

Annual Report

Financial year 1 April 2017
to 31 March 2018



Introduction

In Great Britain last year 250 million visits were made to public libraries – that’s more than the combined number of visits to the cinema and theatre, the UK’s top ten tourist attractions and live music gigs. Library use is declining slowly nationally but only from this very strong position as a much loved public service. Some libraries are now starting to buck that trend and increase usage by making changes to libraries and promoting them more effectively. That is our ambition for West Berkshire - a service that is responsive to local needs. It’s your library service – a safe and trusted place to get good information with rapidly expanding online services - and it’s all free and available for residents of all ages.

This is the first annual report for the West Berkshire Library Service. The report is intended to give you an idea of what libraries do, who uses them, our staff and volunteers, what the service costs and how much town and parishes contributed to them in the financial year April 2017 to March 2018. We have provided data for each branch library and a summary for the whole service. We have not compared this to previous years because the library service budget and staff team was reduced by 44% in April 2017 and is a different service than it was in previous years. In future years we will compare it with the 2017-18 data. We are always happy to share general data about library usage - we do not share any customer, staff or volunteer details - but please be mindful that requests take up staff time and their priority is to help customers use our services.

“We are very grateful to the town and parish councils who chose to donate to the cost of the service and the scores of people who came forward to volunteer in the last year. This has enabled us to provide 8 libraries across the district, the mobile library service (which is a lifeline for many, particularly in rural areas). Our free wi-fi and online services are expanding all the time with access to e-books, e-magazines and thousands of publications for study and research. You can join free either online or at any library.” **Councillor Dominic Boeck.**



Got a suggestion or query?

Email **Paul James**, Culture & Libraries Manager, West Berkshire Council
paul.james@westberks.gov.uk

Highlights and challenges

The library service is FREE for everyone, of all ages. We have 8 libraries which are open 220 hours a week between them, and 1 mobile library.

Library services nationally are under pressure from the increasing costs of adult social care and other services which safeguard the most vulnerable of all ages. Last year was the transition between the old and the new library service which now has 44% fewer staff and resources. Our 42 staff (24.8 full-time equivalent posts) have come through these changes with flying colours. However, the changes have been difficult and staff do feel the added pressure while doing their best to provide as much service as possible within the capacity and resources available. They have really appreciated the support they receive from customers.

Last year we recruited and trained 215 more volunteers in addition to the 68 we already have. They support staff and customers and we simply can't run the service without them. Between them they contributed 10,147 volunteer hours between 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2018. If you would like to join them please have a look at our volunteering opportunities online:

www.westberks.gov.uk/volunteer

We invested in new self-service kiosks for all our libraries during 17/18 so that customer waiting times could be reduced. We are continuing to encourage our customers to make more use of these kiosks for routine transactions. Customers using the kiosks frees up staff to concentrate on other tasks behind the scenes which do not get done otherwise.

Our WiFi coverage now includes all libraries.



Open
220
hours a week



215
volunteers recruited
and trained
last year



Setting up library working groups for each library is still a work in progress but the working groups have already proved their worth by directly involving local people who give the service feedback from local communities and help us to increase library usage.

To find out more email paul.james@westberks.gov.uk

During 17/18 we added 12,970 new items to our stock (including e-books and e-magazines).

In February 2018 we held a 'Love Your Library' community engagement day and this has helped us make informed decisions on priorities for the future. We would like this to become an annual event.

In March 2018 we dropped the fifty pence charge for reserving a book as this only served to reduce library usage and didn't contribute a meaningful amount of income. We do levy fines for late return of stock and there is a modest charge for ordering books from any of our 13 partner library authorities through the SELMS consortium. We also donate old book stock to worthy causes and have book and DVD sales in library branches from time to time, hire out libraries for community uses and put on events which earn income.

We have also re-branded the library service including new external signage, promotional materials and logo giving it a fresh look to compliment the West Berkshire Heritage brand.



Last year Hungerford Town Council came up with an innovative proposal to take over the Hungerford Library building and run it as a community hub while we continue to run the library service there. This is a great example of partnership working to increase community benefit. The handover will be complete this summer. It's a model that others may be interested in. Contact the town council or the library service to find out more.

8

libraries in
West Berkshire

12,970

new items added to
the stock during
2017/18

About the service

As well as providing access to over 130,000 free books to borrow, we provide:

- A safe place to go and meet
- Free computer use and WiFi
- Printing, photocopying and scanning to email
- Room hire
- Special events and craft activities
- Free downloadable e-books and e-magazines.
 - Thousands of titles available. 29,301 items were borrowed remotely from our e-library during 17/18
- Audiobooks and e-audiobooks to listen to on the go
- Large print books
- Children's services including regular well attended children's events (Storytime, Rhymetime, Code Club, craft events and now and again, Watermill Theatre productions)
- Summer Reading Challenge: almost 3,500 children took part last year
- Nursery and class visits
- Bookstart: we delivered over 3,500 Bookstart packs to babies and children aged 3-4 via health visitors and educational settings
- Online resources to use in the library and at home
 - **Access to Research** – 1.5 million academic and research journals (link with secondary schools)
 - **Britannica online**
 - **British Newspaper Archive** - millions of pages of historical newspapers from the British Library collection
 - **Newsbank** - over 40 national, international and local newspapers, going back to the 1990s
 - **GoCitizen** online resource for candidates preparing for the Life in the UK test (British citizenship)
 - **Theory Test Pro** with online simulation of the UK driving theory test and online hazard perception tests
- Book groups: hundreds of titles available in book group sets of 10 copies (annual fee applies)
- Family History
 - Local and family history resources
 - Free access to 'Ancestry' online database in the library
 - Weekly bookable sessions with Berkshire Family History Society
- Mobile and 'At Home' services
 - Our volunteers delivered books throughout the year to 119 housebound readers.



Loans or renewals of library stock	539,473
Active borrowers	17,427
New borrowers	3,972
Reservations placed	26,461
Visits to the library	335,584
New items added to stock	12,970
Number of public PCs	64
Public PC Usage (hours)	31,736
Number of public PC Users	4,415
Number of visits to public PCs	39,707
Weekly staff working hours	892.67
Number of volunteers	283
Volunteer hours	10,147
Weekly opening hours (Libraries & Mobile)	220.3
Yearly opening hours (Libraries & Mobile)	11,456
Planned closure hours (for example for maintenance)	131
Unplanned closure hours (for example due to extreme weather or staff shortages)	138
Total closure hours	269
% closed hours during year	2.35%
Summer Reading Challenge participants	3,265



How much did it cost / how much income did we generate?

People sometimes ask how much a certain library branch costs. Some costs are specific to a branch – for example, staff, business rates, energy and maintenance costs. Others are shared with the whole service - for example, professional librarian staff, emergency staff cover, book stock and ICT. All the parts of the service are inter-dependent, so all branch libraries benefit from being part of the wider service and the library service as a whole benefits from being part of West Berkshire Council – for example, corporate support for ICT, finance, maintenance, health and safety, energy and telephony contracts.

Our costs include staff, buying books and digital library stock, building maintenance, energy costs, business rates and marketing. Our income includes contributions from town and parish councils for the first time, fines on late returns of stock, income from room hire, events, book sales and grants.

Expenditure	£
Staff	815,513
Premises - energy, rates, maintenance	289,506
Supplies and services - new books, ICT, marketing, transport etc	300,124
Total	1,405,143
Income	£
Fees and charges - fines, venue hire, events, sales	-74,923
Voluntary contributions from town and parish councils	-89,772
Miscellaneous income	-11539
Total	-176,234
Net cost of the library service 2017-18	1,228,909

Please note that we hope to receive a minimum of £89,772 and a maximum of £150,000 in voluntary contributions from town and parish councils.



Support from Town and Parish Councils

We asked town and parish councils to make a voluntary contribution to help support the service - and if they wish to get involved in library working groups so that we get local feedback about the service and how we can improve it for residents. Many thanks to all those who chose to do so.

We are inviting voluntary contributions for financial year 2018-19. Please note the following:

- The council is the local authority responsible for delivering the statutory library service in West Berkshire. We are not delegating or transferring that responsibility to town and parish councils nor are we levying a charge on the parish councils.
- We are asking town and parish councils to support the service at the local level to help residents benefit from the library service and from the library buildings as a community hub for a range of local activities.
- Contributions are voluntary and ring-fenced within a specific budget - for example: for a specific library branch or for the mobile library service only – so that they directly benefit parish residents.
- We will request a contribution each year rather than request a commitment for a number of years at a time.

Parish	Contribution £
Ashampstead	375
Basildon	1740
Beedon	250
Beenham	1155
Bucklebury	1850
Burghfield	5715
Cold Ash	3855
East Garston	525
Farnborough	25
Frilsham	237
Hungerford	Library building costs have transferred to Town Council in lieu of a cash contribution
Kintbury	2500
Lambourn	4000
Leckhampstead	500
Newbury	31275
Pangbourne	2910
Purley on Thames	250
Shaw cum Donnington	1665
Stratfield Mortimer	3735
Thatcham	24480
Theale	2730
Total contributions	89772

Orange = Parish where a library is located

Burghfield Common Library

The library is currently adjacent to The Willink School campus but during the year the plans for a community hub in Burghfield Common have progressed. We have been discussing the possibility of the library moving location and becoming integrated as part of the hub.

West Berkshire Archaeology Service, the Museum, and Library Service came together to start to plan the first of a series of pop-up exhibitions in libraries showcasing local heritage. Burghfield Library is hosting the first exhibition during June and July 2018 and an event has been arranged for June 25th for members of the parish to meet the Archaeology and Museum team and share their memories.



Local history exhibition organised by West Berkshire Heritage colleagues.

Clubs and groups

- **Craft Club** – monthly
- **Rhymetime** – weekly
- **Rhymetime/Storytime** – weekly in term time
- **Craft & Chat**– fortnightly

Loans or renewals of library stock	20,774
Active borrowers	1,043
New borrowers	217
Reservations placed	718
Visits to the library	16,426
Number of public PCs	3
Public PC Usage (hours)	229
Number of public PC Users	70
Number of visits to public PCs	410
Weekly staff working hours	21
Number of volunteers	25
Volunteer hours	676
Weekly opening hours	19
Yearly opening hours	988
Planned closure hours	7
Unplanned closure hours	14
Total closure hours	21
% closed hours during year	2.15%
Summer Reading Challenge participants	171

Hungerford Library

Hungerford Town Council proposed an innovative project to take over responsibility for the building as a local community hub while we continue to provide the library service. That project has gone well and the lease and joint use agreement are about to be agreed and the building formally handed over. The town council has formed a charitable organisation to run the building and fundraise to develop events and activities there for local people. The CAB and Registrar regularly use the library.



The library staff have lots of plans for the year ahead including a Lego club and encouraging John O'Gaunt school to use the library for homework and research.

Once a month there is a French rhymetime run by Pat, one of the volunteers.

Clubs and groups

- **Art Group** – weekly
- **Book Group (Bookworms)** – monthly
- **Conversation Group** – weekly
- **Gardening Club** – weekly
- **Word Play Club** – weekly
- **Computer Lessons** – weekly
- **Craft & Chat** – weekly
- **Rhymetime** – weekly in term time
- **Children's Craft Activity** – school holidays

Loans or renewals of library stock	27,535
Active borrowers	1,517
New borrowers	275
Reservations placed	770
Visits to the library	34,953
Number of public PCs	7
Public PC Usage (hours)	1,391
Number of public PC Users	301
Number of visits to public PCs	2,150
Weekly staff working hours	27.67
Number of volunteers	30
Volunteer hours	1,471
Weekly opening hours	26
Yearly opening hours	1,352
Planned closure hours	36
Unplanned closure hours	21
Total closure hours	56
% closed hours during year	4.14%
Summer Reading Challenge participants	171

Lambourn Library

We have been working with the Friends of Lambourn Library (FoLL) to re-organise Lambourn Library. The new layout will provide more space for community groups to make use of the library. The new shelving was put in in place last year with the help of an amazing group of volunteers.

The main challenges for this year are to implement the final stages of the layout change project and also to get more children coming into the library.



Knit and Natter at Lambourn Library

Clubs and groups

- **Art Group** – weekly
- **Book Group** – monthly
- **English Conversation** – weekly
- **Knit & Natter** – weekly
- **Rhymetime** – weekly in term time

Loans or renewals of library stock	10,835
Active borrowers	547
New borrowers	113
Reservations placed	364
Visits to the library	11,164
No. of public PCs	4
Public PC Usage (hours)	747
No. of public PC Users	119
No. of visits to public PCs	951
Weekly staff working hours	17
No. of volunteers	19
Volunteer hours	731
Weekly opening hours	15.5
Yearly opening hours	806
Planned closure hours	14
Unplanned closure hours	10
Total closure hours	23
% closed hours during year	2.85%
Summer Reading Challenge participants	67

Mortimer Library

Clubs and groups

- **Craft Club** – monthly
- **Monday Book Group** – monthly
- **Rhymetime** – weekly in term time
- **Tuesday Book Group** – monthly
- **Craft & Chat**– monthly

Mortimer remains a well used local library. The library also provides office space for Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council who we wish to thank for all their help particularly in recruiting a great team of local volunteers.



Loans or renewals of library stock	14,332
Active borrowers	775
New borrowers	125
Reservations placed	688
Visits to the library	12,594
No. of public PCs	3
Public PC Usage (hours)	304
No. of public PC Users	79
No. of visits to public PCs	576
Weekly staff working hours	20.50
No. of volunteers	22
Volunteer hours	557
Weekly opening hours	19
Yearly opening hours	988
Planned closure hours	13
Unplanned closure hours	8
Total closure hours	21
% closed hours during year	2.16%
Summer Reading Challenge participants	120

Newbury Library

The Children's Library has recently been re-vamped and the library also has specific study areas.

Clubs and groups

- **Code Club** – weekly in term time
- **Craft & Chat** – weekly
- **Credit Union info** – fortnightly
- **Family History Help** – weekly
- **Rhymetime** – twice weekly (Tuesdays and Wednesdays)
- **SilverSurfers** – weekly
- **Storytime** – weekly
- **Pets as Therapy** sessions



Book Groups

- **Saturday Book Group** – monthly
- **Thursday Book Group** – monthly
- **VIPs Book Group** – monthly

Loans or renewals of library stock	185,094
Active borrowers	10,015
New borrowers	2,258
Reservations placed	2,208
Visits to the library	158,926
No. of public PCs	27
Public PC Usage (hours)	22,869
No. of public PC Users	2,806
No. of visits to public PCs	27,573
Weekly staff working hours	413.08
No. of volunteers	51
Volunteer hours	1,105
Weekly opening hours	47
Yearly opening hours	2,444
Planned closure hours	24
Unplanned closure hours	12
Total closure hours	35
% closed hours during year	1.43%
Summer Reading Challenge participants	1,688

Pangbourne Library

Clubs and groups

- **Coffee & Craft** – weekly in term time
- **Family History** – promotes use of 'Ancestry' and our public computers. Monthly sessions are always fully booked
- **Pangbourne Heritage Group** – weekly drop-in for local residents to share memories
- **Rhymetime and Storytime** – alternate weeks
- **Author event** with Holly Webb was really successful and attracted new members
- **Coffee morning** – attracted new members

Children's craft weekly activity has unfortunately had to be discontinued because of the reduction in staff. We continue to try to get this popular activity reinstated with a volunteer.



Celebrated children's author Holly Webb visits Pangbourne Library

Loans or renewals of library stock	21,812
Active borrowers	1,084
New borrowers	248
Reservations placed	695
Visits to the library	20,253
No. of public PCs	4
Public PC Usage (hours)	910
No. of public PC Users	137
No. of visits to public PCs	1,287
Weekly staff working hours	23
No. of volunteers	34
Volunteer hours	894
Weekly opening hours	22
Yearly opening hours	1,144
Planned closure hours	12
Unplanned closure hours	12
Total closure hours	23
% closed hours during year	2.01%
Summer Reading Challenge participants	204

Thatcham Library

A team of Vodafone volunteers spent a day at Thatcham Library in January 2018 to give the children's library a makeover. They raised funds for some new storage, children's furniture, and soft toys.

During the year we had CCTV and improved lighting installed in the entrance of the library. This was a deterrent to deal with anti-social behaviour in this area. A continuing challenge is the lack of signage to the library. The library is set right back from the road and therefore hidden from view. Improved signage would raise awareness of the library location.



Clubs and groups

- **Art Group** - weekly
- **Book group** - monthly
- **IT lessons** - weekly
- **Family history** – weekly
- **Rhymetime** - weekly with a volunteer

Loans or renewals of library stock	46,840
Active borrowers	2,626
New borrowers	383
Reservations placed	871
Visits to the library	42,528
No. of public PCs	8
Public PC Usage (hours)	3,113
No. of public PC Users	536
No. of visits to public PCs	4,180
Weekly staff working hours	32
No. of volunteers	51
Volunteer hours	2,242
Weekly opening hours	33.5
Yearly opening hours	1,742
Planned closure hours	17
Unplanned closure hours	21
Total closure hours	38
% closed hours during year	2.15%
Summer Reading Challenge participants	556

Theale Library

Up until July 2018 Theale Library was a dual use library shared with Theale Green School. For reasons we fully understand, the school has decided to provide their own library on campus. West Berkshire Council Public Protection Partnership were able to rent some of the under-used space at the rear of the library which has replaced the income the library previously received from the school to cover the costs of the building. Working with the parish council we have been looking at how we can make the library building more user-friendly for local community groups, events and activities and that work will continue. Library staff staged a "re-launch" event on 13th October 2017 with a much anticipated visit by children's author Holly Webb. The event was a great success. All in all, despite all the changes, the library has enjoyed a successful year with new people coming in to try it out all the time.



Clubs and groups

- **Big Kids Craft** - monthly
- **Craft & Chat** - weekly
- **Family History** - weekly
- **QuickCraft** - weekly
- **Author event** with Holly Webb was really successful
- **Bridge Club** - weekly
- **Evening Book Group** - monthly
- **Pets as Therapy** - weekly
- **Rhymetime** – weekly in term time

Loans or renewals of library stock	24,124
Active borrowers	1,449
New borrowers	255
Reservations placed	853
Visits to the library	24,972
No. of public PCs	8
Public PC Usage (hours)	1,540
No. of public PC Users	367
No. of visits to public PCs	2,580
Weekly staff working hours	25.92
No. of volunteers	22
Volunteer hours	1,196
Weekly opening hours	23.5
Yearly opening hours	1,222
Planned closure hours	0
Unplanned closure hours	15
Total closure hours	15
% closed hours during year	1.21%
Summer Reading Challenge participants	259

West Berkshire Mobile Library Service

This year saw the reduction of our mobile library service. However we maintain a well stocked mobile library vehicle, supported by 3 highly experienced members of staff, which visits 73 sites in the rural areas of West Berkshire every three weeks. Search online for West Berkshire Libraries Mobile Libraries for the timetable. Please get in touch if you would like to talk about helping us to develop the service further to best meet the needs of rural communities

paul.james@westberks.gov.uk

Loans or renewals of library stock	26,725
Active borrowers	710
New borrowers	65
Reservations placed	642
Visits to the library	8,550
No. of public PCs	n/a
Public PC Usage (hours)	n/a
No. of public PC Users	n/a
No. of visits to public PCs	n/a
Weekly staff working hours	74
No. of volunteers	n/a
Volunteer hours	n/a
Weekly opening hours	14.8
Yearly opening hours	770
Planned closure hours	11
Unplanned closure hours	27
Total closure hours	38
% closed hours during year	4.88%
Summer Reading Challenge participants	29



West Berkshire 'At Home' Service

Our 'At Home' library service is specifically for those customers who find it difficult to visit their local library because of age or disability. Library items are chosen for each customer by our DBS checked volunteers after an initial discussion about tastes and requirements. The volunteers then deliver books or spoken word CDs directly to the customer every 3 weeks.

Loans or renewals of library stock	8,861
Active borrowers	146
New borrowers	14
Reservations placed	270
Visits by the library	1,875
No. of volunteers	29

West Berkshire e-library

Our free e-library service is growing in popularity year on year and is now our third most popular library in terms of loans.

In December 2017 we introduced consortium functionality for e-magazines. This was negotiated through the SELMS consortium, and has enabled us to offer a greatly increased range of 134 e-magazine titles to our customers (previously we only had 52), and save money as well. Our e-magazine issues doubled in the first month as a result and have been growing ever since.

Loans or renewals of library stock	29,301
Reservations placed	4,779
Items added to stock	1461

West Berkshire website (www.westberks.gov.uk/libraries)

The number of website hits has decreased over the past year and we have had consistent customer feedback that it is difficult to navigate particularly for finding out about library events. During the coming year our priority is to act on this feedback and work with our web development team to create new more user friendly webpages.

Renewals of library stock	116,627
Active borrowers	6,582
Reservations placed	13,492
Visits to the website	91,891

West Berkshire Contact Centre (out of hours) 01635 519900

Renewals of library stock	5,228
Active borrowers	753

Volunteering

We have worked hard during the year to recruit more volunteers and by the end of 17/18 we had volunteer organisers in place in 6 out of our 8 libraries.

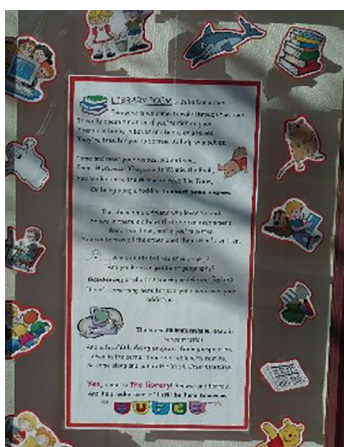
We have extended the range of tasks which volunteers can help us with and provided basic training on our library management system to a few volunteers at each branch so that they can cover periods when there are no library staff available. Initially we had not thought that this would be necessary but in practice in the smaller libraries it has proved very useful to have volunteers available to cover the lunchtime periods.

Our Volunteers Officer has sent out a quarterly newsletter to all volunteers to maintain good communication links and has also shared good practice tips about volunteering amongst all the libraries – see next page.

We held Christmas parties for volunteers at all the libraries to thank them for all their hard work and input to the library service.



Here are some examples of the great ideas and activities that are taking place in the libraries;



Theale Library volunteers have created a lovely window display, cleaning all the windows too.

They continue to deliver a fun packed craft group for the children each week, with something different to make each time.



Thatcham Library has had a group of Vodafone employees over to freshen up the children's area by painting some boards for the walls and donating some new furniture. Sue and Christine continue to deliver a great rota each week to ensure that the library can open.



Burghfield Library has had lots of DIY by volunteer Tim who has put up the new magazine stand making them look well organised and tidy.

Tim is also using his experience in fire safety to help Karen out in the library. Beth, Jane and Olivia are still running the children's craft activity once a month.

Lambourn Library has started a volunteer run rhymetime session which is becoming more and more popular each week with the local community. Pat has been busy counting the volunteer stats for Emna and Lynda at the end of each month.



Hungerford Library volunteers Richard and Hilary have been researching '100 years since women got the vote.' As a result of this research Stacy and Martina have created a display in the library.

Craft and chat continues to grow as do craft activities in the library.



Newbury Library volunteers are growing steadily, and they remain a consistent help with Code Club and many other activities.

Judith is a great help with stockwork and family history on a Friday, offering an appointment based session.

Volunteers Wendy, Maureen and Jane from Thatcham also help at Newbury and are a big support.



Pangbourne Library volunteers are helping with craft activities and Janet runs a busy rhymetime session. Volunteers are helping with book displays and also have organized events within the library, for example a McMillan coffee morning.

Mortimer Library volunteers Louise, Marjorie and Catherine continually deliver a fun and creative rhymetime session for the little ones.

At Home Service volunteers remain a great help to our customers who are housebound. David's experience of 15 years shows how rewarding this can be and is a great help to his readers.