

**NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL****08 November 2017****STATEMENT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER -  
LIBRARY, CUSTOMER AND COMMUNITY SERVICES****COUNTY COUNCILLOR GREG WHITE****Libraries****Library Celebrations**

This month two community libraries have something to celebrate.

On 21<sup>st</sup> October Settle Community Library held its official opening since transfer to the community in April 2017. The Trustees have recognised the value of this fantastic resource to the local community and, following a great deal of hard work and determination on their part, Settle Community Library is now celebrating its first 6 months of delivering the service. Over 50 volunteers give up their own time on a regular basis and work tirelessly for their customers. So far in the last 6 months alone over 16,000 items have been borrowed and over 120 children have joined this year's Summer Reading Challenge.

On 28<sup>th</sup> October Gargrave and Malhamdale Library had its official re-opening following a redesign and refurbishment which has been partly funded by NYCC's community library grant. The library, which has been successfully run by the local community for the past five years, now has new carpets, furniture and redecoration.

**Summer Reading Challenge**

This summer more than 9,000 children aged 4 to 11 in North Yorkshire took part in this year's Summer Reading Challenge, Animal Agents, involving clever creatures trained to use their skills and natural instincts to unravel mysteries.

A total of 116 events attended by more than 1,700 children were held over the summer holidays to encourage children to go to the library. Activities ranged from pony riding at Colburn Community Library, to a visit from Bats at Newby and Scalby Community Library, a "detective school" at Ripon Library and an exciting secret agent event at Bilton and Woodfield Community Library.

Over 99,550 books were borrowed by children from North Yorkshire's libraries over a 10-week period, helping children to maintain and improve their reading skills over the summer holidays. The challenge also provided a great opportunity for young volunteers to get involved with the fun, 103 young people became Summer Reading Challenge volunteers in 19 of our libraries, including 6 community libraries, and contributed 2028 hours; an average of 20 hours per volunteer. 36 of these young people who would like to continue to volunteer with us as Reading Hack volunteers this year – an impressive 35% of the total number of SRC volunteers. The roles they will be volunteering for include children's storytime, Code Club, Fun Palaces, Children's Reading Group, and other activities during the school holidays.

## **Fun Palaces**

On Saturday, 7 October, six North Yorkshire libraries were transformed into Fun Palaces for the day. Working with artists, dancers, musicians, museums, colleges and many other creative people, this year's Fun Palaces at Scarborough, Ripon, Northallerton, Filey, Skipton and Richmond libraries offered a day of free arts, culture and science activities for all on the theme of Everyone an Artist, Everyone a Scientist. On the day the libraries provided over 30 different events including opportunities to try musical instruments, build Lego robots, make animations, sing in choirs and build bug houses. Nearly 2000 people attended the events which were supported by a variety of partners and a large number of volunteers.

## **National Libraries Week**

Across North Yorkshire, libraries held a week of events, displays, activities and taster sessions to celebrate National Libraries Week which ran from 9<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> October which showcased just some of the many things that North Yorkshire libraries offer. Taking the theme of Discovery, emphasis was placed on the library offer and promoting the range of on-line resources available for free to library members, including supporting communities to increase their digital skills with a range of IT sessions and partnering with Google to host a day to support local businesses in Scarborough. Many libraries held activities for children sharing the joys and benefits of reading for pleasure with parents. Mental Health Day fell in the same week and libraries took advantage to promote their Reading Well collections, supporting people of all ages with their mental health and well-being. Other activities included animation, dance, archaeology, choral singing, author talks and local history, demonstrating that libraries in North Yorkshire have much to offer their communities. During the week, 520 people took the opportunity to join a North Yorkshire Library.

## **Library Stakeholder Conference**

The third Library Stakeholder conference is being held on 22<sup>nd</sup> November. This conference brings together volunteers representing the community libraries across North Yorkshire and with those that have newly transferred in April of this year, it will be the largest gathering yet. The conference combines updates, workshops and the chance to share views and best practice with volunteers, library staff and members of the Stronger Communities Team.

## **Archives**

The £8,500 Heritage Lottery Funded project, *Grounds for Appeal*, has reached a successful conclusion. An enthusiastic team of 40 volunteers has listed and summarised almost 6,000 case files of men who appealed against conscription during World War I. The summaries are now available in the online catalogue. Volunteers have also helped to prepare a travelling exhibition and to deliver talks about the project to groups throughout the county. The project has featured both in the local press and in an extensive article in the national *Who Do You Think You Are?* magazine. The same volunteers will now continue to work with the Record Office on other online cataloguing projects