

## South Gloucestershire Library Service Annual Report 2015-2016

This report summarises the work of South Gloucestershire Libraries in 2015/16, it highlights the impact we have had on communities and individuals.

### Reading and literacy

**Vital statistic** 1.1 million books issued

**Thornbury Library** 86,326 books issued

#### Time4Reading

This year the service has been working across South Gloucestershire on the Time4Reading project involving schools (primary and secondary) and the wider community. Schools have developed an award scheme to reward schools who achieve certain criteria, see [www.southglos.gov.uk/time4reading](http://www.southglos.gov.uk/time4reading)

#### Children reading

The work with children and the encouragement of children to read makes South Gloucestershire one of the leading authorities – more children took part in the Summer Reading Challenge per capita than any other library in the South West. The service does work with all ages from pre-school children to teenagers, 44% of books issued are children's books. The Concorde book Award is becoming a highly prestigious award and this year's ceremony was an exciting affair.

Parents said: 'The Summer Reading Challenge has motivated my children to read, read and read over the Summer Holidays. What more could I want?' Children said 'Epic! Because it gets you more into reading.'



#### Adult reading

To mark the Rugby World Cup libraries supported the regional reading passport, this opened doors to working with Bristol Sport through a longer term relationship both in schools and libraries.

The high profile events and activities are complimented by work within all the communities in engaging people with reading both within the library and in community settings.

In June the LibrariesWest consortium expanded to include Dorset and Poole, providing users with a range of 2 million books to choose from. Locally, MyThornbury web site, BS35 local magazine, Thornbury Magazine and various other local publications offer the opportunity to highlight new books

### Information service

**Vital statistic** 140,000 enquiries

**Thornbury Library** 9,230 enquiries

Libraries provide access to information, they are often the first place people will go to for help and staff are able to either provide the answer or refer to another agency or resource. For details of the information service see <http://bit.ly/1rCICEJ>. One young woman visited the library for the first time, seeking advice on a refuge. She was upset and needed someone to listen to her. The member of staff involved gave details of useful contacts and offered as much help as possible. The young woman later returned to thank staff and join the library with her child and is now living nearby.

## Digital literacy

**Vital statistic** 137,000 hours of usage of the computers

**Thornbury Library** 10,138 hours of usage

**Digital inclusion** is a priority both at local and national level and the service working with Community Learning has trained staff and volunteers to deliver a consistent offer to people wanting support with IT. With the increasing channel shift in all organisations access to IT and staff to support is becoming critical for the success of the digital inclusion plans.

The service was successful in receiving a grant to promote online access and worked with the other community groups in South Gloucestershire to promote access to IT.



Mrs R wanted to email her son who was working abroad. She had an initial 1:1 session with an IT volunteer who helped her set up the account. She was very nervous and shaking with fear. Over the year and with subsequent help from staff, this lady has become so confident with IT that she now owns her own laptop and uses the free Wi-Fi in the library.

## Culture and creativity

**Vital statistic** 9,600 adults and 65,000 children attended events in libraries

**Thornbury Library** 626 adults and 4,217 children attended events

Libraries enrich the lives of individual and communities through the provision of events, activities and exhibitions helping people gain a sense of place and take pride in their neighbourhoods and communities. The Discover Festival is a major part of our promotion, festival highlights at Thornbury Library included author talks with Alison Weir, Lucienne Boyce and Jacqueline Wadsworth. We also feature in the Severn Vale Art Trail and support the Thornbury Arts Festival and Thornbury Carnival. The service also supports national weeks to raise the profile of specific issues such as British Science Week, World Mental Health Day and World Book Night.

## Health and wellbeing

**Vital statistic** 4,000 Books on Prescription titles borrowed

**Thornbury Library** 299 borrowed

Reading is healthy in its own right but libraries have continued to develop a series of books for specific conditions under the Reading Well Books on Prescription project – this year the dementia collection was launched which included stock for carers, and people experiencing dementia. In addition staff were trained to become health champions in each library. This complements the dementia and mental health arts project and memory cafes hosted in libraries.



## Learning

**Vital statistic** 16,667 hours of formal learning

**Thornbury Library** 250 hours

‘There is nowhere quiet to study at home with my whole family sharing three rooms, this is the only place I can come to really focus’

A student uses the library regularly often all day as she can plug in her laptop and use the Wi-Fi for free. She cannot afford to sit in a café and buy coffees all day.

Libraries promote lifelong learning, self-improvement and social mobility and play an important role supporting the educational curriculum with reading for enjoyment. They provide both formal learning programmes working closely with Community Learning and local colleges and informal learning opportunities with people developing their own skills and knowledge through use of IT and books. The service works closely with UWE where users can use their library card to access high level stock. The library workforce provides users with essential support to get the most from available learning opportunities.

They also support the economic growth of the area through providing volunteer opportunities and providing a touch down base for local workers. One gentleman regularly uses this and other libraries as a temporary office using the Wi-Fi and taking mobile phone calls. This means he has no office overheads.

## Community

**Vital statistic** 917,743 visits

**Thornbury Library** 102,069 visits

Libraries are valued safe and neutral spaces where people of all ages are welcomed and participate in a range of activities. The stories behind the visits are powerful testimonies to the value of libraries – many library users comment about the value of human contact they gain from a library visit. Without the library in their life they would be lonely and isolated.

Being based in most main communities enables libraries to host the delivery of other services, we work in partnership with Community Learning, Public Health, DWP, and various voluntary sector groups. At Thornbury Library we work closely with the Council’s One Stop Shop customer service point, which is located in our building, welcoming new faces who have since become regular users of the library as well. Our other close partners include Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust, Age UK South Glos, Jigsaw Thornbury (supporting families with a child who has additional needs), National Autistic Society Anderson School, New Siblands School, Thornbury Memory Café, St Marys Shopping Centre and Thornbury Museum.