

Devon's Libraries Update

Report of the Head of Communities

1) Introduction

This report has been produced in collaboration with the Council's provider of Library Services Libraries Unlimited and is intended to provide members with an update on Devon's Library service. The value of Devon's Library network and how it services local communities is described in attached **reference document 1 Libraries – Case for Support brochure**.

This report considers:

- Building back following COVID-19
- Current activities across the libraries network
- Financial pressures on the service
- Future developments

2) Building back after Covid

The pandemic had a huge impact on libraries and the way in which people accessed library services has changed. The already growing digital of e-books, e-magazines and audiobooks offer saw incredible rates of growth during the period of lockdowns whilst physical stock issues dropped away as libraries were closed to public. In the last 12 months we have been analysing the data on the demand on the service to see what new patterns have emerged and also tracking the progress of returns to the more traditional in-library physical transactions.

We have provided the Libraries data pack as **attachment 2**. and would like to draw your attention to the following points:

- Stock issues in total are now 117% of 2019
- Childrens stock issues have increased on 2019
- Digital issues have levelled also at higher levels than pre-pandemic
- Computer access has gradually improved
- Adults physical borrowing is less of the total borrowing than in 2019
- More and more people are returning to the library to borrow items and attend events.

3) Current activities across the library network

3.1 Childrens

The Secret Book Quest has exceeded its Year 1 target of 5000 sign-ups with a total of 5459 children enrolled. We have been tracking the number of books borrowed by participating children and have found that, on average, they borrow almost three times as many books as non-participants. This suggests that the challenge is effectively promoting a love of reading among children. We are focused on replicating this success in the 0-4 age group with the launch of our Early Years reading challenge, Libro's Gang, in Q2 of next year.

Research indicates the importance of encouraging reading at a young age, and we are committed to supporting our communities in this effort. Children & Young People books have seen a higher proportion of investment in the past year which has also had an impact on making the offer more attractive.

3.2 Libraries for Life Campaign

Our Libraries for Life campaign runs from October 2022 through to March 2023 with the overall aim to support individuals and communities through the cost of living crisis. The main themes are addressing the cost of living, access to food, increasing community connections, improving wellbeing, and developing skills and employability.

To achieve this, libraries have been encouraged to:

- Articulate and promote existing library offers
- Identify the changing needs of individuals and local communities
- Raise income where possible to fund activity
- Meet current needs and reach people in ways they identify with
- Share what works across libraries and extend what is successful
- Develop existing partnerships and build new partnerships
- Generate evidence of the difference libraries are making.

The campaign encourages people to use of the full range of library services alongside specific initiatives such as community fridges, coat racks etc. Libraries have made use of additional funding from a range of sources including the Growing Communities fund (17 libraries - £33k) and Dartmouth Town Council £5k grant to cover utilities costs over the winter.

3.3 Warm Spaces

The National Grid kindly provided Libraries Unlimited with a grant enabling us to extend library opening hours in the following libraries and provide additional 'warm space' community support this winter.

- Bovey Tracey open for an extra four hours on Saturdays. The library is open from 1pm-5pm.
- Holsworthy open for an extra three hours on Fridays. The library is open 10am-1pm.

- Tavistock is open for an extra three and a half hours on Wednesdays. The library is open from 2pm-5:30pm.
- Torrington is open for an extra three hours on Mondays. The library is open 10am-1pm.

So far, the libraries involved are reportedly busy during these extra hours and the first Bovey extra opening, a customer brought in a ukulele and played Jingle Bells: <https://fb.watch/hgdjKyZoFV/>

In addition, the following libraries are opening winter extra hours with support of Library Friends:

- Moretonhampstead is open for an extra hour on Tuesdays and an extra three hours on Thursdays.
- Princetown is open for an extra hour on Mondays and an extra three hours on Fridays.

3.4 Volunteering

The volunteering hours peaked in Q2 of 2019 at 8000 hrs compared to 4000 in Q3 on 2022. Although unfortunately volunteering hours have not yet reached pre-pandemic levels of volunteering, which we understand is a sector-wide challenge, it is encouraging to see that the amount of volunteer hours continues to rise steadily. We will be looking at our wider volunteer offer and strategy as part of people strategy planning.

We circulated the second edition of the Volunteer Voice newsletter to all volunteers in December, covering topics from the Staff Awards to volunteer visits to how the volunteers have been supporting the “Libraries for Life” winter campaign.

We are starting to prepare for our volunteer survey that we have carried out every 2 years and which we plan to carry out in the Spring. This is a really useful way to understand what motivates volunteers and what they value about volunteering, as well as getting their feedback on their roles.

3.5 What goes on in the Library

Evolve is an Arts Council funded programme of events and activities and Libraries Unlimited have been successful in their bid for National Portfolio Organisation status securing funding for a new range of cultural activities.

Members are encouraged to visit their local library regularly to see for themselves the broad range of activities and events happening near to them. A snapshot of what's been going on is detailed in **attachment 3 Libraries activity report**.

4) Service financial pressures

The service fee will be increased by £301k making the service fee £6.799m for the 23/24 financial year.

Utilities, staffing and premises costs for Devon's 50 libraries have been increasing at pace with higher than expected rates of inflation. Delivering current levels of services within the service fee remain challenging and measures under consideration and planning for the 23/24 financial year include:

- The book fund will be reduced from £550k to £500k
- Continuation of active vacancy management
- Revising and harmonising opening hours across the 7 tiers of libraries.

5) Looking forward

The local Library continues to play a key role in community life across Devon and the offer has expanded to wider wellbeing support, culture and creativity as well as becoming a place for vulnerable people to access and get support and make connections. We see the Library as a vital resource for those unable to access or afford technology needed to apply for jobs, benefits, documentation.

5.1 Mobile Libraries

In 2023/24 we will need to review the mobile library service as the aging vehicles are now incredibly expensive to run and maintain and downtime is increasing due to mechanical faults and servicing. The mobile library vehicles require significant capital investment to replace and we will look at alternative ways to provide services to people in rural areas and to the most vulnerable.

5.2 Investing in library spaces

We are constantly working with Libraries Unlimited to improve the library estate and we are pleased to report that in June 2023 we are planning to open the new Bideford library in a £1.8m investment in the town that will provide local people with a hub to access library and adult learning in a refurbished, modern building.

There is a project that will replace the self-service machines in many libraries with more modern and flexible devices that will add to the customer experience.

5.3 Future Libraries Strategy

In the Autumn this year we are planning to start work on a future libraries strategy that will take us beyond the existing contract in April 2026. We will ask Devon's residents for their views as well as national and regional intelligence to ensure Libraries remain relevant, vibrant spaces that deliver services and opportunities to the community they support.

Simon Kitchen

Head of Communities

Electoral Divisions: All

Cabinet Member for Public Health, Communities and Prosperity: Councillor Roger Croad

Director of Public Health, Communities and Prosperity: Steve Brown

Local Government Act 1972: List of background papers

Nil

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Devon's Libraries Update - Final

Libraries Unlimited

Enriching Lives
Building Communities

Our Impact



Registered Charity 1170092



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

Devon
County Council

TORBAY COUNCIL

Who we are

We are a charity, established in 2016 when we were 'spun out' from Devon County Council.

We are responsible for operating and developing 54 public libraries across Devon and Torbay on behalf of the local authorities, who commission us to run their libraries serving a population of around 1.1 million.

We deliver hands-on training and education on modern manufacturing and creative techniques through FabLab Devon – the first fabrication laboratory to open in a UK public library.

We support local businesses to start up and grow by offering access to Intellectual Property advice and seminars, through a partnership with the British Library's Business and Intellectual Property Centre.

We're also an Arts Council funded National Portfolio Organisation (NPO), bringing a range of creative events and activities to communities across Devon.



Be part of our story

We are immensely proud to have already gained a national reputation for delivering high-quality and innovative library services.

But: we want to do more.

The impact of our libraries is huge: tackling many fundamental issues that face our society today.

Every penny we raise goes into delivering and developing our services so that we can better support our communities.

With your help we can do more.

Alex Kittow,
Chief Executive



You can help:

- Make a donation: either in your local library, or online by scanning the QR code.
- Introduce a friend to the library.
- Become a corporate supporter or partner with us.
- Leave us a gift in your will.
- Volunteer or join the Friends of your local library.

To find out more:

librariesunlimited.org/support-us
fundraising@librariesunlimited.org.uk



Scan to donate



Promoting and encouraging a love of reading

We reduce literacy inequalities

89,000 children are members of our libraries, borrowing around 650,000 books per year.

Our libraries support reading and communication skills development from 0 upwards, through activities such as our Storytime and Bounce & Rhyme sessions.

'The sessions have been beneficial to my son's confidence and mixing with others. He likes the group songs and stories. Thank you.' Bookstart Corner attendee.

Around 10,000 children across Devon take part in the Summer Reading Challenge every year.

We provide free Bookstart Baby & Treasure Packs & deliver Bookstart Corner courses: parents & children play together and learn about the importance of books, rhyme, puppets and mark-making in early years.



Low levels of literacy are a key factor in inequality

1 in 6 adults in England have what are considered 'very poor literacy skills' and well below the minimum level of skills expected to cope with everyday life.

By 3 years of age, there is a 30 million word gap between children from the wealthiest and poorest families.

1 in 5 children are starting school lacking the expected level of speech and language skills.

In 2018 in Devon only 41% of children achieved at least 5 GCSES, this is under the national average of 43%.

The life expectancy gap for males between UK wards with the lowest and highest literacy challenges is 26 years.



We provide free access to information to help everyone in their everyday lives

We combat social inequalities

We welcome everyone to our libraries, which are inclusive, warm and safe spaces.

Our libraries have a growing number of community fridges, and we provide free winter clothes rails, free toiletry and period products.

Our libraries provide people with day-to-day support with using IT equipment, printing, scanning, completing online forms and setting up email accounts.

Every library offers free access to a range of materials ranging from books, eBooks and audiobooks, business support, children's events, author events and book groups, access to free WiFi, computers, information and resources.

In 2022 Tiverton Library held a welcome session for Asylum Seekers. They joined the library, borrowed books and used PCs and WiFi facilities.



Poverty is deepening in the UK

40,000 children in Devon were living in poverty in March 2019.

The Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) predicts that disposable income will drop by 2.2% this year- the largest decline on record.

Salaries in Devon are lower than the national average.

In 2021 17% of households in Devon households were found to have food insecurity.

13% of households in Devon are experiencing fuel poverty- nationally it's 10%.

In 2018 it was estimated that 4.3 million people in the UK (8% of the population) were estimated to have no basic digital skills.





Inspiring everyone to learn, create and realise their potential

We support economic growth

Our libraries offer free resources for study and learning, including online courses and information sources.

In 2019, an independent report identified that the BIPC network was creating £6.95 of public value for every £1 invested.

We offer a range of support for skills development, from free support to using tech gadgets, to online safety and social media help.

Seven libraries run or host work clubs, reducing the barriers to employment and supporting around 600 people into work and training every year.

"I'm so grateful to Work Club. I absolutely love this job and I wouldn't have got it without you".

Digital skills are essential entry requirements for two-thirds of UK occupations

Roles that include a digital element pay more than non-digital roles. Overall, roles requiring digital skills pay 29% (£8,300 per annum) over those roles that do not (£37,000 p.a. vs £28,700 p.a.).

In 2020, in Devon, only 41% of 16-64 year olds had an NVQ4+ qualification. This is below the national average of 43%. Mid Devon is worse at only 28%.

In 2020, 4% of 16-64 year olds have no qualifications. The national average is 6%, and it's even higher in East & Mid Devon at 8%.

An estimated 9 million (16%) people are unable to use the internet and their device by themselves.



Supporting the health & wellbeing of
individuals and communities

We reduce loneliness & isolation

Our volunteering scheme, knit and knatter sessions, craft clubs, walking groups and more provide opportunities to meet people and support wellbeing.

We offer weekly sessions for parents and carers to weigh their babies, using calibrated Public Health scales, replacing the service previously provided by Children's Centres.

'The mobile libraries are vitally important, especially for people who are isolated and lonely. The service doesn't just provide a book borrowing service, it provides vital human contact for people who wouldn't otherwise have it.'

Our Devon Mobile Libraries support 322 rural communities. In 2019, the public told us that they think this service is essential as it helps many rural and isolated people and communities to access reading material that they otherwise wouldn't be able to get.

Over 50 staff are trained as Dementia Friends.



Loneliness and isolation in the UK are increasing

Loneliness has been linked to early deaths and an increased risk of heart disease, stroke, depression and cognitive decline.

Feelings of loneliness cut across all age groups. About 5% of all adults report feeling lonely 'often' or 'always', with the number rising to 10% for 16-24-year-olds.

People who feel lonely are more than twice as likely to develop Alzheimer's.

Research suggests there are significant associations between frequent library use and reported wellbeing, and also between improved access to health information through libraries and reduced calls on services such as GPs.



With your help,
We can do more



librariesunlimited.org.uk



'I just feel safe & happy at the library'

The Secret Book Quest not only boosted seven-year-old Joanie Chapman's reading skills, but also helped her grow in confidence.

Joanie describes herself as 'proudly autistic' and is educated at home by her Mum Angela. She loves chatting one-to-one with people she knows but not in large groups, can be anxious, and is extremely sensitive to noise.[...]

'Having the staff, in particular Ros, affirm her milestones was lovely for me as well as Joanie. She began to talk to them about her learning and the books, and it was fantastic to see her confidence grow in making conversation with people outside the home.

She now actually looks for two members of staff so she can chat to them. Her reading level went up as well – at one point she was reading five books a day!'

Joanie has continued her reading and is now starting on the Secret Book Quest continuation sheets for more inspiration.





02. Q3 2022/23 Data Report

Data Report

Andy Bowditch – Performance Reporting and Data Manager
January 2023

Introduction

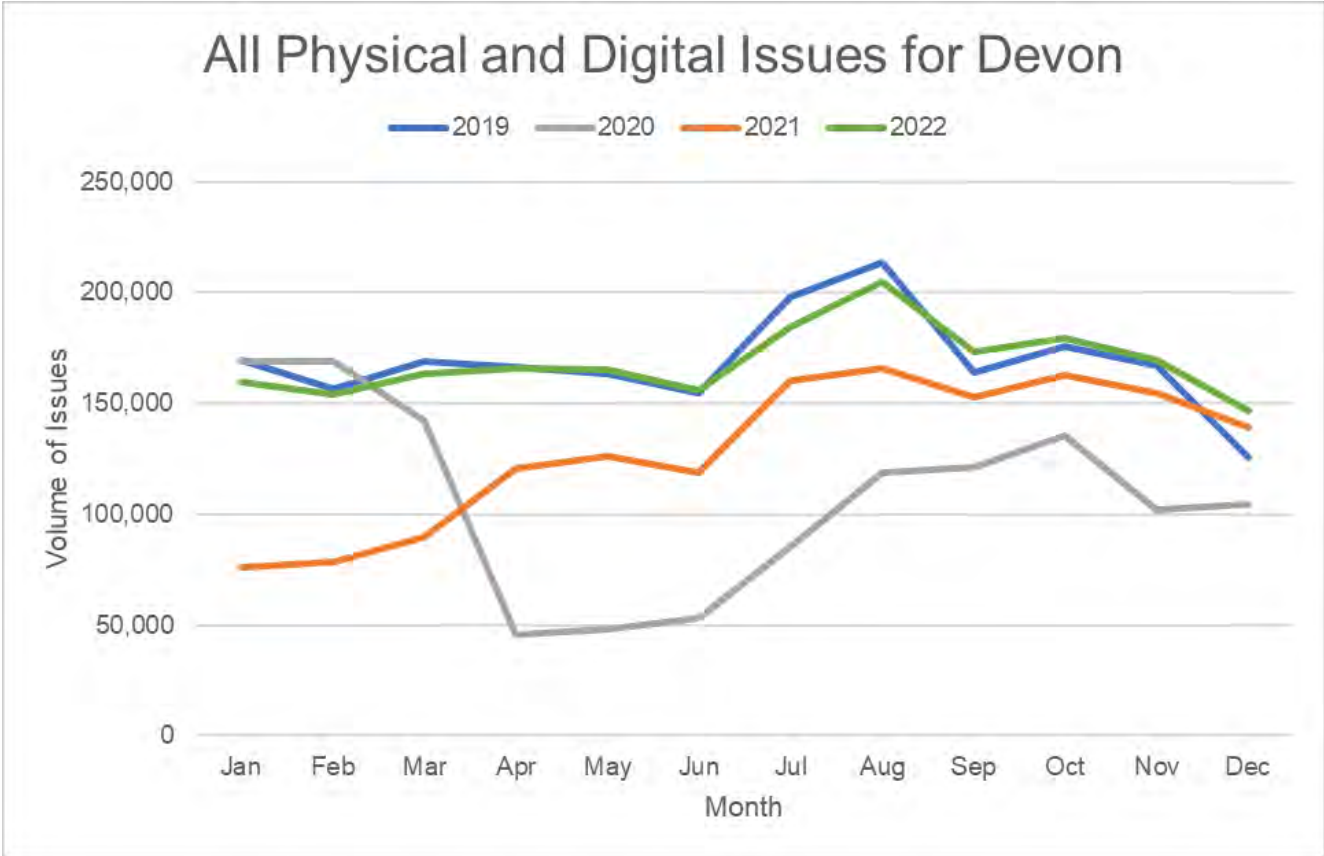
- Total issues (physical and digital) continue to exceed last financial year, this is due to a significant increase in digital audiobook and physical book issues.
- The number of active users continues to increase month-to-month.
- The number of visits continue to increase. The increase from Q2 to Q3 can partly be attributed to the installation of new footfall counters in certain libraries.
- An examination of the data revealed inaccuracies in the All Issues graph, specifically in regards to eNewspaper issuance and historical supplier information. These errors have been corrected and overall performance remains satisfactory.

Data

	Q1 2021-22	Q2 2021-22	Q3 2021- 22	Q4 2021-22	Q1 2022- 23	Q2 2022- 23	Q3 2022-23
Visits to library	160,000	325,000	360,000	398,000	406,000	482,441	638,668
Active Users	74,354	82,365	87,795	97,575	103,310	110,495	112,619
New Members	4,132	8,126	6,241	6,439	5,765	9,310	6,316
Total Stock Issues	366,184	479,044	456,864	476,635	486,861	562,528	496,117
<i>Stock Issues</i>	218,332	347,157	310,436	326,060	334,789	403,294	338,264
<i>eBooks</i>	55,791	55,764	53,710	53,411	53,148	55,517	51,368
<i>eAudiobooks</i>	43,007	44,809	48,821	49,161	51,061	53,407	53,371
<i>eMagazines</i>	37,011	16,562	26,552	28,011	26,921	27,486	28,652
<i>eNewspapers</i>	12,043	14,752	17,345	19,992	20,942	22,824	24,462
Computer and Wi-Fi Sessions	38,812	52,739	56,334	57,459	63,064	62,172	73,983
Public PC	14,661	23,517	26,818	28,395	29,601	33,934	34,716
Public Wi-Fi	24,151	29,222	29,516	29,064	33,463	28,238	39,267
Events and Activities	380	884	1,590	1,740	1,820	2,230	2,512
Event Attendance	26,046	24,246	34,794	26,814	30,020	41,739	39,139
Volunteer Hours	349	1,452	1,592	2,420	3,072	4,505	4,678

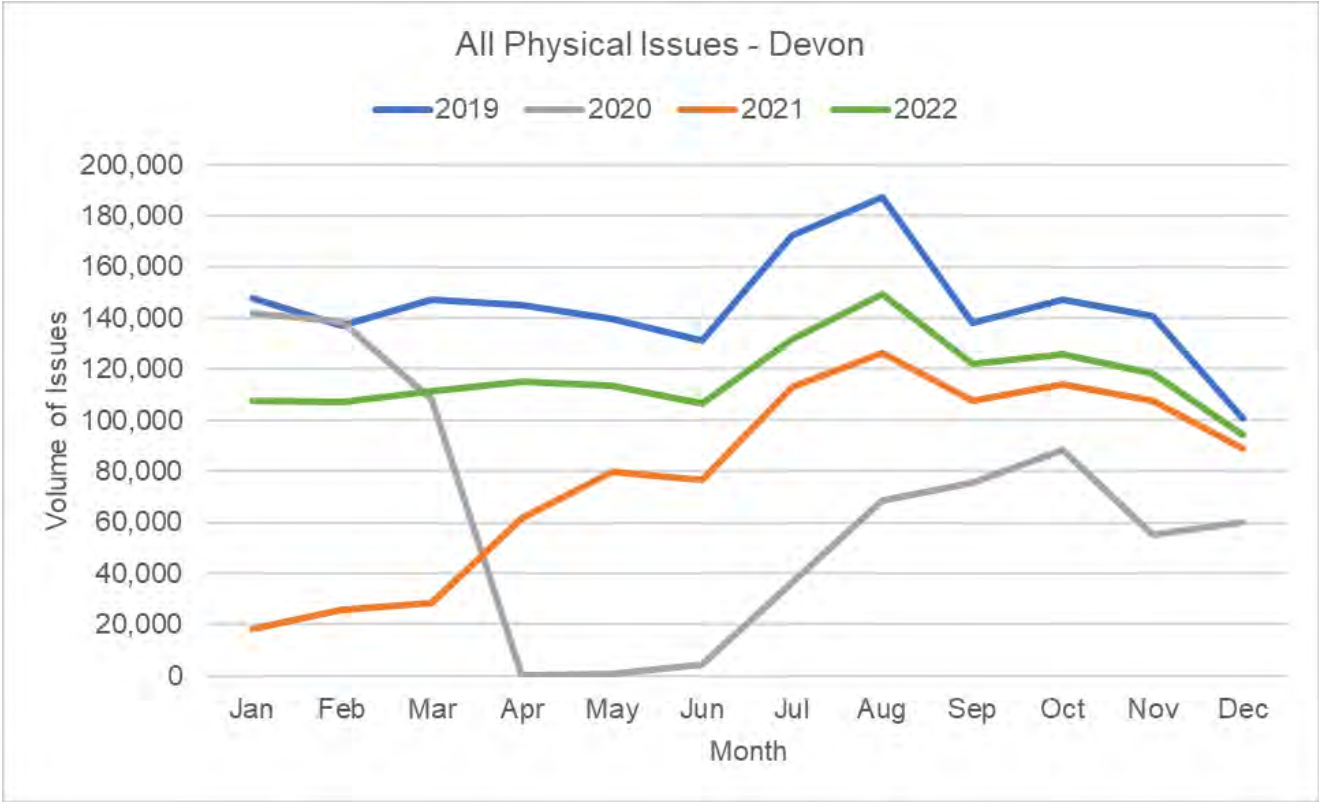
02. Q3 2022/23 Data Report

All Issues (Physical & Digital)



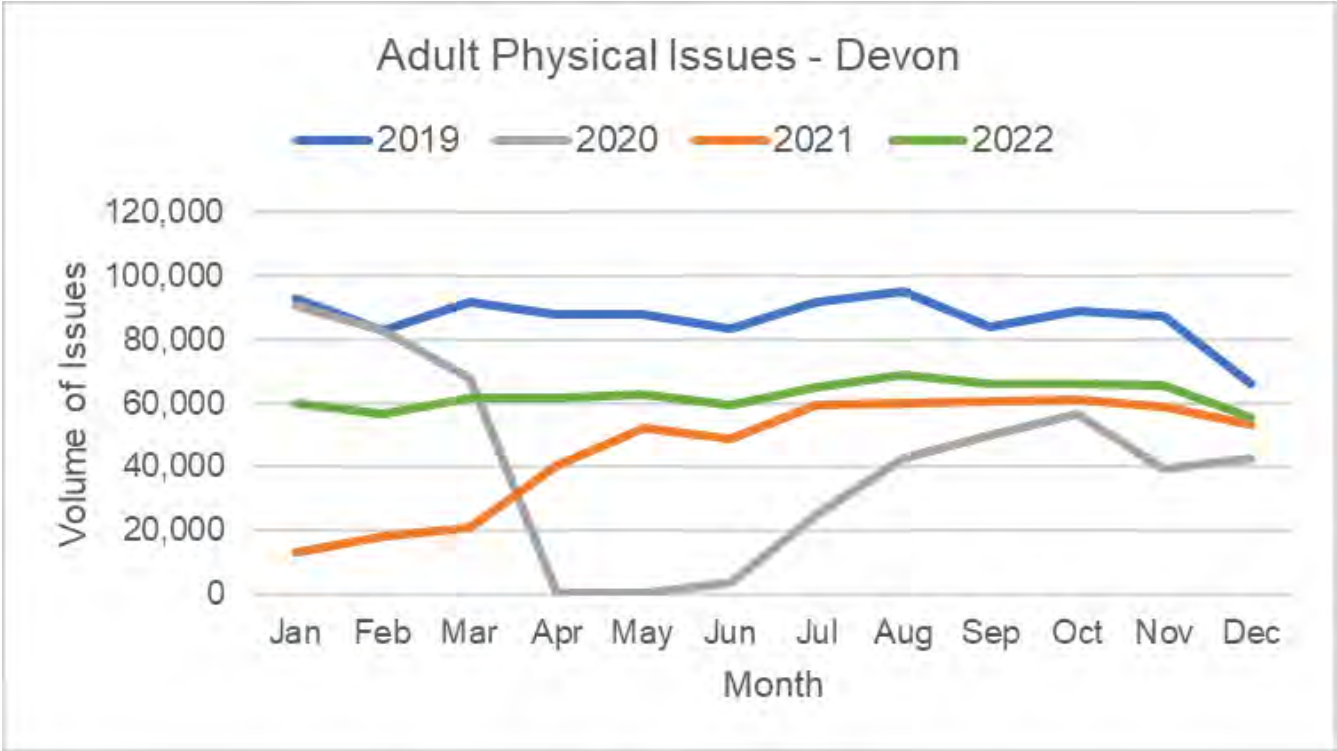
02. Q3 2022/23 Data Report

Physical Stock Issues



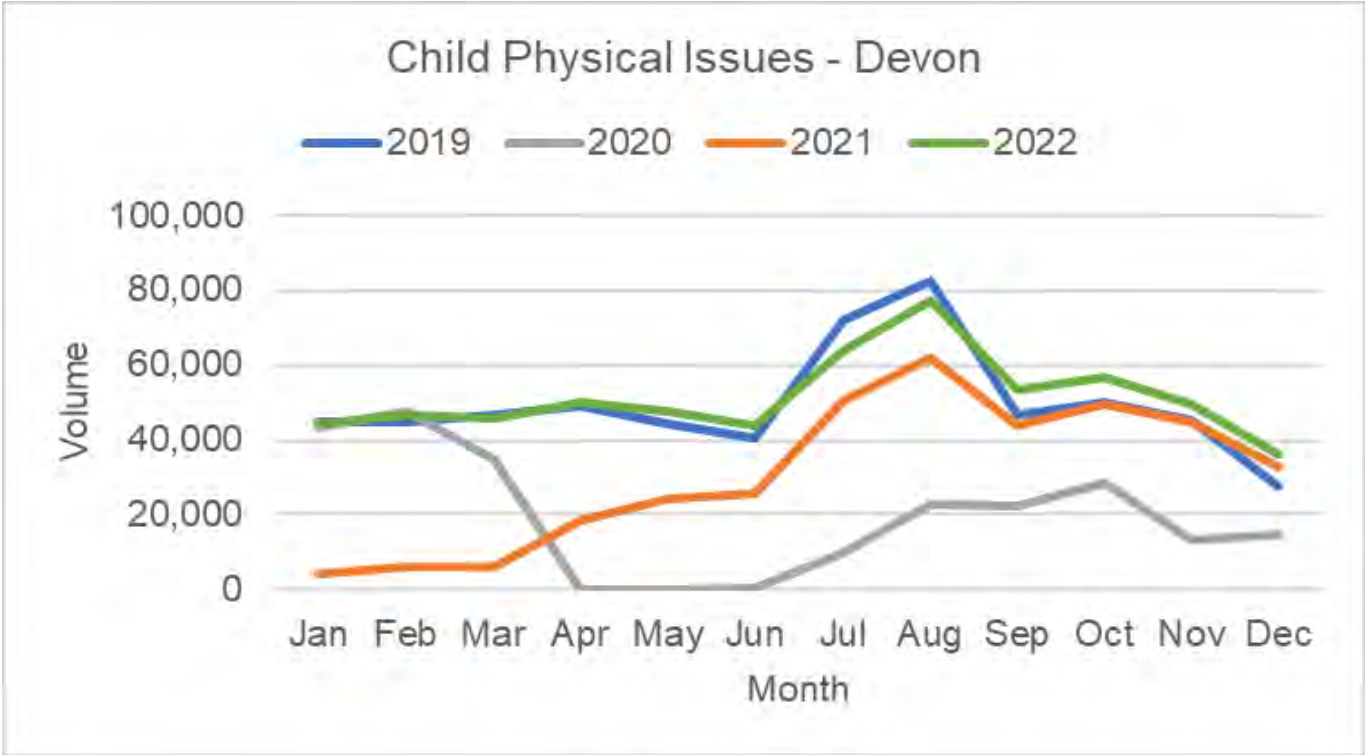
02. Q3 2022/23 Data Report

Physical Adult Stock Issues



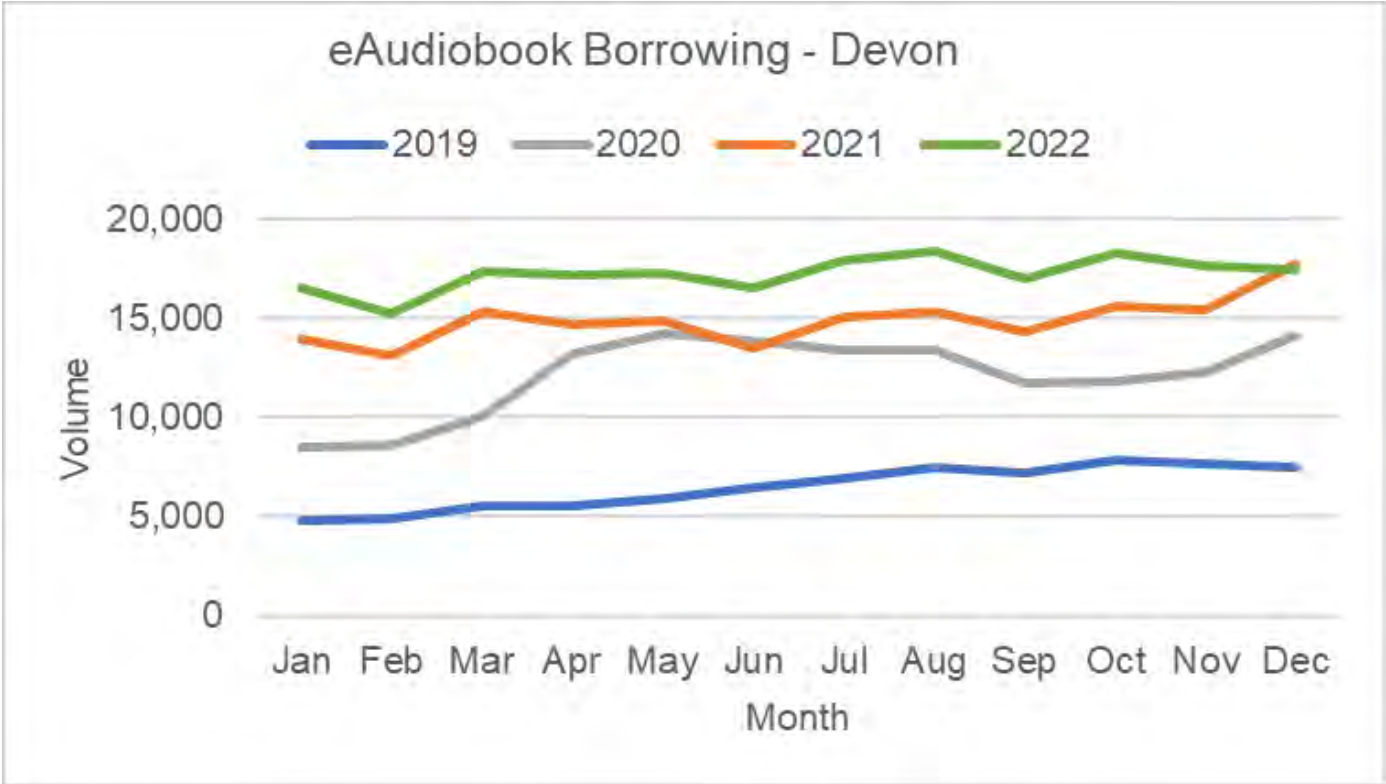
02. Q3 2022/23 Data Report

Physical Children Stock Issues



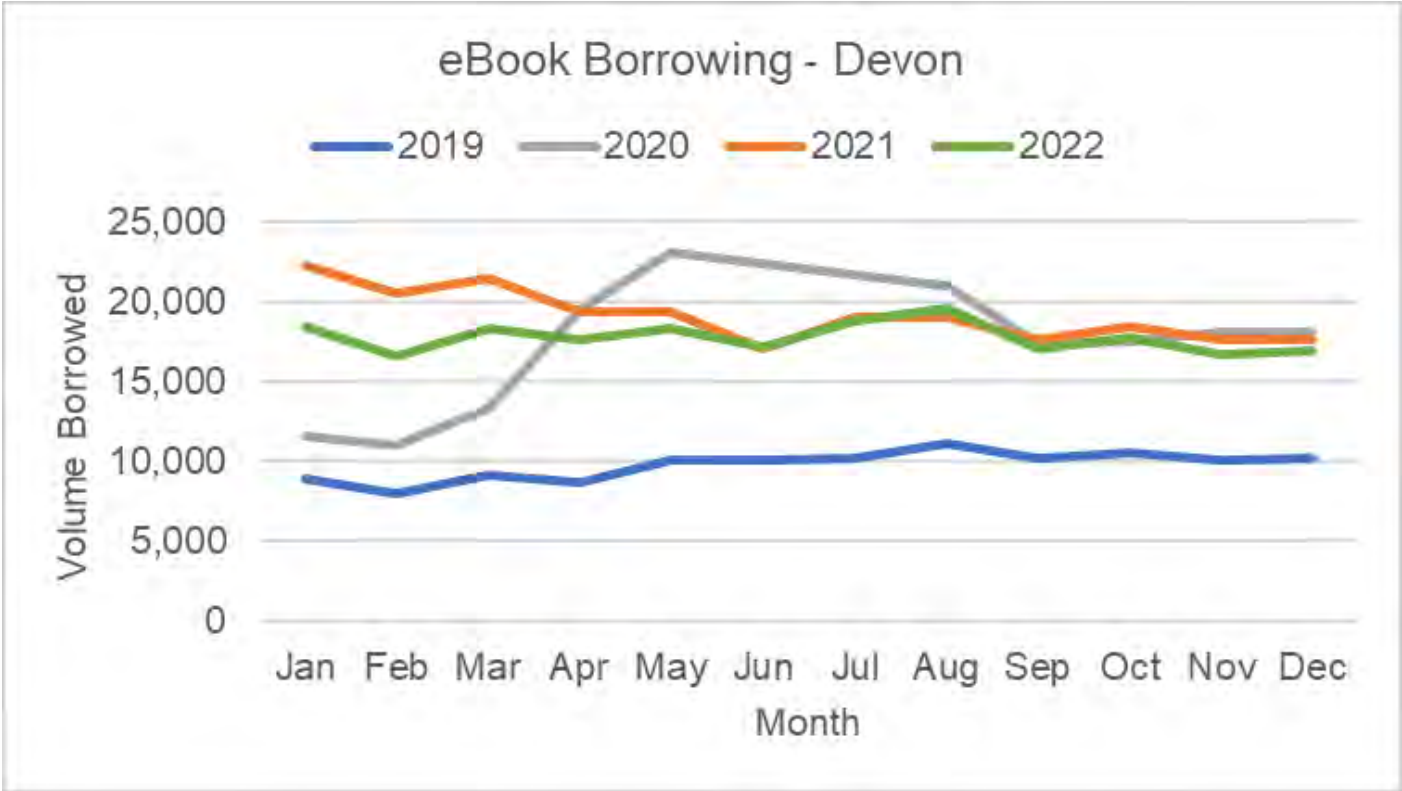
02. Q3 2022/23 Data Report

eAudiobook Issues



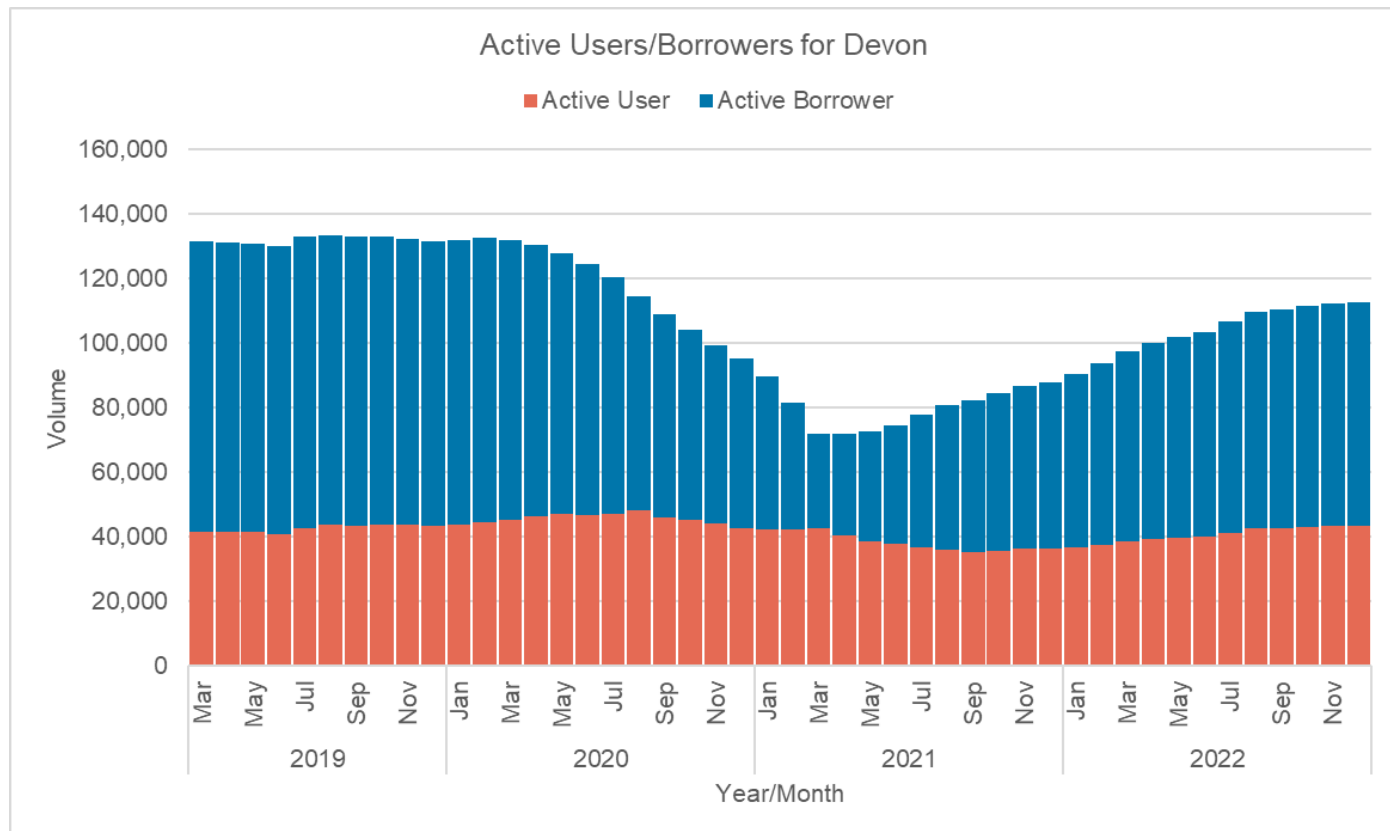
02. Q3 2022/23 Data Report

eBooks Issues



02. Q3 2022/23 Data Report

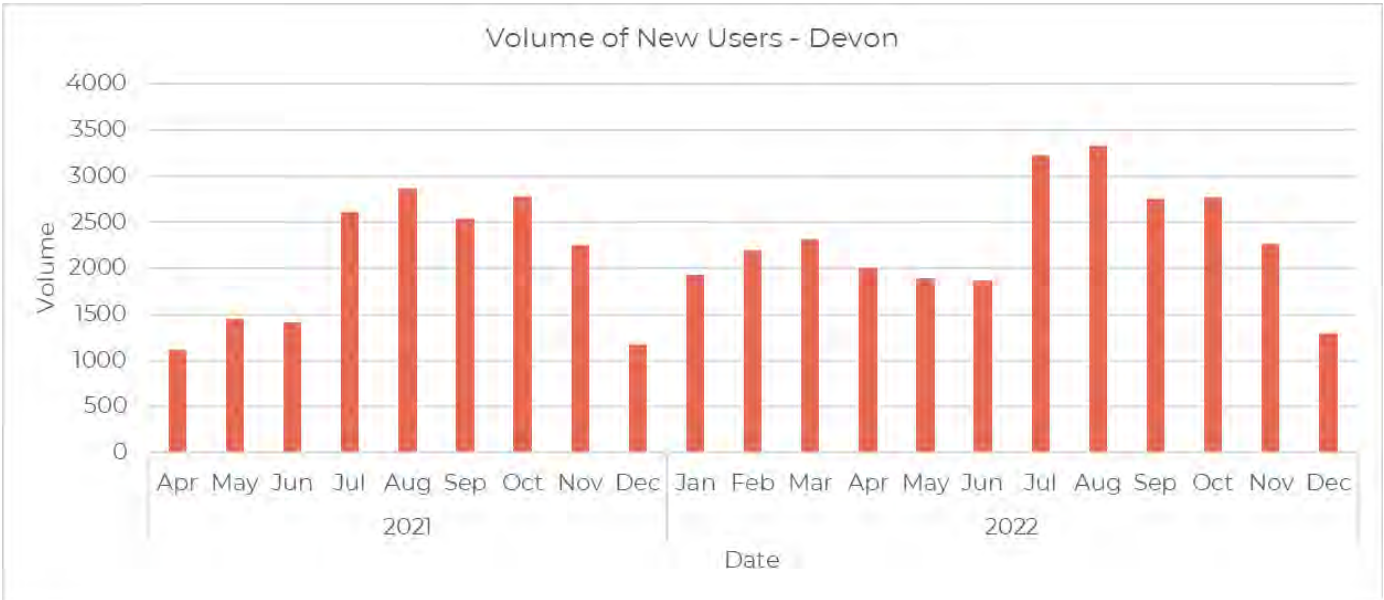
Active Users



(An active user is counted as somebody who has used their library card for something in the last 12 months other than borrowing a physical item. An active borrower is somebody who has borrowed a physical item from a library building. A customer is counted in the category of their last transaction.)

02. Q3 2022/23 Data Report

New Users





01. Q3 2022-23 Devon Library Activity Report

Devon Library Activity Report

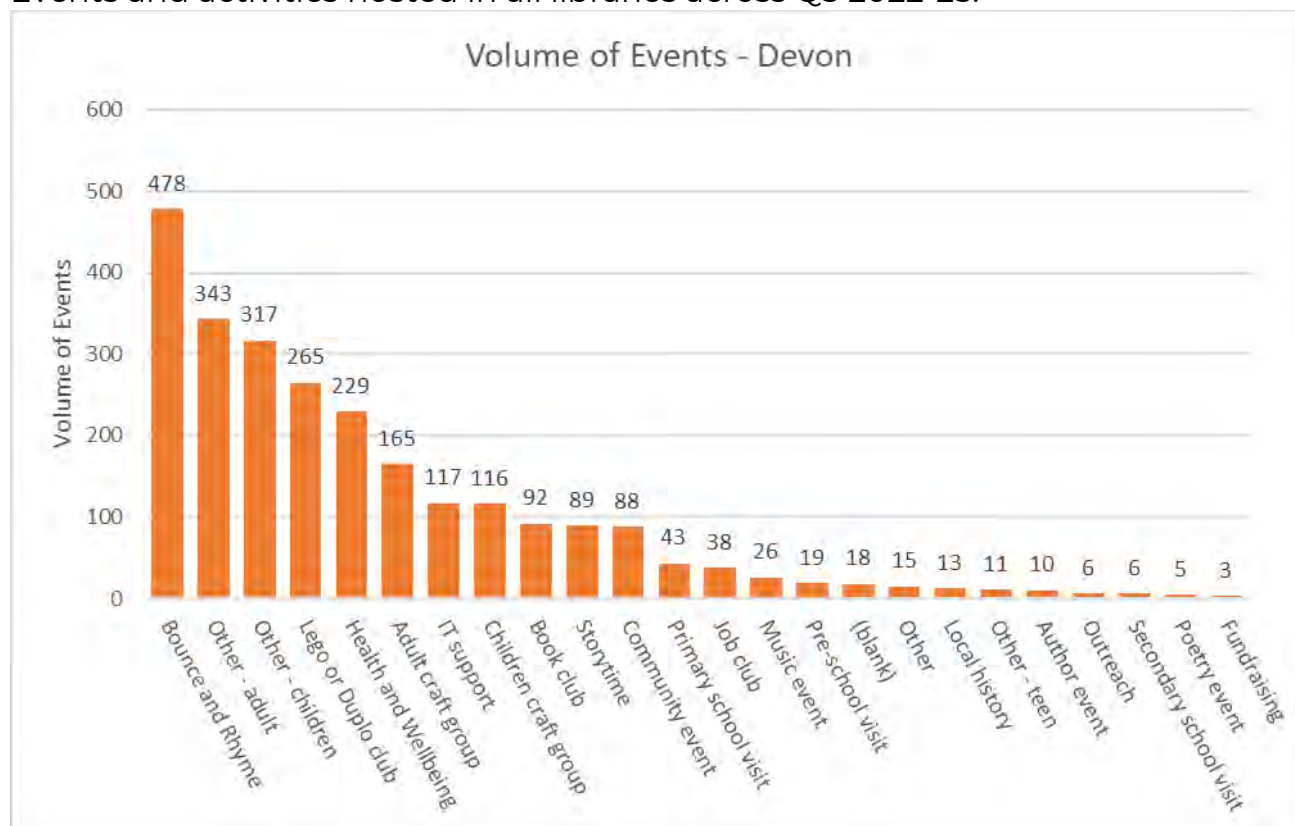
Service Delivery Managers
January 2023

Introduction

This report provides an indicative overview of notable activities in libraries across Devon in Q3 of 2022-23.

Data

Events and activities hosted in all libraries across Q3 2022-23.



Summary

Promoting and encouraging a love of reading

- **Cullompton Library**

01. Q3 2022-23 Devon Library Activity Report

- Started running several new groups which promote a love of reading, including a 0-4s story-time and activities every Thursday morning, a children's monthly reading group and an adult play reading group meeting monthly.
- Expanded the children's library to make more space so that families can spend time and relax in a bigger space, and all story-times and Bounce & Rhymes can be held in the dedicated space.
- Welcomed class visits from Willowbank Primary School, the most local school. The project is extending into Spring as each class from the school will visit each week for the entire term, and the library are hoping to encourage all children to become library members.
- **Dartmouth Library**
 - A Library Reading Group member commented: 'Thank you for making book club so wonderful. I love being part of it, so lucky.' Another book club member thanked library staff for 'choosing a diverse and interesting range of books, authors and genres.'
- **Exeter Library**
 - Hosted a Broomstick Craft and Storytime event during the October half term with over 100 participants. Members of staff performed the Room on a Broom story for the children, followed by a craft event.
 - Started a 'Grown-Up Storytime' aimed at those 10 and above. A member of staff reads a chapter of a book every week. So far we have had a modest 20 participants and completed two books.
- **Kingsteignton Library**
 - Held a visit from one of the local nurseries during November for a story-time and to enjoy the library space. They have visited the library several times before and are in the process of collecting Book Bear's Reading Adventure.
 - Wrapped Christmas surprise books for adults and children in December, as a way of introducing people to a new author and to add an element of mystery to choosing books.
 - Hosted visits from children of two of the classes of a local primary school, to enjoy stories, to choose their own books, and to hear about the library. Those that brought parents were able to join the library and were encouraged to start the Secret Book Quest.
- **Newton Abbot Library**
 - Held visits from all classes at one of the local primary schools, one class at a time. Each child borrows a book and they are encouraged to join the Secret Book Quest. This event occurs every six weeks.

01. Q3 2022-23 Devon Library Activity Report

- Exchanged the items in the small 'pop-up' collection of books that we have placed in one of the local cafes. The feedback from the café staff is that it is very popular, and people are borrowing and returning the books from and to the café.
- Ran two very well attended Storytime sessions. Children enjoy listening to the story and then taking part in a related craft activity afterwards. Feedback from the families is that they look forward to these sessions because they enjoy the story and the atmosphere is so warm and welcoming.
- **Okehampton Library**
 - Hosted an information stand with a co-ordinator from a new 'Read Easy' group that has started in Okehampton. He spoke to several customers and someone who is interested in becoming a volunteer for the group. Since the first session, Okehampton Library have made this a monthly drop-in at the library. There are 7 clients who have asked for support, and the coordinator has a bank of volunteers.
- **Ottery St Mary Library**
 - Teamed up with Friends of Ottery Library, the Library Volunteers and members of the Craft Group to decorate the library tree at the Ottery St Mary Christmas tree festival. The tree was themed on the book 'The Snowman' by Raymond Briggs.



Image: Ottery St Mary Library's Christmas Tree in the town festival

- Held a 'Storytime with Santa' event in the library. The Otter Valley Rotary kindly assisted with Santa, who visited and read two stories to the children. This event was fully booked with 18 children in attendance.

01. Q3 2022-23 Devon Library Activity Report

- **Princetown Library**
 - Host a playgroup weekly for a story-time, and hold regular visits from the school.
- **South Molton Library**
 - Ran five sessions of Litcraft, an innovative workshop that mixes Minecraft with reading. The sessions were run for reluctant readers from a local primary school, a home-ed group, our children's book group and a public session. Children read part of Kensuke's Kingdom and then had the opportunity to complete tasks related to the text in a Minecraft world that was set on the island from the book. Feedback from the school and parents was very positive.
- **St Thomas Library**
 - Has welcomed over 200 school children to the library for one-hour class visits since October, including from Bowhill, St Thomas and Montgomery Primary schools and a home education group.
 - Held weekly story and song sessions and visited local pre-school, Little Saints, and West Exe Nurseries to read stories.
 - Held evening visits for two local cub groups to earn their Book Reader badge, and promoted the Secret Book Quest during these sessions.
- **Tavistock Library**
 - Welcomed every Year 7 class from Tavistock Community College through October and November and visited the school to give a few minutes in assemblies for other students. Hopefully this is the start of a new relationship with the school for the library.
 - A volunteer is leading a children's play reading group, which was requested by customers. A small group of children have been joined by others at later meetings.
- **Tiverton Library**
 - Started a Young Adult (age 11-14) monthly book club. Numbers are growing and it is proving particularly popular with the home-ed community.



01. Q3 2022-23 Devon Library Activity Report

• Totnes Library

- Held visits for 3 classes from The Grove Primary School during anti-bullying week, as well as a visit from a school the library hasn't worked with before, Park School. These visits focused on the theme of friendship and being kind and included craft activities and an author's storytelling session.



Totnes Library's Friendship Wall

Providing free access to information to help people in their everyday lives

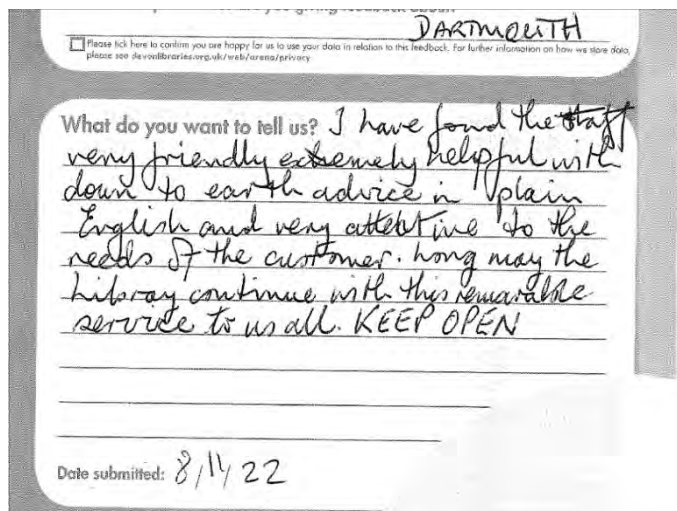
• Cullompton Library

- Organised a display in the main lobby showing where all the local community fridges and foodbanks are, with a help yourself food basket.
- Worked with the local community builder to share information and look to provide what the local community needs. The community builder also had a stand in the library where people could come and meet her to find out more about local offers.

• Dartmouth Library

- Supported a customer who was experiencing severe anxiety and sleeplessness due to having clicked a scam email and experiencing a hacker trying to access his email password. He really valued the reassurance and peace of mind given to him by a staff member, as well as the practical help. He said he did not have the words to say what this help really meant to him.
- Supported a customer who needed help in creating her first invoice for her new small business. A staff member talked her through how to find Templates on Word and how to create her invoice, as well as giving advice on how to download and send the invoice.

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Customer feedback at Dartmouth Library

- **Exeter Library**

- Started a twice weekly Tech Buddy service. Customers who may need a little extra support with their IT book a 30-minute slot with a member of staff. Starting in November, we have had 32 bookings so far.

- **Honiton Library**

- Held English lessons for Ukrainians every Wednesday.

- **Kingsteignton Library**

- Provided information on the Cold Days, Warm Libraries campaign and liaised with the Town Council so that as many people as possible get to hear about it and benefit from this service.
- Continued to provide information, help and support for people using IT services.
- Continued to provide information to people on local groups that could help support them. A new mum came into the library to seek support and advice, and was given information on many groups and sessions that the library and surrounding libraries offer and on other local groups. She was able to warm up with a drink and sit and read the paper while her baby slept. She said that she comes to the library because she feels safe and supported.
- Supported a Ukrainian customer who came in to use the public computers to search for employment and has now successfully got a job.

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- **Newton Abbot Library**
 - Hosted the Boundary Commission display, showing the proposed boundary changes. This raised awareness of the changes and people were able to complete a survey form to have their say.
 - Created a display board in the library that solely hosts information about local groups, clubs and societies that people can join. This helps to reduce social isolation as it raises awareness of the local opportunities available.
- **Okehampton Library**
 - Launched a new Business and IP Centre hub, to offer free and accessible advice to support local business owners, entrepreneurs, and inventors.
- **Ottery St Mary Library**
 - Hosted a 'cutting the costs' event in our library with the following organisations present: Exeter Community Energy, Citizens Advice Bureau East Devon, Ottery Help Scheme & The Ottery Larder.
- **South Molton Library**
 - As part of the Warm Welcome Project running over the winter, South Molton Library created displays and a folder of resources to support people to discover and link into local groups and services, including the community fridge, food bank, and other warm spaces in the town etc.
- **Tavistock Library**
 - Hosted a day long consultation from the Tamar Project (a £5 million environmental project in the Tamar Valley) to talk about their ideas for the Great Tamar Art Festival to be held in 2024.
 - A mother and daughter came to the Tavy fridge. The daughter had been made homeless and had been rehoused in a room in Tavistock without any support. The mother travelled from Kent to help her, and the food from the fridge supplemented the money that the mother had to give her daughter.
 - Continued to share information through the Tavistock Health and Wellbeing Alliance and In Touch Tavi, supported by the CVS. The library aims to be an inclusive place where information can be accessed via poster boards as well as using online.
 - The extra opening hours seem to be encouraging people to come in for information. Articles in the local newspaper and the local free magazine advertised the library services, particularly for the Libraries for Life campaign.

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- Supported the consultation for the neighbourhood development plans for Tavistock Town Council and West Devon Borough Council by hosting meetings and opportunities for the community to see plans on display and give feedback to council representatives.
- **Totnes Library**
 - Organised a display in the library linked to December's warm space theme of 'feeling connected,' including information for local services such as the food bank and local activities.

Inspiring people of all ages to learn, imagine, create, succeed and realise their potential

- **Axminster Library**
 - Held jewellery making sessions with a volunteer, making bead drop earrings.
- **Budleigh Salterton Library**
 - Held free Halloween crafts for children throughout the half term holidays, including two tables of fun and spooky crafts, plus a competition to find an array of bats, cats and witches hats hidden around the library. Staff are still receiving thanks from grateful local grandparents for providing a great, free source of fun and creativity for children. The activities were generously supported by Budleigh Salterton Friends Group who paid for all the crafty bits and prizes.
- **Chudleigh Library**
 - Held a Fun Palace event, which was a great opportunity for local residents to try new skills. One attendee commented on the great, fun atmosphere in the library that morning.
- **Cullompton Library**
 - Took part in the Autumn Festival in Cullompton, as part of the wider community group. The theme was circus, and Cullompton Library held circus arts and crafts, two circus themed Storytimes and circus themed Lego Club.
 - Started a community knitting blanket where people can come in and knit a few rows to contribute to the blanket as a whole.

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Cullompton Library's community knitting blanket

- **Dartmouth Library**

- Assisted a Ukrainian customer who wanted to find an English course, so that with improved English she could find employment. She was concerned that she wouldn't be able to access a course due to lack of data and not having headphones. Staff explained she could use our free Wi-Fi and she could purchase cheap earphones or work in a quiet corner with low volume. She did this and spent over an hour with her chosen course.

- **Exeter Library**

- Hosted 7 craft events during this time and had 508 participants. Two of these events were in partnership with InExeter, where participants created lanterns that were used in the Exeter Carnival, November 2022.
- Partnered with Mothers Who Make to host a series of music workshops aimed at local mothers. They were then invited to perform at a [Finale events](#) that took place in November, with 96 audience members present.

- **Honiton Library**

- Held adult craft sessions with Linda, making Kimekomi Christmas decorations.

- **Kingsteignton Library**

- Held a weekly Lego Club for people to create and socialise.
- Started a Knit and Natter Group in October for people to come along and do the craft they love, have a warm drink and socialise. The group has been a great success – people have joined that have recently moved to the area, giving them the opportunity to meet new friends. One lady has said that it is the only interaction she gets all week.

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- **Moretonhampstead Library**

- Held their first Fun Palace ever and it was a huge success. There were skills and learning on offer from all ages and for all ages.



Moretonhampstead Library's Fun Palace Event

- **Newton Abbot Library**

- Held a Fun Palace event with hands-on sessions including craft with Newton Abbot Museum, Learn How to Knit with our Knit and Natter Group, and How to research Family History, all of which were extremely popular and the people running them were kept very busy. The Chess Club brought some boards and showed people how to play chess. Meg the Pirate joined with a short show. The demonstration that caused most hilarity was the Circle Dancing Demonstration that took place amongst the book stock on the ground floor. It was so popular that we now host a session on a monthly basis. Customers commented that the library was a fun-filled place with 'lots of laughter' and a 'relaxed,' 'warm,' 'welcoming' atmosphere.

- **Okehampton Library**

- Held three activities for Fun Palaces, all of which were really successful and inspired people to take up new hobbies.

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Fun Palace activities at Okehampton Library

- **Pinhoe Library**
 - Successfully held a Lego Club, which continues to grow in popularity.
- **South Molton Library**
 - Ran a successful and busy Fun Palaces morning. Customers were able to take part in taster activities from local groups including flower arranging, drawer-liner making, local musicians and creative writing. We also had a guided litter pick from a local microplastics expert. Children involved then surveyed the litter and created a display for the library.
- **Tavistock Library**
 - Held a day-long Fun Palaces event with whole families coming in and bringing their lunch to eat at tables in the library. People of all ages took part in activities such as hand bell ringing, rag rug making and perfecting magic tricks which have not been presented before.



A member of Tavistock Library's Youth Café

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- Held two more Shake the Shelves events, showcasing different styles of music. The event has retained its popularity.
- Hosted a local community artist who delivered creative sessions using scrap and recycled materials.
- Holding mini Fun Palaces where volunteers are sharing their interests and skills with people coming into the library on Wednesdays.
- Supported *What's their story*, a local history project which aims to encourage people to research the history of their homes, which were built for Bedford Estate workers in Tavistock. The library is providing access to hardcopy and online resources.
- Hosted two displays by Tavistock Museum, which is restricted to one room opening due to building issues in October and November/December.
- Attended Dickensian evening and the town light switch on with the Library trike (and in costume) to raise awareness of the library as a place in the town.
- **Tiverton Library**
 - Started offering two additional Digital Devon drop-ins a week, bringing the total to three sessions, which are proving popular with older residents who need support with accessing IT.
 - Ran a Fun Palaces event on 1st October attended by 35 children and 14 adults, where volunteers shared their hands on skills to encourage people to try something new.



Tiverton Library's Fun Palaces Event

- Tiverton Library's meeting room is booked three times a week by Tiverton High School, who use it as a space to meet and teach children who are not able to attend school.
- Resumed partnership with Blundell's Pre Prep School after the summer break, with school staff delivering high quality sensory

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Storytimes and play monthly from October onwards in the library. October's session was attended by 48 adults and children, and November's by 72.

- o Held a Spooky Crafts and scavenger hunt session for under 11s and their families during October half-term. It was attended by 64 children and 38 adults.



Tiverton Library's Halloween Crafts

- o Hosted the Unlocking the Cage immersive AR experience that takes viewers on a journey through the lives and works of four women writers, whose books reside within the Cage beneath the floors of Exeter Library. This was set up in the foyer area of the library and was well used by adults and children who gave very positive feedback.
- **Totnes Library**
 - o Started a weekly teen study group, following the redesign of our teen library. There is now a regular group of 8 teens who attend the group, where they can study together, use free study guides for all subjects (donated by the local secondary school), use free stationary and have free tea and biscuits. The library provides study top tip cards for teens, including tips such as taking regular breaks when studying and making an action plan at the start of each session.

Children and Families

- **Buckfastleigh Library**
 - o Held a fun Christmas event, in conjunction with local company Clockwork Moth, making Christmas shadow puppets. Almost 20 children and their parents/carers attended this event, which is one of the Library's most popular ever!
- **Chudleigh Library**

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- Introduced a Stay and Play session on a Wednesday just as the library closes. Families new to the area are finding this a great opportunity to meet new people. Lego still happens on a weekly basis – this seems to be very popular with families and it is great to see more Dads getting involved.
- **Dartmouth Library**
 - Welcomed children from a local pre-school, Humpty-Dumpty, who visit the library regularly. Dartmouth Library organise story-telling, singing, and craft activities and these visits help children to learn more about their town and community. A Ukrainian girl has completed her Secret Book Quest 50 book target, reading in English, her second language. A Ukrainian boy needed help to reserve books; he attends an English primary school, does his homework, then goes online to do his Ukrainian lessons remotely.
- **Kingsteignton Library**
 - Welcomed nurseries for Storytime sessions and promoted the under 5's reading scheme, Book Bear's Reading Adventure.
 - Provide an adult and child Christmas quiz for families to enjoy.
 - Held weekly Storytime and Bounce & Rhyme sessions. This has been a great support for parents and carers as they get a chance to speak to other parents and carers, as well as encouraging children's literacy, speech development and social interaction.
- **Newton Abbot Library**
 - Held Sensory Play sessions with an average attendance of 12-15 families each month. October's theme of Halloween attracted an audience of 20 families. One grandparent mentioned how much her grandchild looks forward to the sessions as they are 'so relaxed and there is nothing else like it in Newton Abbot.'
 - Hold Brio Play sessions in the Railways Studies Collection. Families are encouraged to build railway layouts and socialise. 'My child just loves this,' one parent commented.
 - Established a Comics Club on a Saturday morning. This is generally attended by children 10+ and involves writing and drawing based on graphic novels and Manga. 'This is epic,' one young person was heard saying.
 - Held a showing of Home Alone for families just before Christmas.
 - Worked with Sound Art Radio to host a Craft and Soup session in the library. One young person and a volunteer made some tomato soup in one of the meeting rooms, which was served to and shared by families enjoying the craft session run by Sound Art.

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- Hold regular Lego sessions, which continue to be enjoyed by children and families each week.
- **St Thomas Library**
 - Partnered with Exeter University to enable Drama students to complete their final year project, Turning Pages. Using the Book Trust Storytime resources, Millie and Connie have created 6 weekly sessions for pre-schoolers with singing, drama and craft. We have seen new customers attending the event and staying around to chat.



Exeter University Drama Students at St Thomas Library

- **Tavistock Library**
 - Started a fortnightly play-reading group on Saturday afternoons, led by a volunteer. A local artist has volunteered to run a recycled craft workshop once a month.
- **Totnes Library**
 - Restarted the Tiny Tales sessions in November, including a Storytime, a couple of songs, and a fun craft. These have been well received and attendance is increasing.
 - Held sessions with Peter, a local puppeteer. Peter has put on some wonderful shows, and the first show led to one of the busiest days in the library ever!
 - Held a few different activities over the Christmas holidays, including two craft sessions making Christmas lanterns, snowy owls and Christmas cards. The library also ran a scavenger hunt to find the elves in the week running up to Christmas. Finally, Santa and Mrs Claus visited the library! There was a Q&A where children and their families could answer questions, as well as some carols and gifts for the children!

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Santa and Mrs Claus visiting Totnes Library

Volunteering

- **Axminster Library**
 - Held weekly Ancestry drop-in workshops with volunteers.
- **Kingsteignton Library**
 - Have a young DofE volunteer. Since her time at the library, she has become more confident around customers, and feedback from her parent is that the volunteering part of the award is what she was least looking forward to, and now that she has started it is her favourite bit.
- **Moretonhampstead Library**
 - Offering another Library Extra session as a result of Growing Communities funding, paying staff to have enough capacity to support volunteers to deliver the sessions.
- **Newton Abbot Library**
 - At capacity for DofE volunteers and have a waiting list. Library staff have supported young people who have autism via this scheme, which whilst challenging at times, is rewarding on both sides.
- **Princetown Library**
 - Offering another Library Extra session as a result of Growing Communities funding, paying staff to have enough capacity to support volunteers to deliver the sessions.
- **Tavistock Library**
 - Have five volunteers working with the library this term, but had to turn away another three as didn't have the capacity to supervise.
 - Have two Friends Group volunteers supporting a member of staff to open the library on a Wednesday afternoon during the winter. Two more volunteers have joined the afternoons.
 - Received a certificate from the RHS 'It's Your Neighbourhood' judging in the summer, which recognised the efforts of the library staff and volunteers who have been involved with maintaining the planters and indoor plants around the library.

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- Held a coffee morning thank you gathering for all volunteers in November.

Guiding and supporting people to explore and connect to the wider world

- **Exeter Library**
 - Held the [Chinese and British Exhibition](#), in partnership with the British Library and the Hikmet Society. There were 88 participants during the launch event on 26th November 2022.
- **Exmouth Library**
 - Offer English conversation for Afghan women on Fridays, and have invited Ukrainian and English women as well. Syrian refugee families have attended the Summer Reading Challenge.
- **Kingsteignton**
 - Helped customers to find books on Hanukkah.
 - Signposted customers to local groups, both in the library and others. One lady recently moved to the area and joined one of the library groups to help meet people in her local area.
- **Ottery Library**
 - Host fortnightly free one-to-one digital support sessions.
- **South Molton Library**
 - Created displays for Black History Month and ran a successful craft event creating Kente cloth by paper weaving. Children were able to learn about Kente cloth from Ghana and the meaning of different colours.



South Molton Library's Kente Cloth Paper Weaving Activity

- Displayed a Royal Memories scrapbook during November, produced by members of local Memory Cafes. As well as enjoying reading about people's personal memories of meeting the Royal Family, customers were able to learn about the local Memory Cafes.
- **St Thomas Library**

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- o Staff member James is a Digital Champion as part of the Digital Devon project funded by the Community Resilience Fund. In December, James helped a local couple who were struggling with an out-of-date laptop to use the internet and access photos. After referring them to Ability.Net, James recommended them for a new laptop through the gifting initiative. They have now received their laptop and James is supporting them in the library's IT drop-in sessions.



Customers receiving Digital Devon Project

• Totnes Library

- o Held an exhibition for Park School based on China's History. The Library supplied the school with lots of books on the topic for the children to learn from. They came up with some wonderful art and story pieces which were displayed at the library for an exhibition week. The parents of the children then came to visit the library to see the work in the space.



Totnes Library's Chinese History Exhibition, with children from Park School

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Offering a welcoming space to meet, socialise, learn, read and enjoy new experiences

- **Buckfastleigh Library**
 - Buckfastleigh Friends Group have commissioned a large material mural, with book quotes and characters, which will be displayed outside the library.
- **Budleigh Salterton Library**
 - Held Poets on the Shore in October, an afternoon of verse for adults, welcoming the audience to bring along their own poems to read and share in a warm, friendly and non-judgemental atmosphere. There was good food and great company.
- **Crediton Library**
 - Screened two films on Wednesday 9th November, attended by 46 people, with refreshments provided by the Friends of Crediton Library. Crediton does not have a cinema, and it was great to have feedback such as excellent viewing environment; welcoming, warm and comfortable; enjoyable, relaxing, convenient; excellent, etc.
 - Held a free event 'Cooking the Books,' talking about cooking books and recipes through the ages with Food Historian Paul Cleave. 17 people enjoyed the talk, food samples and hot drinks in the warm, welcoming library space.
- **Exeter Library**
 - Began a Home Ed gathering group every Wednesday in the children's library, a perfect opportunity for home ed children to get to know one another while their parents do some much needed networking. Colouring and book suggestions are available to participants. There have been three sessions so far, with 101 total participants.
- **Ilfracombe Library**
 - Held a Christmas pantomime with funding from a local charity. This meant local families could experience the magic of live, professional theatre at a fraction of the usual cost, only £3 a ticket. It was full booked and everyone had a great time.
- **Kingsteignton Library**
 - Offered people a warm, safe space to visit where they are offered a warm drink. This has been incredibly popular, and many people have come into the library to keep warm and help them to save on electricity bills.
 - Offered several weekly groups for people to socialise, learn new skills and help with learning, reading and social development, including Scrabble Club, Knit and Natter, LEGO Club, Storytime, and Bounce

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and Rhyme. One customer joined Knit and Natter just for the social interaction, which shows how incredibly important it is.

- **Moretonhampstead Library**

- Received Devon Growing Communities funding to allow the library space to be more comfortable for people to spend time in. Volunteers will be opening the library for another Library Extra session on Friday mornings and there will be an extra hour of staff time to allow the local mother and baby/toddler group to come to the library when they close their session.

- **Newton Abbot Library**

- Worked with Villages in Action to present an exciting and hilarious afternoon of spoken word, comedy, puppetry and theatre with Raina as she explored questions about the grey areas of consent. Villages in Action were delighted with the event and will look to offer the library more opportunities.
- Set up a Modeller's Group in the Railway Studies Collection, with around 6 people per session. A mum and young person come along – he works on his railway models and she brings along some craft such as felting, knitting and crochet. Other group members are working on railway carriages, a model of Newton Abbot Railway Station and Dawlish Town and Railway Station.
- The Friends of the Railway Studies Collection are seeing an increase in attendance at their monthly talks, which now have an average audience of 20 per session. The talks are wide ranging but all have a railway theme.
- Hosted a Film Festival, which was very popular.
- Supported the Bright Lights Writing Group by helping with the production and distribution of the group's magazine.
- Attended the town's Victorian Evening just before Christmas, and offered a lucky dip for children and sold knitted goods that the Knit and Natter group produced.
- One customer spent about 30 hours on the public access PCs, completing a course for her work. Her feedback form read, 'thank you for providing a warm, peaceful place to work and complete my course. Thanks to staff for being so welcoming and helpful.'

- **Okehampton Library**

- Offered free refreshments to customers, supplied by local Waitrose. Okehampton Friends Group will be paying for any milk purchased by the library for refreshments.

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- o Held a Devonshire Custom and Song event, which was well attended, raised funds for Libraries Unlimited and brought new people into the library.



Okehampton Library's Devonshire Custom and Song Event

- o Okehampton Men in Sheds made a reading den for the library's children's area. Okehampton Friends Group paid a donation to cover the materials and brought some fabric to drape over the den to make it cosy for children.



Okehampton Library's children's den

• **Ottery Library**

- o Joined the Town Christmas Light Switch-on and late-night shopping on Friday 25th November, and stayed open an extra two hours until 8pm. The Library hosted an extended Lego Club, a children's craft session, a Storytime, as well as a book and card sale, and put a jigsaw out in the library for customers to complete at their leisure.

• **Princetown Library**

- o Received Devon Growing Communities funding, allowing Bounce and Rhyme to continue with the added benefits of staff liaison with other local organisations and groups. Volunteers are supporting extended Library Extra sessions which are timed to coincide with the surgery opening hours in the community centre space next door.

• **South Molton Library**

- o Started a new monthly Board Games group. Participants can meet with other like-minded individuals to play different Board Games, often collaborative style games.
- o Ran a busy programme of activities for October half-term holidays including trails, badge making, crafts and a board games morning. All activities were free or very low cost.

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- o Created a 'Save Santa' puzzle room for Christmas. For £1, children were able to have a go at this fun escape room experience – solving puzzles to Save Santa and Save Christmas! We even had visits from Mrs Klaus!



South Molton Library's 'Save Santa' Puzzle Room

- **St Thomas Library**

- o Hosted an eight-week knitting course led by a community run wool shop, Wool on the Exe. This was an extension of the partnership hosting a 'yarn bombing knitting' event earlier in the year. St Thomas Library now have an established knitting group, Natter and Knit, with 5 new members socialising and learning new skills. The Library provides refreshments for a donation.

- **Tavistock Library**

- o Opens on a Wednesday afternoon from 2pm-5:30pm with the support of volunteers. Tavistock staff have created spaces for people to relax in, with two sofas bought by the Friends Group and houseplants donated by a member of the public, volunteers and the Tavistock Community Gardeners. People have donated coats, jumpers, hats and scarves for others to take from the coat rail in the lobby.

- **Totnes Library**

- o Received a £100 donation from a customer who had used the library regularly for 6 months over the summer as a space to write his dissertation. The customer was very grateful for a warm, welcoming space to spend time writing his dissertation.
- o Bought a new chair and rearranged the seating area to maximise seating spaces and to ensure as many people as possible are able to sit and relax in the library.
- o Continue to run Mindful Makes craft group, to encourage socialisation and prevent loneliness. A recent highlight was a workshop on visible mending, run by an external professional.

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Supporting the health and wellbeing of individuals and local communities

- **Crediton Library**

- Started a Reminiscence Project with 10 volunteers chatting and recording memories with local people in the community. The Crediton Library Reminiscence Project is particularly designed to reduce loneliness and increase community connections and health and wellbeing in older people.

- **Dartmouth Library**

- Celebrated the 100th birthday of a member of the Dartmouth VIP Book Group for Visually Impaired People, run in partnership with Dartmouth Caring. The members are mostly in their 80s and 90s and really appreciate club meetings as it provides them with an opportunity to socialise, discuss books and receive advice on living with visual impairment.



Dartmouth Library's VIP Book Group

- **Kingsbridge Library**

- Supported an older lady, with only limited ability in using her smartphone, to send a photo to Derriford Hospital cancer team of the cancerous patch on her face via email.

- **Kingsteignton Library**

- The services Kingsteignton Library offers are crucial for people's health and wellbeing. The clubs, groups and staff have helped people greatly with their mental health and wellbeing by being there for support, information, and social interaction. Being able to offer a safe, warm space for people to warm up with a hot drink and have a friendly chat is imperative for health and wellbeing.

- **Ottery Library**

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- Increased the frequency of 'Craft & a Cuppa' sessions from fortnightly to weekly over the winter to help combat loneliness and give people a warm and welcome place to come to.
- **Tavistock Library**
 - Continues to redistribute huge amounts of food which would otherwise be thrown into landfill through the Tavy Fridge. As well as the regular retail collections, other independent shops are delivering the small number of items that they have left to be redistributed and three food hubs bring the items that they can't distribute in time to the fridge. A large number of volunteers ensure the Tavy Fridge is maintained to high standards and the steering group look to develop the service and deal with issues that arise.
 - Provided library space as a drop-off point for the Toy Recycling Project, run by local volunteers to redistribute unwanted toys free of charge.
 - Support two carer groups to meet monthly at the library.
- **Totnes Library**
 - Delivered the Donate A Coat campaign and received boxes of fruit and veg from the local foodbank to give out for free. Thanks to the support from the local Morrisons, the library have been providing free tea, coffee and biscuits on a Monday.
 - Continued to run a monthly Death Café, led by a local celebrant. Attendance is continuing to grow, with around 20 people coming along. Feedback from the group has highlighted that having a safe space to talk about death and dying is important for the community and is supporting mental wellbeing.

Health and Wellbeing

- **Axminster Library**
 - Offer free hot drinks to customers and have provided a comfortable seating area in which to do this.
- **Bampton Library**
 - Operating as a warm space on Thursday mornings, offering warm drinks to customers, in partnership with LARCs.
- **Crediton Library**
 - Continued to offer the Community Food Larder. In addition to the excess retail shop food collected by the Sustainable Crediton volunteers, the local community are donating excess fruit and vegetable crops and unwanted purchased tinned food, etc. People using the free food larder say that it is a lifeline.

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- Provided free teas and coffee over the winter and colouring books, jigsaws and tabletop games as part of their warm libraries offer. People are very grateful for the warm space and activities, particularly on Saturday 10th December when it had snowed and the library was full of people who stayed for hours.

• Cullompton Library

- Reopened the café space to serve warm drinks.
- Hosted a menopause café, a safe space for women to come and share their experiences of menopause and/or perimenopause. It was really appreciated by those who attended and so another session will be run at the end of January.
- Held a Discovery Screens Week in November, which was well attended, showing various films.
- Is now a C-Card Location, where young people can access free sexual health products.
- Held a Christmas Celebration as part of the town as a whole, with Christmas crafts and a ukelele group playing in the library.



Ukelele Group in Cullompton Library

- Offer a coat rail, as part of the project working with Julian House.

• Ilfracombe Library

- Applied for and received funding to run a children's breakfast club on Saturday mornings, to help out families who struggle to provide meals for children at the weekend. The children can help themselves to fruit, cereal bars, brioche rolls and juice cartons and it's so far proved very popular. The funding will last for 6 months, and more will be applied for if necessary.

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Ilfracombe Library Breakfast Club

• Okehampton Library

- Local Harvest Co-Workers group provided two Veggie Tales sessions for families as part of the November 'Food and Communities' Libraries for Life Campaign, where they listened to some great stories and had food tastings. Okehampton Friends Group paid their fee.
- The Local Harvest Co-Workers Group provided a 'Making Sauerkraut' workshop. They were oversubscribed with 11 adults attending.



Local Harvest Co-Workers Group events at Okehampton Library

- Held a Community Christmas Coffee Morning to encourage people to come together in the library. It was an opportunity for staff to promote Libraries Unlimited and to thank volunteers and organisations that we have worked with this year. The local bakery donated mince pies for the event and the Friends Group provided and served refreshments. This was part of the December 'Feeling Connected' Libraries for Life Campaign.

• Ottery Library

- Ran a stall at the 'Live Well, Age Well' event at the Institute in Ottery St Mary on Saturday 12th November.

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Ottery Library's stand at Live Well, Age Well Event

- **South Molton Library**

- Obtained a grant for a Warm Welcome Project to offer free hot drinks and fruit/biscuits throughout the winter. A wellbeing area has been created, which offers free activities to destigmatise the use of the library as a warm space, including free self-led simple crafts and activities, jigsaws, magazines/newspapers, and a personal stereo to listen to audiobooks and puzzles.
- A volunteer has successfully moved into full-time employment. Another volunteer has now completed her DofE placement, and two more regular volunteers have been taken on, who are looking to build confidence during challenging times in their lives.

- **St Thomas Library**

- Partnered with Sue from Exe Nordic Walking as a base for her Nordic Walking classes, to support local people to get active in a fun and gentle way. St Thomas Library promote the course and loan out Nordic Walking poles during and in-between sessions.



Nordic Walking from St Thomas Library

- **Tiverton Library**

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- Offering the coat rail, which is being very well used, with many coats donated by and gifted to adults and children.
- Operating as a warm space since November 1st, offering free hot drinks and activities every afternoon. The tea/coffee/milk has been provided from the community fridge, which aims to reduce food waste. Tiverton Town Council are donating £50 to continue this initiative.
- Held the annual Christmas Cheer Day after a two-year break due to Covid. This included a family Storytime with Christmas tales, children's make and do sessions, a performance by Take Note Community Choir, a craft fair and refreshments provided by Tiverton's Friend Group. 585 people attended on the day, including Tiverton's Mayor and DCC Councillor Colin Slade, and it was featured on DevonLive.



Tiverton Library's Christmas Cheer Day

Sustainable Business – Fundraising

- **Axminster Library**
 - Extended the sale of donated plants.
- **Budleigh Salterton**
 - Held an outdoor 'not so nearly new' books, jigsaws, cds and dvds table, asking for donations.
- **Chudleigh**
 - Received Devon Growing Communities Funding.
- **Honiton Library**
 - Held a Jigsaw Sale and a coffee morning with craft sale of items made by the Keep Calm and Yarn members.
- **Kingskerswell Library**
 - Received Devon Growing Communities Funding
- **Kingsteignton Library**
 - Received Devon Growing Communities Funding for a further seating area within the library. This will greatly help people coming out of the cold to sit and warm up in the library and with literacy development,

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as an extra place for Storytimes and for parents, carers and schools to sit.

- Raised funds with an adult and children's Christmas quiz and holding a Christmas book sale.
- **Newton Abbot Library**
 - Held a book sale and sale of knitted items at Victorian Evening, raising funds for Libraries Unlimited. Knitted items such as key rings knitted by the Knit and Natter Group raise a steady trickle of funds for Libraries Unlimited.
 - Received Devon Growing Communities Funding to create a comfy space in the library.
- **Ottery Library**
 - Extended the sale of nearly new books within the library.
- **St Thomas Library**
 - Started a co-working space at St Thomas Library in response to a community need for people who work from home. The upstairs space offers 5 desks with electric sockets, a 'Zoom Room' and Wi-Fi printing, and warm drinks are provided. The Devon Growing Communities Fund grant provides warm drinks, room dividers, office equipment and heating and staff time. The first 4 weeks welcomed 22 customers and 40 visits. The Library ask for donations and have raised over £100.
- **Tavistock Library**
 - Received Devon Growing Communities Funding to support opening on Wednesday afternoons.
 - Received £250 from WD Borough Councillors to support the revamp of the children's area.
 - Received £700 from DCC Councillors to support the children's area, sustainable lighting in the lobby, and improved notice boards for hard copy community information.
- **Totnes Library**
 - Received a donation of £2000 from the local community bookshop. The bookshop provided a donation earlier in the year to redesign Totnes Library's teen area, and after the success of this project, they have donated more to help towards the warm spaces offer.

Friends Groups Updates

- **Ilfracombe Library Friends Group** funded the refurbishment of an office space to create a new bookable meeting room. There were a few inquiries over the summer from people wanting a small private space to have an

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interview or a work call, and the space has already been used by volunteers helping asylum seekers to fill in visa forms. It will be a really useful asset to the library and the community.

- **Lynton Library Friends Group** supported a Christmas Storytime and decorating the library Christmas tree event. They funded refreshments to provide hot drinks during open hours through the winter.
- **Moretonhampstead Library Friends Group** ran coffee mornings, which were hugely successful. The November morning raising £300. The Friends have supported financially and with volunteers at the warm libraries sessions.
- **Okehampton Library Friends Group** donated items and put together a festive goodies hamper for their Christmas Draw. This raised £280. They have donated £140 to Libraries Unlimited
- **Pinhoe Library Friends Group** successfully applied for ward and locality grants to update Pinhoe Library. Two grants of £500 each have funded large window blinds, an exterior notice board, decking varnish and security lights. These are great additions to Pinhoe Library.
- **South Molton Library Friends Group** funded some new storage cupboard and organised a successful Christmas Fair with lots of activities for families to enjoy.
- **St Thomas Library Friends Group** held their first evening event since Covid. A talk by Todd Gray, The Cloth Industry in Eighteenth Century Exeter, had 20 attendees on a very chilly evening. They enjoyed an interesting talk, glass of wine, and mince pies.
- **Tavistock Library Friends Group** have established a bi-monthly quiz evening which has a regular following. They have also run a monthly 'Garden Chat' session which ended with wreath-making in December.
- **Tiverton Library Friends Group** continue their fundraising campaign to provide the library with a sensory nook aimed at improving the library experience for neurodiverse children and families. They have raised just over 50% of their target (circa £4000).

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in Libraries

The Reading Agency is teaming up with Universal Music Group's UK Task Force for Meaningful Change, to celebrate Black History Month by gifting books by Black authors to local communities through library authorities across the UK. The book gifting campaign highlighting Black voices from across Britain is called Mark My

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Words: A Celebration of Black Authors, Selected by Universal Music Group and The Reading Agency. Libraries will be gifted with four adult and four children's titles celebrating Black authors.

NPO funded – Sami, children's author and young woman of colour, came to read from her new book, Llama on Ice, and Rudy Loewe (they/them) offered a text and image workshop. Rudy's work responds to black history, colonialism, gender and sexuality. Monica Shanta offered workshops at Honiton as part of Ingrid Pollard exhibition. There is potential to work with Beyond Face, a local theatre company offering performance and workshops led by Black, Asian and ethically diverse artists, and Patrice Naiambana, based in Bovey Tracey, from Tribal Soul theatre company.