

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

16th May 2018STATEMENT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER -
LIBRARY, CUSTOMER AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

COUNTY COUNCILLOR GREG WHITE

Libraries

One year on from taking over the running of many of North Yorkshire's libraries, volunteer groups across the county are working hard, in partnership with the County Council, to create venues that will serve their communities well into the future. The groups running the community libraries are not only finding their feet, but are stepping out in new directions to ensure their libraries are a focal point for their communities and give local people the services they need. Many of the new community libraries held events in April to celebrate their 1st anniversary and there was excellent press coverage of their achievements over the past year. They are all to be congratulated and thanked for the excellent work they are doing.

Community Library Seminars

To support volunteer groups a number of seminars are being held covering areas identified at last year's Community Library Conference. This month seminars will be held on marketing and promotion, supported by the council's communications unit, and support has also been provided by Stronger Communities to help library groups meet the new GDPR requirements. During June groups will be learning about what goes on behind the scenes at Library HQ including sessions on book stock management; and further seminars are planned over the next 12 months.

Selby Library reopened its doors on Wednesday 25 April, following its closure for refurbishment. The project has been supported jointly by North Yorkshire County Council and Selby District Council as part of their Better Together partnership to create community hubs based around libraries, with £140,000 invested in the refurbishment, including £15,000 on new books. The library has been transformed and visitors will find bright, modern, flexible facilities with new meeting space that increases opportunities for the library to host services such as those offered by Citizens Advice or Selby District Vision at a safe, easily accessible venue in the town centre. Along with the rest of the library, the children's area has benefited from a full makeover, providing an enticing space for children to explore, settle comfortably with a book and enjoy story times and other activities and a dedicated IT space has been created to improve provision of support and training within the library. The official opening event to celebrate the refurbishment took place on Tuesday 15 May.

More than Books – Health and Wellbeing Hub

The volunteer group at More than Books, Eastfield community library have been successful in their bid for £9,000 of funding to develop the library as a Health and

Wellbeing hub. The grant has been supported by the local CCG, Scarborough Borough Council and NYCC Stronger Communities. A key component of the project will be to develop IT training courses with a particular focus on helping customers to access health information online both on the existing library computers and on their own devices. The group will also be using "wii fit" equipment to provide physical fitness courses which will be particularly focussed on those who are older and more socially isolated within the local community. In conjunction with the paid library staff, "more than books" will also be using the grant in developing their links with local community healthcare organisations to provide advice and support for local people. This part of the work started in February with an initial, and very successful event at the library involving eleven local healthcare organisations.

Autism Friendly Libraries:

North Yorkshire County Council's libraries service is working towards improving the customer experience of libraries for people with Autism. The campaign was launched at Skipton Library during World Autism Awareness week In April, where a special relaxed Storytime was held. The team has achieved autism friendly status by following advice from Dimensions, a national not-for-profit organisation that helps to make public spaces more accessible, the Association for Children's and Education Libraries and the Society of Chief Librarians. A 'social story' and site plans have been produced to help reduce the uncertainty for first-time visitors and training is offered to staff and volunteers.

Local and Community History Month: Libraries across North Yorkshire will be celebrating the rich heritage of the county with a series of talks, events and exhibitions during May. Highlights include Local History Fairs in Northallerton, Filey, Skipton, Scarborough and Harrogate which will bring together local historical organisations so that the public can discover more about local and family history. There will also be the opportunity to find out more about plans for the County Archives and to contribute to the future planning at a series of pop-up archives events during May.

Cook 250 Festival:

The Library Service has just been awarded funding of nearly £38,000 from Arts Council England to deliver a high profile project in partnership with the County Record Office, award-winning art & science organisation, Invisible Dust and volunteer groups in Whitby and Great Ayton. The project will see the production of contemporary artworks by acclaimed artists Fiona Macdonald and Ahilapalapa Rands and new writing by award winning author Natasha Pulley. All three will work with and run workshops for volunteers and young people. The project will also support Whitby Library and Great Ayton Library volunteers to develop an exhibition on the theme using the expertise and resources of the County Records Office and will also support 6 young people to investigate the art and science of Cook's voyage through a research trip to London, returning on a Tall Ship. The creative responses will form a display at Whitby Library at The Cook 250 Whitby Festival from 6-8 July.

Joygernaut, and exciting one-person show exploring the effects of kindness and cruelty will tour North Yorkshire libraries during May and June. The shows have been inspired by workshops which took place in libraries to encourage people to share

their own experiences of kindness and stories people have shared on-line. The project was initiated by North Yorkshire Libraries with support from the Stronger Communities team and poet/performer Andy Craven-Griffiths will be performing in 12 libraries across the County.

PressReader

Those of you who are avid readers of the press or enjoy magazines will be interested to hear about an exciting new online service just launched by the Library Service. Pressreader is the world's largest online newspaper kiosk and gives access to more than 7,000 daily newspaper and magazines from more than 100 countries in over 60 languages. Any North Yorkshire library member can use the service to read newspapers and magazines in full-colour, full-page format, print articles, listen to audio narration or translate content from around the world. It's completely free to use for those with a library membership.

Archives

A major consultation has been launched on the future direction of the Archive Service. The current record office building is in need of a complete overhaul so that it can continue to maintain important and irreplaceable documents in a secure and controlled environment. The service is also keen to take advantage of the opportunities offered by digital technologies and by improved broadband coverage across the county to widen access to its holdings. The findings from the consultation will enable the service to understand what users and potential users of archives would like to see from a digital age record office and how it can better meet their interests and those of local communities. The survey is open to anyone with an interest in the archival heritage of North Yorkshire & runs until June 4th.

As previously stated, the Record Office has a busy programme of outreach events throughout May and archives staff will be out and about taking a 'pop-up' archive to venues around the county & will be on hand to offer help and advice at the local history fairs to be held at Harrogate, Skipton, Northallerton and Filey Libraries.

Tomorrow evening, 17th May, the Record Office will be holding its annual open evening – Archives at Dusk. This year this popular event is focusing on the medieval and early modern periods. Visitors will have a rare opportunity to explore behind-the-scenes to view some of the archive's earliest documents, including the 12th century Whitby Abbey cartulary, and to discover more about life in the castles, abbeys and villages of medieval North Yorkshire. A display of falcons, commonly used for hunting in medieval times, and performances of medieval music, will help to bring the archive alive. Visitors will also be able to try their hand at calligraphy and painting with medieval pigments.

These outreach events will allow staff to engage with a wide range of users and potential users of the archive service and every opportunity will be taken to encourage as many people as possible to contribute their views to the consultation on the future of the service.