

**NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL****21<sup>st</sup> February 2018****STATEMENT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER -  
LIBRARY, CUSTOMER AND COMMUNITY SERVICES****COUNTY COUNCILLOR GREG WHITE****Libraries****Library Stakeholder Conference**

On 22<sup>nd</sup> November the Library Service held its Stakeholder conference which brought together volunteer representatives from the Community Managed libraries as well as NYCC's County Councillors and other partnership organisations to celebrate their success to date, share ideas and to look to the future. Delegates attended a number of workshops including sessions on marketing, sustainability and volunteer training and had the opportunity to meet representatives from Council departments as well as to network with each other. The feedback from the conference delegates which was both constructive and very positive included requests that this become an annual event. Additional seminar sessions are currently being arranged to provide further support with the groups throughout 2018, with the first of these taking place this month with the County Council's energy team.

**Chairman's Events:**

In addition to the above, the chair of North Yorkshire County Council, Councillor Helen Swiers held 6 library celebration events in January. Hundreds of volunteers from across the county travelled to Scarborough, Harrogate and County Hall to share tea and cake with the chairman and hear her deliver a special thank you to the volunteers who are making such a difference to the county's libraries and to celebrate their achievements. I would like to record my grateful thanks to Cllr Swiers who has been a highly visible champion of the library service during her year in office and has visited many of the community run libraries. The events were a recognition of the tremendous achievement by communities in getting to where they are today, and of the time and energy that volunteers have put in to keep their libraries not only open, but thriving.

**Skipton Library:**

Skipton Library held an Open Day on 25<sup>th</sup> January, following much needed renovation work. Local residents were invited to take a look around the newly refurbished reference library and discover more about what this community resource has to offer. Visitors on the open day saw improvements to the reference and local studies area, as well as new research and study facilities and a seating area where visitors can relax, read newspapers and enjoy a book. During the day staff and volunteers also offered children's activities, such as Storytime and Lego Club, taster sessions in computer help and family history, and an exhibition of old maps and photographs were also on show. The Open Day coincided with the launch of Skipton Library's new monthly talk and coffee morning, Coffee Plus, which this

month was on local suffragette Leonora Cohen and was presented by Helen Pratt from Temple Newsam House. NYCC Adult Learning have also recently relocated to the Library and are now delivering regular courses, including ICT and Functional English, extending the learning opportunities on offer.

### **Safer Internet:**

This month libraries across the County will be encouraging people to stay safe online. The county's libraries help people of all ages to access information and services online and for many people are the only place they can go to for help to get online. Throughout February, libraries will provide information, host free safer internet workshops run by the County Council's Adult Learning and Skills Service and offer opportunities for people to have a one-to-one session with an IT buddy.

### **Joygernaut:**

The nature of kindness is being explored in a partnership between North Yorkshire libraries and poet and performer Andy Craven-Griffiths. Andy has been running workshops in libraries to gather stories and experiences of kindness from people of all ages. Now the project, Joygernaut, has gone online and people across the county are being invited to share their experiences. The project has been funded by Stronger Communities and has engaged people of all ages including school children, library customers, volunteers, and vulnerable and homeless adults. Over the coming months Andy will use the stories to help him write a show which will tour Libraries in May and June. The thinking behind the project is that "kindness can generate small changes in ourselves and others and make our communities better places."

### **Archives**

The Record Office has achieved national recognition with the award of Accredited Archive Service status. Archive Service Accreditation is the UK standard for archive services which defines good practice and identifies agreed standards. It is awarded by the UK Archive Service Accreditation Committee and supported by a partnership including The National Archives (TNA) and the National Records of Scotland. The Record Office is among the first 100 archives to receive this award out of over 2,000 eligible services.

The detailed and demanding submission that was required to apply for accreditation looked at all aspects of the archive service including the policies and procedures in place for managing collections, the range of public services offered and the outreach activities and events. Achieving accredited status demonstrates that the Record Office has met clearly defined standards relating to management and resourcing; the care of its unique collections and what the service offers to its entire range of users.

In making the award the Accreditation Panel recognised the work of staff and also that of volunteers who have contributed so much to the work of the office over recent years. However, TNA also noted that the deterioration of the current premises

requires a long term investment plan and work is currently underway to consider how this could be achieved.

## **Registrars**

The registration service has now completed their annual survey of clients who registered a birth or a death. It is pleasing to report that 99% of customers reported they were very satisfied or satisfied with the service they received. In addition over 99% said the registrar was professional, polite and helpful.

A number of points made in the comments have already been anticipated and further improvements have already been introduced or are to be introduced shortly through the service's new management system. This means that from February customers can book an online appointment to register a birth or a death. This is much simpler than the previous process and the customer's journey and needs have been uppermost in developing these improvements; including a mobile phone compatible version of these forms, the lack of which had been commented on by clients. Further upgrades/changes to the online customer offer for the Registration service are planned later in 2018.