



**explore**

Libraries and Archives

# Shaped with You

Annual Review  
2022/23





# People make Explore

**Explore is a different kind of public service with collaboration at the very heart of all we do. Our mutual model means we're owned by our staff and community members. We also have charitable status because of the benefit we bring to the community.**

Every day we connect with the people who visit our archive and our network of libraries across York. We aim to be shaped by communities and actively seek to understand and respond to their priorities. Explore is based in the community, for the community, and shaped with communities.

## Message from the Chair

It has been an extraordinary year for Explore and a year that really showed us all that while we offer brilliant libraries and archives, Explore does so much more as well. Our staff have been there for our communities during some of the most challenging times most of us have ever seen. Energy prices and the cost of living have pushed us all to the limit as the world faces huge challenges with climate change and the war in Ukraine. But throughout we have been there. We have been there for the lost and lonely and the cold and hungry. We have been there for mums and dads and their little ones and for children and young people. We have been there for the disadvantaged, the



marginalised and the forgotten. We have offered safe, warm, welcoming spaces where culture and the arts have brought a unique kind of magic. And the thing that has made us so special during difficult times is our people; our staff, our volunteers and our friends all of whom are struggling with the same challenges.

We have seen great successes this year with the opening of an amazing new Explore library for Haxby and Wigginton and being crowned an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation - bringing culture and the arts to every corner of the City. New directors have joined the Explore Board bringing new skills, new experiences and new expertise. It has also been a year tinged with sadness with the death of former Chief Executive, Fiona Williams, whose vision and leadership created the concept of Explore and brought it to life.

I hope that like me you are looking forward to the next chapter in the Explore story and while we can only expect more challenges and greater opportunities as Explore reaches its tenth birthday in 2024, we should all remember that Explore is about people: talented, hard-working, creative, caring, dedicated individuals whose collective efforts make us what we are... simply extraordinary!

**Chris Edwards,**  
Chair of the Board



### A tribute to Fiona Williams

In May 2023 we were profoundly saddened to learn of the death of Fiona Williams, former Chief Executive of Explore York Libraries and Archives.

Fiona was a visionary leader who had a distinguished career in libraries culminating in a move to York in 2004 where she developed a new vision for libraries and archives in the city. Under Fiona's leadership, in 2014 Explore York became the UK's first public library mutual owned by its staff and the community. Explore's thriving archives, libraries and reading cafés and passionate workforce are a fitting legacy and a testament to her vision.



## Our Board: Shaped with You

Our board of directors are all people with their roots in York and a passion for the city and its communities. They amplify local voices and help shape the strategy and future of Explore, using their skills, networks and creativity.

Last year we grew and strengthened our board with four new directors. Community Members had the chance to elect two directors - Luke Castle and Rosemary Cook - and the board also elected two non-executive directors - Helen Apsey and Sarah O'Brien.

**Helen Apsey is Head of Culture and Wellbeing at Make It York.**

“Culture can support people’s wellbeing throughout their lives and Explore has a vital role to play in this.”



**Luke Castle is the founder and director of Keeping Digital CIC and a Digital PR Executive at Rise At Seven.**

“Explore should be at the forefront of initiatives that support communities in many different ways from literacy to digital and more.”



**Rosemary Cook is an author, reader and local historian and has been a CEO in the not-for-profit sector for 17 years.**

“I am particularly keen to develop the membership of Explore.”



**Ian Money is a lecturer in Accounting and Finance at the University of York.**

“Libraries should be safe and welcoming hubs in every community.”



**Kate Nash works at York Explore Library and Archive she was elected as a director by the staff and represents everyone who works for Explore.**

“As Staff Director, I represent all the staff, and wherever I go I always look for the stories!”



**Sarah O'Brien is Associate Head for Performance in the School of Arts at York St John University.**

“The arts programmes we deliver at Explore can develop confidence, and enhance life skills.”



**Robert Powell is a poet, writer, curator, and cultural manager.**

“Books nourished my imagination as a child and continue to be central to my life now - not least in my creative work as a writer and poet.”



**Chris Edwards is Chair of the board. Since retiring from Education Leeds, he has continued to work on leadership and culture.**

“I’m passionate about helping Explore develop libraries as vibrant, inclusive, exciting community spaces.”



## Message from the Chief Executive



**Our new Chief Executive, Jenny Layfield joined Explore in January 2023.**

Jenny brings a fresh approach to Explore having worked in the cultural and heritage sector in various roles, most recently as Museum Director at the National Coal Mining Museum for England and before that for the National Trust. True to our mutual values, staff and community directors were involved in recruiting Jenny from drafting the role profile to participating in interviews.

In a city of approximately 200,000 residents Explore has an impressive array of statistics:

- 724,717 visits to our Libraries
- 79,118 engagements with our Archives
- Over 2,571 events attended by 39,578 people
- 10,628 new library members
- 430,712 visits to our website
- 18,914 volunteer hours

Our commitment to enriching the lives of everyone and strengthening communities by creating an inclusive sense of place and belonging remains strong and was even more important in 2022 as we moved from a pandemic into a cost-of-living crisis. We have continued to be here for the people of York, providing warm, safe and welcoming spaces which support and enrich the lives of everyone who comes through our doors.

We are integral to York’s cultural ecology; demonstrated by the fantastic news in November that we would be an Arts Council National Portfolio Organisation, one of only 16 library services across the country. This accolade recognised our commitment to creating opportunities that challenge imaginations through high-quality cultural experiences in the heart of communities. The new Haxby & Wigginton Library within the Oaken Grove Community Centre opened on 4 January. This is a classic Explore success story because it was developed with the community, for the community and

funded by City of York Council. We share the building with Haxby and Wigginton Youth and Community Association and with them we are developing new links. We are in the heart of our communities and work with our communities to provide more of what they want. But there are significant financial challenges, as this year has proven. Our contract with City of York Council currently provides two thirds of our income so if we want to do more we need to raise more. I will be spending the next year working with internal and external stakeholders to develop the vision for Explore for the next five years and looking for those opportunities which build on what we do, but also build our financial and environmental sustainability.

I want to end with saying thank you to all of you: our staff, volunteers, friends, community members, customers, supporters and partners. In my first few months I have been blown away with the welcome I have received and demonstrable commitment and love for Explore I have seen. I am incredibly fortunate to have been given this opportunity and look forward to working with you all in the years to come.

**Jenny Layfield  
Chief Executive**





**"I love to volunteer – I'd like to do more! I really enjoy meeting lots of different people and I find it fascinating. You can learn something from everyone!"**

# People shape Explore

Our network of libraries and archives means Explore is embedded in every community in York. We appreciate all the support we receive from people in those communities who love Explore, our libraries and archives and our work, and who are as passionate as we are about making a difference. Take a closer look at how people shaped our story last year.

**"Every day is different, and I enjoy being able to help people if I can. I've got into lots of interesting conversations with people using the services. The staff are all really kind and helpful, ready to help with many and varied questions. Volunteering keeps my mind working – very important!"**

## Volunteers shaping our story

Recent years have brought huge challenges to our communities with more people suffering financial and social hardship.

Volunteers are our ears on the ground, rooted in communities and facing the same challenges. Volunteers help us do so much more by helping out so our staff can focus on growth and doing more of what people want. We need our volunteers now more than ever. Last year volunteers gave an amazing 18,914 hours of their time, equivalent to around £250,000 of staff time. Their stories show how volunteering made a difference to their wellbeing too, helping them gain new skills, experience and confidence.



**"When Alice started volunteering she was being bullied at school and had lost her confidence. At first Alice was very quiet and just shelved books, hanging her head so no-one could see her. After several months she started to come out of her shell**

*a little. Now she is much more confident - chatting away to staff and customers! Alice says volunteering made her realise that she is not defined by the bullies at school and is valued in her own right. She has taken up new activities outside of school and made great new friendship groups".*

**"Rafa wanted to study Software Engineering and needed some experience to put on his university application. He volunteered to run Digital Support sessions. He was a whizz with the latest technology and enjoyed showing people how to set up and use their new smartphones and tablets. The older people on the course really enjoyed his company and enthusiasm."**



## Community Members shaping our story

Community Members shape Explore, now and into the future, by taking an active interest in our plans, policies and strategic direction, and sharing their ideas about how we can achieve even more for our community.

Any library member over 16 can join as a Community Member. They receive regular updates about Explore, can elect directors and stand for election themselves. Community Members had a chance to elect two new directors to the board in 2022. We were delighted that six people put themselves forward for election – Rosemary Cook and Luke Castle received the most votes with the result announced at the AGM on 5 September.

*“I’ve loved libraries all my life. I wanted to become a Community Director so I could help develop the fantastic libraries and archives services for local people. There is so much going on in Explore, it’s brilliant to be involved.”*

**Rosemary Cook,**  
Community Director



## Friends shaping our story

Friends groups shape Explore in their local community. They are independent charitable bodies and support us through regular fundraising to improve their local library, or by lending a hand in practical ways - from plumbing to painting to planting and more! They know their local library staff and their local area and can provide honest feedback in a context of mutual trust.

### Not just a Friends group but a group of friends.

Our longest standing Friends group is based at Dunnington Library. Activities planned and run by the Friends have become firm fixtures in the village calendar: the Annual Quiz is always a sell-out, and the monthly coffee morning brings the community together while raising funds for the library. The Friends also run regular booksales and organise activities for children.

Lorraine, the library manager says:

*“The Friends group has two important strands - their fundraising helps us redecorate and refurbish the library, and they also advocate for us in the community and raise awareness through a popular programme of events.”*

*“I specially want to thank committee members Maureen, Julie and Chris who stepped down this year after eight years of loyal service. But even though they have retired from the committee, they are still helping out at friends events and volunteering in the library!”*



### Bishopthorpe Library Friends meet regularly and organise a programme of activities.

These range from talks on various subjects, exhibitions, retro games, community jigsaw and a choir. Some events raise money for the library or help raise awareness of the library as a valuable local resource. The group could not meet during the covid 19 pandemic, but Friends and volunteers are relieved to be back to normal in 2023.

**If your local library doesn't yet have a Friends group, why not get in touch to discuss starting one?**



**Friends and Volunteers from across Explore supported a fundraising day in July 2022 and raised £600**



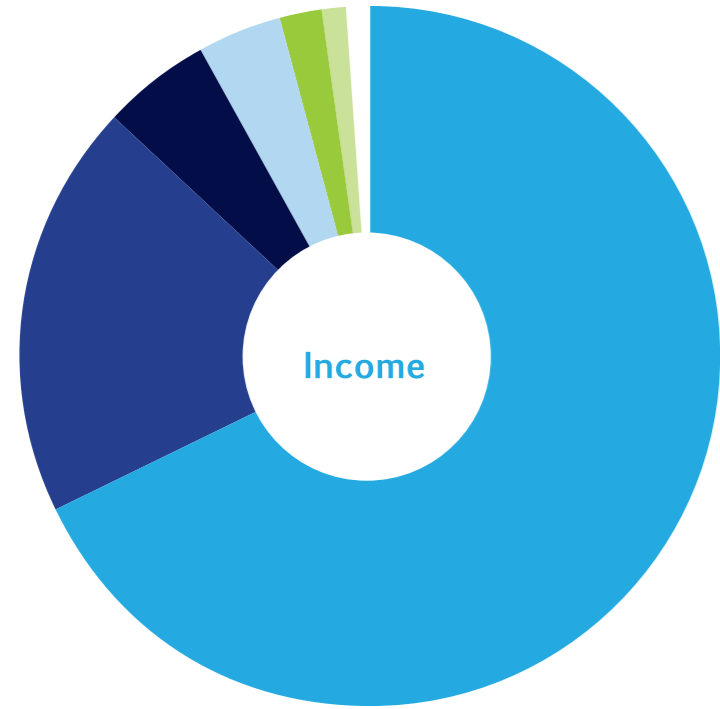
*“I enjoy being surrounded by people who love books as much as I do. The library is a safe space where everyone is kind!”*



**What a difference you made!  
Thank you.**

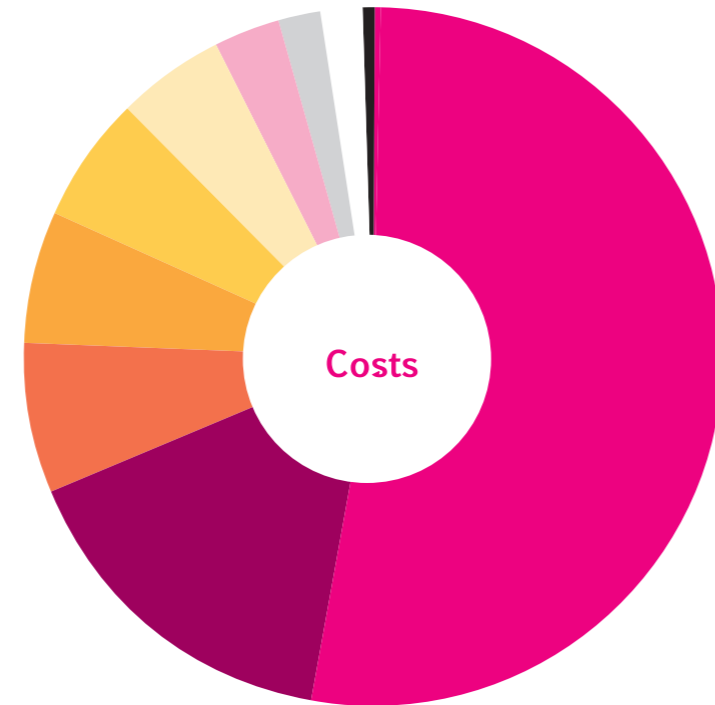


# Explore's income and costs 2022/23



## Explore is funded by:

- 68% City of York Council contract
- 19% Café income
- 5% Room hire
- 4% Other income
- 2% Fundraising
- 1% Events and activities
- 1% Merchandise, images and York Cards



## The costs of running Explore are:

- 53% Staff
- 16% Other premises
- 7% Catering and merchandise supplies
- 6% Heat and light
- 6% IT
- 5% Books and resources
- 3% Library activities
- 2% Rent and rates
- 2% Organisation costs (vehicles, audit, legal, professional fees)
- <1% Sundry expenses and interest payments

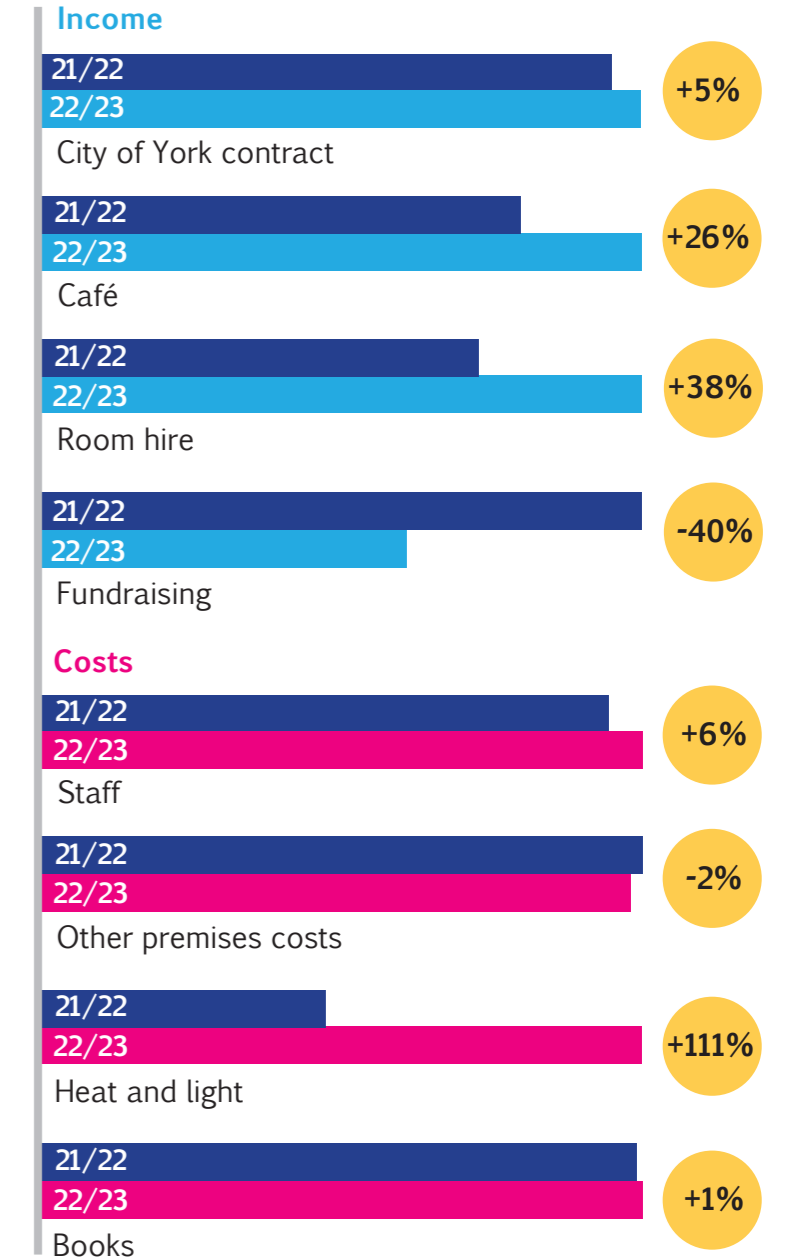


As we began to recover after the pandemic, new challenges posed by the increased cost of living once again impacted the wellbeing and resilience of individuals, families and communities in York.

Explore offered warm, welcoming spaces for everyone and opportunities to try new experiences, read for wellbeing, enjoy fun activities and connect with other people. In every community across the city of York, our libraries, archives and reading cafes create a shared, inclusive sense of place where people of all ages can connect and know they belong. Explore received a contract sum of £2.5 million from City of York Council to

provide a library and archive service for York and needed to raise a further £1.2 million to meet costs and continue to thrive in 2022. The impact of the increased cost of living has proved challenging and continues to be so with 111% increase in utility costs alone. The additional support we have received from funders, sponsors, from everyone who used our cafes or gave a donation has been, and continues to be, vital and we thank you for your support.

## Year on Year comparisons







**“It’s been a pleasure chatting & getting to know many of you a little over the past few months. Well done for making the library a safe space for all and for treating everyone with equal respect without judgement.”**

# Here For You

Despite the challenges of 2022 - the impact of the war in Ukraine and the cost of living pressures - Explore has remained responsive to the needs of our communities, providing warm, welcoming spaces where people find a place to belong and connect with each other.

### Information and Digital Support

Getting the right answers to questions is vitally important in challenging times. As well as regular digital support, we helped people access Household Support Payment and Energy Rebate Payments on-line, we also signposted to financial support and food banks through our website. Explore provides the right information at the right time as well as a warm welcoming space for all.

**“Thank you for helping me print all these forms. I was at a loss how to do it as I’ve not got a printer ... brilliant service.”**



**“I have two young children and honestly I think the libraries are sort of miraculous. To have so many amazing resources available not just books, but story sacks, toys, events and storytelling, is incredible both for them and for me. We love the library.”**



**100% DIGITAL YORK**

Confidence | Connection | Choice

**York: a digitally inclusive city for all**

100% Digital York takes a collaborative approach to achieving its ambition of a digitally inclusive city for all. Explore is lead partner with City of York Council. We re-launched digital support sessions at all Explore Centres to complement this work. The partnership works with community groups and organisations to introduce digital inclusion as a tool to achieve their aims and to support identified outcomes and impact. Through the partnership, residents who meet specific criteria can access equipment through the IT Re-Use Scheme, free connectivity through the Good Things Foundation National Databank scheme, as well as the opportunity to grow their confidence through digital support sessions.

**“I didn’t know where to start...,thank you for helping me to receive this much needed funding.”**



“Looking at Behind the Scenes now, I can see that York..... is the all-pervading main character of this book. The novel is a hymn to my relationship with the city, constructed out of history, memory and nostalgia.”

Kate Atkinson, author of Behind the Scenes at the Museum

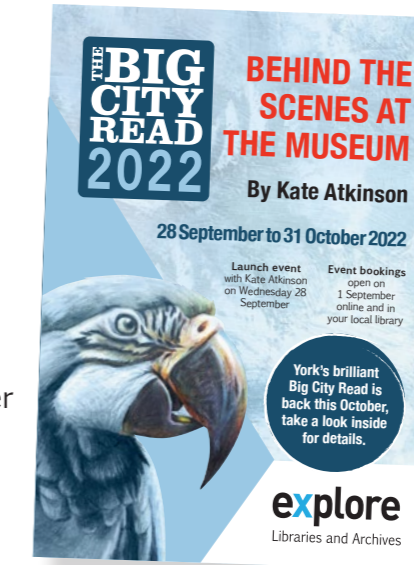


## Sharing the Joy (of Reading)

Connecting with each other through a shared joy of reading supports a sense of wellbeing, sparks an excitement to read and opens up a world of imagination. People of all ages had the opportunity to do just that through two reading programmes in 2022.

### The Big City Read

The aim of the Big City Read is to get the whole city of York reading the same book at the same time, bring people together to talk about it and invite them to join in with inspiring events and activities created around the themes of the book. Behind the Scenes at the Museum as a Big City Read title had been an obvious choice for quite some time.



“I enjoyed re-reading a book by a local author that featured times and places I know so well. I appreciated the behind-the-scenes effort that librarians had put into organising it.”

“I am enjoying the connection with familiar names and places, and the suspense of seeing first through a child’s eyes without necessarily knowing the back story.”



5,000 books given away  
316 downloads from the E-library  
679 people attended events.



2,998  
children and young people  
took part in Gadgeteers

1,594  
children and 749 adults  
attended over 60 events

## Summer Reading Challenge 2022: Gadgeteers

The theme for the Summer Reading Challenge 2022 was Gadgeteers, and aimed not only to encourage reading for pleasure over the long summer holidays, but also to inspire children to get hands-on with invention and discovery. By reading books and attending an exciting range of events and activities, Gadgeteers sparked children's curiosity about the world around them and encouraged them to feed their imaginations. They were boggled by brilliant facts, gazed at the stars, and were inspired to create and invent. **Our programme of free Summer Reading Challenge events and support for disadvantaged children was made possible by funding from York Children's Trust and The Victoria Wood Foundation.**



Children borrowed  
58,836  
books and  
1,932 e-audio/ebooks  
during the Summer  
Reading Challenge

“One of the best of these kinds of events for kids that I’ve ever been to. The author and assistant were really excellent with the children. The content was so varied and the session so well prepared and taught.”

“The kids were totally engaged and absolutely loved meeting a real-life author.”



“This is exactly what a community library should look like in the first week of the summer holidays! Busy, excited children enjoying creative activities, with all the generations involved.”





“Not only is the library an arts venue it’s an arts venue where new and unique things can happen. We are very grateful that it’s on our doorstep!”

## Challenging Imaginations

Creative spaces in the heart of communities where people of all ages can imagine, create, enjoy new experiences and connect to the wider world. A dynamic collaborative environment, where inspiration is ignited and imaginations challenged – who knows where it might lead?

**Stuff & Nonsense: a fresh take on themes from the Big City Read**

“We are so grateful to Explore for inviting us to contribute to the Big City Read. Collaborating with Dr Fraser Mann as our guest monologist we tested an ‘Armando’ improv format, learned from our teachers in Chicago and infused it with the structure of the book by Kate Atkinson. Our delighted audience experienced an accessible theatre event the like of which has never been performed in York before. Funding and support from the Explore team made it possible for us to make new and exciting things for local audiences and we loved every minute of it. Not only is the library an arts venue, it’s an arts venue where unique things can happen.”



**Flags of Hope: creative arts workshops for Her Majesty the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee**

People expressed their hopes and dreams for York over the next 70 years using art and craft skills, simple printing techniques and other inspiring resources to create their own imaginative Flags of Hope. **Flags of Hope was funded by Libraries Connected**



**Wood Owl and the Box of Wonders: affordable live theatre**

Families in York affected by the cost-of-living crisis were able to attend a quality Christmas production this year thanks to £3,000 charitable funding. Explore successfully applied for the grant and worked with Hoglets Theatre to put on Christmas performances in schools and libraries with each child receiving a free book.

Two schools were offered a free performance of Wood Owl and the Box of Wonders and a puppet-making workshop at school. They didn’t need to pay transport costs so this made it easier for them to participate. A further 11 performances were held in eight libraries during the Christmas holidays.

**Wood Owl and the Box of Wonders was funded by The Hobson’s Charity.**





# Connecting People and Communities

Explore is in every community across the city of York. Our libraries, archives and reading cafes create a shared, inclusive sense of place where people of all ages and the varied communities of our city can connect and know they belong.

## Our City Hub: Made by the community for the community

Our City Hub at York Explore is an inclusive space with opportunities for learning and cultural celebrations for migrant communities in York.



“Giving migrants a voice, recognising their true contribution and building their sense of belonging to host societies, in short empowering migrants, will enable us to ensure fair and just societies for all, and allow migrants to both be integrated and feel integrated.”

### Ukrainian Independence Day: celebrating through culture and song

The celebration of Ukraine included workshops and talks about the country’s history, culture and literature. The day also saw the official launch of the York Ukrainian Society which represents the needs and aspirations of the local Ukrainian community. A singer packed out the Marriott Room singing traditional songs and the Ukrainian national anthem, typical snacks were served, and the Lord Mayor of York was in attendance



“Our City Hub is an excellent collaborative effort that yields good for the diverse communities in York. Additionally, it provides opportunities for volunteering, which promote personal growth and development. Thank you very much for all your hard work this year!”





### In York Explore Library Café

Near where he sits, there's a meeting,  
The nature of which is not clear,  
But out of the general free-flow of talk  
'Immigrant' catches his ear.

Perhaps it's come up in discussion?  
What does 'immigrant' mean?  
How do we see ourselves?  
How are 'immigrants' seen?

'Immigrant' isn't a word he can like  
Implying that all are the same  
Here, at this table, are people...  
Each with the gift of a name.

From to time more words float free -  
'Ukrainian'? That's pretty clear  
Albanian...? Romanian...? Armenian...?  
Europe is gathering here!



He wants to say "Hello!  
Welcome to this land"  
To smile a welcoming smile  
To say "I understand"

To each of these young people ...  
With different stories to tell ...  
Facing their futures away from home ...  
Truly, he wishes them well!

It's not as straightforward as this,  
Of which he's well aware,  
But here, today, in the moment  
There's friendship in the air.

By Mike Smith

**Speaking English** 16 two-hour lessons were delivered to beginner and intermediate groups. 85 people attended between June and December and 45 still attend regularly.

“Excellent lessons. It's like putting pieces of a jigsaw puzzle together.”

**45 volunteers from various countries and backgrounds, speaking 13 different languages and united by one wish – to help others.**

“I am really glad to be part of this team. Interpreting work has inspired me to improve my English skills. I found it really exciting to work with people and be able to help with interpreting and translation.”

**More than 150**  
**hours of interpreting sessions, with more than 200 pages of documents and forms translated from May to December**

## York Residents Festival: Mapping Historic York and Map Attack!

The archive team focused on the theme of historical maps in York as part of Residents' Festival. The two events complemented each other and gave residents of all ages the opportunity to engage with York's past. Map Attack! Lego City of Wonder invited families to imagine historic York and design the York of the future using Lego, while Mapping Historic York was an exhibition of original maps and plans of the city.



**486**  
**people came to the Residents' Festival events**





“This really is my happy place. It’s a wonderful library with great books and lovely staff. I look forward to coming.”

# Supporting Wellbeing

As we began to recover after the pandemic, new challenges posed by the increased cost of living once again impacted the wellbeing and resilience of individuals, families and communities in York. Explore responded by providing warm, welcoming spaces for everyone and opportunities to try new experiences, to read for wellbeing, to enjoy fun activities and connect with other people.

## Tabitha: Big City Read Artist in Residence

We hosted four workshops at Explore centres, to develop Tabitha Grove’s solo piece *Them There Then That* followed by performances at five libraries. The aim of Tabitha’s residency and performance was to help audiences connect with stories found

in books in a new way. Tabitha created a thoughtful, honest, and poignant piece about her own stories of mental health and loss, delivered with utmost professionalism. Audience sizes grew as the mini-tour progressed and many who had booked a free ticket donated after the performance - testament to how much they enjoyed and were moved by it, some to tears.



“Making the show with your encouragement was such a wonderful experience. The library was a perfect place to try new work in a supportive and gentle, friendly environment. I’ve left with a show I’m proud of, that I didn’t even know was in me! Everyone has been so kind and the experience has been so beneficial to me professionally and personally. I hope that plenty more artists get this opportunity, it’s been career-changing for me.”  
**Tabitha Grove**



“Thank you for helping me to get warm.”

“I love this library it always has a lovely atmosphere and I feel very safe here as I suffer from anxiety a lot of the time.”

“I come in regularly and sometimes come into the library feeling down. But after coming here I feel so much better. There is always someone to chat to and makes me feel less lonely.”



# Your Libraries: Shaped with You

Libraries co-located in the community, shaped by the community. A shared vision developed with communities of welcoming, safe, inclusive places accessible to everyone, and where everyone feels welcome. A place where organisations work together with the community and make a difference every day.

## Haxby & Wigginton: open at last

Our new library and reading café opened on 4 January 2023 with more books, free Wi-Fi and computers, and an exciting programme of events and activities for all ages. Local residents participated in the planning and design and the Friends group contributed funds for furniture in the children's library. Co-location in Oaken Grove Community Centre means we work closely with Haxby and Wigginton Youth and Community Association and as we deepen our partnership we will be able to engage with even more people from local communities.



## Clifton Explore: growing forward with our community

A major construction project, funded by a multi million pound investment from City of York Council will transform the original Clifton Without Junior School site. The new Explore Centre will be five times larger than the existing library. Its 1,400 square metres will offer space for 15,000 books, a reading café and a children's library, plus meeting rooms and other spaces. Organisations based at the centre will include The Snappy Trust, Accessible Arts and Media and York Learning all working in partnership with Explore to add value to the local community. At every stage of planning, we have kept up a conversation with local people, hearing from them about what they want to see, developing and refining plans for the whole site together. Clifton Explore will be made by the community for the community.

## You asked and we put it in the plan!

- Fully accessible library with comfortable seating, space for quiet study, and separate spaces for children and young people
- Free PCs to use
- Flexible shelving and furniture in the main library which can transform into a 150-seat performance space
- Reading café
- Meeting rooms, fitted out with the latest technology
- Collaborative discussions with local people to plan the garden and outdoor space
- Environmentally friendly features including solar panels and electric charging bays
- Cycle and car parking, accessible parking spaces and storage for buggies and pushchairs

## Clifton Explore development 2022/23

- 2022 Spring  
Planning application submitted
  - 2022 Summer  
Focus groups and conversations with local residents and customers
  - 17 October 2022  
Planning permission granted!
  - March 2023  
Contractor Walter Thompson appointed.
  - April 2023  
Work begins on site.
- The story continues...

The Friends of Haxby & Wigginton Library contributed **£900** towards furniture for the children's library



"Working with the community of Clifton and with our community partners, we look forward to being able to do so much more of what we are good at – providing safe, accessible spaces that welcome everyone in."





# Explore 2022-23 in numbers

724,717  
Visits to libraries



78,918  
people engaged with  
our Archive either  
in person or virtually



502m<sup>3</sup>  
of physical archives –  
the equivalent of 10  
shipping containers



We loaned more than  
1,808  
books every single day



430,712  
visits to our website

up 8%  
on  
2021-22



397,768  
e-books  
and  
e-audio  
borrowed



We loaned  
1,089  
e-books & e-audio  
every day



26,722  
items were added to stock

up 11%  
on  
2021-22



Total number of  
items in stock  
199,198



## Goodbye to late charges

Happy days! In February 2023 we scrapped all charges on overdue items and fees for reserving books. Though late charges are supposed to encourage people to return items, they have a disproportionate impact on people in our community who need us the most by creating barriers to library use. All Explore library cardholders were given a clean slate so if you haven't visited a library for a while due to charges on your account, we can't wait to welcome you back!



39,578  
people attended  
2,571  
events



549  
Volunteers gave over  
18,914 hours of their  
time equivalent to  
around £250,000  
of staff time.

41,866  
PC sessions



10,628  
New members



"Libraries  
really are  
the gates to  
the future."  
NEIL GAIMAN

explore  
Libraries and Archives

explore  
Libraries and Archives

Library Card





# People make Explore

Thank you to everyone who got involved, made a difference and helped shape Explore last year.

Thank you for bringing a friend to share a coffee at our vibrant reading cafes, for telling others about the work we do or sharing on social media. Thank you for volunteering your precious time and for becoming a friend of your local library. Thank you for giving a donation because you enjoyed something so much or because you simply wanted to make a difference. Thank you for sponsoring a programme that meant families struggling with the cost of living were able to enjoy time together in a warm, welcoming space. Thank you to our partners who worked with us so that together we were able to do even more to support our communities.



**I was having a really stressful morning but then I brought my 2-year-old into the library for the afternoon to go to the Lego drop-in session and it turned my day around! The familiar environment and friendly staff in the library really made me feel calm again and I was able to enjoy the afternoon with my daughter."**

## Your Explore. Made with you.

Collaboration is at the heart of Explore and it's what makes our libraries and archives so special. Thank you for being part of our story. Thank you for making a difference.

Together we can do so much more. Will you be part of our story and help shape Explore?

**Get in touch:  
Contact@explore.york.org.uk**

## A heartfelt thank you to our wonderful Explore Staff

Our staff strive every day to make a difference to their local communities and they are the beating heart of Explore. In 2022 they too struggled with the cost of living and have seen the impact on their communities. With a friendly welcome for everyone who comes through the door, a listening ear and the right help or answer when needed, our staff are very much appreciated.

**"Your member of staff went above and beyond for me today. I've had a really horrible time after losing my mum two weeks ago and getting a new job last week. They were patient and kind and really listened to me."**

**"Thank you so much for your help with the zoom call interview - I got the job."**





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