

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**20th February 2019****STATEMENT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER -
LIBRARY, CUSTOMER AND COMMUNITY SERVICES****COUNTY COUNCILLOR GREG WHITE****Library and Information Service****Reading Pictures: Seeing Stories in North Yorkshire Libraries**

I am pleased to say that the Reading Pictures: Seeing Stories festival was successful with 14 events held across libraries in North Yorkshire; 186 children took part; with the number of new 0-19s registering up by 15%. This festival was a regional library initiative celebrating children's book illustration, comic and digital art in a series of events and workshops.

ECode

ECODE (2018/19). Funded from the Essential Life Skills Fund (£38k) and Wellcome Trust (£5k). Working with NPO Invisible Dust, the project aims to support young people to become more confident by developing creative, digital and communication skills; raise aspirations to broaden career prospects; support STEAM learning and develop transferrable skills. The project creates opportunities to engage with professional artists using innovative technology, introduces young people to a range of scientists and conservationists and is providing volunteering opportunities.

Young people from schools across Scarborough will be working on three projects with professional artists and have already embarked on the first aspect of the project with a visit to the local beach and follow up coding work on their recordings with renowned sound artist Rob Mackay. The work of the project will be highlighted to a wider audience at this summer's Scarborough Seafest, the NYCC Youth Voice Conference and at events in the library during British Science week in March

Community Library Update

Members will be pleased to hear that our community-managed libraries continue to be successful, opening hours are increased and the events and activities held are proving popular. The Service Agreement review meetings have been completed and we are looking forward to their working on new projects in the coming years. As part of our continued support for the volunteer groups a number of seminars have been held over the past 12 months, including library specific themes such as stock management and marketing as well as practical considerations with sessions on energy suppliers and GDPR. Colleagues within the Communications team and Stronger Communities have supported these sessions. Groups are currently signing up to seminars on running events delivered by members of the libraries team with considerable experience in event management. There is also an ongoing programme of visits to Library Headquarters for volunteers to spend time with the Bibliographic services team learning about the behind the scenes work necessary for the smooth running of the service and for volunteers to share their experience of the sharp end on delivery.

Together with the county Stronger Community team local network meetings are being developed to encourage sharing of best practice and problem solving.

I am also proud to share the news that the 3-D Printing Club held at The Globe @ Stokesley has reached the finals of the "Meet and Code" Awards, which means they in the final 15 of

500 projects that were entered. They are the only UK group to have reached the finals, and representatives from The Globe will be going to Frankfurt for the awards.

Virtual Reality

I am looking forward to attending North Yorkshire's first pop-up "Digital Makey" at Harrogate Library. VIRTUAL reality and digital arts will be among the futuristic and high-tech attractions at the event, on Saturday, 2 March. I would encourage members to drop in to the library during the day.

As well as offering local communities free access to technology, the Digital Makey workshop gives people the opportunity to socialise and learn. There will be all kinds of creative tech kit made available, including Virtual Reality Headsets, small programmable computers including Raspberry Pi and Micro:bits and robotic Lego.

The Digital Makey event takes place at Harrogate Library on Victoria Avenue between 10.30am and 3.30pm. It is free to attend, but some activities, including using the Virtual Reality headsets, should be booked in advance.

Brew Monday

Blue Monday is the third Monday in January, which is known as one of the most difficult days of the year due to a combination of post-Christmas blues, cold dark nights and the arrival of credit card bills. Northallerton library hosted a community drop-in turning Blue Monday into Brew Monday, promoting services offered by the Samaritans, as well as offering an opportunity to help to beat the January blues by getting together with friends, family or colleagues over a brew.

North Yorkshire's libraries also support mental health self-care with a range of self-help guides. Books from the Reading Well collections for mental health, dementia and long-term conditions and also a Shelf-help range for teenagers are available free via all libraries.

Members will also remember the launch of the Well-being Bag project from last time, I am pleased to announce that these are extremely popular and the service is looking to increase the number available in the near future.

Holocaust Memorial Day

Libraries elsewhere across North Yorkshire will joined in the commemoration of Holocaust Memorial Day with displays of posters, educational materials, leaflets and books.

Pickering library hosted an event to mark the approach of Holocaust Memorial Day on Sunday, 27 January, the date in 1944 of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau by the Soviet armies, with visitors participating in a live webcast by the Holocaust Education Trust.

New limited edition Library Cards

North Yorkshire libraries are offering new members colourful reminders of this year's glorious summer to help to banish the winter chill. Photographers from across the county were invited to capture the beauty and diversity of a North Yorkshire summer in a competition organised by the county council's library service. Six winners were chosen, after long deliberation, from 350 images submitted by more than 100 people covering all aspects of the county, from coast to moors, rolling farmland, dramatic landscapes, historic towns and villages, wildlife and nature. These limited edition cards were launched in December and an exhibition of the winning photos will be touring libraries.

Blue Badge applications

January saw the roll out of the new on-line application procedure for Blue Badges. For those requiring assistance our main libraries are offering appointments.

Archives

The Record Office continues to offer its conservation service commercially and has been awarded a contract from Network Rail for the cleaning and conservation of over 900 historic plans of railway structures, including St Pancras station and the iconic Forth Bridge. The contract is to be completed over the coming year.

The Record Office is to appoint to a new post of graduate trainee archivist. This is a great opportunity for a graduate to receive training in all aspects of archival work, whilst at the same time benefiting from the Council's graduate development programme. It will increase the service's capacity to open up access to the archives through cataloguing, outreach and audience development work and allow the post holder to contribute to the future direction of the service.

Coroners

The current Senior Coroner for the Eastern area (Scarborough, Ryedale and Hambleton) of North Yorkshire, Mr Michael Oakley, will retire on the 31st March. Mr Oakley has been a Coroner for 40 years and has given long and honourable service to many thousands of bereaved families. I wish to acknowledge that and to thank him on behalf of the County Council for all that he has done.

Mr Robert Turnbull, currently the Senior Coroner for the Western area will assume the role of Eastern Senior Coroner in addition to his current appointment.

The Executive has also agreed that that detailed discussions should be opened with the City of York to ascertain whether a merger of the York and North Yorkshire areas is both feasible and desirable. Such a merger would be in line with the Chief Coroner's strategic aim of amalgamating smaller Coroners areas into one larger area