

Report of: Andrea Ellison – Chief Librarian

Report to: Inner North East Community Committee

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To note

Title: Libraries report for sites mapping to INE area

**The Reginald Centre Community Hub & Library, Chapel Allerton Library,
Oakwood
Library and Moor Allerton Community Hub & Library**

Introduction

1. This report is an update on events and activity delivered, community partnerships established and a look forward to upcoming activity. This report will be followed by a more in-depth performance report to be delivered at an upcoming INE Community Committee meeting.

Main Issues

Welcoming communities back into libraries

Children and Schools

Story & Rhyme and Ready Steady Readers

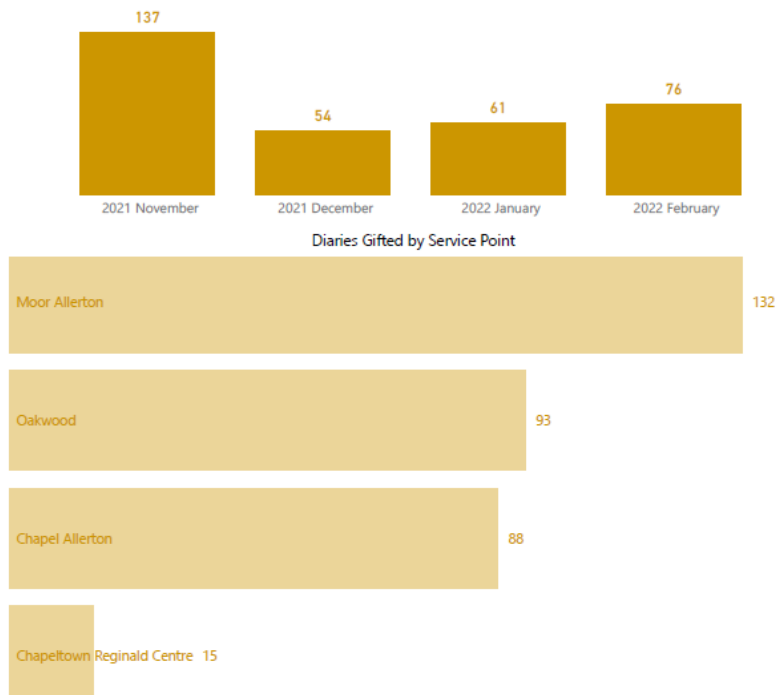
2. From September, Leeds Libraries has focussed on re-introducing key elements of its offer. This has initially focussed on the relaunch of Story & Rhyme, and our reading scheme for Under 5s – Ready Steady Readers. We've seen a steady rise in attendances for our Story & Rhyme in INE libraries, with Chapel Allerton and Moor Allerton now having 50 – 70 attendees per week (children and adults combined), with attendances at Oakwood and Reginald lower, but showing an upward trend, which we hope to build on with further engagement with EY (Early Years) settings within those areas:

Story & Rhyme cumulative attendance, Nov 21 – Feb 22, INE:



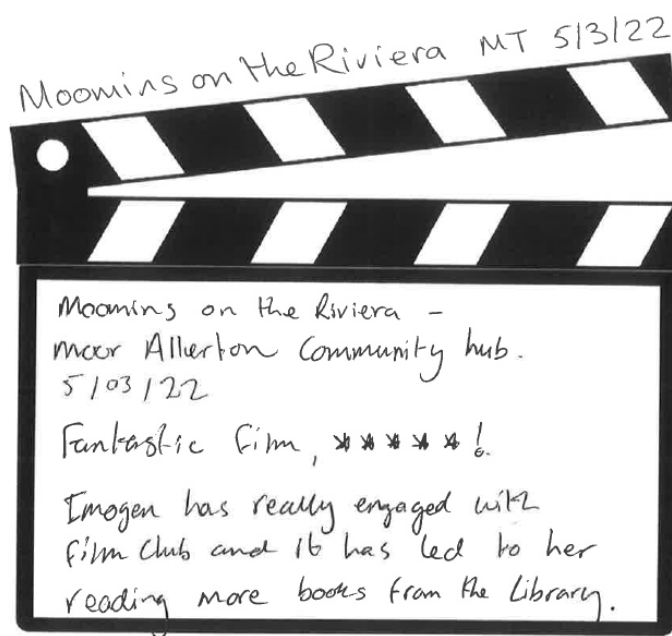
*Moor Allerton – 564 cumulative attendees (313 children; 251 adults)
 Chapel Allerton – 551 cumulative attendees (287 children; 251 adults)
 Reginald Centre – 136 cumulative attendees (78 children, 58 adults)
 Oakwood – 120 cumulative attendees (60 children; 60 adults)*

3. We've looked to engage with families via our Ready Steady Readers scheme, sharing best practise for sharing stories with children and encouraging return visits to the library, with a number of sites in INE having some of the best engagement figures across the city (Moor Allerton, Oakwood, Chapel Allerton). Some work is needed to build awareness of the scheme at Reginald, and we will look to achieve this through targeted staff training and community engagement with EY settings.



Children's events and cultural activity

4. Moor Allerton and Reginald have both been host sites for our Healthy Holidays schemes for children eligible for free school meals, combining a sport and culture offer, with the culture offer being delivered within our library spaces.
5. We have re-introduced holiday events for children and families, each of which have been sold-out via our ticketing platform Ticketsource. These events include: the Lego event Hal-Lego-Ween at Oct half term at Reginald, and the 12 Cones of Christmas craft and stop-motion animation event at Chapel Allerton and Oakwood. We've also delivered Community-Committee funded STEM activity at Chapeltown Lights event, where our LED circuit card workshop reached an estimated 100 children, with the event as a whole engaging with many more families. I'd like to thank the Councillors for enabling this provision through their funding.
6. In partnership with Leeds Young Film Festival, we've introduced Family Film Club (initially on a 6-month trial period) at Moor Allerton, offering film screenings with close book links and tie-in activities. Feedback has been uniformly excellent, and we are currently exploring next steps for this offer:



7. We've made best use of our flexible library and hub spaces to host performances by Wrongsemble (*The Lost Property Office* at Chapel Allerton in August; *TINSEL* at Moor Allerton in December) and Coalesce dance theatre (*The Old Green Time Machine* at Reginald in February) offering free, high quality cultural experiences to our families. Each performance has sold-out in advance, with audiences ranging from 30 – 65 attendees for each performance. This is something we will continue to programme via our Children's team, sharing performances across the area to ensure we are offering as widely accessible a family-friendly culture offer as is possible within our spaces.
8. For adults, we've programmed a varied series of author events at Chapel Allerton library, both providing space for local authors to launch their books (Rita Morrison) and for interactive Q and As by established authors (Pat Young, Chris Nickson, journalist Ben Machell in conversation with crime writer Alex North).

Schools Offer

9. As of World Book Day (3rd March), our new Schools Programme has now launched, and we are in the process of contacting local schools and inviting classes into all of our library spaces for free librarian-led library skills sessions. We are offering school workshops with Coalesce dance theatre and Shakespeare Week workshops with Chicken Shop Shakespeare and Wrongsemble theatre company at the Reginald Centre. We will reintroduce a range of after-school clubs and groups across the East area, and are currently in the latter stages of developing this offer prior to delivery.

b) Digital activity

10. Recognising the demand for face to face digital support, we've introduced monthly Digi Drop ins at Moor Allerton, Oakwood and Reginald libraries, and have run a themed Smartphone Photography workshop at Chapel Allerton (linking in with the FGVW community photography exhibition). We are developing our digital offer, and are now in a position to deliver 3-week First Steps with Digital courses, which will come to a branch in INE between Easter and summer.

c) Displays

11. We've looked to create displays linking into calendar celebrations, such as BHM and IWD, for which we currently have a zine display up at Chapel Allerton, with our BHM display at Chapel Allerton receiving the following customer feedback:

"We're really pleased with the wider selection of children's authors and children's books you have that represent different ethnicities. It is so important that children like my daughter who is of mixed-race heritage, can see herself. Please keep up the good work you're doing in diversifying your stock and ensuring all children see themselves."

d) Library spaces

12. We've been successful in accessing budget to improve the shelving in the children's library at Reginald. This will be of huge benefit to library activity, making the space more inviting for children and families, and making the shelving more flexible to enable class visits to recommence in the library.

(Re-) establishing community partnerships and co-created activity

13. Another key element enabling us to re-establish our community presence and in bringing people back into our spaces, is our community partnership work. This has enabled us to expand on our in-house delivery, through co-created projects and externally delivered activity.
14. The community partners we've (re)established links with so far include: The Little Bookshop (for whom we hosted a Rob Biddulph illustration event), Maecare, Chess in Schools and Communities, FGVW and REAP (with INE libraries hosting community art and photography exhibitions), Roundhay Craftivists, CA Spaces and we are having initial talks with Inkwell.
15. This has enabled library spaces to offer photography, art, craftivism and zine exhibitions, with strong community connections. These community partnerships have been founded on principles of mutually beneficial support and co-creation. We want communities to know that the library space is *their* space: we strive to enable this as much as our staffing capacity allows.

"It's a great pleasure to work with you and your service. I also hope we can find many more opportunities for successful collaborative working." **David Miles, FGVW**

New and Upcoming activity

16. The library activity listed above is just the beginning. Over the coming months we will introduce elements of our Health and Wellbeing offer, through the creation of social tables and social groups. We will pilot social tables at Chapel Allerton and Social Groups at Reginald, linking in with other wellbeing organisations using the Centre. I'm proud that, in INE and across East, we've already begun to deliver wellbeing activities in partnership with FGVW, including Wellbeing Walks from Chapel Allerton Library and The Reginald Centre led by Walking for Health, and Zumba in the Park (Potternewton Park, date *TBC*).

17. Following the current International Women's Day Zine exhibition, through April, Chapel Allerton Library will host an art and craftivism exhibition exploring responses to climate change and COP26, and featuring work by Oakwood Art Group, REAP and Roundhay Craftivists. We have a launch talk programmed as part of this, together with a craftivism embroidery workshop (Positive Patches: <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/leedslibraryevents/positive-patches-embroidery-workshop-with-artist-hayley-mills-style/e-kxplyk>) and a drop in event in April.
18. We're hoping to soon confirm that the Reginald Centre will host the touring version of the *West Indian Soldier* exhibition (<https://www.nam.ac.uk/whats-on/west-indian-soldier>), which we hope to exhibit at Reginald during May, as part of local and community history month. We are in initial discussions with Spin Arts and Irish dancer and musician Kiara Martin (Northern School of Dance) in bringing a Gypsy storytelling project to both the Reginald and the Compton Centre (this is subject to the artists receiving Leeds 2023 funding). In June, the Reginald Centre will host a touring version of the British Libraries' *Breaking the News* exhibition.
19. We will look to continue to programme a rich and varied cultural programme at Chapel Allerton Library, building on the author events already in place, and working closely with Chapel Allerton Arts Festival and the World on Our Doorstep music festival. Although space limits activity provision at Oakwood, as the weather improves, we will explore ways to best use the outdoor space available to us.

Recommendations

20. The Inner North East Community Committee is asked to note the contents of this report and provide any feedback to Mark Kirkby.