

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

13th November 2019

**STATEMENT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER -
LIBRARY, CUSTOMER AND COMMUNITY SERVICES
COUNTY COUNCILLOR GREG WHITE**

Library and Information Service

Summer Reading Challenge

Members will have received the report circulated in October on this years Summer Reading Challenge. I am pleased to note that once again this has been a success, with a 14% increase in participants. This year libraries ran a mini-challenge for those under the age of 5 supporting school readiness, libraries signed up over 1,500 of pre-schoolers of which 177 joined especially to take part. I am particularly proud of our young volunteers – 170 provided over 3,000 hours of support; the contribution at Ripon Library has been recognised with a nomination for the Harrogate & District Volunteer Oscars.

Libraries Month

Libraries across North Yorkshire extended the national celebration of Libraries Week across the whole of October; thanks to the abundance of events on offer. The theme of this year's campaign, from 7 to 12 October, celebrated the role of libraries in the digital world and how they engage communities with technology. Easingwold library ran a stop-motion movie club; Boroughbridge, Ripon and Nidderdale Plus hosted speed databasing – a fun whistle-stop tour of their online resources; and Eastfield and Malton held virtual reality events. Other events included author visits, poetry reading and writing as part of National Poetry Day on 3 October and Northallerton hosted a Forensic Science for Families session, Leyburn library had a healthy lifestyle treasure hunt and Selby hosted Access to Archives.

Book Bingo

Avid and aspiring readers of all ages and abilities are being invited to take the Book Bingo challenge at libraries this autumn. The aim is to encourage people to try something new as well as re-read old favourites with a total of 24 challenges from “read a book that was made in to a film” to “read a book with a number in the title”.

UCI

Whilst the sign on the roof at Harrogate Library didn't get noticed by the TV helicopter, I am pleased to say that the window display at Northallerton Library was recognised by Hambleton District Council, Northallerton Town council and other partners and awarded second place in their competition.

Harrogate Library

Following the national Bookseller award as Library of the Year, Harrogate has also been nominated for the Romantic Novelists Association award. We await the result!!

Thought Bubble

This year's national Thought Bubble Comic Art Festival takes place in Harrogate, so libraries across the district are hosting fringe events including comic art and animation.

Library IT update

I am pleased to announce that the roll out of the replacement self-serve kiosks and new public access PCs has been completed. It is planned to introduce card payment facilities on the self-serve kiosks at the larger libraries later this year. Community Libraries will be able to utilise this facility if they so choose.

Stakeholder Conference

I shall be attending the library's Stakeholder conference on 7 November. This conference brings together over 80 volunteers all helping to maintain our library network to share stories, learn and help develop the service to best meet the needs of communities.

Archives

The Record Office has begun to pilot activities with schools as part of its Resilient Records project aimed at broadening the range of users of its services. As part of their heritage week, a total of 240 pupils from the Applegarth School, Northallerton visited the Record Office through a programme of six themed sessions designed to tie in with the curriculum and the objectives of the week. Interactive learning activities were used to explore Childhood through Time, the Evacuee Experience, and Historical Enquiry – how can we find out about the past? One staff participant commented 'Our children are now able to talk confidently about change over time, what is the same, what is different, passing the message on to families about what incredible resources are on offer'.

The Record Office continues to run an active outreach programme. A study day looking at garden history was held in partnership with the Yorkshire Gardens Trust attracting over 40 enthusiastic participants. Pop-up archives were held in Brompton, Wykeham, Selby, Sheriff Hutton and as part of the Fun Palace held at Whitby Library. A pop-up archive at Stokesley Show, held in conjunction with local history groups, was visited by over 200 people. Behind the scenes tours were given to local history groups and to Library staff and volunteers, giving them an insight into the work of the office, showing the great range of collections available to them and enabling them to promote the work of the office within their communities.

Registrars

Civil Partnerships

In December 2019, it is likely that the registration service will be able to offer civil partnerships to opposite sex couples. Currently, only same sex couples can have a civil partnership. The aim is to bring equality between same sex and opposite sex couples.

Civil partnerships can be formed at a registration office or one of the many excellent venues we have in the county. The costs are the same as a wedding ceremony fee.

It is not expected that demand for civil partnerships from opposite sex couples will be significant.

The exact implementation date does depend on sufficient parliamentary time being made available to pass these changes into law.

EU Settlement Scheme

EU nationals have to register with the Home Office if they wish to live or work in this country after Brexit. The exact cut-off date for applications does depend on the manner of leaving the EU. They can sometimes use their own phone or computer to apply but for those who do not have compatible ICT equipment, EU nationals can visit a registration office and use the registration equipment to make the application “settled” or “presettled” status.

The numbers using the service at the registration office has been lower than anticipated (including by NYCC staff) and I would urge all employers to ensure that their workers from the EU are both aware of the need to register and have actually applied.

Customer

Windows 10

NYCC is currently 50% through our conversation from windows 7 to windows 10, We finished the roll out in Harrogate on the 1st November and have now moved on to Scarborough, we will do a wash up in Northallerton in December. We will begin the conversation from windows 8.1 to 10 in February and March.

Webmail

NYCC is currently improving the security of webmail and moving to new security provision requiring users to log in with a random generated number on top of the existing log in process. This change will further help to reduce opportunities for cyber-attacks. This will be fully rolled out at the end of November. Member seminars will utilised to support members in this transition.

Preparing for Office 365

In the new year NYCC will be moving to the new version of office, this will be a significant move into cloud technologies and will bring a host of new capabilities such collaboration tools to ensure smoother working with partners. More information will be covered around this significant change in the New Year.