

We are:
Kirklees
Libraries.



Annual Report
2022-23

A WELCOME FROM KIRKLEES LIBRARIES

Over the last year we have faced many challenges but equally, achieved amazing things. As always, our staff, volunteers, Friends and partners have worked together with passion and commitment to ensure our service delivers the best possible outcomes. This report highlights how these outcomes have positively impacted on communities and improved lives.

We have continued to demonstrate our value and importance as Libraries of Sanctuary in the broadest sense. During the cost-of-living crisis we have provided safe, welcoming spaces delivering locally based support and resources free of charge. As part of the national Warm Spaces initiative anyone could access practical help and guidance or simply spend time, meet, enjoy a cuppa and continue to participate in cultural and social activities without the worry of additional cost.

We also welcomed those seeking sanctuary as a result of current world events, providing a place of safety for refugees and asylum seekers enabling them to meet new people, build friendships and create groups, access support and resources and feel part of our communities. Working extensively with partners and our communities we have delivered collaborative approaches to support integration and cohesion.

We applied for and were awarded the Quality 4 Health award – the first public library service to achieve this. The award recognises the fantastic work of frontline staff and volunteers to improve health and wellbeing through a targeted programme of outreach activities, promoting the improvement of mental health through reading for pleasure, delivering support for residents with a visual impairment, our Death Positive Libraries project, bibliotherapy supporting people living with dementia and story walks.

As part of preparation for the development of the Cultural Heart we successfully moved Huddersfield Library to two interim locations within the town centre whilst our new library is completed. Thousands of books, resources, equipment, furniture and shelving were packed away and transferred and our service delivery adapted to ensure that all elements of the service were maintained and accessible to the community.

As always, a huge thankyou to everyone who contributes to, uses and supports our precious libraries ensuring the essential work highlighted in this report continues at the heart of communities.

Steph Shaw

Service Manager (Libraries)



THE KIRKLEES COUNCIL OUTCOMES

The library service build programmes of work around the eight Council outcomes, which are:

- Shaped by people
- Best start
- Well
- Independent
- Aspire and Achieve
- Sustainable Economy
- Safe and Cohesive
- Clean and Green.

The following pages show some of the ways that Kirklees library service contribute to these outcomes by providing inspiring, free, easily accessible resources, cultural opportunities, activities and events to the people of Kirklees.

SHAPED BY PEOPLE



The Library Service champions a place-based approach in all we do, with our buildings well positioned in the heart of communities to engage with partner organisations and the public in a variety of ways. We connect communities through partnership work, and we help to facilitate the work of others.

KEY PARTNERSHIP CREATES IMPROVED GREEN SPACE FOR PEOPLE TO COME TOGETHER

Cleckheaton in Bloom is a voluntary group established to help make Cleckheaton a more attractive place for residents, shoppers, visitors, retailers, businesses and to draw new retailers, businesses, families and shoppers to the town. They work in partnership with the Rotary Club and the Cleckheaton Library Friends of Group to increase volunteering opportunities and encourage more visits to our library. The highlight of the year was the installation of the Jubilee arch in the centre of the front garden, which was officially opened by MP Kim Leadbeater and our own Service Manager Steph Shaw in September.



Steph Shaw, Service Manager and Kim Leadbeater MP cutting the ribbon.



Jubilee arch celebration event.

DOWNSD AND SPECIAL FRIENDS MEET TOGETHER IN BATLEY LIBRARY

The Downs and Special Friends group used Batley Library every week during the summer holidays to run a programme of activities for their members. The activities were a combination of crafts organised and run by the group and sessions put on by the library service, such as a film club, Lego club and a sensory Storytime session.

The sessions were attended by families with special needs children, on a Wednesday when the library is normally closed, and the library proved to be an ideal environment for the group. We showed the families the autism resources we have should they wish to use them. The Friends of the Library were also working with the Cohesion team planning a picnic in the park event near the library in the Memorial Gardens. We promoted this to the families and as a result many of the families went along to the event.

HOLIDAY CLUB
 Batley Library
 11am - 12:30pm

After Club, weather permitting Group can continue with Meet & Greet at Batley Park. Bring your lunch pack.

Wed 3rd August	Wed 10th August	Wed 17th August	Wed 24th August	Wed 31st August
Lego Club led by Christina Smith	Arts & Crafts led by Mehmet Dincel/Neil	Film Club led by Library Staff	Arts & Crafts led by Mehmet Dincel/Neil	Storytime led by Library Staff

www.DownsandSpecialFriends.org 01924 922924

'SNOWDOGS' AND THE FAMILY LEARNING FESTIVAL

In 2022 The Kirkwood installed 67 beautifully decorated sculptures in towns and villages across Kirklees. The spectacular free trail was inspired by 'The Snowman and the Snowdog', the hugely popular sequel to Raymond Briggs' classic story 'The Snowman'. Kirklees Libraries created a family-friendly series of events to support the trail, and these were delivered during the Family Learning Festival, which had a theme of inspiring curiosity.

Events were hosted in Denby Dale, Holmfirth and Birstall Libraries, all three of which had their own Snowdog sculptures within the building. The sessions consisted of a multi-sensory Storytime, followed by a mini library trail, which the children loved, and then bunting making and craft activities.

Many people commented that it is increasingly hard to find free activities to do with their children, and the Snowdog activity enabled families to enjoy a cultural activity together that they could otherwise not have afforded. It was also an opportunity for the family to come together with others in their community to enjoy a shared cultural experience.



NEXT STEPS FOR HUDDERSFIELD LIBRARY AS PART OF THE EXCITING CULTURAL HEART DEVELOPMENT

In December we said goodbye to the library building which has been an important part of the life of the town of Huddersfield for over 80 years and relocated our existing library services into two locations in the Town centre which provide us with a temporary home until our new, state-of-the-art library is ready. Our main adult lending and children's departments are now in the shared space in the Customer Service Centre, and our Local Studies offer, and Transcription Service is on Victoria Lane, shared with the West Yorkshire Archives Service.

We organised several events as part of our farewell to the building; Writer-in-residence Chris Longden led reminiscence sessions and library customers shared stories and memories, and there were opportunities to browse photographs, newspaper clippings, objects and memorabilia of Huddersfield Library from the local history archive. Children took part in a creative writing session with poet Matt Goodfellow, writing poems about their favourite books and stories, and local rap artist RappaMan led a workshop for families to think about what would be in the perfect library.



The old Huddersfield Library



The new Huddersfield Library

BEST START



The Library Service works to support improved early language development, improved literacy, reading for pleasure and attainment for all ages. We deliver child focussed activities which support families, and we provide a range of high quality creative and cultural activities.

DEVELOPING SERVICES TO PROMOTE CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

Holmfirth hosted a class visit to promote Children's Mental Health Week, where the students shared a story from the children's Reading Well collection and joined in activities. Reading Well is a collection of information and story books selected by leading health professionals to support children's mental health and wellbeing.

Teacher feedback:

"The variety of activities ranging from a quiz [to] drawing their own worries... made their visit extra special. The book 'Ruby's Worry' was a great start to the afternoon and a perfect story for promoting Mental Health Week and talking about feelings."

Pupil feedback:

"I enjoyed it because we could listen to a wonderful story she told us about worries. If you talk to someone and let your feelings out, they can make you happy again."

KEY PARTNERSHIP WORK BETWEEN LIBRARIES AND LOCAL SCHOOLS

Kirklees Libraries have worked in partnership with schools and early years settings in Ravensthorpe to provide continuous support to ensure that the community know where the library is, what it has to offer, and enable access. There has been a wide variety of librarian run activity targeting this geographical area throughout the year.

In World Book Week over 300 pupils from Ravensthorpe Junior School visited the library to take part in the 'book tasting bistro'. The children were able to 'taste' different kinds of books and were given individual help finding their perfect read to encourage reading for pleasure.

The Ravenshall Satellite class brought some pupils from their host school at Headfield to share an amazing sequence of interactive sensory stories. The children made footprints in sand (representing the moon), flew paper planes around the globe using a giant map, made musical bumble bees (and danced to the matching piece of classical music); they also explored worms, got sprayed with water, and draped themselves in chiffon.

As well as hosting class visits, workshops and performances at Greenwood Centre Library the Librarian has been into schools and nurseries to celebrate events such as National Poetry Day and International Women's Day. Being present at Diamond Wood Community Academy School readiness sessions and the Summer Fayre makes Kirklees Libraries more visible and a trusted part of the community.

INSPIRING READING FOR PLEASURE WITH THE BOOK CLUB AT BIRKBY AND FARTOWN

The Book Club at Birkby and Fartown Library chooses books from the Carnegie Greenaway Award longlist to allow children to share a story together, with questions, discussion and related activities. Many waiting parents and carers enjoy an hour to themselves in the library, reading and chatting or using the computers:

“My children are educated at home, coming to book club allows them to learn with other children and discuss what they are learning with other children and discuss what they are learning with others of their age and ability. They have also made friends and I can talk to other parents too. It helps me with their learning and getting them interested in books.”

“My children attend a school that is not in the community where we live. I want my children to do positive activities with children who are our neighbours, who they may see in the street or in the park or at mosque.”

“I like what my children do at Book Club. They gain an interest in and think it is a ‘cool’ thing to do. They ask to come and say which book will we look at today? It helps their learning they have time to talk and say what they are thinking.”



Children from Birkby and Fartown Library

USING MULTISENSORY STORYTIMES TO ENCOURAGE FAMILIES TO ENGAGE WITH LIBRARIES

The Library Service organised a series of sessions over the summer holidays to help boost children's language skills, help them to be more nursery or school ready, as well as giving isolated or low-income families free activities to attend. The librarians used specially selected language-rich picture books and the stories were enhanced by carefully selected multisensory elements. These helped to immerse the children in the story, increase their understanding and develop their vocabulary.

The chosen picture book, 'Monkey and Me' by Emily Gravett, and the accompanying resources proved a popular choice with families and many commented on how much they had enjoyed the book.

Participant feedback:

"I am so pleased that you are running these story-times – so many activities for little ones close down over the summer so it's great to have something to do!"

"It was good to see some of the parents I see at the regular story-time. Normally we don't see each other over the holidays."

"My older child also enjoyed this story-time and helping her little sister with the actions and words."



'Monkey and Me' book, toy and paper face mask



The Library Service provides opportunities for people and communities to come together and be less isolated, and access to books and information to promote self-care and reduce health inequalities. We assist health partners to effectively reach local communities.

THE FIRST SERVICE IN THE COUNTRY TO GAIN THE QUALITY 4 HEALTH AWARD

One of the highlights of our year was that Kirklees Libraries became the first public library service in the UK to receive the Quality 4 Health award.

This national kitemark was presented in recognition of the work of frontline staff and volunteers to improve the health and wellbeing of residents through a targeted programme of outreach activities. It was awarded by Penny Woodhead, Director of Nursing and Quality (Calderdale) for NHS West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board and Julie Robinson, Chief Executive at Voluntary and Community Services.

Providers of health and wellbeing see this award as an industry standard accreditation, recognising excellence in nine key areas including service user experience, health promotion, equality and diversity, outcomes and impact connectivity. Examples of the evidence we provided in order to be able to achieve the accreditation included projects around promoting the mental health benefits of reading for pleasure to all age groups, demonstrating support for residents with a visual impairment, promoting healthy walks and the enjoyment of local green spaces with regular story walks, supporting people to deal with grief and loss through the Death Positive Libraries project, and providing bibliotherapy opportunities for people living with dementia and their carers.



The Quality 4 Health team

THE SHARING STORIES STANDING STRONG PARTNERSHIP WITH LAWRENCE BATLEY THEATRE

Kirklees Libraries have been working in partnership with Lawrence Batley Theatre on an exciting project funded by the National Lottery through Arts Council England. The project took place at Rawthorpe Dalton Library, Batley Library, Greenwood Centre, Chestnut Centre, Birkby and Fartown Library, and Dewsbury Library

The overall aim of the project is to help to improve the wellbeing and resilience of communities post-pandemic whilst making libraries, theatre and the arts accessible to a wider range of people. Library staff worked in close partnership with a variety of artists such as poets, a musician, theatre-makers, visual artists, and even a stand-up comedian in order to develop fun and inspiring sessions for groups and individuals within these communities, enabling them to share their stories and explore what makes us the communities that we are in creative ways. Staff involved in the project have also gained valuable skills and experience in working with a variety of artists and art forms and in forming long-term partnerships with other organisations.

This project has seen members of the community come together to write their own music, share stories over craft and coffee sessions, use creative art forms to build a collage of their own community and learn how to use comedy and storytelling for their own wellbeing, to name just a few. We hope that the success of this project will lead to long term collaborative opportunities with both the Lawrence Batley and the artists themselves.



Henry Bateman, songwriter

BRINGING COMMUNITIES TOGETHER – CRAFT AND CHAT AT HOLMFIRTH

The 'Craft and Chat' group at Holmfirth Library was funded by the "Warm Spaces" initiative. Customers were encouraged to drop into a free crafting afternoon; each week a different craft was on offer with the emphasis on sustainability using recycled materials. Free refreshments were also provided. The development of the group served several purposes, including reducing isolation, making new friends, socialising and learning new skills – the attendees really appreciated the opportunity to take part, as reflected in this feedback:

"This is a fabulous craft group. I find it really great to be able to get out and meet people. I live on my own and it really helps my mental health to spend time with other people. The group leader is a fun and patient teacher."

"We need this craft group because before I was suffering from mental health and depression. I have now started volunteering at the library and I am laughing and getting on with everyone in the group. The group leader is amazing she has brought me out of my shell. I was so quiet I wouldn't talk to anybody. I am now so bubbly and a lot happier. This is because of coming to these groups, chatting, and making friends and working on my mental health. Thank you to everyone who puts the groups together."

"A joy to meet other people and to partake in different activities. A way of not being house bound."

"The group is welcoming and helps with loneliness. It makes it worth getting out of the house."



Participants at Holmfirth Library Craft and Chat

INDEPENDENT



The Library Service reaches out to those who cannot easily access us and provides a range of services designed to help people remain independent and part of their community.

TAKING OUR LIBRARY SERVICE INTO COMMUNITIES – THE HOME LIBRARY SERVICE

Kirklees Home Library Service is provided in partnership with the Royal Voluntary Service and is available to anyone who struggles to physically access their local library for any reason.

In 2022-2023 RVS and their team of 27 volunteers made over 6,000 deliveries of over 40,000 carefully chosen books, audiobooks and jigsaws to our customers. The service is as much about delivering an important source of entertainment and mental stimulation as it is offering a friendly face and social interaction for people who cannot get out as much as they would like. Every month the RVS volunteers gift over 135 hours of their own time and cover 43 routes across the whole of Kirklees.

Volunteers' visits are also a useful check on the safety and wellbeing of their customers and provide a befriending service. The service also benefits the volunteers who can gain valuable library experience, build their skills and self-confidence, and discover a sense of purpose and belonging to their local community.

The Home Library Service has been extremely lucky to work alongside some wonderful charities over the last 12 months. Santa's Seniors kindly provided 230 Christmas presents to home library readers. We have also worked alongside the National Trust who generously gifted beautiful hand-knitted lap blankets to our readers, and most recently we have been gifting an impressive array of warm clothing as part of the Council's warm space initiative. All these gifts have made a huge impact to our readers, making them feel less isolated and knowing someone cares for them.



Ian, Home Service and a home service user

KIRKLEES TRANSCRIPTION SERVICE – SUPPORTING THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED

Kirklees Transcription Service is available to support anyone of any age living with sight loss. We offer a variety of services including transcription into alternative formats, a free talking newspaper, access to support and information about sight loss, details of specialist products and technology to support independence, referrals to relevant services, an annual exhibition and a listening ear.

Throughout the year the KTS team received customer enquires covering a range of subjects. These included audiobooks, specialist technology and products, eye conditions, befriending, children's services, alternative formats, leisure activities and local groups. Referrals were made to organisations including our own Home Library Service, Kirklees Sensory Team, RNIB sight loss advisors, British Wireless for The Blind Fund and Out Lookers.

During the year the team continued to deliver the KR Talking News to visually impaired people in Kirklees. The fortnightly editions are produced in podcast and USB formats. An average of 160 listeners receive every edition, keeping them informed and entertained with up-to-date news, articles and local features.

One customer said:

“Thank you for sending my mother the KR Talking News for all these years, she really enjoys it, it keeps her in touch with her community as she is unable to get out now.”

In August 2022 the Vision Connect exhibition returned to Huddersfield Town Hall bringing together 25 local and national exhibitors of products, services and technology for people with sight loss. Over 150 people attended including those with a visual impairment, their families, carers and professionals.

Attendee feedback included:

“A brilliant exhibition, informative and provided info we didn't know existed. I purchased a magnifier which will improve Mum's quality of life.”

“Today's event helped with seeing the organisations out there to support those who are visually impaired. We have so much useful information and we have more confidence.”

The team exhibited at the 'Kirklees Local Offer Live!' event in November 2022 engaging with many of the attendees, including children with special educational needs and their families along with professionals in the field. KTS have also continued to offer visual impairment awareness training sessions to library staff, so they are aware of the offer and are able to promote it to their customers.



Vision Connect 2023

EXPLORING 'THE LOST WORDS' WITH THE RECOVERY COLLEGE

The Library Service worked in partnership with The Recovery College in Mirfield with a group of adults recovering from mental health issues, delivering a series of three workshops based around the theme of nature and using the Greenaway Award-winning book 'The Lost Words' by Robert McFarlane and Jackie Morris. The aims of the session were to promote wellbeing and confidence, improve mental health and help the participants to feel less isolated. The sessions included a mixture of poetry sharing, craft activities and a wellbeing story trail, all culminating in a co-creative session with Calderdale based poet Emma Decent.

Participant feedback:

"I loved meeting new people, learning something new and doing craft work."

"The sessions improved my confidence."

"I identified that I can do different things."

"Pleasant, relaxed course with no pressure, but fun activities that made me feel good."



Recovery college artwork

TACKLING LONELINESS WITH THE SLAITHWAITE LIBRARY COMMUNITY CAFE

This well attended and popular wellbeing cafe takes place every Thursday morning at Slaithwaite Library. There is a short wellbeing walk followed by hot drinks, soup and bread and after lunch some people attend a chair yoga session. The cafe sessions receive regular food donations from Slaithwaite businesses, and are supported by Kirklees Council and community volunteers, who bring along home-baked goods, prepare food in the kitchen, and support new people, many of whom are in need of encouragement, good company and confidence building.

The cafe offers a friendly and supportive environment to all who attend and frequently enables people to access help from appropriate professionals such as Community Coordination, Social Prescribers, and Welfare Rights Advice.



A group of five people enjoying the Slaithwaite Library Community Cafe



A large group of people enjoying the Community Cafe

ASPIRE AND ACHIEVE



The Library Service provides free access to appropriate learning resources and activities, and signposting to other opportunities, as well as offering the chance to improve skills and gain experience through volunteering, apprenticeships and work placements.

IMPROVING LITERACY LEVELS WITH THE ADULT READING GROUP

Each Friday in Huddersfield Library the Adult Literacy Group meet to read a book together. The group is primarily for people who are just starting to learn how to read, and who have no academic qualifications. The aim is that participants improve their reading ability through practicing aloud to each other. The books we use are from the 'Quick Reads' collection in the library. 'Quick Reads' are a collection of short books using accessible words, and they are a perfect entry point to reading for pleasure for people who find reading difficult.

The group have read many books together and this is producing some excellent results. It is heartening to see how the group's reading confidence is given a boost each week. Recent studies have shown that those who do read for pleasure have higher levels of self-esteem and a greater ability to cope with difficult situations.

One participant said:

"I've been to see my English tutor at college, and he says I've come on dramatically with my reading this year. He said I'm nearly ready for GCSE level! I can't believe it! I'm sure it's because of all the reading we do here."

PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES VIA THE PROJECT SEARCH INTERNSHIP

Project SEARCH is a one-year transition to work programme for young adults with a learning disability or autism spectrum conditions, or both. Interns complete three 12-week rotations whilst also studying for an employability qualification. Holly spent 12 weeks working in different departments at Huddersfield Library.

This is what Holly had to say about the experience:

"Throughout my time at the library, the staff were very patient with me and were more than willing to show me how things are run, how to deliver the best customer service possible, this really helped with my confidence working within a team of people because I knew that there was always someone to help me out. Over my 12 weeks work at the library, it taught me so much valuable skills that will be very helpful in the future and a lot of the skills I have learnt I have also implemented into my later placements. The library has taught me to be confident in whatever I do even when the task at hand is hard, it has taught me how to interact with all sorts of different people from all walks of life and many other useful skills that I will carry for the rest of my life. My time at the library has made a massive impact to life and my confidence in myself."

OUR STAFF IN THE SPOTLIGHT – KIRKLEES AWARD NOMINATIONS

2022/2023 was another good year for the Library Service in terms of awards nominations:

In June our Librarian Ambreen Aziz attended the **West Yorkshire Apprenticeship Awards** in Bradford as a finalist in the Health and Public service category. Ambreen began her career with the service as a level 3 apprentice, before gaining a substantive role as a Customer Service Officer, followed quickly by a promotion to the post of Librarian. Ambreen was nominated for bringing new and innovative ideas to the service, whilst overcoming Covid restrictions. Ambreen's passion for inclusivity and diversity came to the forefront when she was a co-lead for the South Asian Heritage Month project, with the aim of educating young adults on important social and historical issues. Ambreen has always been keen to share her experiences and encourage other young people to get involved and worked as an ambassador for the Kirklees Young Employee Network (YEN); she has been a positive advocate for this and other schemes and her enthusiasm and authenticity are infectious.



Ambreen with our much missed colleague John Greenwood

In 2023 when the Library Service apprenticeship team won the **YEN's Inclusive Team of the Year** award. On presenting the award, Sarah Harris (the Council's strategic lead for inclusion and diversity) said:

"I've chosen the libraries team because it's a mainstream service that has gone out of its way to engage young people and give them a quality experience of working in their service, via the apprenticeship scheme. I think there's been a dual impact in this submission – the first being around supporting young people to gain experience of the service and to equip them for a future career and, second, being the library service itself, adapting its working practices to be more inclusive of younger people."



Apprentice working party

On the national stage, our Customer Service Manager Troy McIntosh was highly commended at the **Municipal Journal awards in the 'Rising Star' category**, in March 2023. The nomination concluded that Troy has made a significant contribution to so many development projects within Kirklees Libraries. Troy uses his skills, learning and valuable community experience to enhance our offer to Kirklees residents. He is continually looking for opportunities to develop his own skill set, whilst at the same time developing other through his involvement with our workforce development team. His secondment to the Iroko project, working as a community ambassador to support the African Caribbean community, yielded benefits to our service, improving links relating to diversity and inclusion.

Linda Johnson, who managed the Iroko Project, said:

“Troy is extremely organised and dependable whilst showing great insight and fortitude. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to work with Troy, he is a credit to your service.”



Troy, Customer Service Manager

SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY



The Library Service offers access to a whole world of free resources, saving people money. We offer support for local businesses, resources and signposting, and access to culture and the opportunity to be creative.

USING THE LIBRARY SERVICE SAVES YOU MONEY

Access to library services in Kirklees is free; there are no fines for the late return of items and there are no charges to borrow books. Many people pay expensive subscriptions to e-book or newspaper reading platforms, often not knowing that borrowing e-books, e-audiobooks and reading newspapers and magazines using your Kirklees library card is also completely free.

We were asked to estimate how much money we saved people in Kirklees over the course of a year and have calculated that over a 12-month period, we're saving people in Kirklees over £11million.

AMOUNT OF MONEY SAVED

Time period	Borrowing Books	Borrowing e-books/e-audiobooks	Use of e-newspapers/e-magazines (PressReader)	Total
April-June 2022	£2,199,655	£330,216	£154,686	£2,684,557
July-September 2022	£2,492,500	£349,267	£180,285	£3,022,053
October-December 2022	£2,233,930	£326,642	£190,505	£2,751,077
January-March 2023	£2,138,870	£339,979	£197,319	£2,676,168
Total	£9,064,955	£1,346,105	£722,795	£11,133,855

CONTRIBUTING TO THE CULTURAL LIFE OF THE DISTRICT DURING THE RUGBY LEAGUE WORLD CUP

We were delighted to get funding to organise a variety of cultural events to celebrate the Rugby League World Cup (which was delayed by a year because of the pandemic) – we had discussion panels, author talks, children learning their own version of the ‘haka’, poetry workshops for teens and a theatre performance by ‘Colour the Clouds’. All the events were free to attend.

One teacher who attended a poetry workshop said:

“The children were immersed and fully engaged; an excellent session, the children were proud of their work and enthused by the books which had been shared.”

FREE EVENTS TO ENTERTAIN AND INFORM OUR CUSTOMERS

Cleckheaton Library welcomed local author, John Barlow for a visit and talk. Featuring DS Joe Romano, ‘Right to Kill’ is the first title in his crime thriller series set in Cleckheaton. The book describes the town, streets and local pubs - even the library got its very own mention. Over 50 people attended the event as John discussed his characters, themes and why he chose to write about Cleckheaton.

One lady was happy to share some feedback:

“I was so pleased to find this book that is based in Cleckheaton. I could really visualise the story as John went to great lengths to describe the area and used real streets. I tried to give a copy to my son who hasn’t touched a book since he left school. He doesn’t read for pleasure. I told him he should read it; it has all the places he goes to in it. In the end to stop me nagging, he reluctantly took a copy. He loved it, so much so that he then got all his friends to read it too. I now have a group of 30-year-olds begging me for more book suggestions and I have got a few of them to join the library.”



John Barlow author visit

SAFE AND COHESIVE



We proactively and collaboratively engage with local people so they feel proud of where they live. We provide welcoming, safe spaces, and we provide collections which reflect our communities.

LIBRARIES AT THE HEART OF THE COUNCIL 'WARM SPACES' INITIATIVE

As part of Kirklees' response to the cost-of-living crisis we took part in a national initiative called 'Warm Spaces', which included promoting libraries as safe and warm places in which to spend time in order to save money on home fuel bills. All 24 of our libraries became 'warm spaces', different models were adopted, but as a minimum every library provided hot drinks and a space for people to come and spend time. Each library (including the Home Library Service) also had a stock of free items to give away to people in need, including electric blankets, fleeces, gloves and hats.

One recipient of these items said:

"The blanket is brilliant it warms you even without your heating it's brilliant. Once you are warm you can turn it off and you stay warm."

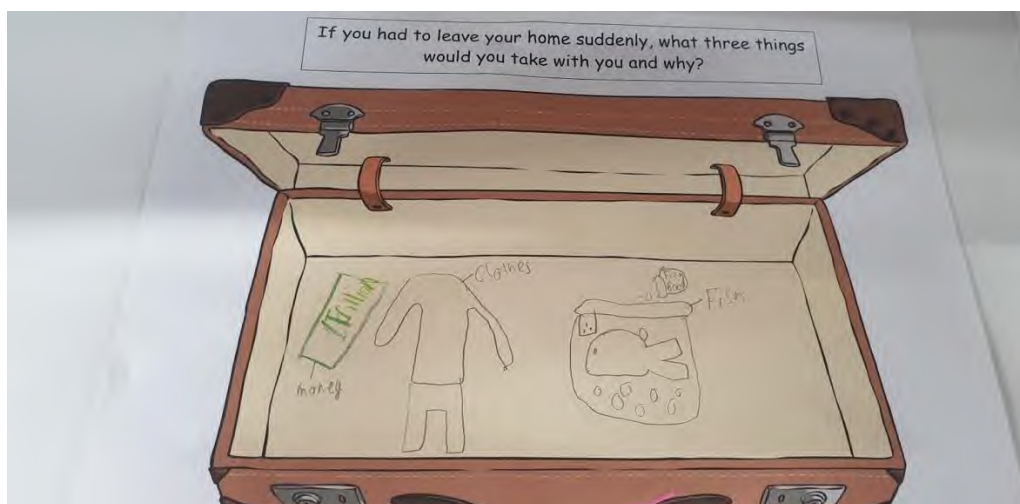
In addition to this, 11 libraries applied for money to deliver activities, initiatives or events linked to warm spaces. The successful bids included coffee and craft mornings, community film screenings, seated hand tap dancing, games clubs, takeaway 'keep warm' packs, and a socialisation scheme for home educated teens.



One of the 'keep warm' packs provided by Kirklees Council

LIBRARIES AS A SAFE SPACE TO EXPLORE STORIES OF EXILE AND HEALING

As part of our activities to mark Refugee Week Birkby and Fartown Library hosted a special event to raise awareness of the experiences of refugees and asylum seekers in West Yorkshire. A variety of organisations took part in the event, including the Council's Community Cohesion team, the Solace team, and our own service. There were personal statements, both in person and pre-recorded, about the effect being a refugee can have on you, your families and your wellbeing, and the library service spoke about the value of providing a place of safety, as well as providing books and resources to people whose first language is not English.



CLEAN AND GREEN



The Library Service provides a range of activities reflective of clean and green principles, in line with Kirklees Council policy.

THE GREEN LIBRARIES PROJECT – THE SECRET GARDEN OF GOLCAR LIBRARY

There is a special garden behind Golcar Library that is little known about by the community. Our ambition for the space is to develop it into an environmentally sustainable area for community use. The space would have an edible component, wild garden, sensory garden, reading garden and be an integral part of community activities from learning to wellness.

In August 2022 we found out that we were one of 15 local authorities to be successful in a bid to the Green Libraries Partnership part of the national Chartered Institute for Library and Information Professionals (CILIP). Our bid allowed us to proceed with the first stage of our plan, which focused on the creation of external artwork for the garden. We worked with three local schools, Lily Park, Golcar Junior and Infants, St. Johns, and local arts organisation, The Children's Art School. Pupils from each school were able to visit the library garden and learn about what could be found in their own 'secret' gardens. The theme of the artwork looked at native wildlife, plants and habitats of sky, land and underground, with each school working on a different habitat for the mural.

The 80 children who participated attained the nationally recognised Arts Award: Discover Level qualification. The research, learning and techniques used by the children to create the mural and the group discussions in school were all important steps for the children to gain their award.

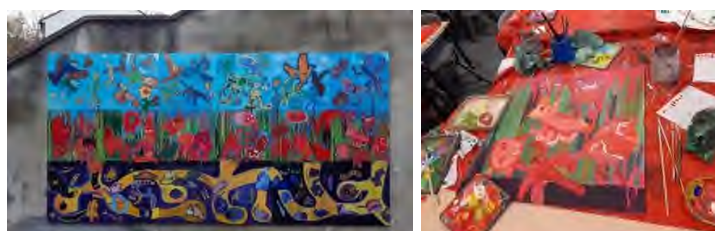
Looking to the future we are engaging with the community to find out their vision for the garden space. The next step will be to find volunteer gardeners and plan work based on community feedback.

Feedback from the Year 5 and 6 teachers:

"The children loved the opportunity to learn new art techniques, transferring their sketched work onto the mural boards. The children also benefited from working as a team, creating a mural for the local community, that they can be proud of and that they can share with family and friends for many years to come."

"Very inclusive sessions which catered for all, well done. The artwork on the wall will inspire the children to become involved in more art projects as it will really boost their confidence to know they have created something like this."

"We were able to visit the library in our first week which led to some children going home excitedly to ask their parents if they could join the library and borrow some books."



PROVIDING ACTIVITIES THAT PROMOTE SUSTAINABILITY – ‘MEND IT MONDAYS’ AT DENBY DALE

A volunteer coordinator at Denby Dale Library who organises many craft and environmental groups started ‘Mend It Mondays’ at Denby Dale Library with the aim of helping people to repair, repurpose or reinvent items of clothing. The idea behind the initiative was that people came into the library with specific problems relation to items of clothing, and the session organisers told us some great examples of success stories:

“A lady with a hole in her favourite cashmere jumper did not want to make the repair visible but make it disappear. After a discussion with the group and taking their advice, she ordered some cashmere yarn from the internet. She came along the next week and was shown how to darn it up, so indeed the hole disappeared, and she could wear her favourite jumper again.”

“A lady came into the library with a memory quilt her elderly mum had made, many years ago, with fabric from her old summer dresses when she was a child. Some of the patches were starting to fray and pull apart and she wanted help and advice on how to repair the damaged panels, which she got from the team, and was shown some embroidery techniques to pull the fabric together and stitch over the top and further into the panel so that it looks as if it has always been that way.”

“Another lady had an apron that was badly ripped but has sentimental value, having been in her family for years. Following advice from the team she made it into a whole new garment, with the addition of some contrasting fabric she had picked up in the charity shop and making up new panels.”



Mended jumper

KEY STATISTICS

The table below shows how quickly public confidence in using our services has been restored following the pandemic; we've shown a significant rise in both these numbers this year when compared to the previous twelve months.

ISSUES AND VISITORS

Library	Issue Statistics 2021-2022	Issue Statistics 2022-2023	Number of Visitors 2021-2022	Number of Visitors 2022-2023
Almondbury	10,854	15,271	7,077	134,21
Batley	36,467	52,830	44,394	87,955
Birkby	17,249	19,328	8,194	10,387
Birstall	16,860	26,714	26,497	53,301
Chestnut Centre	2,229	3,300	2,079	3,,722
Cleckheaton	59,245	87,776	30,651	57712
Denby Dale	9,745	19,280	5,075	16,806
Dewsbury	54,838	98,295	55,744	118,721
Golcar	10,618	15,295	3,388	80,27
Heckmondwike	12,635	16,407	12,587	19,937
Holmfirth	38,762	55,817	29,893	54,996
Home Service	40,093	39,802	6,178	7,318
Honley	13,583	24,463	8,184	16,621
Huddersfield	135,831	176,463	98,348	152,370
Kirkburton	13,704	230,81	6,203	15,442
Kirkheaton	4,436	7,082	3,211	6,509
Lindley	45,959	65,157	24,799	41,809
Marsden	9,863	12,998	7,574	19,129
Meltham	9,453	17,974	N/A	N/A
Mirfield	43,990	63,550	24,631	47,831
Greenwood	3,713	4,575	12,375	26,849
Rawthorpe	6,213	9,044	4,047	14673
Shepley	9,138	13,048	4,868	89,97
Skelmanthorpe	10,393	14,499	60,64	13,403
Slaithwaite	11,711	22,379	7,872	17,640
Transcription service	1,686	3,196	373	8,37
Totals	639,264	907,624	440,306	834,413