Libraries and Archives

Annual Report

1 April 2020 - 31 March 2021





City of York Libraries and Archives

managed by Explore York Libraries and Archives Mutual Limited on behalf of City of York Council

Contents

Foreword by Fiona Williams, Chief Executive	4
Overview	4
Highlights	5
Learning	6
Reflection on the Year of the Pandemic	7
Annual Report Financial Summary	8
	9
	9
Customer Focus	10
Customer Feedback: Informal	
Customer Feedback: Informal	
Community Engagement	22
Friends Groups	
Friends Groups Volunteers	23 23
Friends Groups	23 23
Friends Groups Volunteers	23
Friends Groups Volunteers Community Members	23 23 23 23 24
Friends Groups Volunteers Community Members Explore Annual Programme of Events and Activities 2020-2021	23 23 23 24 24 25
Friends Groups Volunteers Community Members Explore Annual Programme of Events and Activities 2020-2021 Supporting key priorities – highlights	23 23 23 23 24 24 25 25 27
Friends Groups Volunteers Community Members Explore Annual Programme of Events and Activities 2020-2021 Supporting key priorities – highlights Marketing and Communications	23 23 23 23 24 24 25 25 27
Friends Groups Volunteers Community Members Explore Annual Programme of Events and Activities 2020-2021 Supporting key priorities – highlights Marketing and Communications Promotional Campaigns	23 23 23 24 25 27 27 30
Friends Groups Volunteers Community Members Explore Annual Programme of Events and Activities 2020-2021 Supporting key priorities – highlights Marketing and Communications Promotional Campaigns Learning points	
Friends Groups Volunteers Community Members Explore Annual Programme of Events and Activities 2020-2021 Supporting key priorities – highlights Marketing and Communications Promotional Campaigns Learning points Future libraries investment programme – Transition plan and Capital works	
Friends Groups Volunteers Community Members Explore Annual Programme of Events and Activities 2020-2021 Supporting key priorities – highlights Marketing and Communications Promotional Campaigns Learning points Future libraries investment programme – Transition plan and Capital works Transition Plan – Asset Management Strategy	
Friends Groups Volunteers Community Members Explore Annual Programme of Events and Activities 2020-2021 Supporting key priorities – highlights Marketing and Communications Promotional Campaigns Learning points Future libraries investment programme – Transition plan and Capital works Transition Plan – Asset Management Strategy Other Capital Works – 5 year maintenance plan	
Friends Groups Volunteers Community Members Explore Annual Programme of Events and Activities 2020-2021 Supporting key priorities – highlights Marketing and Communications Promotional Campaigns Learning points Future libraries investment programme – Transition plan and Capital works Transition Plan – Asset Management Strategy Other Capital Works – 5 year maintenance plan	

ICT	
Book stock	41
Stock Inventory	
Stock Turn	
Stock Acquired, Purchased and Retired	
Benchmarking	46
Archives and Local History report	47
Collections Highlights	
List of new collections added this year	
Digital Engagement	
Report on progress for move from provisional to full Archive Service Accreditation	
The National Archives - Archives Testbed	
Digital Preservation Strategy/Records Management at CYC	
Contract Delivery	50
	51

Foreword by Fiona Williams, Chief Executive

Overview

This year has been without precedent and we have learned a great deal through it. The pandemic closed down our service on 21st March 2021. At that time it seemed as if it could be over with by the summer, but we were too optimistic and a year later we have become used to opening and closing the service, focusing on our online services, supporting our staff and creating covid secure spaces for the public

We all now live in a different country with different rules and we have had to endure months of lockdown. Now with the vaccination programme underway, there is some hope for the rest of this year, but we have learned that nothing is predictable so we must be ready for any eventuality.

We were able to act swiftly due to being an independent organization. Over the year we have developed an efficient and effective process to close down and reopen. Fiona Williams was part of a national team developing a toolkit for reopening and Sarah Garbacz pulled together our plan. She worked with H&S to write risk assessments and change our buildings so they are covid secure spaces. She also trained staff on how to operate in the covid secure space and staff have felt very supported and safe.

Barbara Swinn led her team in developing our online services. Libraries at Home web pages provided links to accurate information about the pandemic as well as support for home schooling and content to keep people occupied. The use of Ancestry has grown enormously as people were able to access it direct from their homes. Another highlight was PressReader which was funded by the Council and gives access to thousands of newspapers and magazines from around the world. By Q4, we were delivering high quality online events

The Government responded to lobbying by Libraries Connected amongst others and declared that libraries are essential services and staff are key workers. This is a real positive to come out of the year and raised our profile in the city.

In lockdown 2.0 onwards, we kept Acomb, York and Tang Hall open for access to PCs and click and collect book service. This was possible due to the Government's ruling and has been a lifeline to people without access to the internet at home.

Explore was an important part of the city's response to covid.

• Providing buildings for community hubs

- Rowntree Park remained open through much of the year, providing refreshments and a place to drop into on people's daily walk. We received many comments on how much it was valued
- Provided study spaces for university students in the city centre. Our partnership with the universities is a strong one
- Provision of accurate, up to date information on the pandemic, health matters and government advice and regulations
- Support for parents home schooling via our website links
- Access to the pcs in lockdowns 2, 3 and 4. This gave vital access to the internet for those without it at home. This at a time when online access made such a difference to people's lives. We gave them the chance to apply for jobs, benefits and keep in touch with family and friends
- Engagement with the archives. The archives set up many Flickr galleries, seeking information to describe the contents of photos. We have been very successful and hundreds of photos now have descriptions.
- We provided access for people's hobbies. For instance, the use of Ancestry which was available for people at home, massively increased. Many people took the opportunity to work on their family history through the lockdowns
- Our subscription to PressReader gave access to newspapers from around the world

We now are an important part of the city's recovery from pandemic and that will be seen as the next year progresses. It is impossible to predict how the year will go and we are well placed to respond how we need to.

Highlights

Darren Henley, CEO of the Arts Council, was the guest speaker at our event for cultural leaders in York in the summer. This highlighted the role of libraries as key providers of cultural activity.

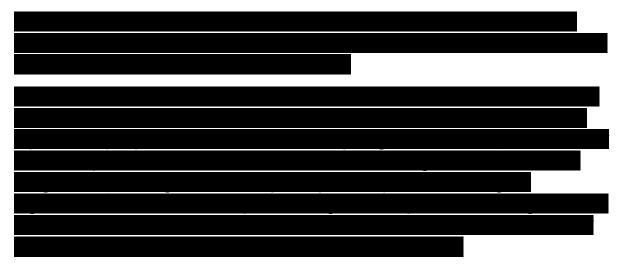
In December the Culture Strategy for the city was launched and Explore took part in a panel discussing diversity and inclusion. The Strategy mentions Explore's role in the cultural life of the city and over the next few years we will work with the Cultural Leaders Group to deliver the outcomes

Explore Labs report was well received by the Arts Council and our partners. It shows the journey that we have been on over the last 3 years and the difference that the project has made to staff skills and to Explore's standing in the cultural life of the city

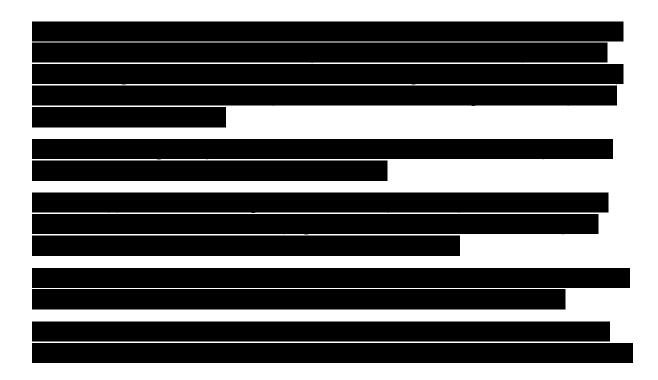
Explore is now leading 100% Digital York, a citywide partnership to encourage people to get online. Being able to access the internet was so important through the pandemic as we were all locked down at home.

Our online pantomime – The Astronomermaid was a huge success and demonstrated how we can deliver quality content online.

We ran a We're Back campaign after lockdown 1 and it elicited a wealth of positive responses that show how much people love their libraries and how much they miss us.



Learning



Reflection on the Year of the Pandemic

The Press did an article on how various organisations coped with the pandemic and I was interviewed by Stephen Lewis for the following article.

This time last year we were starting to hear about this possible pandemic. There have been various scares so at first I wasn't that concerned. But as we approached March 21 things started to happen very quickly and we were asked to close by public health. It broke my heart to have to close with no knowledge of when we might be able to reopen. We all hoped it would be a three month lockdown and then life could return to 'normal'. We became very good at closing down and reopening libraries and cafes. By lockdown two, the government had accepted that library services are essential and staff are key workers. So we were able to keep **York**, Acomb and Tang Hall open for PC access and click and collect. This provided a lifeline to those without access to the internet at home. Most of our staff were put on furlough and have spent most of the year at home. We ensured that we kept in contact with them all so they knew what was happening. Training was allowed on furlough and many of our staff took the opportunity to learn new skills. Once we had closed down, we turned our attention to our online services. We received Arts Council funding to help us build on the successful Explore Labs work. We also received government funding to increase the number of e-books we have - it has been great to see so many people discover these: we hope that they will continue to borrow them after we have reopened.

One of the most impressive online services we offered was PressReader. This provides library members with free access to thousands of newspapers and magazines from around the world and in different languages, and allowed us to read how different countries were dealing with the pandemic.

We now look forward to reopening on April 12. Cafes, meanwhile, will reopen on May 17, although Rowntree Park has been open throughout. By June/July, we hope to be able to offer some face to face events, maybe a storytime, but this will be dependent on government advice.

We are beginning to think about the future and how Explore might change as a result of the pandemic. Our online offer was developing, but the pandemic gave it a huge boost. Our YouTube channel's content grows every week and there are films for everyone. We are hosting poetry evenings online which are getting bigger audiences than when held in York Explore.

The pandemic showed how important it is to be online.

But libraries are ultimately all about bringing people together. Through the pandemic we found ways to keep on doing that online. In April we will be able to get back to doing that face to face.

Fiara Williams

Page | 7

Annual Report Financial Summary

Staffing

Staff Profile – Summary

Staff Diversity Survey 2021





Residency

Chart Area				_
Chart Area	20/21 number	20/21 %	19/20 %	
	number	20/21/0	13/20 /0	1
Resident				
- live within City of York boundary (e.g. for council services)	56	81%	89%	Ψ
Non-resident	13	19%	11%	1
Prefer not to say	1			

Age Group

	20/21 number	20/21 %
0 to 19	2	3%
20 to 34	15	22%
35 to 49	18	26%
50 to 64	30	44%
65 to 74	3	4%
Prefer not to say	2	

Sex

	20/21 number	20/21 %	19/20 %	
Female	59	87%	95%	$\mathbf{\Psi}$
Male	9	13%	5%	Ϋ́
Prefer not to say	2			-



Gender Identity: "Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?"

	20/21 number	20/21 %
Yes	68	100%
Prefer not to say	2	

Ethnic Group

	20/21 number	20/21 %	19/20 %
White - English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British	58	87%	95%
White - Irish	1	1%	
White - Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0		
White - Any Other White Background	8	12%	5%
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	0		
Mixed - White and Black African	0		
Mixed - White and Asian	0		
Mixed - Any other Mixed / Multiple ethnic background	0		
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0		
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0		
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	0		
Asian or Asian British - Chinese	0		
Asian or Asian British - Any other Asian background	0		
Black - African	0		
Black - Caribbean	0		
Black - Any other Black / African / Caribbean background	0		
Other Ethnic Group - Arab	0		
Any Other Ethnic Group	0		
Prefer not to say	2		
Skipped	1		

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Disability

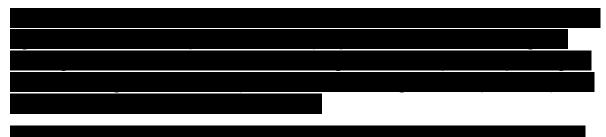
Disability				_
	20/21 number	20/21 %	19/20 %	
Limiting conditions/illnesses	5	8%	16%	↓
Non-limiting conditions/illnesses	12	18%	84%	•
No conditions/illnesses	45	69%		
Conditions/illnesses but prefer not to comment on whether				-
they're limiting	3	5%		
Prefer not to say	4			
Skipped	1	Chart /	Area	

Socio-economic Background

	20/21 number	20/21 %
Modern Professional Occupations	13	22%
Clerical and Intermediate Occupations	7	12%
Senior Managers and Administrators	4	7%
Technical and Craft Occupations	13	22%
Semi-Routine Manual and Service Occupations	10	17%
Routine Manual and Service Occupations	2	3%
Middle or Junior Managers	1	2%
Traditional Professional Occupations	6	10%
Short Term Unemployed	0	0%
Long Term Unemployed	2	3%
Retired	0	0%
Other – please specify	0	0%
Not applicable	1	
Don't know	4	
Prefer not to say	7	

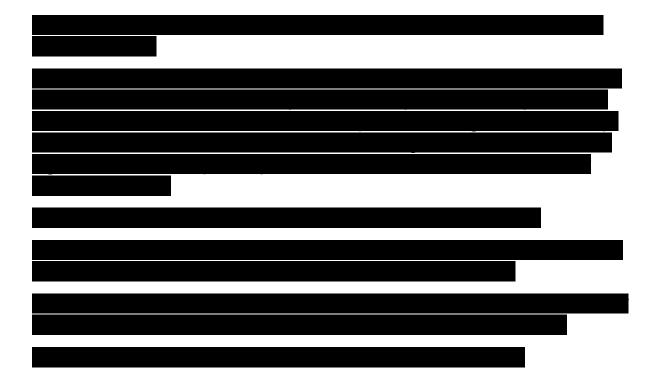


Staffing and the pandemic



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Staff Turnover and Absence

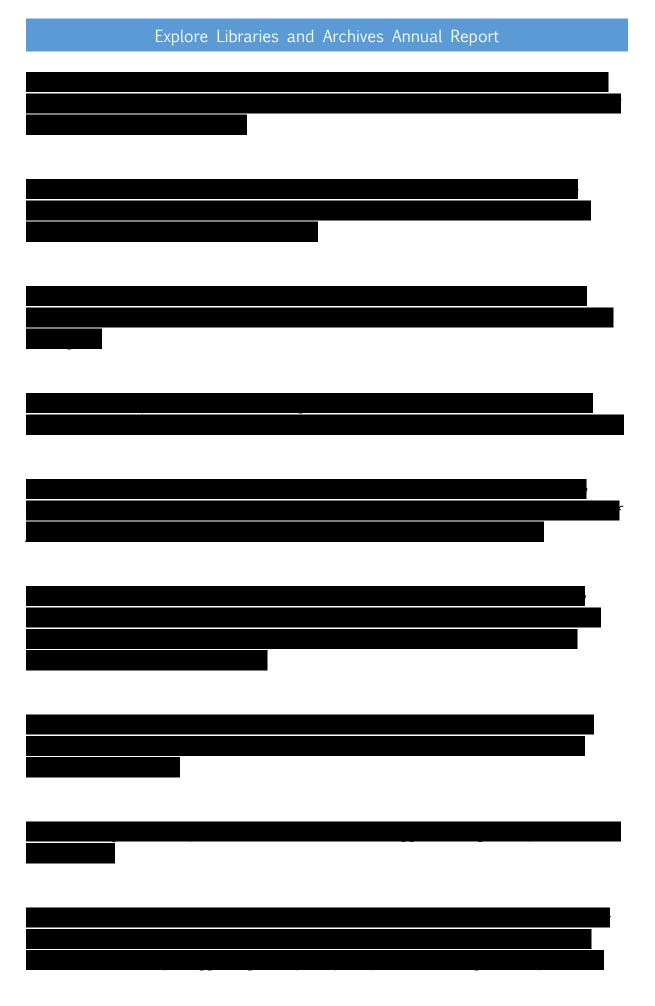


Staff Wellbeing Survey

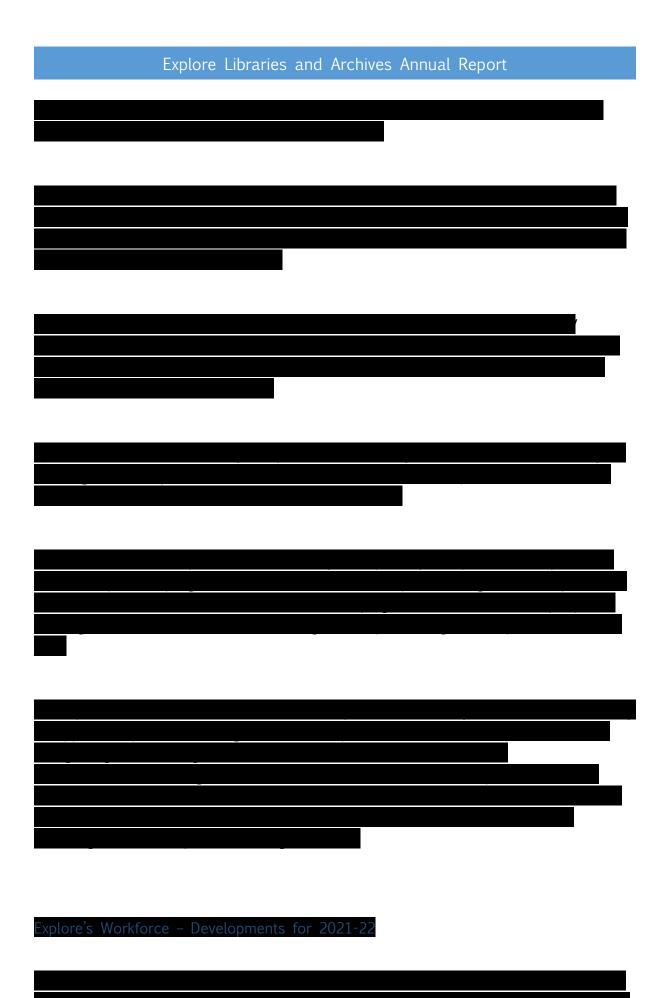




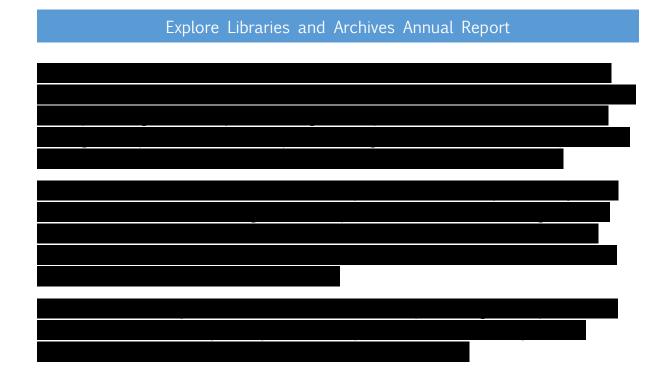
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Page | 15



Page | 16



Customer Focus

As a people focussed organisation, the relationship with customers both existing, new and potential is very important. We have developed Customer First standards that provide a foundation on which to build a strong customer connection. Our customers are at the heart of Explore and feedback from the individuals, families and communities of York is important as we develop and shape services. We encourage customer feedback not only for specific projects but on a day to day basis. We listen, respond, monitor and review feedback in order to continually improve the customer experience.

Customer Feedback: Informal

194 items of customer feedback were recorded between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021: 146 compliments, 20 suggestions and 28 complaints. We replied within the 7 day time limit to all comments requiring a response.

Customer feedback during 2020-21 was much reduced compared to the previous year. The pandemic meant that there were far fewer opportunities for customers to interact informally with staff and most feedback was received by email or through the website comment form.

Compliments - trends and highlights

a) Explore's response to covid

Customer comments reflected a high level of satisfaction with Explore's response to the pandemic. Services provided during lockdowns especially new ways of borrowing books such as Click and Collect and the Lucky Dip book selections. "Massive shout out to York Explore for their 'lucky dip' service. My mum filled out a form about what she wants and got a bag of fifteen books to read. Great idea." The element of fun and personal interaction in the lucky dip selection seems to have contributed to wellbeing too as the comments reveal.

"We are so excited to see what books you selected for us. You really went above and beyond your role. You are our lockdown hero!"

Customers also told us how much they missed visiting in person. "In lockdown the customer's son encouraged her to buy a laptop so that she wouldn't need to come

into the library to have internet access. She was reluctant and explained to him that she didn't just visit for the computer use as she loved the community vibe, coming in, having a coffee, seeing familiar faces, listening to the children and having a chat." Another carer of an adult with severe autism told staff at Tang Hall "It's brilliant to have you open - we've been lost without the library." Customers missed the friendly interaction at their local library

"Just had to tell you how many people I meet who are getting more and more down. They all say that what they miss most is the library and talking and laughing with you."

b) Press Reader

Customers were delighted with the introduction of Press Reader giving free access to newspapers and magazines online and customers were pleased and grateful with comments such as "Excellent service" "Press Reader is amazing".

"I'm really happy the council have invested more money in the library to provide this for residents".

Staff engaged with compliments on social media to amplify the positive response. A grant from the council's covid support fund made the initial subscription possible, but the service will continue in 2021-22 funded from Explore's stock budget.

c) E-library and other online services

Customers appreciated the E-book offer which was expanded during the pandemic using local and national government grants "Books have always been a lifeline, and to have them available digitally, all the more so at the moment". They appreciated the children's offer as well

"I only discovered the elibrary in November... its fab!!! And I link my tablet to the Google hub so the boys can listen to audiobooks in bed. Fantastic!"

There were also positive comments about the "outstanding resources" to support mental health, and praise for free at home access to the family history sites Ancestry and Find My Past. There was praise too for changes made to the website which made it quicker and easier to use.

d) Customer Service

During the first lockdown customers were quick to praise the speed and helpfulness of staff replying to emails. They also praised Explore's clear communications about online services (Libraries from Home) which were sent out through council and community newsletters and in emails to volunteers and community members.

"Thank you from the bottom of my heart ... literally saved my sanity over the last year. Wonderful customer service."

Customers were glad we were able to keep some libraries open during lockdown 2.0 and greatly valued the service they received. Phone contact was appreciated by isolated customers who enjoyed a chance to chat about books as a welcome respite in the day. Customers praised the ease and speed of re-opening in December, and one customer at Strensall was particularly delighted "I just managed to see through the lockdown with the books I had. I don't like watching TV so this is my entertainment, I would be lost without the books!" Customers commented on friendly efficient customer service which was especially valued during the challenges of lockdown 3.0. A customer who described himself as 'Hard to please' was "happily astonished" with Explore York libraries and said "Every single encounter is outstanding."

Suggestions

All Customer suggestions are reviewed monthly by Explore's Management Teams. Where feasible, suggestions are acted on immediately or added to development and improvement plans. Customers are kept informed of changes made through "You Said, We Did" communications on-site and online. Where we do not act on customer suggestions we always respond giving an explanation for our decision.

Main themes in 2020-21

- Home Library Service We had numerous requests for the Home Library Service during Lockdown 1.0 and this was provided for people in need via the Community Hubs.
- Schools asked for support to promote the Summer Reading Challenge for Children and we emailed all schools with the information.
- Covid secure appointments system. We reviewed and improved our re-opening Click and Collect service and appointment system to make it easier for customers to use.
- Website. We improved our website to make it clearer to navigate and updated our FAQs in response to customer suggestions so that customers understood all the new systems in place due to the pandemic, such as booking appointments to collect books.
- We also responded to customers with particular requirements on an individual basis Examples include special arrangements for disabled customers

to have materials transferred from York to other libraries while the accessible parking bays are suspended, or continuing the Children's Lucky Dip scheme outside lockdown in certain cases.

Complaints

All customer complaints are reviewed monthly by Strategic and Operational Management Teams and added to improvement plans if they cannot be resolved immediately. Trends and common themes in complaints are below:

Main themes in 2020-21

Very few complaints were recorded during 2020-21 - just 29 over the year. This is because far fewer informal interactions were taking place in libraries. The majority of complaints are related to aspects of our pandemic response such as the timings of re-opening and the services we provided or suspended, and to disrupted customer service as a result of introducing new systems in response to the pandemic. There were also several complaints in the autumn in response to the proposed mini-golf course at Library Lawn, and a thread on Facebook critical of our charging policy for the new York Images site.

Pandemic response - summary of complaints received.

We received complaints that Gateway libraries did not re-open in July – some customers were concerned they might never re-open. There were complaints about the early stages of re-opening and the introduction of new services such as click and collect, and delays and glitches as staff became familiar with the new systems. We had some isolated complaints that social distancing regulations were not being followed, or that hand sanitizer was not available, and these were quickly addressed. Other customers complained that restrictions were not lifted sufficiently with all libraries immediately open in July for browsing, group activities and storytimes. Many of the complaints reflected customers' individual perceptions of risks – some very worried and others impatient to return to normal. These complaints subsided as the national pandemic response unfolded. All such complaints and concerns were addressed individually and via FAQs and information videos on our website and social media channels.

Page | 21

Customer Feedback: User Satisfaction

The main user satisfaction survey which Explore carries out is the CIPFA PLUS survey on a three year cycle. 20/21 ought to have been a PLUS year, but as this is a face to face survey of physical visitors, it was not possible during the pandemic. In between PLUS years, Explore carries out our own user satisfaction surveys regarding specific services. This year, we completed a user satisfaction survey of online events attendees The headline figure was an impressive 94% satisfaction, and users reported that they not only enjoyed the events but found them profoundly beneficial in terms of their effect on wellbeing and providing a sense of community, among other outcomes.

Community Engagement

As an organisation that brings people and communities together, connecting with and listening to those communities is important to us to inform the decisions we make strategically as an organisation. We do that formally as we develop new services, we listen and adapt our offer to reflect community need, and informally, via our network of community members, volunteers and Friends groups. These groups are committed and invested in supporting Explore to deliver a quality library and archive service.

Friends Groups

The 6 Friends groups across Explore have continued to meet (albeit infrequently) across the year, but little fundraising activity has taken part. Communications with Friends Groups have been maintained, with updates from Explore at key internals and regular contact with Library Managers.

Looking ahead, 2021 sees the ambition to launch Friends groups at both Strensall and Huntington.

Volunteers

Explore has 558 volunteers supporting the organisation – this compares with 700 last year, so there has been very little impact as a result of the pandemic. When the easing of restrictions allowed, volunteers have returned to support opening with public access at all times – an offer that they viewed as invaluable as it supported their mental health and wellbeing in enabling them to get back to meeting, working, interacting with others post-lockdown. Some volunteers were shielding throughout so contacted us to say they were unable to support us, but wanted to be 'kept on the books' to return at such time they felt able to socialise again. The vast majority though were keen and eager to support a very visible essential public service.

Community Members

35 new community members were added to and 1 member was removed from the register during 2020-21. There were a total of 748 community members on 31 March 2020.

Recruitment of members. We were not able to engage in active recruitment of Community members during 2020-21 due to the pandemic.

Engagement. We stayed in contact with members through regular emails during 2020-21, keeping them informed about our pandemic response, re-opening plans and key messages and asking them to share information with their networks about Explore's offer during the various lockdowns. Explore's AGM took place on 2 November via Zoom. All members were invited to attend – by email or by post if no email address was available for the member. 16 Community Members attended the meeting, and heard about Explore's progress during 2019-20 and plans for the future. Presentations from the Chair, Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer were well received.

We recognise that Community Members can act as powerful advocates for Explore in York and beyond, and our Board is keen to increase both the numbers of people joining and engagement with existing members with community member and director recruitment part of the action plan for 2021-22.

Explore Annual Programme of Events and Activities 2020-2021

The events and activities programme across Explore provides opportunities for all age groups, individuals, families and communities to connect, to share, to learn, to be creative and to challenge imaginations. Both planned and unplanned events throughout the year attract existing and new audiences, encourage repeat visits and wider usage of services and contribute to income. We proactively support and promote key national programmes, key local events and festivals, In addition, we provide a daily/weekly programme of events and activities for all ages including craft clubs, Lego clubs and activities for under 5s such as rhyme times.

However in 2020/21 we faced the unprecedented challenge of the covid pandemic and subsequent impact on everyone. For Explore, this meant the closure of our libraries, archives and cafes as has already been mentioned. This meant we needed to promote events and activities in a different way and we were not able to deliver all of the events as planned. Even during lifting of lockdown we were not able to deliver in-library activities.

From the Annual Events Plan you will see that Explore offered a substantial programme of online events during 20/21 in response to the pandemic. We had some previous experience with online events, such as Lego clubs and reading groups, but having a large scale programme of live events broadcast in real-time was new to both staff and customers. In total we delivered a total of 120 events with 2,887 attendees.

Page | 24

In order to improve the customer experience, the front page of the website became the focal point with 8 tiles linking to quality information. These included, e-books and e-audiobooks, e-newspapers and e-magazines (Press Reader supported through additional CYC funding), online information and support, online activities and information for children and families, reading, archives and local history, health and wellbeing, culture and creativity. All areas that would normally be explored through our events and activities programme. We later adapted the tiles to focus on the Summer Reading Challenge and We're Back campaign (information about re-opening after lockdown 1.0).

The development of the front page of the website with this tile approach was used as an example of good practice in a marketing webinar delivered by the British Library.

Having successfully applied for Arts Council emergency funding we used this to develop our digital offer further, and develop quality on-line events through Explore Labs 2

In July we held our very first Zoom event, hosting the launch of 'Notes from a Border River' for author and poet Robert Powell. This was quickly followed by a high profile zoom workshop with Darren Henley, Chief Executive Arts Council England. The learning from both of these events increased confidence in delivering events and activities using different digital platforms.

Supporting key priorities - highlights

The following key highlights demonstrate how our events programme support priorities and provides opportunities for all.

To share the joy of reading

Summer Reading Challenge – this was digital only, with 305 children signing up with 46 completing, this was much lower than previous years and was reflected regionally. To support the challenge we provided additional on-line activities with 4 craft activities with a total of 197 visits to the page and 2 videos with a total of 142 views. We recognised the significant challenge and barrier to digital participation for many children and families and to address this we successfully applied for Ward Funding to provide 840 Summer Reading Challenge bags, which included books and craft activities as an alternative to the digital challenge.

Learn, imagine, create and share ideas

A highlight for December was the virtual panto which really captured interest from York and beyond. "The Little Astronomermaid" by the Theatre of Science was combination of panto fun, comedy and science and viewers were encouraged to participate with simple experiments at home. The performance was delivered on Facebook live with a recording on You Tube after the event. This worked really well.

Build stronger, connected communities

We developed specific campaigns to engage communities and build a sense of belonging and Explore Archives provide a rich resource to draw on. Examples include 'Missing York' a social media and Flickr campaign showcasing 900 images that didn't have descriptions, we asked people to help us to identify them. This generated lots of interest and engagement on social media. All of the images were successfully identified and added to Explore York Images platform.

Growing our experience of utilising a variety of platforms, in November we used podcast for the first time to bring the Nuisance Inspector to a wider audience as part of Explore Your Archives week. The initial 'teaser' extract attracted 52 downloads and the full audio attracted 150

Support Wellbeing

Creativity supports wellbeing. We delivered an 'artists in your home' programme, with 4 make-along sessions on zoom, aimed at the whole family as well as creative writing for calm and relaxation.

World Turned Upside Down - a combination of Haiflu (poetry) and doodle art, culminating in the creation of a chapbook to add to the collection held in the city archive and in response to the pandemic

Key Learning: Delivering a large scale programme of live events broadcast in realtime was new to staff and we had to learn how to use a variety of digital platforms. Inclusion is a key priority for us and we were able to try out various tools to support inclusion, such as video captioning, webinar subtitling and included BSL in 2 of our specifically targeted live events as part of Disability Awareness Week.

Feedback received from event attendees has influenced our programming for 2021/22 and our intention is to deliver events that are in-library, on-line and at times a hybrid of both.

Marketing and Communications

The Audience Development Plan for 2020-21 was aligned to the events plan. The intention was to use national campaigns as a platform to showcase the Explore offer where appropriate. In addition, to target specific areas to raise awareness including: Reading Cafes, York Card, volunteer recruitment, Community Members and Donations. However, the covid pandemic resulted in the closure of our libraries, archives and cafes. This meant that targeted awareness raising was not appropriate rather we focused our communication on provision of quality information and the support available, promoting quality events and activities and re-opening as we came out of each lockdown.

Using the annual events and activities plan as a focus, we developed social media campaigns to engage audiences with national campaigns, also encouraged people to 'Explore at home' by linking to high quality content and activities through the front page of the website and Explore content. Explore also offered a substantial programme of online events during 20/21 in response to the pandemic.

Promotional Campaigns

We developed social media campaigns to engage audiences as well as promoting through posters print posters outside libraries and on community notice boards, through our website, email newsletters print media and through partners such as CYC comms. Here is a flavour of some of the promotional campaigns delivered throughout the year.

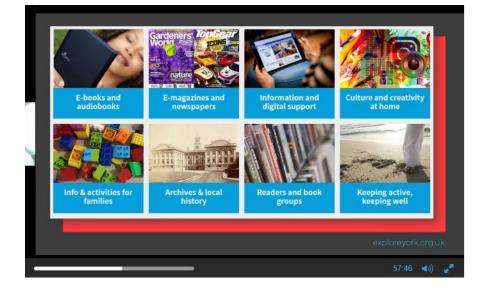
Website – 'Explore at home': In order to improve the customer experience, the front page of the website became the focal point with 8 tiles linking to quality information. These included, e-book and e-audio books, newspapers and magazines (Press Reader supported through additional CYC community funding), Information and support, Activities and information for children and families, Reading, Archives & local history, health & wellbeing, culture and creativity. All areas that would normally be explored through our events and activities programme. We adapted the tiles according to need – so for example to focus on Summer Reading Challenge and We're Back (information about re-opening from Lockdown (1) or Explore Together Again

The development of the front page of the website with this tile approach was used as an example of good practice in a marketing webinar delivered by the British Library.

Example of screenshots from the webinar

Page | 27





The Explore E-Library is 10 - was another successful marketing campaign - brief outline below

- 10,613 impressions on #Elibrary10 related posts across all 3 platforms.
 - Most popular on Twitter by far: 9,842 of the impressions came from Twitter.
- Quiz ran on Twitter and Instagram.
 - Used Twitter poll function where users can vote anonymously, see the answers ranked by popularity, but the answer must be shared separately.

- Began with quiz function on Instagram, users vote (we can see who's voted for what but no other users can), correct answer is shown instantly. Moved to showing options in stories, and revealing the answer later to fall in line with Twitter.
- Question posts which generally have interactive elements were a lot more popular than answer posts which did not.
- Used Canva to create a range of media suitable for sharing on different social media channels, but with a unified visual identity.
- Used #Elibrary10. No one seemed to have used this before, so it was a nice way to collate all our posts on this theme. Clicking on the #, showed all of our posts on the subject.

World Book Day - 4th March

- 16,015 impressions over 25 tweets throughout February and March.
- Average engagement rate of 1.57% per tweet, above 1.20% average overall for February and March.
- 7 standout tweets which received 2-4% engagement, much higher than our average.
- 596 people reached on Facebook; 221 on Instagram.
- Conversations with partners such as local primary schools, York Literature Festival, York Minster, Theatre Royal, and Bookcase For All.
- Positive response to world book day themed lucky dip bags with customers sharing their appreciation and photos on social media
- Although aimed at primary age school children, we received messages from a wide range of groups celebrating our role in sharing the joy of reading in York.



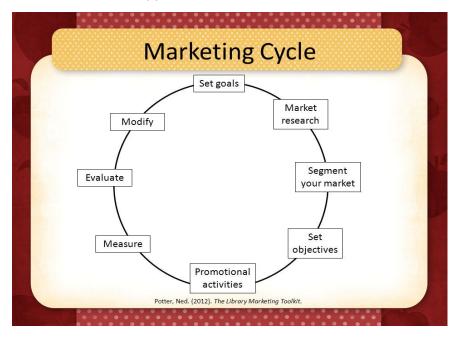
We're Back Campaign From the end of Lockdown 1.0 to September 2020 we ran a co-ordinated marketing campaign to make sure people knew about our re-opening plans and what to expect in libraries as they opened up in a covid secure way. We commissioned special branding and put up physical posters in libraries and their surrounding neighbourhoods. We emailed all existing customers directly with news of re-opening, as well as contacting partners, stakeholders and the media. We received excellent coverage in local news outlets and even in the United States with an article referencing our response in the New York Observer! We also invited customers to complete a simple survey telling us how they had missed their library during lockdown and what they had most enjoyed in our online provision. We received over a thousand responses in a week – a record number. We used the feedback to tailor and adapt our service delivery in the succeeding period both in and out of lockdowns.

E-newsletter. The single biggest source of people hearing about the events was our E-newsletter, cited by a third of participants. This indicates that we have an audience who enjoy our events programme and want to hear more. The e-newsletter currently has 1971 signups and is growing

Learning points

We have recognised that the 2020/21 Audience Development Plan **inadequately** reflects how we will develop new audiences. We have developed a

strategic approach to marketing and communications The Marketing Cycle illustrated below shows this approach.



This insight gained from the feedback about our online events has been analysed alongside other sources to inform our Audience Development Plan 21/22. This plan presents the goal and objectives for the year and outlines the promotional activities to support the goal and achieve the objectives.

Future libraries investment programme - Transition plan and Capital works

Transition Plan - Asset Management Strategy

Work on delivering the asset management plan continued throughout the year, with the focus primarily on 4 projects as summarised below:

Haxby Library

A partnership was formed with the Trustees at Oaken Grove Community Centre to progress both short and long-term solutions to the location of Haxby Library. In the short term, Haxby Library opened in September 2021, operating from 2 meeting rooms within Oaken Grove.

The longer term solution progressed as follows:

- 1. Agreement that a redeveloped Community Centre which included a fit for purpose library and reading café would add value and enable the delivery of a shared vision at Oaken Grove.
- 2. An agreed design, equating to a £600k investment by City of York Council in Oaken Grove
- 3. Agreed working principles to both inform the design and the operating protocol of the Centre
- 4. Agreed in principle leases, including a negotiated management agreement between Explore and Oaken Grove

Acomb Explore Centre

- 1. The completion of a high level, desk-based options appraisal which identified the development of the current Explore Centre as the preferred option.
- 2. The completion of a feasibility design for an extended Acomb Explore Centre based on the above
- 3. The development of a vision for the Explore Centre
- 4. The development of a business plan for the Explore Centre
- 5. Engagement with potential tenants for the Explore Centre to test the feasibility of the business model, with 2 tenants confirmed.

Clifton Explore Centre

- 1. The completion of a high level, desk-based options appraisal which identified what was Clifton Junior School on Rawcliffe Lane, Clifton as the preferred site for redevelopment.
- 2. Successful discussions and negotiations with Hope Learning Trust and City of York Council Education colleagues about the development on that land, which had been ear-marked for housing development.
- 3. A high level feasibility study to determine best option with the budget either a) demolish and total rebuild b) part demolish/rebuild and part refurb c) full refurb. Option b preferred and the option the provides best value
- 4. The development of a vision for the Explore Centre.
- 5. Identification of potential partners for the community tenant aspect of the development

Mobile Library

The completion of an options document for the mobile library service. The outcome of this paper was to identify that a strategic consideration of alternative service provision for communities with no access to a physical building is required. A mobile library may be part of the solution, but it's a wider visioning document that's required.

Gateway Co-locations

Due to pandemic, progress on the Gateway co-locations was slow due to the absence/differing priorities of potential community partners. A full revision of the asset management plan was completed March 2021 following consultation with key City of York Council colleagues with regards City of York Council owned community assets.

Other Developments

Hungate Reading Café opened in August 2021. Opening during a pandemic has been challenging, but the reading café has been very well received by local residents, which embrace Explores vision. The development of Hungate is a key part of our business plan for 2021/22.

Key actions for 2122 include:

- 1. Public consultation on the 3 new developments as mentioned above Haxby, Clifton and Acomb.
- 2. Progress the detailed design and consultation with tenants/potential tenants for Acomb and Clifton developments
- 3. Progressing the co-location opportunities at Dringhouses and Poppleton
- 4. High level options appraisal to determine a preferred solution for Bishopthorpe, Fulford and Dunnington
- 5. Developing an approach for how customers use library services without access to a physical building.

Other Capital Works - 5 year maintenance plan

Activity to progress Explore's maintenance plan continued this year, with us using the lockdown period when appropriate as useful time to action works that would otherwise impact on our ability to deliver the service. A summary of tasks undertaken this year is given below and a revised plan ready for priority works for 2122 has been prepared.

- 1. York Explore significant roof repairs. Phase 1 saw roof and high level repairs (brickworks, windows, guttering) completed on the left elevation from November through to March 2021. Phase 2 works on the front right elevation will be completed 2021.
- 2. Huntington window frames and doors renovated and repaired.
- 3. Strensall windows renovated and repaired
- 4. Parquet flooring at York explore renovated and repaired.
- 5. Dringhouses roof repayments and removal of ivy.
- 6. Fascias at Clifton repaired and redecorated
- 7. New heating system installed at Clifton
- 6. Various internal decorations to improve look and feel at Strensall, Acomb, Burnholme, York, Rowntree Park

Operations

Facilities Management (including cleaning)

This was Explore's 2nd year contracting Facilities Management provision to City of York Council. The contract ends March 2021 and will be renewed for a further 3 years. No major issues and quarterly contract meetings are held to monitor the contract. FM support continued through the lockdown to maintain buildings safely.

The soft landings period ended at Burnholme in June 2021 and a one year contract to continue the provision via Sewells (the contractor who developed Burnholme) was entered into. There are no issues with this contract.

Cleaning services are contracted to Britsafe for all Explore buildings. There have been no issues with this contract, which is subject to annual review.

Health and Safety

This was Explore's 2nd year contracting Health and Safety provision to City of York Council. The contract ends March 2021 and will be renewed for a further 3 years. Quarterly contract meetings are held to monitor the contract.

2 formal complaints were raised this year in relation to:

a) Lack of support in the development of risk assessments as required in preparation for reopening of libraries. This was resolved with walk rounds and an expert check-in on our prepared risk assessment at York Explore and Burnholme

b) The transfer from one online incident portal to another with excluded any consultation with Explore and we were left without an online incident portal for 3 months. This has now been resolved.

Despite this being a significant year putting health and safety in the spotlight, there have been very few incidents. All Explore sites completed thorough risk assessments before reopening post Lockdown in July and all staff received training on operating safely during the covid pandemic.

There have been no major incidents relating to either public or staff safety this year and no RIDDORS. An analysis of all of our incidents finds no significant patterns in failings and are mostly one-off accidents

The focus for 202122 will be to pick up various mandatory refresher training for staff, including new staff (fire safety awareness training, fire warden training, manual handling training and first aid)

Page | 35

Opening Hours - Summary of the year

This unprecedented year impacted our contractual requirements in terms of our operating hours with enforced total closures April – July, alternative service delivery in the form of Click and Collect for the months of August, November and then again Jan – Mar. The months the libraries could open saw a restricted browsing offer, with no in-person events and activities offered or access to comfortable seating as lingering was discouraged. The public were cautious in their usage with footfall being a half of typical usage in some cases – we therefore reduced our opening hours in our Explore Centres to map to the needs of the local communities. At each stage, our offer was agreed with City of York Council.

A simple overview of service provision across the year is provided below:

Month (s)	Offer	Locations
April – June	Targeted home library service	Delivered City wide from Acomb and Clifton (operating at local hubs supporting community need in response to covid)
July and August	Click and Collect offer – pre-booked 'Lucky Dip' selection of books, or reserved books, collected at a pre- booked time	Acomb, Clifton, Tang Hall and mobile
	PC access	
	Home Library Service	Delivered City wide from Tang Hall
	Reading cafes open for food service only	Rowntree Park and Hungate
	Remote access to archives enquiries	
September	Public access for book browsing	All libraries
and October	PC access	All libraries except New Earswick and Dunnington due to restrictions

		imposed by the need for social distancing
	Home Library Service	All home library service base libraries with books delivered by volunteers
		York Explore
	Pre-booked public access to archives	All cafes
	Reading cafes open for food service and book borrowing	
November	Click and Collect offer – pre-booked 'Lucky Dip' selection of books, or reserved books, collected at a pre- booked time	Acomb, Tang Hall, York
	PC access	
	Home Library Service	
		Delivered City wide from Tang Hall
	Takeaway offer at reading cafes	Rowntree Park, Hungate
	Remote access to archives enquiries	_
December	Public access for book browsing	All libraries
	PC access	All libraries except New Earswick and Dunnington due to restrictions imposed by the need for social distancing
	Home Library Service	All home library service base libraries with books delivered by volunteers
		York Explore
		All cafes
	Pre-booked public access to archives	
	Reading cafes open for food service and book borrowing	

Jan - Mar	Click and Collect offer – pre-booked 'Lucky Dip' selection of books, or reserved books, collected at a pre- booked time PC access	Acomb, Tang Hall, York
	Home Library Service	Delivered City wide from Tang Hall
	Takeaway offer at reading cafes Remote access to archives enquiries	Rowntree Park, Hungate

However, we did offer the maximum we were able under the restrictions within which we were operating – customers had access to a PC at all but 2 of our libraries, supporting their need to reconnect with others, job search, pursue interests etc. York Explore offered access to bookable study space for everyone, plus and enhanced offer for University students in November, and reading cafes took advantage of the national Eat Out to Help Out scheme in August. Access to an archives enquiry was maintained throughout, with online enquiry access supplemented by in-person once restrictions were lifted.

With regards maintaining our planned opening hours, within the limitations of what we were able to deliver, the covid had little impact on Explore's ability to deliver the service – reduced opening hours meant we had staff available to step in in the instances of staff illness and gave us some flexibility in order to keep all services open at all times. During Q3 there were a couple of instances of late opening due to staff sickness, with the delay being caused by the need for staff to travel to that library. There were no contractual failings.

ICT

Explore Online

Throughout 20/21 we introduced a lot of new online services and made some big changes to our online presence in response to the changing needs of the customers. Some of the highlights include

- Introducing PressReader, the new service for e-newspapers and e-magazines
- Rolling out our new digital York Cards
- Buying 2,000 new e-books & e-audiobooks

- Running a programme of 120 online events
- Implementing a new function for customers to request "lucky dip" book selections online
- Overhauling the online joining process
- Giving the website a new front page, to re-focus it on the most relevant services during the pandemic
- Introducing new self-service functions including customers being able to edit their contact details online

During 20/21 there was a government deadline for all public sector websites to meet the WCAG 2.1 AA standard for website accessibility. We have made good progress, such as updating the colour palette to meet contrast requirements and updating the catalogue software, but the work continues into 21/22.

On Site Public IT Provision

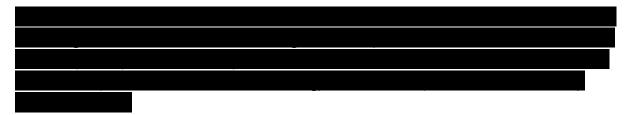
During 20/21 we were keen to offer public PCs whenever it was legal to do so. The number of PCs was naturally restricted by social distancing, so we most frequently offered either 14 or 29 of our 71 public PCs depending on the level of lockdown. This service was very well received and potentially made a lot of difference to the 1,200 people who used it, particularly those who were relying on it for communicating with family, looking up health information, or applying for universal credit, for example. We continued to offer Wi-Fi in our larger libraries and cafes, wherever we were able to offer socially distanced seating. We made some improvements to on site IT facilities during the year, including introducing credit/debit card payments for printing, but the public PC software does need a refresh as we head into 21/22, in particular to remove Internet Explorer following its end of life.

IT Infrastructure and Staffing

We've adapted well to flexible working this year, with staff getting to grips with productivity tools like Zoom.

There were some teething problems with IT when returning to sites after closures, but the network team offered good support with these.

The speed of change this year has been challenging at times. Whilst we're proud of how well we rose to the challenges posed, making such a lot of big changes with only a small team of non-furloughed staff did take its toll. Staff returning from furlough have a lot of changes to get to grips with quickly, and are being supported in this.



Forthcoming IT projects for 21/22, as reflected in the service plan, are to reprocure our ageing self-issue kiosks, to join other authorities in the region in having a shared library management system, and to launch a new catalogue for the Archives.

Book stock

Stock Inventory

As always, the stock count is taken on the final day of the year, 31 March 2021, and we use CIPFA definitions for stock categories to ensure consistency over time.

The 20/21 stock inventory is made more complex due to the pandemic. On 31 March, none of our stock was available to browse on open shelves, so under normal CIPFA definitions it would go into the single category "reserve books". Putting most of the stock into a single category would make the statistics less informative now, and less useful to look back on next year, so we have presented the figures below as though stock on shelves was available to browse on 31 March. This was true a mere twelve days later.

	20/21 inventory	19/20 inventory	Up/Down on last year
Reference Books	19981	19982	0%
Lending Adult Fiction	50189	50957	-2%
Lending Adult Nonfiction	45097	45635	-1%
Lending Junior Fiction	35341	33582	5%
Lending Junior Nonfiction	8534	8337	2%
Reserve Books (in transit, in reserve etc.)	14202	35399	-60%
Total lending book stock	139161	138511	0%
Total book stock	173344	193892	-11%
Reference Audiovisual	0	0	
Lending Adult audiobooks	3827	3855	-1%
Lending Children's audiobooks	789	819	-4%
Lending AV (DVDs, language packs)	73	79	-8%
E-books	6064	5044	20%
E newspapers, emagazines, ecomics	7258	0	New service

E-Audio and e-audiovisuals	3027	2122	43%
Music streaming	0	0	
Hardware	39	39	0%
Reserve AV (in transit, in quarantine, in reserve etc.)	276	480	-43%
Total lending AV	21077	11958	76%
Total AV	21353	12438	72%
Total Stock	194697	206330	-6%
Toys (outside CIPFA inventory)	187	227	-18%

A significant change between this year and last is the "reserve stock". This is a CIPFA term covering anything in our collection which isn't currently available to the public. Last year's annual report highlighted that we had a large amount of long overdue stock in this category. We remarked that keeping them on the catalogue made it easier to add them back into stock should they ever be returned. We have since taken the decision to remove the oldest of these records to make the system more efficient. In the above figures the reserve stock line is much lower than last year as a result. The remaining reserve stock total is made up of items in quarantine (29%); items in transit between branches on 31 March 2020 (26%); long overdue items (23%); and items in storage for retrieval by staff only (reading group sets 15% and reserves 8%).

The collection which increased in size most significantly this year is the e-library stock, due to long term increasing demand, intensified by the pandemic. The addition of over 7,000 e-newspaper and magazine publications relates to our new PressReader service, launched in April 2020. Note that in line with CIPFA definitions, these e-library lines count publications rather than individual copies. So we have 6,000 e-books in stock, but some of them are borrowable by two, three or unlimited numbers of people at once. The e-audiobook collection and e-book collection have both grown by approximately 1000 titles – in fact we purchased considerably more e-books than this, but they tend to be licenced on temporary terms (e.g. two years or 36 loans) so as with normal books the collection size can go down as well as up.

Stock Turn

This is a measure of how hard the stock works – average issues per item per year. Explore's stock turn figures are usually upper quartile. The most recent benchmarking figures, for 19/20, demonstrated this once again.

	20/21 inventory	20/21 issues	Explore Stock turn 20/21	Explore Stock turn 19/20
Lending Adult Fiction	50189	60576	1.2	5.3
Lending Adult Nonfiction	45097	23015	0.5	3.3
Lending Junior Fiction	35341	39698	1.1	6.3
Lending Junior Nonfiction	8534	6235	0.7	4.3
Total lending book stock	139161	129524	0.9	4.8
Lending Adult audiobooks	3827	3453	0.9	4.1
Lending Children's audiobooks	789	439	0.6	3.8
Lending AV (DVDs, language packs)	73	26	0.4	3.6
E-books	6064	56955	9.4	4.4
E newspapers, e-magazines, e-comics	7258	266695	36.7	
E-audiobooks	3027	40194	13.3	10.8

The stock turn figures for 20/21 are heavily affected by the pandemic. All of the physical stock has been borrowed much less frequently than in 19/20, whereas the e-stock has serviced a lot more customers.

In normal years, we examine stock turn regularly through the year, broken down into scores of sub-categories, and aim for a stock turn around 6 or 7. Generally a high figure is positive, although a figure over 10 suggests that we can't keep enough stock on the shelves to fulfil demand and need more stock in that area.

Since the calculation divides issues throughout 20/21 by the inventory on the final day, it gives a misleading figure if collections have radically grown or shrunk through the year. Collections which have grown through the year, in this case e-books and e-audiobooks, would realistically have an even higher stock turn figure

than that shown. A stock turn over 10 is not necessarily a problem for e-books and e-audiobooks, especially if they can be borrowed by multiple people at once.

20/21 total stock including books, AV, e-library, reference and toys	19/20 total stock including books, AV, elibrary, reference and toys	Up/Down on last year	Up/Down on last year as %	All 20/21 acquisitions including purchases and donations	20/21 acquisitions - purchases only	Retired stock 20/21
194884	206557	-11673	-6%	22859	22121	34532

Stock Acquired, Purchased and Retired

In 20/21 we accessioned fewer items than we de-accessioned, so the overall stock size fell by -6%. The retired stock column covers stock which is withdrawn for any reason, this may be library staff withdrawing out of date items, damage, loss/theft, or items not returned by customers. In the case of e-books it also includes licences expiring. During 20/21 the vast majority of retired stock, 23,000, was a one-off exercise to remove several years' worth of very long overdues. If it weren't for this exercise, the stock size would have grown 5% due to all the new e-stock.

When the budget was set for 20/21, in January 2020, we allocated extra budget to e-books and e-audiobooks due to growing demand, but quickly needed to reallocate even more budget when the pandemic struck. The additional funding came from CYC Ward funding, the Arts Council, stopping our expenditure on hard copy newspapers and magazines completely, and slightly reducing our budget for hard copy books. Going forward, we will keep a close eye on elibrary demand and tailor the budget accordingly. Our aim is to have quality in both e-library and physical stock, so there is a budgetary implication of investing in the elibrary without it being at the expense of print publications.

The figure for "acquisitions – purchases only" is approximately 7,000 higher in 20/21 than we reported in 19/20. These 7,000 are the PressReader e-newspaper and e-magazine publications.

In summer 2020 our adult book supplier went into administration, and the regional consortium we are part of entered into an emergency procurement process. During September to November, with no contract in place, we used a local book supplier to purchase the biggest new titles. Our stock supply chain is heavily automated, so

relying on a non-library supplier without those mechanisms in place put some pressure on staff resource. The new library supplier began supplying stock in December, and had caught up on supplying 20/21 new releases by the end of March 2021.

We did not encourage donations for most of 20/21, due to quarantine space limitations. We are still very much committed to supplementing our stock budget in this way, and expect to take considerably more donations in 21/22.

Other notable stock work in 20/21 included allocating stock to the new sites -Community Stadium and Hungate Reading Café. We also invested in some new reading group sets, in preparation for making this an income generating service in 21/22.

Benchmarking

During 20/21 the CIPFA stats for 19/20 were released, enabling us to understand our comparative position among unitary authorities.

Once again, Explore are proud to be upper quartile for physical visits, book issues and stock turn. We have a relatively small book stock, but one which works hard. We fell into the lower quartile for purchases of traditional book formats by a very narrow margin.

CIPFA usually request data in the summer for the previous year, so we would expect to submit our 20/21 figures shortly. It remains to be seen how this process will work in the pandemic year, when services were so different. Comparing the data about usage volumes may prove less relevant than comparing facts about services and dates. We already know from Libraries Connected monitoring and from industry discussion boards that our pandemic offering was relatively strong, for example, we introduced genealogy services from home swiftly, and were relatively quick to bring back public PCs after the full lockdown.

Archives and Local History report

Collections Highlights

- Gray, Dodsworth & Co is a particularly extensive solicitors collection (some 2,934 catalogue entries), dating between 1738 and 1975. The bulk of the collection is client-based work, which provides a fascinating insight into legal paperwork and deeds, and can fill some gaps in York where there was never a formal deeds registry. This work was started in previous years, with the full cataloguing and repackaging of the collection (c.150 boxes) completed this year.
- **Gansolite Ltd** (later British Buttons) is a very small collection in terms of what survives, but was a big employer in York making buttons for the clothing industry. It was founded by Dutchman Jacob Gans in 1929, and passed through a number owners before finally closing in 2003.
- Fred and John Hawksby were well-known boxers in York in the 1920s and 1930s. Fred rose to professional level, whilst we believe John competed as an amateur as well as co-ordinating local charity matches.
- On the Drawing Board continues to be the most significant in terms of volume and the outcome of a funded project. Work has continued into this financial year (although on completely different scale due to covid). As well as continued general interest, the collection is still proving an important addition for professional use by colleagues in CYC and other local architectural bodies.
- The Black Swan Folk Club is a new archives accession, and due to the impact of covid work will continue on cataloguing it into the next financial year. The archive is a new departure for us, as it's our first traditional music archive. The collection features posters, correspondence and other papers compiled by Roland Walls (founded of the Black Swan Folk Club) from its inception in the 1970s through to the present day.

List of new collections added this year

Digital Engagement

Explore Your Archives Week provided an opportunity to focus on widening the audience reach for archives through a digital marketing campaign on Twitter and

Page | 47

Facebook including specifically, a daily posting under the Explore Your Archives national campaign, announcement of Archives Accreditation success, a call to action to identify 200 images and promotion of the Nuisance Inspector podcast. The Nuisance Inspector podcast, provided a 'teaser' mini podcast with 52 downloads and the full audio attracted 150.

Following on from this success, we aimed to increase interest in The Nuisance Inspector on you tube during March with a social media campaign across Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. The Nuisance Inspector achieved 95 views on You Tube.

Using Flickr to engage audiences in identifying 900 images through the Missing York campaign and highlighting Explore York Images, was excellent social media campaign. Supported by York Past and Present the engagement numbers were high with Flickr views of 90,739 and the Explore York Images views of 8,429. This community project has also increased the images on Explore York Images site, with now over 8,000 images.

The Archives blog site has been refreshed and upgraded to give a more contemporary look and to ensure the design ties in with the rest of Explore's website. The upgrade also means that the site supports audio and video, which allow us to better link content with other social media platforms.

Report on progress for move from provisional to full Archive Service Accreditation In July Explore was awarded Full Archives Accreditation.

The National Archives - Archives Testbed

We successfully applied TNA Archives Testbed funding with a collaborative application with Bright White. The feedback from The National Archives was extremely positive – our application scored joint first in this round, and they recognised the sector-wide significance of the project.

This is an amazing opportunity for Explore to work collaboratively with Bright White an industry leader in interpretation, experience and innovation design. The digital story telling tool they develop will be a prototype, which we hope will attract further funding.

The application of the RiCs model (a new, developing standard in archives) will allow for nuanced tracing of links between digitised assets and will form the foundation for user-directed exploration of the records by subject, geographical location, chronology, person, event, and so on. The first public demonstration of the prototype will be on 15 June 2021 as part of the Festival of Ideas online event: *Virtualising the Archives.*

Digital Preservation Strategy/Records Management at CYC

Outstanding work has happened over the past year in the creation of policies, procedures and guidelines that have been developed by the Bridging the Digital Gap TNA placement which comes to an end early January. This work supports our readiness for digital record management and digital preservation and will also support future successful Archives Accreditation compliance.

Explore is now invited to the DRMP Board. The need for Preservica was firmly acknowledged by Executive sponsor (Janie Berry) and the recognition that this will support future Archives Accreditation compliance. The business plan for Preservica is being update for presentation at DRMP Board meeting in April.

Presented to the DRMP Board and Councillor Darryl Smalley in February. The need for Preservica firmly acknowledged by Executive sponsor (Janie Berry) and the recognition that this will support future Archives Accreditation compliance. Business plan for Preservica being updated for presentation at DRMP Board meeting in April.

Contract Delivery

We confirm that Explore has met the delivery requirements for the contract. Any failures during the year are due to the Covid 19 pandemic.

Fiona Williams, Chief Executive, Explore York Libraries and Archives Mutual Limited

Annexes

Annex 1	Finance pack
Annex 2	Annual Events Plan
Annex 3	Labs 2 Final Report
Annex 4	User Satisfaction Survey
Annex 5	Audience Development Plan
Annex 6	E-Library is 10 campaign re

Annex 7 Comparative Stats

Annex 8 New Archives Collections added

Annex 9 Archives Accreditation

Annex 10 Performance 2020-21