

## LIBRARY STRATEGY APRIL 2023



### 1 READING

#### 1.1 Offer children of all ages an opportunity to read and discover

- Thanks to funding from Peters who supply our children’s books, Wish Upon a Party entertained children for two hours with their Gruffalo themed party at Birkenhead Library, which included a story, crafts and promoting the author to the children. The thirty children who attended enjoyed the party and the feedback from parents and carers was very positive.



- We held twenty-two Baby Bounce and Rhyme sessions, including a special Easter one at Birkenhead Library, which had the theme ‘Teddy Bear’s Picnic’. Staff created a picnic scene with bunting. The babies brought their own teddies, and a snack and bear ears were given out.



- Story and craft sessions are being planned for the Coronation in May and Elmer Day on 27<sup>th</sup> May.

- Six Easter craft and story sessions took place in our sites. We also promoted Easter books that could be downloaded from our Overdrive platform.
- We shared Booktrust reading lists to do with all things Easter and a list of books for children that explore Ramadan and Eid.
- Twenty-four Lego sessions took place in various sites.



## 1.2 Provide affordable and engaging resources and activities to promote and celebrate reading for pleasure for adults

- We promoted the fact that we have subscribed to some new e magazine titles from BorrowBox, all of which are free to borrow.



- A new feature on social media was the introduction of a monthly book challenge in January. Each month we challenge our readers to choose a title from that month's theme. April's theme was funny books. Readers are encouraged to share feedback and reviews on our social media pages.
- This World Book Night we invited readers to join the Road to Reading. This asks people to pledge to read every week to help them connect to others, spark curiosity, boost their self-esteem and support their mental health. Their reading journey will also form part of a national reading research project, helping to transform the lives of more people across the UK.
- Library staff were successful in their application to the Reading Agency for World Book Night Quick Read titles to give out to our communities. Staff gave some out at two shopping centres and community groups which included the

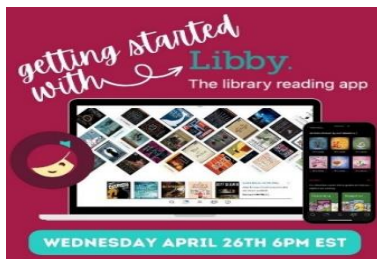
Inspire Community Café and Diversity Hub 67 which aims to offer support with mental health and financial issues and who are passionate about preventing isolation.

### 1.3 Provide an engaging and diverse book stock and reading focused materials for all ages and abilities

- April campaign titles on BorrowBox were The Curfew by TM Logan on e Audio and Run, Rose, Run by James Patterson and Dolly Parton on e Audio. Other promotions included local history titles for Local History Month and a gardening/spring feature. 42 e Audio books and 121 e Books have been purchased since February, which included reservations, replacements for expired titles and new titles.



- Readers were invited to join OverDrive experts for a one-hour webinar on Getting Started with the Libby App. They would learn the basics, find out what makes Libby different, ask questions and access additional learning resources after the webinar ends.

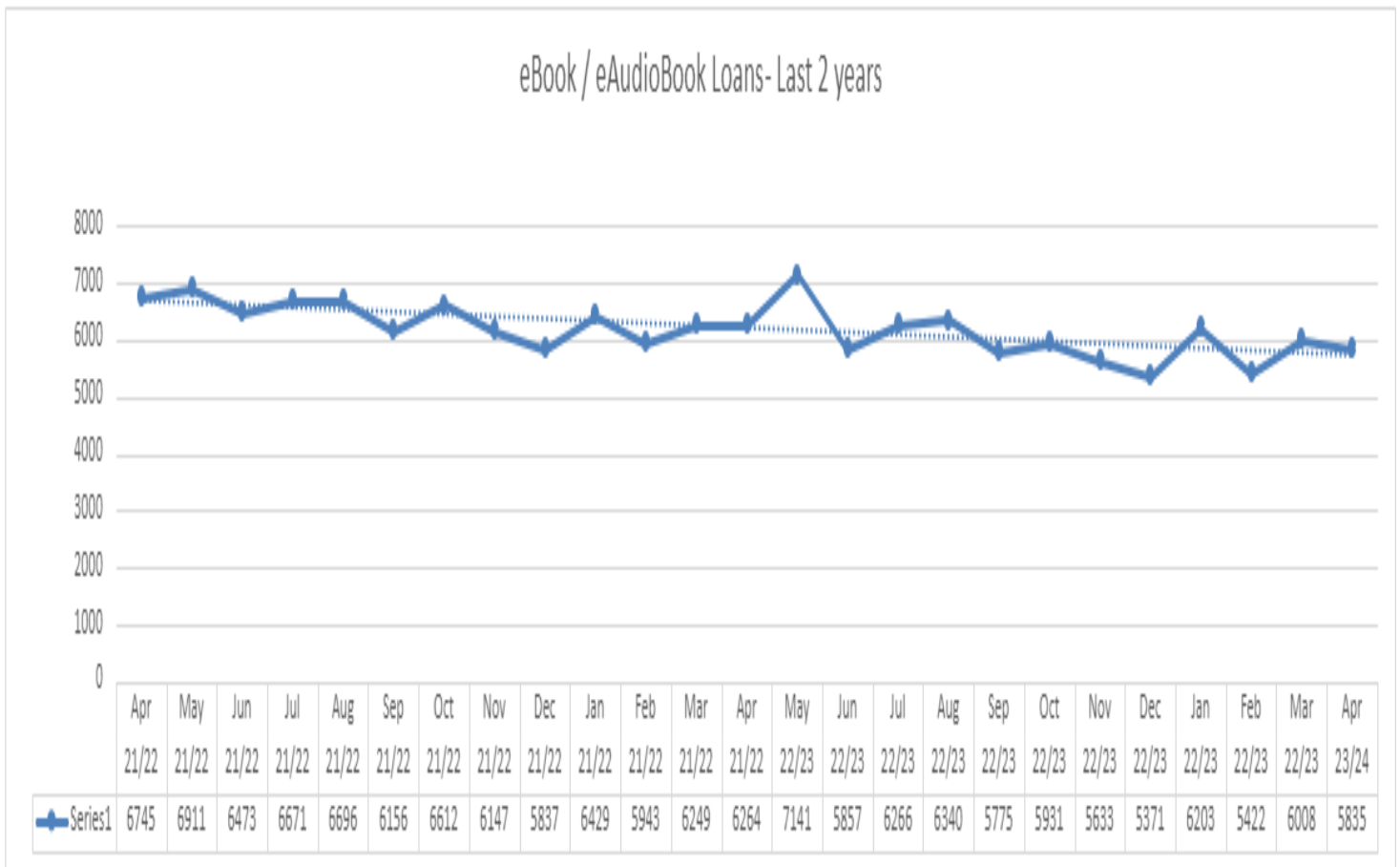
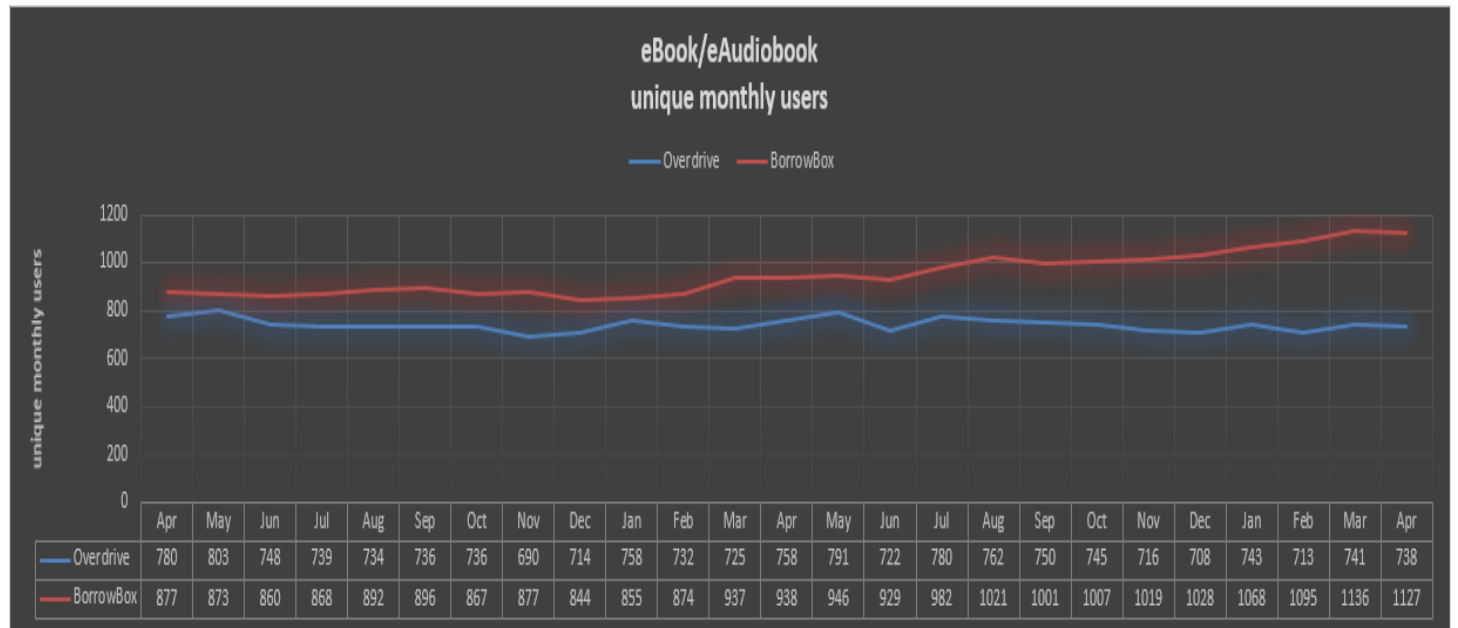


## 2 INFORMATION and DIGITAL

### 2.1 Provide a range of resources and activities that promote digital inclusion and support residents with their digital skills

- Wirral Lifelong Learning continue to hold courses at the new Connect and Inspire hub at Birkenhead Central Library. They include:
  - Easy steps into computers
  - Learn to use your own smartphone
  - Learn to use your own tablet

### Borrowbox and Overdrive engagement



## Appendix 1

Performance				Wirral Libraries
Engaged Users	Post Impressions	Reactions	Post Reach	
2,073 ↘19%	80,589 ↘10%	534 ↘17%	43,154 ↘18%	
Page & Post Engagements	Link Clicks	New Fans	Posts	
2,977 ↘20%	274 ↘20%	25 ↗32%	96 ↗4%	

Post summary			Wirral Libraries
Posts	Reach	Reactions	
96 ↗4%	76,067 ↘5%	320 ↘16%	
Comments	Shares	Engagement Rate	
19 ↘36%	229 ↘13%	3.98% ↗1%	

Performance				WirralLibraries
Tweets	Retweets	Impressions	Engagements	
51 ↘7%	66 ↘8%	15,416 ↘5%	254 ↘4%	
Replies	Clicks	Likes	New Followers	
4 ↘33%	65 ↗9%	90 ↘5%	2 ↘83%	

Post summary			WirralLibraries
Posts	Retweets	Replies	
51 ↘7%	66 ↘8%	4 ↘33%	
Clicks	Likes	Engagement Rate	
65 ↗9%	90 ↘5%	1.50%	

## 2.2 Provide access to quality information and digital services

- People who live in Wirral and wanted to start or grow their business were invited to an event with business advisor Heidi at Birkenhead Library.

**ARE YOU READY TO START YOUR BUSINESS?**

**BIRKENHEAD LIBRARY**  
MONDAY 17TH APRIL | 10AM - 12PM

BUSINESS ADVISOR HEIDI LODGE

European Union  
European Structural  
and Investment Funds

NORTHERN  
POWERHOUSE

Enterprise  
Hub

Wirral Libraries

- Wirral Ways to Work Job Club and Employment Advice with Involve NorthWest is an appointment only service at Birkenhead Central Library in the new Connect and Inspire Hub. Also, Involve NW Community Connectors were in Birkenhead Library every other Thursday and Heswall every other Tuesday to signpost clients to all kinds of community and wellbeing support in the areas. Eight sessions took place this month.
- Wirral Libraries introduced new extended opening hours from 3<sup>rd</sup> April. Branch libraries opened for more days and our Centrals opened until 7pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays.
- The Connect and Inspire hub is now open at Birkenhead Central Library, with an offer for individuals, local communities and businesses. There is new digital tech for users, free super-fast wi-fi, free charging points and brand new spaces to hire, study and learn in. The hub has been developed thanks to funding from the Libraries Improvement Fund from Department for Culture, Media and Sport, with Wirral Council being one of just 25 local authorities that successfully applied.



- Users can access digital newspapers and e Magazines at home as well as in our libraries. To access the papers they can log in to NewsBank. For e Magazines, they need to login to BorrowBox and select e Press.
- Twenty Reachout sessions took place in various sites. The service offers free, confidential advice and guidance to support residents get back into employment.

### **3 CULTURE and CREATIVITY**

#### **3.1 Provide opportunities for residents to engage in inclusive cultural and creative experiences, amongst audiences of targeted need and within local communities**

- As Eurovision is taking place in Liverpool next month, we celebrated by making a playlist on Spotify of the library staff's favourite British entries, with some great international songs mixed in. We also added a Wirral Classical

playlist, which consists of pieces by composers from the Wirral (or who have significant Wirral connections) and pieces performed by Wirral musicians.

- To celebrate World Book Night on 23<sup>rd</sup> April, staff went to Cherry Tree Centre where they chatted to approximately fifty people about the library offer and to give out free books.
- Wirral MakeFest have released tickets for the first WirralMakefest event being held at the Williamson Art Gallery and Birkenhead Central Library sites. Makefest aims to give confidence to new creators, build communities and help start makers on the path to sustainability. It is being organised by volunteers Diana Powell, Wirral Unplugged, Alison Bailey Smith, and John Howard Wirral Code Club who have formed the Wirral Makefest organisation. On 3<sup>rd</sup> June there will be a planetarium in Birkenhead Central Library with ten 25-minute shows throughout the day, with makers and organisations providing advice, information and activities plus a pop-up café by Wirral Met College Prep4Life across the whole of the library ground floor space and pocket park.
- Our zoom reading group continues to meet once a month. Books talked about at this session included Snap by Belinda Bauer, Bournville by Jonathan Coe and Murder Before Evensong by Richard Coles.

### **3.2 Encourage the growth of local cultural groups and events to further enhance the use of the library space for cultural and creative activities**

- In April we celebrated Local History Month. As well as some fabulous talks we had collections of local interest and local history books at our central libraries and a wide range of interesting articles on BorrowBox and Libby.



- Local History Month was a great success. We sold out at all our venues and used the Eventbrite platform for bookings. Numbers allowed are outlined below:

Bebington 30

Greasby 40

Birkenhead 60

## Wallasey 30

We had more demand than ventilation numbers would allow tickets for some of the events, which shows there is a demand for Local History talks. Local people enjoyed the opportunity to listen to talks for free and the sessions encouraged the community to get involved. Feedback was very positive. It is also a great opportunity to promote our service e.g., Census 1921. The speakers all provided their time for free, which the library service is very grateful for. Hopefully next year it will be bigger and better again. The four talks were:

Crossing the Mersey by Gavin Hunter

Curious Tales of Wirral by Ken Pye

Aethelflaed by Dave Capener

Mothers, Wives and Daughters: Women's experiences of the Great War 1914 – 1918 by Dr Stephen Roberts

- Birkenhead Reference Library is celebrating the coronation of HM King Charles III with a photo exhibition of his visits to Wirral and how we celebrated past coronations.
- Staff at Bebington library are holding a poetry event in May featuring Dean Fraser. Dean's mixture of philosophy and poetry make for an interesting and thought-provoking hour, whilst also being entertaining.
- Birkenhead Library is hosting the Friends of Tranmere Tunnels display in April and May. It includes photographs and information about the history of this local heritage site. The aim of the display is to raise awareness of this valuable historical asset and the vision for its future development.



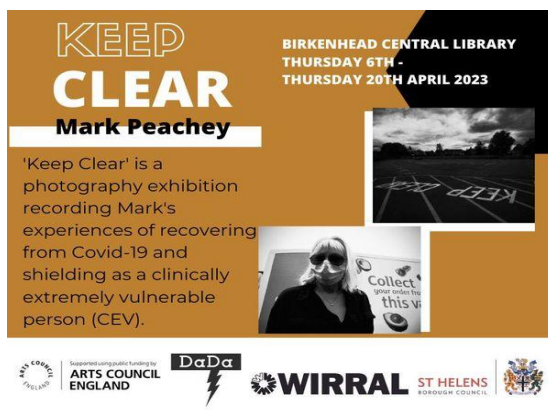


## Appendix 1

- Two pupils from Upton Hall School have started doing their Duke of Edinburgh volunteering at West Kirby Library
- 'Keep Clear' exhibition is a series of photographs by Mark Peachey, a St Helens-based photographer. In early 2020 Mark caught Covid-19. He has severe asthma and the effect of Covid on his health has been substantial. He had to shield at home as a Clinically Extremely Vulnerable person. To help him cope with his experiences he began to photograph his life at home shielding, and later on, his experiences of slowly re-entering the world around him.

As society opened up and restrictions were lifted, the political mantra became one of 'Living with Covid.' Mark feels that a gap has opened up between many CEV people who are still wary of going out and mixing with other people, and non-CEV people who may not have these concerns. After nearly three years Mark is still struggling with the after-effects of Covid. This, in Mark's experience, is 'Living with Covid'. The virus remains an elevated threat to people with disabilities. For Mark and many people like him, the need to Keep Clear could become a way of life.

'Keep Clear' is on loan to Wirral Borough Council from St Helens Borough Council and was on display in Birkenhead Central Library from Thursday 6th to Thursday 20th April 2023 as part of Dada International 2022, a disability arts programme designed to inspire, develop and celebrate talent in disability and Deaf arts. You can also view the images online at [keepclearphoto.co.uk](http://keepclearphoto.co.uk).



'Keep Clear' was commissioned by Cultural Hubs, delivered by and through St Helens Borough Council's Library Service and has been exhibited throughout the Liverpool City Region as part of a collaborative cultural working party.

Feedback from the exhibition has been very positive with a conservative estimate of 250 people viewing the exhibition. The format of the exhibition (via easels) fitted the space exceptionally well and increased engagement. Two copies of the accompanying book have been purchased as part of the exhibition legacy.

- The service has been preparing for the hand-over of St James library to the St James Centre. Following meetings with the management team at St James a programme of stock work has been initiated that will reflect the needs of the local community and the vision of the Centre's future plans for the space. This has led to a reduction in stock in some areas and a new layout for the library with considerable space being provisioned for community activities going forward. Work will continue in the coming weeks, with the operational team facilitating the removal of the counter and FFE removal.
- Library staff and other judges met to choose the winning poems in this year's Chris Salmon poetry competition. It was open to entrants under 19 years of age who attend school or college full-time in Wirral. It was free to enter and a prize of £100 is awarded to the winner of each of the 5 age categories. The prize-giving ceremony will be on the evening of 7<sup>th</sup> July.

## **4 HEALTH and WELLBEING**

### **4.1 Promote access to trusted information on a range of health issues including specific medical conditions and public health issues and provide self-management support**

- Greasby Library is again being used for Covid vaccinations on the days when the library is closed. This will be starting from 18<sup>th</sup> April and will conclude at the end of May.
- Staff are planning a Reminiscence Box event at Wallasey Central library for residents in local care homes who have dementia.
- Friends of Wallasey Central are holding a coffee morning in the library in May in aid of Dementia Action Week. Singme Merseyside choir will be providing the entertainment.
- Eastham Day Centre meet up in Eastham library every week.
- We are highlighting Mental Health Awareness in May by holding six drop-ins in our libraries hosted by two of our partners.

### **4.2 Provide a range of creative and social activities which engage and connect communities, reduce loneliness and improve wellbeing in accessible and trusted spaces**

## Appendix 1

- We hosted eight shared reading group sessions and three-monthly reading groups.
- Lisa Kelly from Autism Together helped host a coffee morning at Wallasey Central Library as part of Autism Acceptance Month. As well as serving drinks and cake to visitors, the group displayed literature giving more information about autism and the group. Everyone had a great time helping to raise money for the charity and acceptance for autistic people everywhere.

All the necessary photographic permissions have been obtained.