

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

17 FEBRUARY 2021

STATEMENT OF CLLR GREG WHITE

Library and Information Services

Libraries are (sort of) open for business

I am pleased to inform you that 22 of North Yorkshire's libraries are providing the limited service offer allowable under the current lockdown including access to computers for essential use. A further 4 are open for collection of books only. The Home Library service continues as a delivery service. All services are being provided in a Covid-secure manner with sanitiser, wearing of face coverings and limited number of PCs available to ensure social distancing as well as additional cleaning between use. Opening hours are currently reduced at most libraries which are also operating on minimum staffing levels required, this has enabled library staff to be seconded to support other Covid initiatives including test/vaccine centres.

Our virtual library is still proving popular with over **103,000** ebooks/eaudio borrowed and **146,000** newspapers and magazines being read since we re-opened in July. The service is continuing to offer online events and activities with Facebook posts having reached over **700,000** people. Online events since December have been 'attended' by 197 households covering a diverse range of topics from Mars to Jack the Ripper

I reported last time that the situation around book supply has been resolved and over 250 boxes of new books are being delivered weekly for our libraries which will be welcome news to many.

Children's Mental Health week 1-7 February

Libraries asked North Yorkshire children aged 4-16, which books they like to read to make them smile. They had some fabulous suggestions! These books can be reserved to select and collect from libraries in your area.

Black History Month

The successful virtual Black History Month event hosted by Harrogate library and attracting over 100 people has been recognised by Libraries Connected and shared with the DCMS. Library assistant and organiser of the event Basia Godel has written a piece which can be read here <https://www.librariesconnected.org.uk/content/BHM-north-yorkshire-young-adult-library-team>

Goodie Bags

Following on from the successful Wellbeing bags, HLIS customers are being given a bag themed around health and well-being and beating the winter blues. The bags will contain info on help and support, activities, crafts and a local history quiz (developed with the County Record Office)

Libraries promised that Christmas would not be cancelled, a rapid turnaround swapped a seasonal reading challenge into Christmas Goodie Bags. We are delighted that we were able to give away free reading goodies to **1381** children across North Yorkshire as part of this project, **11903** junior items were borrowed and **96** children joined the library.

Reading Friends

I am pleased to announce that our library service has been awarded £10k, from the Reading Agency, to take part in this national project. The Read, Talk and Share Campaign is to help tackle loneliness through sharing enjoyment of reading and plans include a telephone group aimed at older people/carers and a virtual group aimed at teenager/young volunteers

Celebrity Storytime

Kate Winslet, Dolly Parton and Michelle Obama were among those who stepped up to share stories over the last ten months, as well as famous authors. Staff at Harrogate library have come up with their own version; showcasing local key figures reading books of their choice.

The first story time was hosted by Channel 5's Traffic Cops star and North Yorkshire Roads Policing Sergeant Paul Cording, who read *Ducktective Quack and the Cake Crimewave*. Future celebrities include myself and Richard Webb.

Registrars

With the re-introduction of the national lockdown in January 2021, the main customers of the registration that have been affected are the couples with bookings for a ceremony. Currently the size of the ceremony party is limited to six people and with no reception. In addition, ceremonies can only take place in exceptional cases. Such ceremonies are rare. It is not possible to give customers any reassurance as to when ceremonies might resume or what the size of the ceremony party will be. These are decisions that will be taken as part of the national plan for lifting of the current restrictions.

This continues to add to the challenges our many ceremony venues face.

Meanwhile, the registration of births (which still has to be undertaken in a face-to-face interview) and deaths (which can be registered over the telephone) continues. There is still a small number of parents who have yet to register their baby within the statutory 42 days. Whilst falling in number, there are still 28 such babies with one dating back to March 2020. Priority is still being given to registering deaths, which is always a priority in the winter months.

Coroners

It has not been possible to complete and submit the business case, to the Chief Coroner and the Ministry of Justice for the amalgamation of the existing coroner areas. This now unlikely to be before Easter. This delay is regrettable but inevitable in the current circumstances.

Records Office

Whilst onsite visits are not yet possible, the Record Office is continuing its programme of online digital engagement.

Interactive Digital Heritage Sessions have been held for year 3 & 4 pupils exploring the story of Northallerton and how the town has changed over time, using maps, plans, old photographs and school log books to inspire learning across the history and geography curriculums. The sessions have added value and depth to pupils' learning, providing access to local, topic-specific historic sources not available elsewhere. They have highlighted the wealth of resources held by the Record Office and the ways these can be used to help pupils build skills in historical enquiry and chronology, as well as human and physical geography.

A webinar for Teesside University MA History students introduced the archive collections and highlighted records of relevance to research in the Cleveland area, building student confidence in using original archival sources.

In partnership with the Refugee Council, a different approach was taken to engage families re-settled in North Yorkshire with British traditions. Interactive sessions used historic recipes to focus on culinary traditions linked with the Christmas period, promoting understanding and providing an opportunity for participants to practice their English skills in an informal setting. The digital volunteer project to open up access to the Record Office's collection of 19th century tithe maps and apportionments continues to progress. We are enormously grateful to our volunteers who have now transcribed over two thirds of the 330 apportionments. Their hard work will allow us to enable remote access to this key resource through a new website, which is in development and will be launched later this year.

Technology and Change

Customer – Digital and Customer Service Centre

Performance in the CSC remains high for business as usual services with all service levels achieved even with an increase in Social Care demand tracking at 10% higher than last year.

In November residential parking permits were launched on-line with a telephone channel into the Customer Service centre.

In November CSC launched Contact Tracing and made 219 successful contact tracing calls up to the end of December. 96.5% of all contacts sent from the national system have either been attempted 3 time by phone or have been sent a text if contact could was not successful over the phone. We are now planning for lateral flow testing which will see contact tracing figures potentially increase over the month ahead.

In November the CSC also implemented Care Home Support calls and have completed over 11,000 calls during October, November and December.

During the 2nd lockdown the CSC made 1289 calls to clinically extremely vulnerable customer requesting support, we received an additional 308 call from customers who needed help and referred 109 customers to our community support organisations for help with shopping and prescriptions.

The centre is currently responding to additional requests for support generated from the 254,000 covid information leaflets to each residence in North Yorkshire - we have seen a relatively low impact so far - the distribution campaign will continue until 8th February.

During Oct/Nov with support from Stronger Communities and HR team we recruited and trained a weekend Volunteering team to respond to urgent requests for support over the weekend.

CSC is currently working with IPT and Stronger Communities to develop a service for customers who are unable to access transport to vaccinations - this service will be going live in February 2021.

Office365

Building on the successes of the Modern Council Programme we are continuing to ensure our technology supports flexible and collaborative working; the Office Productivity project has undertaken the move of the existing Microsoft Office software to the new 'Office 365'

cloud platform. Office365 includes a suite of products and this move will provide us with the tools we need to operate in a Modern Workplace and transform the way we work together.



Yammer

In August 2020, Yammer became available for all NYCC colleagues via the intranet. Yammer is an internal business-networking platform, providing a space for work conversations such as sharing and responding to updates, posting ideas and questions that may benefit part, or all, of the organisation as well as being a virtual corridor for conversations to take place, encouraging a sense of community and supporting well-being. On average, there are approximately 1,200-1,500 active users logging into Yammer every month to read and post messages.

OneDrive

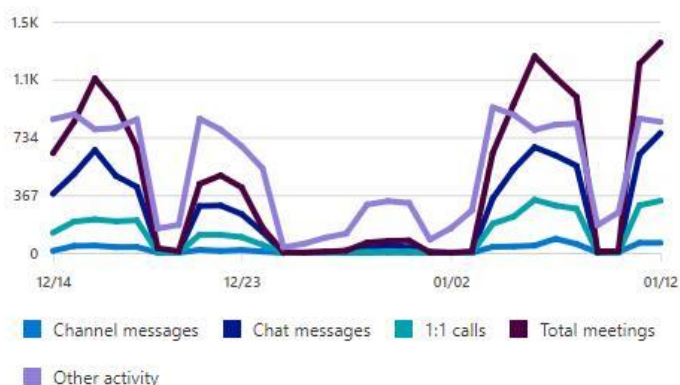
From November 2020 the migration of individual storage spaces (Pdrive) commenced to OneDrive. OneDrive is the secure cloud space for storing `work in progress` documents that are not yet ready to share, and for general content relevant to the specific user only. The move to OneDrive provides a better and more secure way to access these documents from any appropriate location using different work devices. OneDrive migration took place between November 2020 and January 2021 and involved 5,883 colleagues.

MS Teams

MS Teams is a collaboration space that enables colleagues to stay organised, work together and have conversations in a centralised place. MS Teams was released to the whole organisation to download in December 2020. Since go-live there have been 3,315 active users and 168 Teams spaces have been created as of January 2021.

The use of MS Teams has been growing since go live, with users increasing their chat and meetings held on MS Teams as well as using other features such as the add in applications or document sharing. The below graph shows the trends of activity occurring on MS Teams throughout December.

Number of users by activity type for licensed users



MS Teams collaboration space request forms on the Get IT Help portal where there is additional support and guidance also available. Familiarisation for MS Teams will be communicated throughout early 2021 to promote the opportunities MS Teams provides and

ensure we get the most out of the tools available. MS teams enables increased capabilities within the Microsoft Office suite, improved document management and security and supports centralised internal and external collaboration and communication for wherever colleagues are working.

Cyber Security

Proactively monitoring cyber threats including taking action around a number of IP addresses that were carrying out scanning of networks, this was reported by the National Cyber Security Centre and we configured the system to block them.

Phishing emails continue to be a threat and whilst the perimeter defences stop the majority it is possible for the odd one to get through and we then carry out proactive remediation to remove as many of the emails as possible whilst also blocking the links they contain to reduce the impact they may have on the network.

Updated Cyber Security training material which will be rolled out to staff over the next two months and invested in software to allow phishing email simulations to be carried out in order to improve understanding and awareness in identifying threats and reacting appropriately.

Data Products

Common Exposures – Intelligence that highlights locations that have been reported by people through the test and trace process. It highlights common areas of exposure, so that public health can risk assess and engage with those areas to assess and support.

Flooding Intelligence – We created a product that allows highway officers and other trusted LRF partners submit intelligence to us, including pictures and locations – and a means of sharing that intelligence back to tactical decision makers. It enables better decisions to be made more quickly as well as developing a clearer more consistent view of risk. The tool also takes feeds from Environment Agency, and airbus as part of a proof of concept to monitor flood dispersion.

Vaccine Data – We've enhanced our view of intelligence by presenting information about rates of vaccination by locality area, allowing us to monitor risk in care settings as well as across the local authority.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR GREG WHITE