
Libraries and Archives

Annual Report

1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022



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

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Foreword by Sarah Garbacz, Deputy Chief Executive

Overview

2021 was the year Explore bounced back. We welcomed people, partners, volunteers and Friends back into our spaces in droves, and continued to grow our online offer. After a cautious start customers shrugged off most of their anxieties and visits increased month-on-month as the year progressed, with a full in-person events programme returning across the whole organisation from October – a real cause for celebration. Our spaces became vibrant, busy, owned, loved and laughter-filled once more, and we continued to support City of York Council with the emerging city-wide challenges post-pandemic: supporting wellbeing, improving digital confidence and helping to rebuild literacy levels.

The entire Explore staff team have performed brilliantly, delivering on most of our targets as they adjusted to normal life and welcomed back customers and volunteers.

We remained strong financially, with reading cafes making a significant contribution to our income. The cafes had a brilliant summer and a busy autumn and winter, thanks to support from local communities

We are in a good, strong position to take Explore forward as we enter the new financial year.

Explore for York: How we supported city-wide priorities

York emerged from the pandemic in a different place, with the spotlight on speedy economic recovery, and on significant social issues which had become more urgent during the pandemic. Explore's contribution to these agendas is significant. Using our services means residents do not need to access more formal routes of support. Explore provides safe, accessible, welcoming spaces where residents can easily access trusted information, and be supported by skilled, professional staff.

The literacy attainment gap Explore had a successful Summer Reading Challenge - 2344 children took part, and 1091 completed the challenge. We introduced a targeted offer this year - 120 disadvantaged children received a bag containing the Summer Reading Challenge folder and stickers, a bookmark and game, as well as a fiction book. These were distributed through York's Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) summer schemes. We also supported nurseries with a high number of disadvantaged children, with under 5 mini challenge materials and activity.

Before rhymetimes were re-introduced in all libraries, all frontline staff and volunteers received training from the NSPCC on *Look, Say, Sing, Play*, a city-wide initiative to embed a common language across all organisations with a link to early years provision, enabling

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parents to hear a consistent message on the power of engaging with young children to support their development.

Digital inclusion Explore led the rollout of the 100% Digital York Partnership, which worked together to develop common Terms of Reference, stakeholder mapping and workstreams. Funding was achieved to create a post within Explore to take forward this significant area of work in the new financial year. Aligned to the city-wide 100% digital strategy, Explore has played a key role in enabling the rollout of City of York Council's digital channel shift agenda. Frontline staff have supported customers with applications for the Household Support Fund, residents' parking permits, and the reporting of housing repairs.

Mental health and wellbeing Explore plays a critical role in supporting residents' mental health recovery after the pandemic. People told us they feel safe in our spaces and see them as a way to escape isolation. We heard many stories from customers, volunteers and partners about the positive impact of using our service in its many forms. For example: a customer at York said the library was her first outing in a public space – she came to us because she felt safe and reassured and this helped increase her confidence. Specific projects such as *Cuppa and a Chorus* and *Creative Cafes* brought together people who felt isolated or were experiencing low mental health to engage in cultural creative activity.

Diversity & Inclusion Explore coordinated the inaugural One City Festival, bringing partners and local communities together in a one-day festival at York Explore in March to celebrate inclusion and difference. The project brought together people of different backgrounds, faiths, beliefs and countries to share their stories and passions. An important outcome of the event was the commitment to developing a regular Migrant Hub. This will launch in the first quarter of 2022, coordinated at York Explore, and will bring communities together regularly in a safe, welcoming, accessible space. Explore also developed and delivered a 10 week Reading Together group for people whose first language is not English in partnership with the city's Community Involvement Officer (Minority Communities) and York Learning.

Explore's Strategic Action Plan: key achievements

Delivering a fantastic consistent high quality service day in day out is reason to celebrate in itself, and in addition to all this, it's also worth identifying a few notable moments from this year's action plan:

1. We achieved Archives Accreditation in July, further embedding quality in an already excellent and nationally recognised service.
2. Our Arts Council funded *World Turned Upside Down* lockdown project which combined poetry and archives resources to create an online participatory experience, received national recognition at the Libraries Connected Seminar in June.
3. A successful sponsorship event for funders of the Summer Reading Challenge generated further sponsorship commitment from donors.

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4. Our partnership with York Mini Golf to take forward the development of Library Lawn progressed to the planning stage.
5. We held a successful consultation with all staff on new employment contracts and modernised HR policies, resulting in positive engagement with our staff, whose responses influenced the final outcome.
6. City of York Council committed £7.7m capital funding to take forward the developments of Haxby & Wigginton library and the Explore Centres in Acomb and Clifton, further evidencing that City of York Council sees the value of Explore and our contribution to supporting York's communities
7. 2000+ customers who took part in our public library user survey registered a 95.8% satisfaction rating.
8. Our staff wellbeing survey demonstrated that 100% of staff are proud of the work they do and are proud to work for Explore.

Explore's performance: high-level summary and trends

After a year of month-on-month growth, we ended the year in the fantastic position of being, back to 75% of pre-covid footfall figures on average. This is a considerable achievement considering that at the end of April we were at 24%. This result is testament to both the staff teams and the communities across York and is evidence that Explore can make a difference. At the start of the year only book borrowing, and PC use was available to customers, but as our full offer was introduced, customers came together in our reading cafes and participated in our events. As we brought more people together through the year, our footfall figures grew and grew. Our real value to the community is shown by the way our safe welcoming, accessible spaces support wellbeing, and are places of cultural activity.

Library Visits	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
18/19	71112	67228	72015	87353	81439	77638
19/20	72065	76511	78403	83689	86249	78443
20/21	0	0	0	6521	7144	21210
21/22	17105	23688	29198	34575	43172	44675
21/22 as % of 18/19	24%	35%	41%	40%	53%	58%

Library Visits	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
18/19	84315	77104	59547	81439	74116	78118
19/20	84567	76680	60433	81201	75249	48339
20/21	27341	7782	15843	5873	4345	5358
21/22	48879	50831	37143	47187	49005	59515

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21/22 as % of 18/19	58%	66%	62%	58%	66%	76%
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Our volunteer support bounced back too, with 1700 hours of support given to Explore by volunteers which is back to 70% of pre-pandemic levels.

Trends

As we moved through the year, we identified several emerging trends to influence and inform our decision-making and our delivery models as we move forward into the next financial year:

1. Hybrid use Customers have moved to using us in an increasingly hybrid way: as our physical book issues returned to 90% of pre-pandemic levels, our eBook issues, which had more than doubled during lockdown, remained at significantly increased levels even following the opening up of physical libraries. It is clear that our customers are making use of both online and physical buildings to access our services. Similarly, audiences are still engaging in our events and activities programme online as well as in-person, with some finding they can access our programme now it is online where they had been previously excluded from attendance, for example due to accessibility issues. We have introduced new metrics to capture the growth in this area.

2. A reduction in PC usage. We do not necessarily expect PC use to return to its pre-pandemic level. Nationally PC use in libraries has been on a downward trend for many years, so arguably 80% would constitute a full post-pandemic recovery. In a survey of our PC users just before the pandemic, 40% said that one of their main reasons for using library PCs were that they did not have a computer/internet connection at home. Some of those respondents (where they had the means) may have been forced to find alternative solutions during lockdown. Library PCs are still a very important offer to which Explore is committed, but we cannot assume usage will return to former levels.

3. Evening footfall has been slower to recover than daytime footfall. By the end of 2021, evening footfall was beginning to increase, but was still at less than half of its former level. As more people continue working from home, it remains to be seen whether evening usage will reach its former levels, the same users may not return, and we may need to adapt our evening offer. We continue to monitor this closely.

Benchmarking

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] this information relates to 20/21, the main year of the pandemic closures, not the most recent year 21/22. The year 20/21 was an anomalous year. Whilst all library services were tasked with the same broad challenge, providing services safely during a global pandemic, specific circumstances varied greatly from authority to authority. As such, the 20/21 comparative stats are strongly affected by the availability of services, not just their take-up. Moreover, the number of English Unitary authorities submitting figures to CIPFA for benchmarking has fallen again, so whilst we can still calculate our quartile position, we cannot state it with a strong degree of confidence. There is a discussion happening nationally about how best to benchmark in a meaningful way going forwards.

Explore's performance was once again upper quartile for visits, stock turn and e-issues. Our quartile position fell to quartile 2 for (physical) book issues, and rose to upper quartile for PC use, but this is largely due to the anomalous nature of services in 20/21.

Contract Compliance – summary and overview

Organisationally, we have delivered 100% of Explore’s planned activities and events, although some city-wide events that Explore was supporting and which were included in the activities plan were cancelled by the partner organisation due to the pandemic. 93% of our strategic action plan priorities were achieved. A summary of compliance in key areas is provided below.

Opening Hours

Despite high levels of staff absence as a result of the covid pandemic, and thanks to the fantastic teamwork of our Operational Management Team, there were few significant closures or impacts on our service delivery. This is a phenomenal achievement and testament to the team of managers who worked together to maintain full operational levels.

The unplanned closures were as follows:

Service impacted	No of Days	Reason
Mobile Library	3	Family bereavement
Rowntree Park Reading Café	1	Public health issue
Fulford Library	1	Communication error re. Staff cover

A one-day full service planned closure for Explores annual staff conference was postponed from 9 March to 6 April 2022.

Accessibility

Issues compromising the accessibility of our services are listed below. These were reported promptly and, more importantly, communicated to our customers, with alternative accessible options identified as appropriate. Following complaints from Explore regarding the frequency of faults with the lift (a new mechanism was installed January 2021) a new contractor has been appointed, commencing 1 April 2022.

Service impacted	No of days	Reason
York Explore – parking suspension of accessible parking bays	90	Erection of scaffolding to undertake significant roof repairs
York Explore – access to 1 st floor via lift	3	Waiting on parts for repair
York Explore – access to 1 st floor via lift	20	Replacement of kicking rollers – delayed by orders for parts post pandemic
York Explore – access to 1 st floor via lift	6	Waiting for parts to arrive
York Explore – access to 1 st floor via lift	2 days	Error with emergency stop mechanism
York Explore - Changing places facility	4 days	Damaged cistern

IT Access

In April 2021 the country was still in the grips of pandemic restrictions. Explore York had begun to open back up. In normal times we'd have seventy-three personal computers available for the public to access. In January 2021 only three sites were open offering a total 14 PCs. In April 2021 we were able to increase to twelve sites with 29 machines available. As the months went on those restrictions eased, with social distancing rules being relaxed all across the country, during quarter three we were able to make all of our public access PCs available to the public and return to pre-pandemic provision. The only location not back to pre-pandemic public access provision is in New Earswick Gateway: from quarter three, rain damage to the building meant for a few days the provision went down from four to two machines. The damage was repaired, but more severe damage occurred in quarter four, requiring part of the building to be closed and the PCs relocated elsewhere in the building. We've been working with the building managers to get the offering back up to 4 machines, which should happen shortly.

Our website has seen good performance all year. In quarter two we overhauled the website to deliver better outcomes for our customers, and the end of quarter 3 saw the migration of the webpages to a new server. All through the year we've been working hard on enhancing the accessibility of our website, to better serve our diverse customer base.

Our public-facing printing facilities remain popular, with customers citing it as one of the things they missed most about not being able to come into buildings during lockdown, and many positive comments about Explore's printing service in our customer survey. However, the printers are approaching the end of their life, with an inevitable increase in minor, hardware failures. Both customers and staff have noticed this, leading us to do extensive research on our options in quarter three. As a result, we plan to buy new printers to replace our aging hardware and implement an evolved solution to printing for our customers, similar to our current one, but with added functionality in response to customer feedback.

In August 2021, our library management software became contracted as part of a regional framework. The supplier selected by the regional procurement exercise was SirsiDynix, our previous supplier, so there has been no disruption to services in York. It is a positive step, opening up the possibility of greater collaboration between library services in Yorkshire and the Humber over the next few years.

Our RFID self-service kiosks are also reaching end of life. This year we've secured funding and budgeted for identifying and implementing a replacement contract for them in the coming year.

While we've had a few incidents that have been reportable, such as the issues in New Earswick Gateway already mentioned, none of them constitute a failure in % up-time, according to the terms of the contract. The one incident of particular note is the power outage on 7 September. This was a major power outage that affected not only the Explore

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organisation but schools, traffic signals and CYC systems in general, yet was resolved quickly enough that service was restored without constating a failure in % up-time.

Buildings

There were no issues with planned building management. All planned maintenance is managed by CARE plans overseen by City of York facilities management team.

Health and Safety

Explore had a full review of its suite of Health and Safety documentation, resulting in the implementation of updated policies from January 2022. These included a refresh of risk assessments, first aid policy, general library specific health and safety policies and fire safety policies. The full review was performed with North Yorkshire County Councils/CYC Health and Safety management team.

Across the year, there have been 21 incidents, showing no major concerns or significant patterns. No RIDDORs reported.

Cleaning

Cleaning is provided via a contract with Britsafe direct with Explore. Although there have been no issues with standards, there have been recent issues with high levels of staff absence as a result of the Covid

Planned maintenance schedule 21/22

Progress on the maintenance plan as follows.

Library	Element	Progress update/action
Dringhouses	Minor roof repairs and ivy ingress removed	Work completed March 2022
Dringhouses	External decoration – window frames and doors	Work completed August 2021
Huntington	External redecoration of doors	Work completed August 2021
Huntington	Replacement of the heating system	Work completed between January and March 2022
Strensall	Internal redecoration of children's library	Work completed June 2021

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York	Roof and high-level window repairs	Phase 2 (front elevation) of the roof works began in April due to be completed June
York	Meeting room redecoration	Redecoration of Garden Room completed
York	Internal redecoration of back corridor	Work completed December 2021
York Explore	Refurbishment of Office 2 following the roof repairs	Work completed March 2022

Absence of CEO – statement

The contractual element of the role of the Chief Librarian is picked up by Sarah Garbacz, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Operating Officer. Sarah also acts as primary contact for City of York Council for the purposes of the contract.

Engagement and Outreach

Here For York

The events programme is varied and evolving and Explore has not simply returned to the pre-pandemic events programme but is developing new activities and partnerships. In 2021 we were able to increase the level of in-library events and activities. We chose to remain on-line for some activities due to customer demand. One example of this is *Finding the Words*, our monthly poetry event which has remained on-line with quarterly in-person events.

Attendance at events has increased rapidly as confidence has grown. In Q1 29 events were attended by 597 people, rising to 545 events in Q4 attracting 5,959 attendees.

From the Events Plan you will see the range of events and activities offered in addition to the weekly events across the Explore network.

We offered a total of 1305 public events and activities which were attended by 14,931 people during 2021/22.

See below for the key partnerships, developments and events during 2021-22 which supported Explore's strategic priorities.

Share the joy of reading

Early years

Rhyme time and story time sessions were re-introduced in libraries. These are invaluable in supporting language and cognitive development and provide a good foundation for literacy.

Explore supported Early Talk for York, rolled out to 7 participating schools, by providing the Family Learning Team with Bookstart Time to Read packs for targeted families. Explore worked closely with CYC's Healthy Child Team and the Early Years Team so that targeted families received the packs but were not made to feel 'targeted'. The Early Years Team also identified the settings that receive highest funding so packs are gifted universally in these settings and the Healthy Child Team will also directly gift packs to families identified during 9-12 month visits.

Children: Summer Reading Challenge

2,344 children and young people took part in the Summer Reading Challenge, 499 children and 58 adults joined the library as new members, and children who took part in the challenge across libraries came back and told us about 7,067 books they had enjoyed reading. 108 volunteers gave 355 hours of their time, 50 were young volunteers. We received £6,636 in grant funding which meant that the total cost to Explore (not including staff costs) was £536.60.

We were alert to the effects of the pandemic on literacy. Extra support was offered to children from disadvantaged families. Working with the Early Years Team at CYC we

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approached nurseries with higher-than-average disadvantaged families to help them run the Summer Reading Mini Challenge we arranged a storyteller and library visits and put families in contact with their nearest library. As a result, parents read more with their children and said that children's reading skills, concentration and confidence improved.

"...over the last couple of weeks has been showing a much bigger interest in books and story time at home. Previously he would get bored and wander off to do something else after only a couple of pages. His favourite book is Peace at Last. He has now started to sit and 'read' it himself".

A nursery owner said:

"I knew that it had been worth doing, when a hard-to-reach Mum said how much she had enjoyed some quality time reading with her son and that she was going to continue this every night as her baby daughter sat engaged with it also. Result. We have continued the "lending library" for the nursery and the interest in books has definitely increased."

Adults: Supporting adults with lower-level literacy skills

During summer we piloted a 6-week Quick Reads group and reading challenge at York Explore for adult readers with lower-level skills referred by York Learning. Although there was low take-up for the group with 4 participants attending for all 6 weeks, we will be discussing with York Learning how we can expand this and take it forward in 2022.

Adults: Reading Together

This initiative supported three groups - people with dementia and their families, people at risk of isolation and loneliness, and people whose first language is not English. We received funding from Libraries Connected Yorkshire and Humber in 2020 to run groups in partnership with Fiona Shaw and Daisy Hildyard from Reading Together, but due to covid, the groups were deferred to 2021.

Tang Hall Explore: A weekly session in partnership with Wellbeing Co-ordinator at Mossdale Residence for a group of residents with dementia and families/companions. Average attendance 8 people each week, with 3 residents and the Wellbeing Co-ordinator attending all sessions.

Acomb Explore: Local Area Co-ordinators referred people to the group and other recruitment was through local promotion. Grant funding for this group included money to train and mentor a volunteer and the Reader Development Librarian to continue to run the group after funding ended. Attendance was 70% over the 10 weeks and at least 9 members wish to continue attending.

York Explore: This group was for people whose first language is not English. Recruitment was done through the Community Involvement Officer (Minority Communities) and York Learning. The group included people who were new to the city from Hong Kong, Romania, Spain, Italy, Syria, Korea and Japan. Many participants want the group to continue.

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"I like this group because I've an opportunity to talk more English with them and after every class go together to drink coffee or eat lunch and also practice more English. Everything is very good."

Challenging Imaginations

Children and families: Snow Bear theatre performance

We aimed to provide affordable live theatre for local families and schools. York Children's Trust funded performances of The Snow Bear by Hoglets Theatre and provided additional funds to buy a book for every child attending.

7 family performances were delivered in Acomb, Clifton, Tang Hall and York Explore Centres: these venues were specifically chosen as they are located in the wards with most disadvantaged families. To identify the families, we worked with Local Area Co-ordinators, York Learning and Social Workers. 285 adults and children attended the family performances, including refugee families, children in foster care and families on low incomes.

Carr Infants and Tang Hall Primary School were invited to free schools' performances: they serve some of the most disadvantaged families in the city. Both performances were delivered in the schools due to staffing issues and covid.

"Thank you for organising this, it has been wonderful to have been able to afford to bring my children to a Christmas show and it was so good! I hope you do it again next year."

"Everything is so expensive at Christmas; it has been lovely to be able to manage to do a 'nice' thing with my kids and the book on dinosaurs has made my sons day".

Adults: Northern Girls performance and workshops. Explore hosted 8 writing workshops in partnership with Pilot Theatre for a targeted group of young women. Workshop participants and professional writers created 8 monologues which were rehearsed at York Explore and performed to audiences on Library Lawn over 4 evenings in October. Bookings were high with a total audience of 200 - 100% capacity. As part of the partnership, Pilot Theatre also delivered a community workshop at Acomb Explore, attended by 18 people.

"Utterly compelling, thought provoking, beautifully written and brilliantly acted"

"Great setting - relaxed and informal. Great performances and writing. Well organised with headphones and seating etc."

"Fantastic production. The atmosphere was brilliant, so nice to be outside and experience such great talent. The acting was really captivating. Really enjoyed everything about this and would definitely go again"

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Northern Girls: The film: a performance of Northern Girls on Library Lawn was professionally filmed and edited for screening. The film was shown to an audience of 22 at Acomb Explore in February 2022. The screening was introduced by Hannah Davis, who had written one of the pieces and she led a Q & A with lively discussion about feminism and female identity after the screening. The film will be made available on YouTube in due course.

World Turned Upside Down celebration event – Our project in response to the pandemic combining “Haiflu” poems and doodle art, culminated in the creation of a modern chapbook to add to the collection held in the city archive. An online celebration to launch the chapbook was held in May and the project was also highlighted at Libraries Connected Seminar in June.

Supporting Health and Well-being

Creative Cafes -

Two 8-week Creative Cafes at Tang Hall and Acomb Explore were funded by CYC and Ways to Wellbeing. The 10 participants at each were either self-referred or referred by a social prescriber. The impact on wellbeing is clear from the quotes of participants:

"I have really enjoyed the course, particularly the cheerful and supportive input of the 2 artists. I did not expect that to be so influential. I would definitely like to do more craft activities as they are very calming."

"Met new people at the craft meetings and joined in. The new skills and new friends helped me. Hope to join more classes at the library – they are life savers."

"Got new ideas for creativity, met people with lively chat. After covid with deaths of friends etc. and isolation, this class has been essential for my mental and emotional well-being."

Books on Prescription - work with partners We received 15 sets of Books on Prescription core collection, Shelf Help and Reading Well for Children and Young People, funded by DCMS. We offered the collections to trusted partners on a long-term loan aligned to Health Information Week. Partners included Ways to Wellbeing, Snappy, Door 84, NSPCC, CYC Early Years' Service, St Nick's, and Kyra. We also linked to Foss Park Hospital and GP surgeries via the link workers.

Converge@theHaven This programme is aimed at individuals who access mental health services in the city. An archivist delivered sessions (one via zoom and one in person) focused on *The York We Have Lost* looking at aspects of the city and civic life that have changed beyond recognition. While the zoom session went well, the social interaction and discussion that followed the in-person session was clearly of the most benefit to this group. The archive sessions were very well received. Tutor workshops and training on teaching individuals with mental health issues was attended before the sessions providing a staff development opportunity.

Connecting Communities

Evaluation phase of the Archives Testbed project in person evaluation sessions took place with local residents at Burnholme, Hungate Reading Café and Tang Hall Local History Group and on zoom with researchers and academics. The sessions provided Bright White with high quality feedback and user experiences to develop the tool further. An unexpected outcome of the sessions was the way the tool facilitated social interaction and discussions between users and the testing team. Further development of the tool will be dependent on securing funding. The National Archive saw our Virtualising the Archives talk recorded for the Festival of Ideas in Q1 and featured the project in their Year in Archives publication in December 2021.

Covid Newspaper - As part of the Summer Reading Challenge, Archivists and artists created a workshop based on the 200-year-old Gray Family Newspapers. Children were encouraged to think about who they would want to communicate with in quarantine, how they would communicate and what they would tell them about. The children worked with the artist to create their own pandemic newspaper story and also created a joint newspaper which will form part of the archive, to create a snapshot of a child's life during the pandemic in York, in the same way as the Gray family newspaper are a snapshot of a child's life in York 200 years ago.



People and Places

Overview of Public Service Delivery

Commented [HG1]: Is this section in the right place???

The year began with us emerging and slowly recovering from the pandemic, as government restrictions lifted, and society finally opened up. A summary of our reopening is provided below:

12 April	Explore Centres	Open for browsing and PC use. Reduced opening hours with no opening beyond 5pm and no Sunday opening
	Library Gateways	Open for browsing and PC Return to pre-pandemic opening hours except Haxby due to operating model
	Reading Cafes	External seated eating and takeaway
	Archives	Mon, Weds, Fri pre-booked retrieval access
17 May	All cafes	Open with internal service
21 June	Explore Centres	Introduction of bookable, socially distanced storytimes/rhymetimes
19 July	All libraries and reading cafes	Opening hours returned to pre-pandemic, contractual hours Some face to face in-person activity with Summer Reading Challenge focus and socially- distanced bookable storytimes in Explore Centres
6 September	Archives	Mon, Tues, Weds and Sat – pre-pandemic contractual hours, with pre-booking encouraged
1 October	All libraries	Full return of non-bookable community events programme – storytimes, craft groups, readers groups etc returned to all venues

In-person visits increased month on month except in December due to the emergence of the omicron covid variant.

Key learning for Explore was that customers also choose to access our services online: the growth in our online services has provided customers with a choice in how they use us, and this is something we want to grow and evolve as we work through the next year so customers can have options about how they engage with us.

Explore Staff Team

Awards

[Redacted text]

Staffing

[Redacted text]

[Redacted text]

[Redacted text]

[Redacted text]

Staff profile: summary

A copy of our current staffing structure is attached at Annex 9.

Commented [HG2]: Attach structure

[Redacted text]

[Redacted text]

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Staff Diversity: overview 31 March 2022

[Redacted text block]

Staff Wellbeing Survey

[Redacted text block]

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[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

Staff Wellbeing survey: next steps

[Redacted text block]

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[Redacted text block]

Staff Turnover and absence

Staff turnover is this year is at xxx. [Redacted text block]

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Volunteers and Friends Groups

Volunteers

Explore continues to support community resilience by offering a growing range of opportunities for local residents, and thus contributing to development of skills and confidence, and wellbeing. The number of volunteer hours given over to supporting Explore have remained stable throughout the year, with an average of c. 50% of pre-pandemic levels, with a slight up-surge in March to 70%. Pre-pandemic, a significant number of our volunteers were older people, and this could perhaps explain a reluctance to return given the vulnerability of this group during the pandemic.

Volunteer Hours	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
18/19	1939	2166	2012	2131	2047	1925
19/20	2316	2255	2071	2759	2625	2171
20/21	12	4	0	38	170	939
21/22	1264	1076	1148	1280	1330	1232
21/22 as % of 18/19 Volunteer Hours	65%	50%	57%	60%	65%	64%
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar

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18/19	2100	2138	1796	2283	2326	2424
19/20	2713	2337	1582	2156	1991	961
20/21	1095	117	632	42	27	9
21/22	1298	1456	902	1144	1408	1705
21/22 as % of 18/19	62%	68%	50%	50%	61%	70%

Friends' groups The advocacy work and financial contributions of Friends bounced back, with all pre-pandemic groups returning and planning programmes of activity ahead of the new financial year. Financial contributions this year saw internal improvements at Bishopthorpe, Dunnington and Copmanthorpe. Explore launched a new Friends Group at Strensall in February. We now have 8 Friends groups raising funds and advocating for Explore.

Looking ahead Growing our volunteer base and widening the diversity of our volunteers will be a focus in 2022. We will rekindle our partnership with St John's University, to provide student volunteering opportunities, particularly for projects like the Summer Reading Challenge. We will grow the volunteer opportunities we have available, as well as continuing to celebrate the achievements and contributions our volunteers make to Explore. Our attention will also turn to preparatory work in advance of a self-assessment in readiness for submitting for *Investing in Volunteers* accreditation in 2023- 24

Community Members

89 new community members were added to the register and 8 members were removed during 2021-22. There was a total of 787 community members on 31 March 2022.

Numbers joining up showed an improvement on 2020-21 which demonstrates the importance of face-to-face conversation with staff in encouraging people to show their support for Explore by joining as community members.

Engagement. Explore's AGM took place on 8 September via Zoom. All members were invited to attend – by email or by post if no email address was available for the member. 8 community members attended the Annual General Meeting on 8 September. Following a Governance review in which directors recognised the need to add capacity and strengthen the voice of the community on the Board, amendments to the Rules of Explore which were accepted at the AGM included adding a further Community Director post on the board.

At the end of September, we emailed all Community Members with a copy of our Annual Review and received responses from several – here is a typical reply

"Thanks Fiona and colleagues. The libraries have been such a help to so many people. Keep up the excellent work."

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We also sent out a Christmas message with information about opening hours and also inviting Community Members to donate as part of our Make a Difference campaign. We also shared the happy news about Fiona's BEM with Community Members and received a number of warm replies, for example:

"Congratulations and thank you to Fiona and all the warm-welcoming staff at York Explore - from my first visits holding Mum's hand, nearly seventy years ago, I have enjoyed being in the library. A good 2022 for York Explore and all who work in her"

We recognise that Community Members can act as powerful advocates for Explore in York and beyond, and for the first time our Audience Development Strategy for 2022-23 has a dedicated strand "Explore - Shaped with You" which will raise awareness of community membership, improve the offer to community members and deepen engagement with existing members. Q1/2 2022-23 will also see the roll out of recruitment campaign to bring 2 new Community Directors onto the Board in time for the AGM in 2022.

Customer Engagement

Customer Feedback: Informal

322 items of customer feedback were recorded between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022: 241 compliments, 49 suggestions and 31 complaints. We replied within the 7-day time limit to all comments requiring a response.

Compliments – trends and highlights

Comments during Q1 and Q2 reflected customers' relief that libraries were back after the pandemic with numerous expressions of gratitude just to be back in libraries, and for the services provided during lockdown. Customers also told us how very important libraries are for their wellbeing and mental health. They also told us how safe and comfortable they felt in our buildings as a result of our measured response as restrictions began to lift

"It wasn't until I went into Tang Hall Library for the first time in April when restrictions were lifted that I realised how much my mood and sense of wellbeing is affected by being in a wonderful library space."

As things began to move back to normal compliments moved away from their pandemic focus to a broader appreciation for the way Explore delivers for communities through its strategic priorities.

Examples include:

Joy of Reading: Dringhouses library provided dual language books for a Korean primary school pupil. *"Daeun was so thrilled - she shared the book in class and taught us all some Korean. It was just lovely to see her come to life and share her language. "*

Digital Inclusion: Customer needed help applying for Household Support Fund. The customer couldn't read or write and had no IT skills. The customer was also concerned that this could be a scam as was asking for bank details. Member of staff read letter to them, searched on York Council website to ensure fund was legitimate and then applied for the fund online for them. Customer was so relieved to be able to speak to someone and for the help given.

Supporting Wellbeing: *"My daughter loves coming to the library. She doesn't like going to pre-school but if she knows she can come here afterwards that helps."* *"A customer told us that the police had asked them if they had a support group and they said 'yes, Acomb library and café".*

Challenging Imaginations: A regular customer said that the library was such a great place to get together with friends and have debates and discussions about things, the York building inspired thinking.

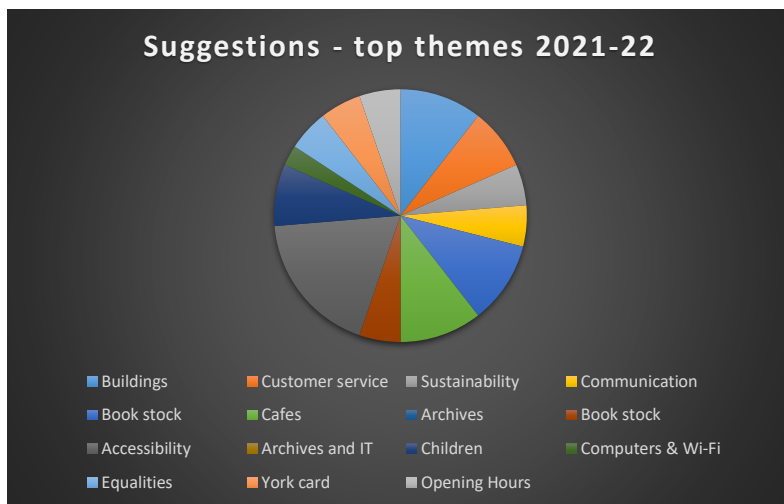
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Connecting People: "Thanks for making me feel so at home, and so welcome. I have moved to New Earswick in the pandemic and don't know many people, it's nice to know I can come somewhere with my family and feel part of the community."

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. A full list of suggestions is also reported to CYC quarterly.

Main themes in 2021-22

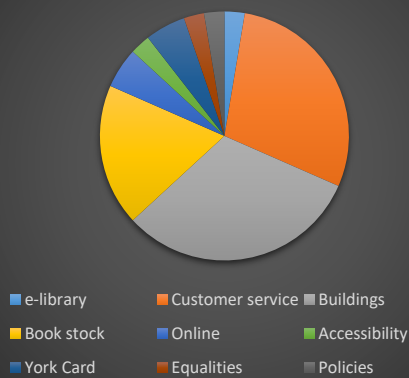


Complaints

All customer complaints are reviewed monthly by Strategic and Operational Management Teams and added to improvement plans if they cannot be resolved immediately. A full list of complaints is also reported to CYC quarterly. Trends and common themes in complaints are below:

Main themes in 2021-22

Complaints - top themes in 2021-22



Customer Feedback: User Satisfaction Surveys

Public Library User Survey (PLUS)

We conducted a large-scale customer engagement exercise in running the Public Library User Survey (PLUS) which is a robust large-scale pen and paper survey of in-person visitors. 2077 responses were collected during during week commencing 11 October 2021. We actively approached visitors asking them to take part, so we heard from a broader spectrum of users than those who normally make their voices heard.

Highlights from the report:

1. Customer Satisfaction scores were very positive. Overall satisfaction rose from 92.0% to 95.8%, and all ten satisfaction questions showed an uplift from the 2016 survey. This may be related to running the survey at the end of the pandemic – perhaps customers feel particularly grateful about the high quality of Explore’s services during the pandemic; or perhaps the most positive customers were more likely to have returned to libraries and therefore form part of the sample.
2. Scores for Library Attractiveness were highest at Tang Hall, New Earswick and Mobile; and lowest at Haxby and Clifton, which strongly endorses the investment programme in terms of libraries already refurbished and those identified for imminent improvement.

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3. We collected evidence for the first time that larger multi-purpose sites are used in quantifiably different ways – more services are used in a visit, and customers linger longer.
4. 74% of customers indicated that libraries had helped them in one of more of the ways indicated, which were social impact terms such as “your job” or “family and relationships”. Specifically, 38% of customers indicated that using libraries had helped with their health & wellbeing, and this figure was higher among long term sick or disabled customers (50%), and widowed customers (49%).
5. There were approximately 900 free text comments, in which the themes which came up most often were praise for staff (c215); requests for more books (c90), and comments on opening hours (c50). We collected approximately 50 comments which are particularly strong on demonstrating social impact. A sizable minority of the comments contained practical suggestions which have since been addressed, by measures such as reviewing our holdings of classic novels; increasing the rotation of the audiobook stock; and bringing in an additional storytime at Tang Hall.

The survey was resource-heavy in terms of staff/volunteer time and budget, but the investment paid off by providing valuable insights into how customers feel about library services, actionable customer requests, and evidence we can use for advocacy.

Talkabout Panel

In October 2021 we ran some questions in CYC's Talkabout residents' survey, an online survey of 513 residents, in order to collect information about how residents (including non-users) view us, and to measure the recognition of our various services. This information will inform marketing activity and determine how we manage our messaging to non-users. The timing of the survey aimed to complement the user survey which was conducted at a similar time.

Highlights are:

1. We gained an understanding of which groups of residents are aware of which of our services.
 - o The services with the highest overall level of awareness were Book lending; Archives & Local History; York Cards; Computers; Cafes. The services with the lowest overall level of awareness were YouTube channel; Free access to paid-for websites like Oxford English Dictionary and Which; Sheet music sets; Reading Well; Help with government or council services online.
 - o Non-users naturally had lower awareness of services, and this discrepancy was greatest with storytimes/ryhmetimes; Author events, and eBook lending. These are the services where you're most disadvantaged in your chance of knowing about the service if you're not a user.
 - o Females generally had higher awareness of services.
 - o There was some limited evidence that customers who only use the smaller libraries are less likely to be aware of eBook and eAudiobook lending; Online events; Toy lending and Reading challenges.
2. Of lapsed users, defined as those who said they hadn't used us since before the pandemic, one third were planning to return after the pandemic, the other two thirds are staying away for non-pandemic related reasons.
3. Non-users were fairly likely to select the answers "I didn't know what was available" (22%) and "I'm not clear about what I have to do" (12%) when asked about the reasons for their non-use. Similarly, a perceived lack of marketing was also one of the themes which came up most frequently in the free text comments.
4. Other themes which came up regularly in the comments were around noise, and around wanting more investment in bookstock. The focus on bookstock was also seen in the comments from the user survey running concurrently (PLUS). The focus on noise wasn't a strong theme in the PLUS comments, which may relate to

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Talkabout having an older panel, and asking non-users and lapsed users as well as current customers. There were a lot of complimentary comments too, including respondents praising CYC's commitment to funding library services.

The Talkabout survey required very little resource in terms of time and budget and was therefore a very cost-effective exercise. Unfortunately, the panel is self-selecting and doesn't necessarily represent the make-up of the population: 70% of respondents were over 60, when over 60s only account for 29% of York's adult population. None-the-less, the data has been informative around our marketing programme and our understanding of non-users.

Consultation as part of the Future Libraries (FLIP) programme provided us with opportunities to engage with local communities specifically around the proposed plans for the library developments at Clifton and Haxby & Wigginton.

2,255 residents responded to the consultation with Clifton residents in August and 90% agreed with the relocation of Explore Clifton Library Learning Centre. A second engagement session seeking views on the first draft of site plans was held during December. 88% of those who engaged with the survey liked the overall design and its elements – the library space, the reading café space and the concept of flexible spaces that perform multiple functions. Targeted focus groups to tease out some of the design details will be held in 2022/23

Public consultation in Haxby & Wigginton held in November saw 90% out of the 177 who participated in support of the project. The consultation requested views on future opening hours, uses for the spaces within the library and elements to incorporate into the detailed design. In February, we then held a number of focused engagement sessions seeking the views of children, young people and parents specifically to inform the development of the children's/teen area of the library. Comments will be fed into the overall finished product as the library opens Autumn 2022.

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Audiences

Audience Profile

Demographic information about our customer base is collected once every three years as part of an anonymous user survey (PLUS). By collecting the data this way, we learn about the full range of visitors, not just those with library membership. When we ask customers for personal information, we attract some complaints, because some customers feel that these questions are intrusive. None-the-less, it does enable us to understand who is using our services, and how effective we are at reaching the broadest possible audience from the local population.

As with the Staff Diversity report, this analysis will be revisited in Summer 2022 when the census 2021 data is due to be released, because the comparative data available at present is not current. In some cases, such as ethnicity, the population profile may have changed considerably since the previous census.

The report shows that among Explore's customers:

- People aged 16 to 34 are under-represented compared to the population profile, and people aged 35 to 44 and 65 to 84 are over-represented. The age profile of quiet study users and PC users is younger than that of borrowers.
- Females are over-represented in our customer-base. 67% of Explore's customers are female, whereas females represent 51% of York's population.
- Overall, Explore's customers are similar to the population profile in terms of their health conditions and illnesses, which is a change from last time we ran the survey. The proportion of customers with no conditions, 84%, is higher than last time we ran the survey when it was 65%. The survey took place in October 2021, during the pandemic, and it seems possible that some customers with particular types of health problems may have been staying away from public places.
- Explore's customers are slightly more ethnically diverse than the population profile, however, since the census figures are from 2011, they must be viewed with caution.
- Most visitors, 59%, have been using us for more than 3 years.

Marketing and Audience Development

The Service Developer Team focused on the development of the website, building on the success of the tile approach on the front page. We now have a template that we can use throughout the website to make navigation more user friendly. Our focus has moved from support during lockdown(s) Explore at Home, to 'Here for you' everyday support in all the many and varied ways. We also feature special events, activities and information such as the

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Summer Reading Challenge or consultation and engagement such as the Clifton Explore and Haxby developments.

Explore wrote a bid and was awarded 3 free places to attend the prestigious Arts Marketing Association Annual Conference in autumn 2021.

Marketing: Key campaigns

This was our first year in focusing on specific campaigns to increase influence and income. We focused on three specific campaigns during the year.

Q2 Value of the Summer Reading Challenge campaign

This campaign drew on customer stories and facts from The Reading Agency to demonstrate the positive impact of The Summer Reading Challenge. We created bright, appealing social media posts that could be shared across multiple platforms.

Although the campaign was smaller than we initially hoped it did build momentum through the week, with two of the tweets gaining over 3,000 impressions and a retweet from a library customer, who has over 1,000 followers, sharing that she had seen her daughter's confidence grow whilst participating in the challenge.

Twitter: impressions – 11,910 over 7 tweets; engagement rate – 2.5%.

Facebook: impressions – 2,802 over 5 posts; engagement rate – 2.5%.

Key Learning:

On reflection we felt that this campaign would have been more successful to share earlier in the year, as part of the build up to the campaign – rather than at the end of the summer when momentum is slowing down as people prepare to return to school.

Q3 Make a Difference - Donations campaign

This campaign drew on customer stories and facts about how Explore makes a difference focusing on three specific areas:

- Challenging Imaginations
- Connecting communities – sharing ideas
- Supporting well being

It provided the opportunity to start the conversation on social media about our need for community support through donations.

Twitter: impressions – 11,910 over 7 tweets; engagement rate – 2.5%.

Facebook: impressions – 2,802 over 5 posts; engagement rate – 2.5%.

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Key Learning: More development time needed. This campaign was developed between one marketing assistant leaving and induction of a new person in the post resulting in less development time.

Q4 York Card and Residents Festival campaign

York Card Sales in January **£5,433.32** (target exceeded)

Twitter: Reach for campaign – 10,506 impressions over 12 posts, engagement rate 4%

Facebook: Highest reaching post on Facebook: 7.1k, Overall reach for campaign: 10.7k

YouTube: 127 impressions – 32 unique viewers (for How to video)

Key Learning: Last campaign from interim Marketing Assistant. New post starts April 2022 which will provide consistency.

Events and Activities Programme

Our messaging around events and activities for all ages is popular and successful. Events are frequently delivered in partnership with other local organisations and we work collaboratively to promote our activities. This helps us grow our audience beyond our usual followers, as partners will not only retweet our messages, but also tag us in their own promotions, helping to raise our profile as a cultural venue.

The attendance for events has increased exponentially as confidence has grown. In quarter 1 we had 29 events attended by 597, rising to 545 events attracting 5, 959 attendees.

From the Annual Events Plan you will see the range of events and activities offered in addition to the weekly events across the Explore network. We offered a total of **1,305** events and activities which was attended by **14,931** during 2021/22

Advocacy

We produced 2 major advocacy documents this year.

The Annual Review: this was shared with councillors and local organisations and partners and attracted both national (Arts Council and Ned Potter – marketing guru) and international recognition (USA Library Marketing Blog). The Annual Review will feature on the blog as good practice in April 2022.

The Summer Reading Challenge Evaluation: was used as advocacy for funders thank you event. This resulted in additional funding for children's events during December.

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Advocacy through Media Mentions

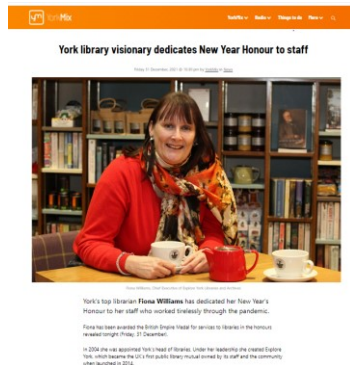
We recorded 97 mentions of Explore in print, online and other local media during 2021-22.

Q1 Full reopening of libraries after lockdown in April 2021, coverage of the launch for The World Turned Upside Down chapbook and the award of the British Empire Medal to Barbara Swinn.

Q2 Summer Reading Challenge, development of Clifton Explore and the production of Operation Hummingbird.

Q3 Explore's Annual Review was featured in library sector press and Explore Archives Storytelling Tool (EAST) featured in The National Archives Annual Review both helping to raise our profile nationally. There was also coverage for Libraries Week, development of Haxby & Wigginton and Clifton Explore. 2021 closed with the announcement of another award with a British Empire Medal for Fiona Williams recognising her work and by extension the whole Explore team.

Q4 January coverage focused on CYC's capital funding announcement for the developments at Haxby & Wigginton and Clifton Explore. Residents Festival & York Card received good coverage. Other mentions included Mini Golf (objections), and Our City festival in March.



Archives

Performance: The Archives Reading Room were increased in July and Saturday opening in September. Numbers of researchers are still not where they were pre-pandemic, but this may change as students and academics return to research and international researchers are able to travel more freely.

ALH Researchers: 468

ALH Encounters: 1,358

Archives deposited and accessioned:

A total of 28 were received this year. Key highlights identified in yellow

Full list:

F J Wise	Signed etching of Ouse Bridge, York
John Stanley Brown	Scanned images of a diary maintained in India by John Stanley Brown.
Unknown photographer	Scanned photographs of Askham Bryan VE Day
Sid Metcalfe	Scanned copies of photographs from Normandy Veteran Sid Metcalfe
Created by City of York Council as part of its Freedom Court proceedings.	Scanned copy of a Freeman's certificate in the name of Mary Rose Masefield
Mencap, York and District branch	Records of York and District Mencap
Wheldrake Women's Institute	Records of Wheldrake Women's Institute
Rowntree Players	Jim Hammond, Rowntree Players scrapbooks and other memorabilia
Bedern Hall Company	Bedern Hall Company records
York Guild of Building	Records of the York Guild of Building
Land registry	Deeds relating to 31 West End, Clifton
Sowray Family	Records of Sowray Family of 38 Alma Terrace, York

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Youngman and Wright families	Records relating to 18 and 19 St Maurice Road and Haxby Lodge
Not	School of Art plans
York Society of Magicians	Records of the York Society of Magicians
York Rotary Club	Accrual of records York Rotary Club
York Philharmonic Choir	Archive of the York Philharmonic Choir
Huntington Good Neighbours Association	Records of the Huntington Good Neighbours Association
Tony Neal	Records of Tony Neal relating to his work with the York Guild of Building
RB Mills Travel Agent	Ledger of RB Mills Travel Agency of Minster Gates
Fairfax Society	Residual records of the Fairfax Society
Loadman's Curio Book	
Joan Maynard, collection of National Union of Agricultural Workers papers	
York Philharmonic Choir accrual, newsletters (digital)	
Accrual The River Foss Society	
Freda P R Freer, collection of programmes	
Archives of Sue Lister, MBE	
City of York Council and Edited	Unbound Electoral Registers 2021 (Full

Archives Accreditation: Following the Archive Service Accreditation review, Explore York Libraries and Archives Mutual Ltd continues to meet the requirements of Archive Service Accreditation and will retain its status as an Accredited Archive Service.

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Deepstore audit: in February. It is best practice for archive services to undertake collections audits from time to time, and this was the first audit since the uncatalogued collections were transferred to Deepstore from the Art Gallery premises.

Digital Preservation and Records Management

Work has progressed this year with attendance and presentation to the Digital Records Management project Board, chaired by Janie Berry. The Civic Archivist has supported Ian Smithies with the development of a business case recommending the purchase of Preservica.

We have made contact with other Archivists in the region who are in the early stages of integrating Preservica and will meet up with the working group made up of the Northern region Preservica users on a monthly basis.

Digital access: work continues to develop the policies, procedures and infrastructure that will support born-digital access and preservation, in particularly how users will access born-digital material in the reading room.

To supplement all of the above archivists have signed up to a series of webinars on Practical Digital Preservation, offered by Preservica.

Development of a video: To support the understanding of the importance of Digital Records Management for CYC staff we have been working with Kitty Greenbrown (poet and performer) and Hewitt and Walker to create a promotional video of the archive service for a general audience and a council audience. Kitty has written two great spoken word pieces and we have met with Hewitt and Walker to discuss how to structure the video element, based on the words. Filming will take place early April. The version for council staff, addresses them directly to 'make your mark'. This will be used for internal advocacy and as a tool to support an understanding of records management.

Engagement and Outreach

TNA Testbed: Virtualising the Archive event as part of the Festival of Ideas. There were 76 attendees, including academics, teachers, artists, and professionals from the tech, archive and museum sectors. We live tweeted during the event, and this was picked up by the National Archives Sector account and the International Council on Archives.

Presentations were delivered at Tang Hall Explore and Hungate Reading Café for the community to try it. A zoom session was held for academics and in January a presentation to the Tang Hall Local history group.

The project will be featured in the TNA Annual report and next steps, including further development funding will be considered in 2022/23

Street Life Project: We are actively supporting the University of York's Street Life project focusing on high street regeneration in Coney St. We are in regular contact with Kate Giles

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and Louise Hansom who are leading on the project. The project was awarded £400,000 and part of that money is funding a group of professional researchers to uncover the history of Coney Street in the archives. In February, archivists delivered a two-hour workshop highlighting archive collections that could assist in their research. This was attended by 13 academics.

Raids over York:

IPUP Student Placement is developing her two Canva outputs on the theme of the 29 April 1942 Baedeker Raids, ahead of the anniversary in April. Three videos will be created. One is a general overview of the raid, another is a focus on the report of Officer Shearing, an ARP officer whose detailed account of the night we hold. The final video is about billeting. These will be shared on our You tube channel and on Raids Over York and Explore social media in the build up to the 80th anniversary of the raid.

NHLF Funding application for the project, supported by Explore has been deferred to May/July 2022

Sporting Heritage:

The elements for all partners have been delivered with the exception of York City Knights. The project was originally due to end in December but received an extension until the end of January. This extension was agreed specifically in order for YCK to launch the community artwork during Residents Festival. The Access Archivist created an exhibition of Sporting Heritage archives to support the launch. Unfortunately, YCK pulled out of this event at the last minute. The event still went ahead and was successful.

At the specific request of YCK, the project sought and received an extension for another 2 months, until the end of March, to enable them to deliver their outputs. Again, this has failed to materialise and has been escalated to SMT and funders NHLF.

Student Placements and teaching: Archivists have supported xx student placements and delivered xx teaching modules this year.

Funding

Following a funded scoping grant of the Town Clerks records, we applied for Archives Revealed funding of £45,000. Unfortunately, this was unsuccessful. It is getting harder to achieve funding due to the significant increase in number of applications.

Future Libraries Development Programme

Our focus this year was primarily on the capital investments and preparatory work leading to the decision by City of York Council Executive in January to invest £7.7m capital for the development of Explore Centres at Clifton and Acomb and the co-located gateway library in Haxby & Wigginton and Oaken Grove Community Centre.

A brief summary on the status of each co-location is provided below.

Acomb Explore	Decision made by CYC and Explore to postpone the development of plans based on the outcome of 3 feasibility studies. Focus given to Haxby & Wigginton and Clifton where the development need is greater. Liaised with key local stakeholders throughout.
Bishopthorpe	Updated asset management plan with options of community co-location partners. No further actions
Clifton Explore	Held numerous engagement sessions with stakeholders to develop the plans for the scheme, both internal and external. 4 community partners on board with Agreement for Lease in progress and regular partnership meetings held Planning application submitted
Copmanthorpe	5-year lease agreed in July 2020. Updated asset management plan with options of co-location partners.
Dringhouses	Updated asset management plan with options of community co-location partners. No further actions
Dunnington	Explore entered into 12-year lease with Dunnington Reading Rooms, with option of a 6-year break, should more desirable co-location opportunities arise,
Fulford	Updated asset management plan with options of community co-location partners. No further actions
Haxby & Wigginton	Held numerous engagement sessions with stakeholders to develop the plans for the library and reading café elements of the scheme Management agreement and agreement for lease agreed with Oaken Grove Community Centre Trustees Planning application for development approved Specification for the tender agreed and out for tender
Huntington	Updated asset management plan with options of community co-location partners. No further actions
Mobile	Full review of how residents access library services outside of physical buildings following changes in use post-pandemic. Mobile library is an option

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Poppleton	Meetings held with manager of The Poppleton Centre on the co-location of the library with the Centre. Poppleton Centre Trustees in agreement in principle In negotiations re capital or revenue commitment from Explore
Strensall	Updated asset management plan with options of community co-location partners. No further actions

Looking ahead to 2022-23

The specification for Clifton Explore will be finalised by August 2022, ahead of tenders going out in the autumn. The third phase of the public engagement strategy for the scheme with launch with focus groups planned for key stakeholders within the community, including volunteers, existing library groups, staff teams, Clifton Explore future partners, local residents and library users and accessibility groups.

Co-location of the remaining Gateway libraries remains a risk, primarily due to the lack of available opportunities within local communities. A meeting is planned in April with key stakeholders within City of York Council to assess potential options.

Bookstock

The overall size of the stock collection has not changed significantly within 21/22. The report details changes which have been made during the year. 21/22 was a particularly strong year for enhancing the collection via donations from partner organisations, for instance Reading Well books; eBooks; Wellcomm packs; and children's braille.

Stock Inventory

As always, the stock count is taken on the final day of the year, 31 March 2022, and we use CIPFA definitions for stock categories to ensure consistency over time.

	21/22 inventory	20/21 inventory	Up/Down on last year
Reference Books	19878	19981	-1%
Lending Adult Fiction	51020	50189	2%
Lending Adult Nonfiction	44133	45097	-2%
Lending Junior Fiction	34144	35341	-3%
Lending Junior Nonfiction	7484	8534	-12%
Reserve Books (in storage, transit etc.)	14527	14202	2%
Total lending book stock	136781	139161	-2%
Total book stock	171186	173344	-1%
Reference Audio-visual	0	0	
Lending Adult audiobooks	3712	3827	-3%
Lending Children's audiobooks	771	789	-2%
Lending AV (DVDs, language packs)	72	73	-1%
E-books	6799	6064	12%
E newspapers, e-magazines, e-comics	7258	7258	0%
E-Audio and e-audiovisuals	3451	3027	14%
Music streaming	0	0	
Hardware	40	39	3%
Reserve AV (in storage, in transit etc.)	205	276	-26%

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Total lending AV	22103	21077	5%
Total AV	22308	21353	4%
Total Stock	193494	194697	-1%
Toys (outside CIPFA inventory)	215	187	15%

There are no very large changes from last year.

The volume of children's non-fiction has fallen by -12%. This is due to withdrawing some out-of-date stock and is temporary. There has already been a stock-buy in January to partially refresh the stock and ongoing acquisitions will providing ongoing replenishment.

The volume of eBook and eAudiobook titles has increased by 12% and 14% respectively. The eLibrary was identified as an area to expand due to long-term increasing demand intensified by the pandemic. Note that in line with CIPFA definitions, these e-library lines count publications rather than individual copies, so we have 6,799 eBooks in stock, but some of them are borrowable by two, three or unlimited numbers of people at once.

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 20/21, demonstrated this once again.

	21/22 inventory	21/22 issues	Explore Stock turn 21/22	Explore Stock turn 19/20
Lending Adult Fiction	51020	217417	4.3	5.3
Lending Adult Nonfiction	44133	110830	2.5	3.3
Lending Junior Fiction	34144	205658	6.0	6.3
Lending Junior Nonfiction	7484	32408	4.3	4.3
Total lending book stock	136781	566313	4.1	4.8
Lending Adult audiobooks	3712	9093	2.4	4.1
Lending Children's audiobooks	771	1954	2.5	3.8
Lending AV (DVDs, language packs)	72	126	1.8	3.6

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E-books	6799	44831	6.6	4.4
E newspapers, emagazines, ecomics	7258	277923	38.3	
E-audiobooks	3451	41763	12.1	10.8

The 21/22 stock turn for physical books was lower than the comparison year shown, 19/20. This is just a factor of issues being lower, especially in the earlier part of the year during pandemic measures.

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 for physical stock. 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. A stock turn over 10 is not necessarily a problem for eBooks and eAudiobooks, especially if they can be borrowed by multiple people at once.

Stock Acquired, Purchased and Retired

21/22 total stock including books, AV, e-library, reference and toys	20/21 total stock including books, AV, e-library, reference and toys	Up/Down on last year	Up/Down on last year as %	All 21/22 acquisitions including purchases and donations	21/22 acquisitions - purchases only	Retired stock 21/22
193709	194884	-1175	-1%	24180	17262	25355

In 21/22 we accessioned slightly fewer items than we are de-accessioned, so the overall stock size fell by -1%. 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 eBooks it also includes licences expiring.

In 20/21 we did not encourage donations due to space limitations and quarantine processes, but we planned to attract more donations in 21/22, and indeed this came to pass. We accessioned almost 7000 donations during 21/22. These were partly donated by the public: where residents had post-pandemic clear-outs we were happy to accept high quality books into stock. The donations also came from partner organisations who donated collections including Reading Well books; eBooks; Wellcomm packs (a multimedia resource for early years providers supporting communication skills); and children's braille.

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Other notable stock work in 21/22 included allocating stock to Haxby ready for the re-opening – this accounts for a portion of the “reserve stock” in the inventory. Additionally, we also invested in some new reading group sets. This is now an income generating service where subscription fees are spent on refreshing the titles. Ward funding was used to buy an additional collection of children’s stock at Strensall.

Our aim is to have quality in both e-library and physical stock, so there is a budgetary implication of investing in the e-library without it being at the expense of print publications.

The number of paid-for acquisitions this year, 17262, appears lower than last year when it was 22121, but this is largely illusory. Last year the 7000 e-magazine and newspaper publications on PressReader were new to stock. This year they were still in stock and being kept up to date every day but they weren’t classed as a new addition.

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Results for 12 months to 31 March 2022

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