

# Annual Report

Financial year

1 April 2019 - 31 March 2020



## Introduction

Our vision is for an inclusive, modern, sustainable and high quality public library service at the heart of every community in West Berkshire. This is our third annual report and it is intended to give you an idea of what libraries do, who uses them, our staff and volunteers, what the service costs are and how much town and parishes contributed to them in the previous financial year, April 2019 to March 2020.

We have provided data for each branch library and a summary for the whole service. We have included comparative data for the previous financial year 2018-19 as this is a useful way to identify the main trends in library usage and tailor our service accordingly.

**Please note that because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic we had some unforeseen library closures in mid-March and our Mobile Library was unable to run from 17 March 2020. West Berkshire Libraries closed all buildings from 23 March 2020 in line with government requirements for a nationwide lockdown. As a result, our data for 2019-20 is not representative of a complete year and is therefore slightly lower than expected. For example, we estimate that without these enforced closures the number of visits this year would have exceeded those for 2018-19.**

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.

"Over the last decade public library services nationally have experienced a gradual decline in usage. We're delighted to announce that, for the second year running, library usage in the district is increasing. We've done that by listening to customers and developing the service accordingly – including investing in book stock, IT and library buildings and by communicating effectively. Despite the impact of COVID-19 in March this year, the library service again proved very popular with customers. I wish to thank our staff and many volunteers who have, again, done a great job for local residents. If you are not already a member, do join. It's free for residents and the extent of what the service provides may surprise you."

**Councillor Howard Woollaston.**

Storytime at Burghfield Common Library  
with Mrs Bland's Infant School



## Have you got a suggestion or query?

Email **Paul James**, Culture & Libraries Manager, West Berkshire Council  
[paul.james@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:paul.james@westberks.gov.uk)

## Highlights

The library service is FREE for everyone, of any age, living, working or studying in West Berkshire. We have eight libraries and one Mobile Library which are open 220 hours a week between them. Our 46 staff (24.93 full-time equivalent posts), along with our 354 library volunteers, delivered library services to 346,895 visitors during the year.

It is particularly pleasing to see that the number of new library users increased by 7.52% as this was one of the particular challenges we set ourselves last year.

We added 15,237 items of new library stock to our collection, and customer reservations continued to rise this year by 20.54%. We also invested some targeted funding to strengthen specific areas of our library collection. We are delighted that our overall library loans increased by 6.8% to 571,352.

In June 2019 we launched PressReader, our online newspaper service, giving library members free access to thousands of the world's top newspapers as soon as they are available on the shelves. This contributed to the continued growth of our hugely successful e-library.

A particular focus this year was to develop closer links with children and families through working more closely with schools and West Berkshire Family Hubs. The recent restructure of our Librarian Team has allowed us to concentrate more staff resources in this area. We have made good links with the Central Family Hub in Thatcham and have been working with them to enable their Toy Library stock to be integrated into our Library Management System.

During the summer over 3,000 children in West Berkshire participated in The Reading Agency's Space Chase Summer Reading Challenge, which was a great success. This involved 19.2% of 4-12yrs population in West Berks and was the highest percentage reach in the south east region, with an average for the UK of 9.6%.

Our social media continued to grow in popularity and at the end of March 2020 we had over 2,000 followers on Twitter and nearly 1,700 on Facebook. In September 2019 we set up an Instagram account.

Household internet access has continued to rise over the last decade and in 2019 the Office of National Statistics (\*ONS, 2019) reported that almost two thirds of households now have mobile broadband access. In line with this, library computer use has declined during the past few years and our data reflects this national trend. We are aware though that for the proportion of the population that does not have access to the internet, our public access computers are still a vital part of facilitating social inclusion.

In October 2019 we used capital funding to replace all our public access computers (hardware and software) as they were several years old and needed updating. In some libraries we reduced the number of public access computers. This created additional study spaces for laptop users and has been well received by customers who can now use their own devices on our wi-fi network.

\*<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/householdcharacteristics/homeinternetandsocialmediausage/bulletins/internetaccesshouseholdsandindividuals/2019>

The project to offer chip and PIN/contactless payment facilities in all libraries through our self-service kiosks was also completed this year.

In terms of investment in our library buildings, the refurbishment of Pangbourne Library took place in October 2019.



Refurbished children's area at Pangbourne Library

The 'Message of the Month' initiative, launched last year to highlight certain areas of our service with branded promotions and advertising, continued to be really successful. Our list of promotions is shown below.

- **April 2019:** Have we got your details right?
- **May 2019:** PressReader – our new e-newspaper app.
- **June 2019:** Discover your family history story.
- **July 2019:** Space Chase Summer Reading Challenge.
- **August 2019:** Space Chase Summer Reading Challenge.
- **September 2019:** Autumn activities in our libraries.
- **October 2019:** Celebrating our libraries – review us online!
- **November 2019:** Promoting e-books and e-magazines.
- **December 2019:** Christmas activities in our libraries.
- **January 2020:** New Year, volunteer?
- **February 2020:** SELMS reservations - available from 14 library authorities across the South East.
- **March 2020:** At Home library service.

West Berkshire Library Service	2018-2019	2019-2020	% Var
Loans or renewals of library stock	534,968	571,352	6.80%
Active borrowers	16,038	15,648	-2.43%
New library members	4,081	4,388	7.52%
Reservations placed	37,680	45,419	20.54%
Visits to the library	349,365	346,895	-0.71%
Items added to library stock	16,159	15,237	-5.71%
No. of public computers	64	57	-10.94%
Public computer usage (hours)	25,703	23,026	-10.42%
No. of public computer users	3,959	3,517	-11.16%
No. of visits to use public computers	33,443	31,212	-6.67%
No. of staff (total)	47	46	-2.13%
No. of staff (full time equivalent)	24.79	24.93	0.55%
Weekly staff working hours	917.33	922.33	0.55%
No. of volunteers	322	354	9.94%
Volunteer hours	12,035	12,935	7.48%
Weekly opening hours	221.7	219.8	-0.87%
Annual opening hours	11,528	11,428	-0.87%
Summer Reading Challenge participants	3,430	3,317	-3.29%

## Challenges and plans for 2020/21

COVID-19 has transformed our way of life and our library service is adapting quickly in response. At the same time, the tremendous public appetite for e-reading and online services is increasing our membership and creating long-term digital engagement with our customers. We are making plans to ensure that we balance this with the physical library offer to make sure both are valued. Libraries have always been seen as safe places for communities to come together. We want to retain this, but providing this safe space is more challenging because of the need to take government social distancing and other public safety requirements into account.

These are just some of our plans for 2020-21:

- Restore and provide appropriate adaptation of library services during and after COVID-19.
- Launch a West Berkshire Libraries app and a separate Children's Library app which will allow our customers to access library services from their personal mobile devices, and manage their account, search the catalogue and renew and reserve books. Customers will also be able to check out books in the library through their mobile devices.
- Offer regular online storytimes and craft activities, as well as in libraries when it is safe to do so again.
- Develop an online book group, West Berks Reads.
- Start a virtual Code Club for 9-11 year olds, giving them the opportunity to learn to code and make their own games, animations, and websites.
- Increase school class visits (including virtual class visits where appropriate).
- Work with the Central Family Hub in Thatcham to make their Toy Library stock available for loan and reservation through our library management system.

- Complete a refurbishment of Thatcham Library.
  - Launch a new customer e-newsletter.
  - Increase engagement with social media, particularly our new Instagram account.
  - Set up more library working groups for each library. Library working groups have already proved their worth by directly involving local people who give feedback from their community which helps us to increase library usage.
- To find out more, please email [paul.james@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:paul.james@westberks.gov.uk)

## About the service

As well as providing free access to over 115,000 books to borrow, last year we provided:

- A safe place to go and meet.
- Free computer use and wi-fi.
- Self-service printing, photocopying and scanning to email.
- Rooms for hire.
- Special events and craft activities.
- Free downloadable e-books, e-magazines and e-newspapers.
- Audiobooks and e-audiobooks to listen to on the go.
- Large print books.
- Children's services, including regular, well attended children's events (Storytimes, Rhymetimes, Code Club, craft activities and other occasional events such as the Watermill Theatre productions).
- Summer Reading Challenge: almost 3,000 children took part last year.
- Nursery and class visits.
- Bookstart: we delivered over 3,500 Bookstart packs to babies and to children aged 3-4 via health visitors and educational settings and facilitated the delivery of a BookTrust 'Time To Read' pack to every child starting in a Reception class in West Berkshire.
- Online resources to use in the library and at home:
  - **Access to Research** - 1.5 million academic and research journals (linking with secondary schools).
  - **Britannica Online** - three different, age appropriate editions of this encyclopedia.
  - **British Newspaper Archive** - millions of pages of historical newspapers from the British Library collection.
  - **GoCitizen** - online resource for candidates preparing for the Life in the UK test (British citizenship).
  - **Theory Test Pro** - online simulation of the UK driving theory test and hazard perception tests.



Launch of the Space Chase Summer Reading Challenge at Newbury Library

- 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.
  - Free bookable sessions with Berkshire Family History Society.
- Mobile and At Home services - our volunteers delivered books throughout the year to 127 housebound readers.



Bookstart Packs distributed to West Berkshire babies and children

## 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, energy, rates and maintenance – while others are shared with the whole service – professional librarian and back office staff, emergency staff cover, book stock, ICT support, etc. 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, HR, energy and phone contracts.

Our costs include staff, buying books and digital library stock, ICT, building maintenance, energy costs, business rates and marketing. Our income includes voluntary contributions from town and parish councils, library item charges and fines, income from rent and room hire, events, book sales and grants.

In the information below we have also included information about capital investment in the library service.

<b>Revenue Expenditure (Running costs)</b>	<b>£ 18/19</b>	<b>£ 19/20</b>
Staff	810,406	843,454
Premises - energy, rates, maintenance costs	296,648	292,991
Supplies and services - ICT, marketing, transport, e-resources	200,199	184,494
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,307,253</b>	<b>1,320,939</b>
<b>Income</b>		
Fees and charges/fines, rent, venue hire, events, sales	-96,318	-90,782
Voluntary contributions from town and parish councils	-90,287	-93,918
Other income including donations	-7,709	-8,607
<b>Total</b>	<b>-194,314</b>	<b>-193,307</b>
<b>Net cost of the library service</b>	<b>1,112,939</b>	<b>1,127,632</b>
<b>Capital Investment (Fixed Assets)</b>		
Building improvements	61,456	14,633
Book stock and associated costs (*Section 106 funding)	129,063	123,876
Libraries self-service kiosk contactless payment facilities (*Section 106 funding)	N/A	9,750
Replacement of public access computers and software in all libraries (** CIL funding)	N/A	104,388
<b>Total</b>	<b>190,519</b>	<b>252,647</b>

\* Under S106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, the library service benefits from contributions from developers towards the costs of providing community and social infrastructure, the need for which has arisen as a result of a new development taking place. This funding is known as 'Section 106'.

\*\*The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a charge which can be levied by local authorities on new development in their area. It is an important tool for local authorities to use to help them deliver the infrastructure needed to support development in their area.

## Support from town and parish councils

For the third year, we asked town and parish councils to make a voluntary contribution to help support the service - and if they wished to get involved, to participate 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 again inviting voluntary contributions for the financial year 2020-21. Please note the following:

- The council is a local authority responsible for delivering the statutory library service in West Berkshire. We are not delegating or transferring the 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 local level to help residents benefit from the library service and from the library buildings as community hubs 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	2018/19 Contribution £	2019/20 Contribution £
Aldermaston	1,020	1,020
Ashampstead	375	375
Basildon	1,740	1,740
Beech Hill	0	300
Beedon	0	250
Beenham	1,150	1,155
Bucklebury	1,850	1,850
Burghfield	5,715	5,715
Chaddleworth	0	250
Chieveley	0	500
Cold Ash	3,855	3,855
East Garston	520	525
East Ilsley	0	100
Enborne	0	250
Englefield	0	140
Farnborough	40	80
Frilsham	0	300
Great Shefford	0	200
Hamstead Marshall	100	50
Hampstead Norreys	0	70
Hungerford	Library building costs have transferred to Hungerford Library and Community Trust in lieu of a cash contribution	
Kintbury	2,500	2,500
Lambourn	4,020	4,020
Midgham	100	100

Green = Town/parish where a library is located

<b>Parish</b>	<b>2018/19 Contribution £</b>	<b>2019/20 Contribution £</b>
Newbury	31,275	31,275
Pangbourne	2,910	2,910
Purley on Thames	0	750
Shaw cum Donnington	1,655	1,665
Stanford Dingley	195	195
Stratfield Mortimer	3,735	3,735
Thatcham	24,480	24,480
Theale	2,842	2,842
Tilehurst	0	250
Winterbourne	210	0
Wokefield	0	280
Woolhampton	0	170
Yattendon	0	21
<b>Total Contributions</b>	<b>90,287</b>	<b>93,918</b>

Green = Town/parish where a library is located

## Volunteers

Our volunteers have continued to support us throughout the year with high standards of engagement and support for our communities across West Berkshire Libraries. During the year 354 volunteers spent over 12,900 hours helping to keep our libraries open. This was an increase of 7.48% compared to last year.

They have helped with and run many activities such as IT lessons, Code Club, Craft Sessions, Rhymetimes, Storytimes, visiting our At Home members and much more.

Volunteers also promoted the Space Chase Summer Reading Challenge by visiting a record number of 51 local primary schools throughout the district to engage with young children and encourage them to visit the library to complete the challenge. This also provided a wonderful opportunity for them to promote more generally what the library service has to offer.

This year we tried a new initiative and asked West Berkshire Council staff from other departments to help us promote the Summer Reading Challenge at Newbury Library and connect with young people. 18 staff took part in this, working 82 hours between them, including our Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council.



One of our volunteers helping with the Summer Reading Challenge

The role of the volunteer has developed and changed over the years, with some volunteers becoming permanent or casual staff members. New tasks, such as helping with stock work using our library management system, have given volunteers a new challenge. Volunteers have also helped us to promote the contactless and card payment facilities on our self-service machines by making sure our customers know their PIN.

We have also helped 50 young people complete their volunteering section for their Duke of Edinburgh placement this year.

We have six volunteer organisers but are looking for three more for Burghfield Common, Newbury and Mortimer Libraries. Our volunteers enjoy the experience of working in libraries and we are proud that our average retention is more than 2.5 years.

We are immensely grateful to all our volunteers and we simply can't run the service without them. If you would like to join them, please have a look at our volunteering opportunities online: [www.westberks.gov.uk/volunteer](http://www.westberks.gov.uk/volunteer)

 West Berkshire  
**LIBRARIES**

For more information:  
[www.westberks.gov.uk/volunteer](http://www.westberks.gov.uk/volunteer)  
0118 983 3632

# Volunteer

at Burghfield Common Library

We have lots of opportunities  
but particularly need help on  
Fridays and Saturdays



## Burghfield Common Library

It's been a busy year for this rural library, with lots of fun had by all and the number of visitors to the library, new library members and library loans all on the increase. Links have continued to be forged with the local community with weekly visits from Little Footprints Montessori Nursery and monthly visits from The Rainbow Montessori Nursery; articles submitted for both Burghfield Parish and Sulhamstead and Ufton Nerve Parish newsletters; participation in the Burghfield Scarecrow Festival and St Mary's Burghfield Christmas Tree Festival.



Crime Scene Investigators event at Burghfield Common Library

From Easter 2019 through to February half term 2020 the library was busy with special one-off events for children and families.

These were in addition to its usual activities. During Easter 2019 the library became a crime scene for 22 young Fraud Scene Investigators, as part of the NatWest Bank educational programme. Later that holiday, eight Hearing Dogs for the Disabled puppies visited the library to raise awareness of this service and the training that is undertaken before these dogs are partnered with a deaf person.

During October half term 12 families attended Bird Nest Box making workshops and bird feeder activities. Feedback was received that some boxes were later occupied!

February half term saw Erica and Frank Mudd bring their Pop-Up Play Village to the library: an incredibly popular event with families and a one-off for the library. The week continued with author Rachel Jane attending to read from her Little Campervan storybooks and to lead craft activities. The week ended with Katie Black's Cookery Doodle Doo running two cookery classes for children. In March, World Book Day was celebrated with Mrs Bland's Infants School visiting for Storytime and 1st Burghfield Pioneer Beaver Colony held their meeting in the library to complete their Book Badge.

Burghfield Common Library	2018-2019	2019-2020	% Var
Loans or renewals of library stock	20,315	21,801	7.31%
Active borrowers	934	1,008	7.92%
New library members	241	287	19.09%
Reservations placed	671	1,003	49.48%
Visits to the library	17,809	18,206	2.23%
Items added to library stock	667	598	-10.34%
No. of public computers	3	3	0.00%
Public computer usage (hours)	268	190	-29.20%
No. of public computer users	87	85	-2.30%
No. of visits to use public computers	415	329	-20.72%
No. of staff (total)	3	3	0.00%
No. of staff (full time equivalent)	0.57	0.57	0.00%
Weekly staff working hours	21.00	21.00	0.00%
No. of volunteers	37	28	-24.32%
Volunteer hours	1,181	1,216	2.92%
Weekly opening hours	19.0	19.0	0.00%
Annual opening hours	988	988	0.00%
Summer Reading Challenge participants	158	240	51.90%

## Hungerford Library

Hungerford Library has been part of the Hungerford Hub since 2018, when the Hub team took over the management of the library building. This has allowed the building to be used when the library is closed, and the Hub team hosted many events during the year, including eco craft fayres, book talks, arts and crafts workshops, foreign language classes, flower arranging workshops, business meetings, children’s events and much more.

We have continued to work closely with the Hungerford Hub team during the year, and developed some joint initiatives such as selling cards. We are also working with them to review the layout of the library.



We are pleased that we attracted a significant number of new library members during the year – an increase of 17.95%. We continued to run a variety of library events, and the weekly Rhymetimes for under 5s and their grown-ups proved so popular that we added an extra session each Wednesday. The Jigsaw Puzzle Library launched with a range of puzzles for adults and children.

Holiday-time craft sessions were very popular, with paper swans, bubble painting and making musical instruments among the activities offered. We also enjoyed live harp and saxophone music at some of these. LEGO Club continued to be popular during the year.

We were delighted to host a visit from the Guide Dog puppies, and also the Watermill Theatre one-woman production of The Three Little Pigs.

Guests at our pre-Christmas Italian evening enjoyed a taste of festive food and tried their language skills.

Hungerford Library	2017-2018	2018-2019	% Var
Loans or renewals of library stock	27,689	26,558	-4.08%
Active borrowers	1,374	1,366	-0.58%
New library members	273	322	17.95%
Reservations placed	1,240	1,128	-9.03%
Visits to the library	42,899	40,175	-6.35%
Items added to library stock	1,086	976	-10.13%
No. of public computers	7	6	-14.29%
Public computer usage (hours)	1,387	1,265	-8.77%
No. of public computer users	259	235	-9.27%
No. of visits to use public computers	1,934	2,164	11.89%
No. of staff (total)	3	3	0.00%
No. of staff (full time equivalent)	1.39	1.39	0.00%
Weekly staff working hours	51.33	51.33	0.00%
No. of volunteers	34	23	-32.35%
Volunteer hours	843	691	-17.99%
Weekly opening hours	26.0	26.0	0.00%
Annual opening hours	1,352	1,352	0.00%
Summer Reading Challenge participants	204	196	-3.92%

## Lambourn Library

We are really pleased that the number of active library borrowers increased this year by over 4.26%. Reservations of books by Lambourn customers has also gone up by 41.6%. In addition to this, our library groups continued to thrive and numbers grew, particularly for our Friday morning Rhymetime sessions, which proved to be extremely popular. This year we have used money donated from the Lambourn community to purchase a lovely bean bag support seat for use in the children's area, which is very popular with the little ones, both in the Rhymetime sessions for babies and toddlers and with older children at other times.



Bean bag support for babies

In the summer of 2019 we arranged class visits to the library for all Year 3 and Year 4 pupils from Lambourn Primary School to encourage them to be involved in the Summer Reading Challenge. This was very successful and the children loved using our self-service kiosk. Lots of children joined the library who hadn't been before and then continued to visit us afterwards - our new borrower figures at Lambourn increased by over 40% largely as a result of this. We certainly plan to do this again in the future.

Our school holiday craft activities have also proved very popular and we really value our network of volunteers and the 'Friends of Lambourn Library', who put such thought, time and effort into providing these activities and groups, as well as helping in the general running of the library service in Lambourn. The usage of our public computers declined during the year, but we hope that the installation of the new hardware and software will see them used more in the future.

Lambourn Library	2018-2019	2019-2020	% Var
Loans or renewals of library stock	10,045	9,501	-5.42%
Active borrowers	469	489	4.26%
New library members	107	150	40.19%
Reservations placed	382	540	41.36%
Visits to the library	11,534	11,085	-3.89%
Items added to library stock	455	486	6.81%
No. of public computers	4	4	0.00%
Public computer Usage (hours)	545	550	0.92%
No. of public computer users	140	118	-15.71%
No. of visits to use public computers	810	839	3.58%
No. of staff (total)	2	2	0.00%
No. of staff (full time equivalent)	0.46	0.46	0.00%
Weekly staff working hours	17.00	17.00	0.00%
No. of volunteers	21	27	28.57%
Volunteer hours	997	946	-5.09%
Weekly opening hours	15.5	15.5	0.00%
Annual opening hours	806	806	0.00%
Summer Reading Challenge participants	70	84	20.00%

## Mortimer Library

We have invested a significant amount of capital funding to refresh and replace library stock at Mortimer – an increase of 115.24% on the previous year. We hope that this will increase the use of the library and attract new library members.

A number of library activities and events took place, including a children’s craft session once a month, which was run by volunteers. The library also participated in the Scarecrow Trail, with library volunteers making a ‘Tweety Pie’ effigy.

In collaboration with ‘Made in Mortimer’, we now have a display cabinet in the library to showcase village crafts.

Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council continues to rent office space at the rear of the library and discussions have been taking place during the year to progress the plan for them to take over the management of the library building. West Berkshire Council will continue to run the library service, but this arrangement will allow the Parish Council and the Mortimer village community to make more use of the library building on the days when it is closed to the public.



‘Tweety Pie’ made by volunteers so that the library could participate in the Mortimer Scarecrow Trail

Mortimer Library	2018-2019	2019-2020	% Var
Loans or renewals of library stock	14,646	12,469	-14.86%
Active borrowers	659	579	-12.14%
New library members	144	80	-44.44%
Reservations placed	622	699	12.38%
Visits to the library	13,872	12,876	-7.18%
Items added to library stock	479	1,031	115.24%
No. of public PCs	3	3	0.00%
Public computer usage (hours)	274	241	-11.88%
No. of public computer users	72	57	-20.83%
No. of visits to use public computers	456	400	-12.28%
No. of staff (total)	2	2	0.00%
No. of staff (full time equivalent)	0.55	0.55	0.00%
Weekly staff working hours	20.50	20.50	0.00%
No. of volunteers	23	27	17.39%
Volunteer hours	758	903	19.14%
Weekly opening hours	19	19	0.00%
Annual opening hours	988	988	0.00%
Summer Reading Challenge participants	132	101	-23.48%

## Newbury Library

Another busy year, with 171,119 visitors coming into Newbury Library - an increase of 2.28%. In addition to regular Storytimes, twice weekly Rhymetimes and groups and clubs such as our popular Code Club, Craft and Chat sessions, VIPs (visually impaired) Book Group and weekly help with computing, we hosted a range of other events and activities at the library:

- Monthly LEGO Club, including a 'Library of the Future' display developed in conjunction with construction company ENGIE.
- Family History Help sessions – bookable individual sessions run by Berkshire Family History Society every week.
- U3A book groups and a new creative writing group, meeting monthly.
- Red Cross drop-in sessions – weekly volunteer(s) available for queries, hire of wheelchairs and other equipment.
- 'Knitted Map' on display in January, produced by local women and depicting many local landmarks and buildings (including the library!).
- Clive Goddard Exhibition & Workshop - exhibition of cartoons featuring libraries and literature, plus a workshop for all ages on drawing cartoons. Clive is a children's author, illustrator and cartoonist.
- The Watermill Theatre visited us again in February with a performance of The Three Little Pigs, which proved incredibly popular.
- Chair Yoga class, run weekly by local yoga teacher Neeta Madahar.
- Flower arranging sessions run by Christina Francis, one of the attendees from our VIPs Book Group.
- Open Studios 2019 exhibition 'New in Town', promoting newly accredited artists.
- Open Studios also provided an ongoing rolling programme of artists' work in the study area of the library.
- Free drama workshops for children during half-term, organised by local group Perform.
- Christmas window display in connection with Visit Newbury's Christmas Window Competition.



Visit Newbury's Christmas Window Competition – Newbury Library entry based on 'The Gruffalo'



LEGO Club at Newbury Library



Class visit at Newbury Library

<b>Newbury Library</b>	<b>2018-2019</b>	<b>2019-2020</b>	<b>% Var</b>
Loans or renewals of library stock	174,603	170,458	-2.37%
Active borrowers	9,186	8,825	-3.93%
New library members	2,214	2,232	0.81%
Reservations placed	2,716	2,654	-2.28%
Visits to the library	167,311	171,119	2.28%
Items added to stock	7,091	4,555	-35.76%
No. of public computers	27	23	-14.81%
Public computer usage (hours)	18,259	16,098	-11.84%
No. of public computer users	2,518	2,216	-11.99%
No. of visits to use public computers	22,941	21,085	-8.09%
No. of staff (total)	19	17	-10.53%
No. of staff (full time equivalent)	11.46	11.33	-1.18%
Weekly staff working hours	424.08	419.08	-1.18%
No. of volunteers	69	114	65.22%
Volunteer hours	1,576	2,266	43.78%
Weekly opening hours	47.0	47.0	0.00%
Annual opening hours	2,444	2,444	0.00%
Summer Reading Challenge participants	1,683	1,634	-2.91%

## Pangbourne Library

The library was closed for refurbishment from 24 September and reopened on 1 October. It was an opportunity for the interior of the library to be refreshed and given a more modern appearance. The external signage and branding was also replaced and enhanced. Library users have responded positively to the refurbishment.

A reopening event took place attended by local West Berkshire Councillors Rick Jones and Gareth Hurley, with Langtree Secondary School Year 10 GCSE Music students providing much of the entertainment.

We are delighted that the number of new library members increased by 15.29% this year, and the number of library loans also showed an increase.

Regular Rhymetimes and Storytimes, held on alternate Thursday mornings during term time, were well attended and led by one of our enthusiastic volunteers.

Other regular events included:

- A Coffee and Craft group on Monday afternoons. The group usually attracted older library users, but was clearly valuable to residents who may otherwise experience some level of social isolation.
- Family History sessions, once a month on Tuesday afternoons. These were run by the Berkshire Family History Society and generated strong interest from customers.
- Library Book Group meetings took place once a month on Friday mornings.
- Craft activities for children during the school holidays.

In August the library hosted a Guide Dogs for the Blind event. It was an opportunity for the early socialisation of a group of guide dog puppies. Library visitors were able to learn more about the charity and the work that they undertake. It was a very successful event with more than 100 people attending.

The community in and around Pangbourne is very active in supporting charity coffee mornings. The library has been available as a venue for this for a number of years. The most recent coffee morning took place in September 2019 and raised more than £1,000 for Macmillan Cancer Support.



Reopening of Pangbourne Library after refurbishment in October 2019



Cllr Rick Jones with Langtree Secondary School students and Stephen Henderson, Head of Music

<b>Pangbourne Library</b>	<b>2018-2019</b>	<b>2019-2020</b>	<b>% Var</b>
Loans or renewals of library stock	20,949	21,241	1.39%
Active borrowers	1,093	1,085	-0.73%
New library members	314	362	15.29%
Reservations placed	823	1,058	28.55%
Visits to the library	21,326	19,388	-9.09%
Items added to stock	611	591	-3.27%
No. of public computers	4	4	0.00%
Public computer usage (hours)	758	704	-7.09%
No. of public computer users	117	124	5.98%
No. of visits to use public computers	982	946	-3.67%
No. of staff (total)	2	2	0.00%
No. of staff (full time equivalent)	0.62	0.62	0.00%
Weekly staff working hours	23	23	0.00%
No. of volunteers	34	35	2.94%
Volunteer hours	1,095	1,205	10.05%
Weekly opening hours	22.0	22.0	0.00%
Annual opening hours	1,144	1,144	0.00%
Summer Reading Challenge participants	219	234	6.85%

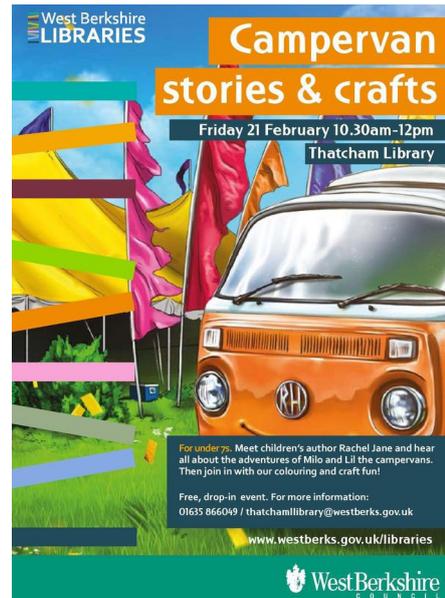
## Thatcham Library

We are delighted that the number of new library members increased by 18.93% this year.

We started two new weekly groups this year: Duplo Play for our under 5s and an Adult Colouring Group. We were represented by 'Friends of Thatcham Library' at the Family Funday and also Fun on the Broadway, which was run by Thatcham Town Council.

Christine from NatWest has held public talks to raise awareness about dementia.

Author Rachel Jane held a Storytime and craft session about her Campervan books during February half term.



We hosted two author events during the Thatcham Festival: Holly Webb and David Whitehouse (the latter covering 'Apollo 11 - the inside story' to link in with celebrations for the 50th anniversary of the moon landing). We held a Christmas carol concert with a choir called 'Just a Singalong', which was organised by one of our volunteers. Thanks to 'The Friends of Thatcham Library' who served coffee at all of these events.

We also had a visit from pupils from The Castle School.

Thatcham Library	2018-2019	2019-2020	% Var
Loans or renewals of library stock	46,430	45,745	-1.48%
Active borrowers	2,429	2,403	-1.07%
New library members	412	490	18.93%
Reservations placed	1,133	1,341	18.36%
Visits to the library	43,355	41,021	-5.38%
Items added to stock	1,196	1,422	18.90%
No. of public computers	8	7	-12.50%
Public computer usage (hours)	3,317	2,751	-17.08%
No. of public computer users	500	443	-11.40%
No. of visits to use public computers	4,546	3,774	-16.98%
No. of staff	2	2	0.00%
Staff (Full time equivalent)	0.86	0.86	0.00%
Weekly staff working hours	32.00	32.00	0.00%
No. of volunteers	49	42	-14.29%
Volunteer hours	2,368	2,262	-4.48%
Weekly opening hours	33.5	33.5	0.00%
Annual opening hours	1,742	1,742	0.00%
Summer Reading Challenge participants	509	556	9.23%

## Theale Library

We had another busy year at Theale Library and the highlight must be the 30th birthday party which we celebrated in June. Our theme was 'cake and balloons' and this attracted approximately 200 people into the library. Englefield Church of England Primary School choir started off the celebrations with a song specially written for the occasion.

Visitors to the library, library loans and the number of new library members all increased at Theale. We also invested a significant amount of capital funding to refresh and replace the children's library stock at Theale – an increase of 124.78% on the previous year. We hope that this will attract even more new library members.



Staff and volunteers at Theale Library 30th birthday party – June 2019

In addition to all the regular activities at Theale, a number of additional events took place:

- Summer Flower Arranging demonstration in June.
- 'Theale Beach' project run by our undergraduate work experience student during the summer holidays.
- 'Meet the Guide Dogs' in early September.
- 'Stretch-a-Story' hosted by the West Berkshire East Family Hub in October.
- Berkshire Maestros visiting one of our regular Rhymetime sessions in December, where the children were accompanied by guitar and had a lovely time with a huge range of percussion instruments.
- A performance of The Twits by the youngest group from The Pauline Quirke Academy which meets at Theale Green School on Saturday mornings.
- Drop in dyslexia advice session for adults and children in February.
- Children's 'Make a Roman Villa' event, run by West Berkshire archaeologist Beth Asbury in February.
- Theale Library Children's Book Group – first meeting attended with much excitement and enthusiasm in February.

All through the school summer holidays we offered the popular current craze of 'rock painting'. This was very popular with all ages of library users and everyone from pre-schoolers to pensioners took part.

We invited local primary schools to display their art work on our notice boards for a term. Children are delighted to see their school's work on display and it is an effective way of raising the profile of the library in the schools.

Theale Library customers are hugely generous with their donations to the library and we received over £1,000 during the year. With this money we have been able to buy exciting craft materials, prizes and a selection of games and toys. We have also bought display boards to increase the space for community posters and a set of 20 wrist bells for December Rhymetimes.

Theale Library	2018-2019	2019-2020	% Var
Loans or renewals of library stock	21,120	21,504	1.82%
Active borrowers	1,108	1,171	5.69%
New library members	273	344	26.01%
Reservations placed	725	626	-13.66%
Visits to the library	20,908	23,562	12.69%
Items added to library stock	577	1,297	124.78%
No. of public computers	8	7	-12.50%
Public computer usage (hours)	895	1,227	37.04%
No. of public computer users	266	239	-10.15%
No. of visits to use public computers	1,359	1,675	23.25%
No. of staff (total)	2	2	0.00%
No. of staff (full time equivalent)	0.70	0.70	0.00%
Weekly staff working hours	25.92	25.92	0.00%
No. of volunteers	26	28	7.69%
Volunteer hours	1,960	2,139	9.16%
Weekly opening hours	23.5	23.5	0.00%
Annual opening hours	1,222	1,222	0.00%
Summer Reading Challenge participants	249	244	-2.01%

## West Berkshire Mobile Library Service

After reviewing our timetables and subsequently cutting times on under used stops, we were able to add six new stops. After the success at Welford and Wickham Primary School, we planned to introduce similar stops at Curridge and Enborne Church of England Primary Schools. These stops would also be open to the community. Further new stops include: Long Lane Primary School in Tilehurst, Beenham Pre-school, and Falkland Grange and Birchwood care homes in Newbury. It is always very exciting to go to new places. Unfortunately, due to the lockdown in March, we were unable to proceed with this plan but hope to re-visit this in the near future.

West Berkshire Mobile Library	2018-2019	2019-2020	% Var
Loans or renewals of library stock	26,312	23,738	-9.78%
Active borrowers	713	682	-4.35%
New library members	80	102	27.50%
Reservations placed	938	1,072	14.29%
Visits to the library	8,513	7,763	-8.81%
Items added to stock	528	534	1.14%
No. of staff (total)	3	3	0.00%
No. of staff (full time equivalent)	2.00	2.00	0.00%
Weekly staff working hours	74.00	74.00	0.00%
Weekly opening hours	16.2	14.3	-11.91%
Annual opening hours	842	742	-11.91%
Summer Reading Challenge participants	41	28	-31.71%



## 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 three weeks.

Thank you so much to our volunteers for everything they do for the service and the time they spend with their readers. It is very much appreciated.

West Berkshire At Home Service	2018-2019	2019-2020	% Var
Loans or renewals of library stock	9,365	9,878	5.48%
Active borrowers	145	127	-12.41%
New library members	18	19	5.56%
Reservations placed	413	435	5.33%
Visits to the library	1,838	1,700	-7.48%
No. of volunteers	29	30	3.45%
Volunteer hours	1,257	1,307	3.94%

## West Berkshire e-library

Our free e-library service has grown exponentially this year by 127.39%, with 89,634 e-downloads now making it our second most used library.

Our digital collection, which offers a wide range of e-books, e-audiobooks and e-magazines, has been growing steadily over the last ten years, but last year saw the biggest 12 month increase. In June 2019 we extended the range of e-formats available by launching our e-newspaper service PressReader. This gives library members free access to an all-you-can-read digital newsstand, with a vast selection of newspapers from across the world. 28,784 of this year's e-downloads can be attributed to this new service.

West Berkshire e-Library	2018-2019	2019-2020	% Var
Loans or renewals of library stock	39,419	89,634	127.39%
Reservations placed	7,169	9,742	35.89%
Items added to stock	3,469	3,747	8.01%

## West Berkshire website

Customers continued to make use of our website to carry out routine library transactions and the number of reservations placed online increased by 20.56% this year.

West Berkshire Website	2018-2019	2019-2020	% Var
Renewals of library stock	120,093	115,482	-3.84%
Active borrowers	6,643	6,705	0.93%
Reservations placed	20,712	24,970	20.56%