

Suffolk Libraries

Annual Review 2016-17

Suffolk
Libraries
*5 Glorious
Years*



Thank you to the following organisations for their support:



Chairman's introduction



Libraries are about people

When I joined the Board of Suffolk Libraries in 2013, I referred to it as a social experiment, designed to deliver that most sought-after goal - an improved service at a significantly reduced cost.

At that time, there was no guarantee the experiment would be a success. So it is gratifying to introduce this review, which contains ample proof that the experiment has worked.

Despite the unfavourable economic environment, we have shown that passion, talent, creativity, and a shared sense of purpose can achieve the most challenging outcomes.

One of the themes which dominated our discussions in 2016/17 was the insight that libraries are about people. As the scope and number of community-based activities have grown over the past few years, we have shown that libraries are the ideal – and sometimes now the only – places where individuals and groups can gather in a safe and supportive environment to enjoy an almost limitless variety of social, recreational, and educational pursuits.

In late 2016, the Board unanimously decided to commit to what has become known as 'The Next Five Years' and automatically trigger a five-year extension to our contract with Suffolk County Council. We did this believing that despite the challenges ahead, the current structure and governance model has the best chance of ensuring a secure and successful future for the library service in Suffolk.

I would like to thank everyone who helped make the year reported on here one of continued progress and success. Without the creative energy of our brilliant staff and volunteers, this would not have been possible. Our Community Groups have also helped to deliver activities and events, and many have also enabled major refurbishments and improvements at their libraries.

I would also like to pay tribute to our Chief Executive, Alison Wheeler. This review covers the last full year of her tenure, as she plans to retire in February 2018. Her particular combination of vision, passion, versatility, and resilience will be impossible to replicate. And there is no sign of any diminution of her energies as she and her team work hard to ensure that she hands over a thriving service to her successor next year.

Tony Brown, Chair of Suffolk Libraries Board.

Suffolk Libraries Board Members 2016-17

Tony Brown – Chair

Sylvia Knights – Vice Chair

Maureen Garratt Simpson – Honorary Secretary

Sue Buck – (retired in September 2016 and co-opted in April 2017)

Peter Callaghan – (retired in February 2017)

Jonathan Ogden

Colin Rockall

Sarah Wilson – (co-opted in October 2016)

Alison Wheeler – (Chief Executive and ex officio board member)

Innovation and Development

Suffolk Libraries Local

Suffolk Libraries Local launched in March 2017 as a pilot initiative between Suffolk Libraries and Suffolk County Council to bring a weekly pop-up library to communities in Suffolk not directly served by a static library.

Customers visiting a branch of Suffolk Libraries Local can browse and borrow from a selection of books, use IT facilities and attend a range of activities for all age groups – just like any of our permanent libraries.

Communities in Red Lodge, Shotley and Moreton Hall helped to shape the pilot through a public consultation, and over 1,000 customers visited during the first four months.

Feedback from a customer: ***“Just been along to the Suffolk Libraries Local at Shotley Village Hall. It's fab! My son and I went to the singing and stories session and it was so much fun. We both really enjoyed it. Lots of bits for all ages as well – Code-a-pillar, Lego, games and laptops for homework etc. Really good resource!”***

IT and online services

Following a successful pilot at Halesworth Library in 2015, several more libraries introduced iPad lending throughout the year. Suffolk Libraries is thought to be the first library service in the UK to offer this service. The aim is to help people try out iPads to give them access to new services and technology and to further promote online library services such as eBooks and eMagazines.

Get Connected events to promote online library services were also held at Southwold, Lakenheath, Newmarket, Ixworth, Woodbridge, Chantry, Needham Market, Beccles and Felixstowe libraries.

Digital roadshows were held at Newmarket, Beccles, Halesworth, Chantry, Gainsborough and Great Cornard libraries reaching a total of 110 children who were given the opportunity to build a Kano Raspberry Pi computer, experience 3D printing and complete an hour of coding.

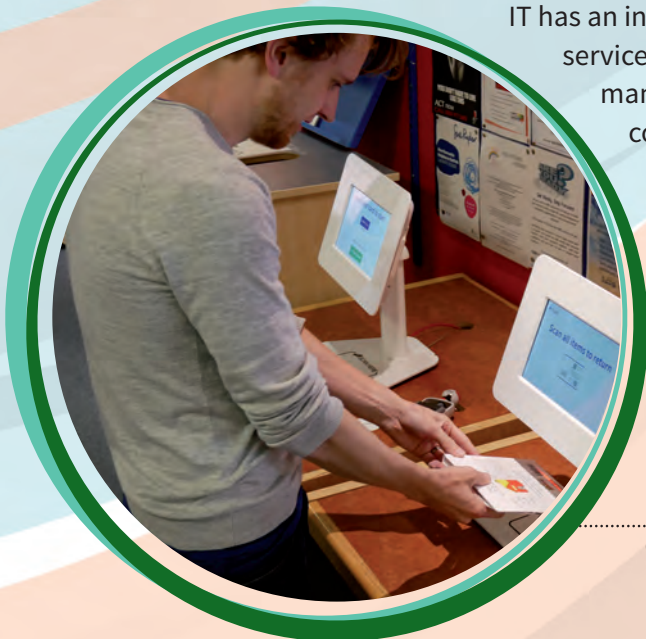
A code club was launched in Ipswich County Library's Enterprise and Innovation Hub, offering young people a chance to learn new digital and programming skills. By the end of 2016 it had been designated an exemplar by Code Clubs UK.

IT has an increasingly important role to play in a modern library service. During the year there was a major library management system upgrade and Suffolk Libraries continued to migrate more of its services and infrastructure away from the county council which has the benefit of cost savings and allowing greater control and flexibility.

Suffolk Libraries also worked with software developers Dootrix to develop new bespoke self-service equipment which was being introduced across libraries during the summer of 2017.



The launch of the first Suffolk Libraries Local session in Red Lodge.



Our new self-service equipment.

Suffolk Libraries Presents... events!

The Arts Council England funded programme of digital screenings in libraries was extended and continued throughout 2016-17. Working in partnership with Creative Arts East, the project saw around 50 screenings of arts performances in libraries during the year. In addition, the programme was widened to include film screenings in some libraries.

Feedback on Suffolk Libraries Presents screenings:

"Good idea for use of the public library. Thoroughly enjoyable."

"Great opportunity to see something we wouldn't normally be able to."

The programme has been a great way of bringing different people into the library. A survey found that nearly half those coming to screenings were new to the library and 94% thought the overall experience of the screening was either very good or good.

Although funding for the project is ending in 2017, the equipment installed in the libraries involved will remain and can be used for future screenings. The funding also enabled Suffolk Libraries to purchase mobile screening equipment which has already been used at other libraries.



Suffolk Libraries Live

The number and diversity of events in libraries has continued to expand with a series of surprising events you wouldn't expect to find in a library. This has included a number of successful live music events.

The Anna Mudeka Band brought the exciting and vibrant 'sunshine music' of Zimbabwe to Glemsford Library in February 2017 with over 100 people filling the village hall next to the library.

Ipswich County Library hosted another sold out live music event with around 230 people enjoying funk band Primo Nelson in November 2016.

In October 2016 Thurston Library hosted acoustic duo Honey and The Bear and Ipswich County Library played host to an evening of rhythm and blues with Back Porch and Chuck Will's Widow.



Suffolk Libraries

The highlights of 2016-2017

April 2016

- **Kesgrave Library** was refurbished and redecorated thanks to funding from the Kesgrave Library Community Group and local charity SPARK.
- **Glemsford Library** was also refurbished with the work funded by local developer contributions with support from the Friends of Glemsford Library.
- **Beccles Library** increased its opening hours to include Wednesday afternoons thanks to additional funding from the Beccles Library Community Trust.

■ **Southwold Library** organised a World Book Night themed pub crawl and Suffolk Coastal District Councillor TJ Haworth-Culf presented a group of girls from Farlingaye High School with a copy of one of the World Book Night books, 'Am I Normal Yet', at **Woodbridge Library**.

■ **Clare, Glemsford, Great Cornard, Kedington and Sudbury libraries** teamed up on the MAPril project to engage with children and families to create a joint map of their area.

Felixstowe Library celebrated its 50th birthday with a series of 1960's themed events.



The launch of the new customer service facility at Woodbridge Library.

May 2016

- A new shared customer services facility opened in **Woodbridge Library** where Suffolk Coastal District Council and library staff now work alongside each other to provide a range of services to local people.
- **Needham Market Library** held an open day to showcase its services with storyteller Marion Leeper providing two storytelling sessions.
- Several libraries marked the first ever **Elmer Day** to celebrate the popular children's book character Elmer the Patchwork Elephant.

June 2016

- Suffolk Libraries supported **Bookstart Week** by giving away free copies of 'A Hole in the Bottom of the Sea' by Jessica Law and holding several themed events for young children.
- Two libraries introduced local children to some amazing animals with **Stowmarket Library** welcoming the Suffolk Owl Sanctuary and **Beccles Library** hosting a very popular Mini Monsters Creepy Crawly Roadshow (see photo on back page).



Felixstowe Library staff celebrating the library's 50th birthday in 1960's outfits.



The Debenham Library Foundation in the new library.

■ **Debenham Library** moved to a larger and improved library space at Sir Robert Hitcham Primary School. The move was the culmination of a partnership project involving Suffolk Libraries, the Debenham Library Foundation, Sir Robert Hitcham Primary School, Suffolk County Council, Sir Robert Hitcham Foundation Trust, Mid Suffolk District Council and Debenham Parish Council and has had the support of Aspoll Cyder and many local people who helped to raise funds.

■ **Suffolk Libraries' Music and Drama service** was praised for helping The Suffolk Philharmonic Orchestra get the music needed for a free concert held to mark Her Majesty the Queen's 90th birthday.

July 2016

■ **Broomhill Library** in Ipswich and **Great Cornard Library** both changed their opening hours after consulting with customers. The change at Broomhill meant opening hours increased by two hours a week at no additional cost to Suffolk Libraries.

■ **Bury St Edmunds Library** celebrated 150 years since the birth of Beatrix Potter with a character trail in the children's library and a popular fun day in the nearby Abbey Gardens.



Two of the winners of the Get Caught Reading photo competition.

August 2016

■ **Brandon Library** held a Roald Dahl themed Big Scrumdiddlyumptious Lunch Party for local children as part of the Summer Reading Challenge.

■ Earlier in the year Suffolk Libraries had launched a '**Get Caught Reading**' competition as part of the Year of Reading and a local cat called Ollie who wandered into Gainsborough Library was one of the winners!

September 2016

■ **Aldeburgh Library** was the subject of extensive refurbishment funded by the Aldeburgh Library Foundation which raised an impressive £30,000 to fund the work.

Southwold Library also had new wheeled shelving installed.

■ Author and biographer Artemis Cooper introduced her new biography of the late author and library patron Elizabeth Jane Howard at a special event at **Bungay Library**.

■ Suffolk Libraries held its first **Volunteer Awards** as part of the 2016 AGM, sponsored by East of England Co-operative. The winning volunteers were nominated for regularly going above and beyond the call of duty and for being hugely valuable to Suffolk Libraries.

Four Big Tea events were also held across the county to provide a thank you to volunteers.



October 2016

■ **Newmarket Library** reopened after significant refurbishment work funded by developer contribution money and fundraising by the Friends of Newmarket Library. Refurbishment and redecoration was also carried out at Kedington Library with developer contribution funds.

■ **Glemsford Library** hosted a Star Wars and superhero themed event



Newmarket Library.

November 2016

■ At **Gainsborough Library** over £300 was raised for Children in Need when the library's youth group took over the library and held a group flash mob.

■ **Framlingham Library** took part in the Big Draw festival to promote the pleasures of drawing.

December 2016

■ **The Newmarket Lion's Club** kindly donated £1,000 to enable the library to purchase 'storywall' furniture for the children's library. The library also received nearly £10,000 of funding from the Racing Foundation to preserve and display the library's unique racing collection.



Suffolk Libraries Volunteer Awards presentation.

February 2017

■ **Chantry Library** marked its 50th birthday.

■ Several libraries organised events to celebrate the return of **Harry Potter Book Night**.

Harry Potter Fancy Dress competition at Chantry Library.



March 2017

■ **Ixworth Library** was preparing for refurbishment work which was carried out in April. **Long Melford Library** also received a makeover with new carpets, furniture and a redecoration.

■ Following a consultation with customers, **Eye Library** changed its opening hours; opening and closing earlier to meet a demand in the mornings.

■ It was also announced that **Framlingham Town Council** would be moving their office to the town's library in early April, helping to create a one-stop shop in the town and creating additional revenue for Suffolk Libraries.

■ **Thurston Library** ran a free positive ageing course for anyone over 50.

Reading and literacy



Festivals

The second Suffolk Libraries Bookfest was held in October 2016 in various libraries and other venues across the county. The varied programme included: James Runcie, the creator of the hugely popular Grantchester TV series, best-selling crime writer Elly Griffiths, former Home Secretary Alan Johnson, Barbara Erskine, Nicci French, poet Liz Lochhead and Holocaust survivor Eva Clarke who appeared together with author Wendy Holden who tells her story in the book 'Born Survivors'.

The Slaughter in Southwold crime writers' festival featured talks by Helen Callaghan, Hugh Fraser, Paul Harrison, Suzette A. Hill, Andrew Hook, Peter James, Alison Joseph, Erin Kelly, Renee Knight, Anya Lipska and Kate Rhodes.

Felixstowe Library once again hosted Felixstowe Book Festival's young people's programme including Carnegie Medal winner Tanya Landman and local children's author Rebecca Elliott. The Friends of Lowestoft Library once again held the Lowestoft Literary Festival in the library with an impressive line-up including author Anthony Horowitz.

In 2016 six libraries took part in the Brave New Reads programme in partnership with Norfolk and Cambridgeshire county councils and the Norwich Writers Centre.



Children's author and illustrator Emily Hughes running a Bookfest workshop at Woodbridge Library.

Inspiring children and young people

The Summer Reading Challenge theme for 2016 was 'The Big Friendly Read', featuring some of Roald Dahl's best-loved characters. With 8,354 children signing up it was the most popular ever in Suffolk and the fourth consecutive annual increase in the county.

Hundreds of older children also enjoyed a new activity in libraries called ImagiNation which asked them to create artwork based on books they have read.

In November Suffolk Libraries marked Children's Book Week by distributing Booktrust's new 'Bear's Reading Adventure' sticker books throughout the county's libraries. Several libraries also celebrated World Book Day with a series of fun and engaging activities for children.

Popular children's authors Hayley Long and Chris Priestley helped to inspire schoolchildren at the Book Mastermind final in Stratford St Andrew, a competition organised by the Literacy, Books and Reading Team for Schools.

As part of the new Suffolk Writes project, offering people the chance to publish their own work through the library eBook platform, Suffolk Libraries converted the winning entries of the Student New Angle Prize (SNAP) for University Campus Suffolk students (UCS) into library eBooks.

The Summer Reading Challenge presentation at Framlingham Library.



New Chapters

Suffolk Libraries' Mental Health and Wellbeing Information Service



NewChapters
Mental Health & Wellbeing
Information Service

In May 2016 as part of Mental Health Awareness Week, Suffolk Libraries officially relaunched its Mental Health and Wellbeing Information Service with the new name of 'New Chapters'.

'New Chapters' helps signpost library visitors to more information about mental health and wellbeing organisations, services, local projects, events and specialist books to help support a whole range of mental health and wellbeing issues.

There has been greater awareness of the service under its new name over the past year and there have been several positive developments as the service continues to grow.

In March 2017 Suffolk Libraries, Suffolk Family Carers and Suffolk Mind were awarded funding to create a partnership and design a new service to provide information, advice, guidance and emotional support to Suffolk residents. Working closely with other organisations, the new service aims to help people understand more about their wellbeing and to ensure they get the information and support they need.

The partnership are currently working together to gather feedback and ideas from the general public, service users, professional and family carers, to help shape the new service.

In April 2016, Suffolk Libraries supported a national scheme to support young people with mental health issues. 'Reading Well for Young People' is a new scheme which provides expert information and a recommended reading list to help tackle some of the mental health and wellbeing issues that young people face.

The scheme is part of the hugely successful Reading Well Books on Prescription scheme which is already available through the library service. Reading Well for Young People is aimed at 13-18 year-olds and provides high-quality information, support and advice on a wide range of issues such as anxiety, depression, eating disorders and self-harm, and difficult life pressures, like bullying and exams.

Following the success of the Ipswich County Library Open Space sessions, a similar activity launched in Bury St Edmunds Library in September 2016 which has recently been followed by the start of a new session at Haverhill Library. The sessions are run in partnership with Norfolk & Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust and Julian Support. They provide an informal opportunity for people to talk about a mental health issue or anything they would like to discuss.



The launch of Reading Well for Young People at Great Cornard Library.



An event to celebrate Mental Health Awareness Week at Ipswich County Library.



Customer survey

In April 2017 we launched our latest customer survey which prompted many people to show their support for the library service. Nearly 3,400 people completed the survey which is twice the amount of people who filled in the previous survey in 2015.

Over 99% of those who responded told us that they thought their library was important and we had some reassuring and heart-warming comments about how people felt about the library service.

Libraries are so important. Being friendly and welcoming and helpful encourages more people and especially children to use them and so get into the habit.

This is the most wonderful service which I love. It is so brilliant that you are open on Sundays, when there is so little else for free in the area. Great selection of books, constantly being renewed and updated.

I really enjoy the children's library with its groups and massive range of books. The staff are so friendly and welcoming. The library as a whole offers so many services and such a wide range of activities. It is also the only place in town with baby changing facilities. Our library is a valuable resource.

This is a fantastic resource for people who are old and cannot afford a computer or who have no broadband access. It is great to have somewhere to go. If one is old or infirm; one tends to be stuck at home. It opens up a whole world of travel and education and entertainment for people on low income.

Our library is doing a great job, catering for wide interests, raising funds successfully and generally flourishing.

Suffolk Libraries
extra

Suffolk Libraries Extra

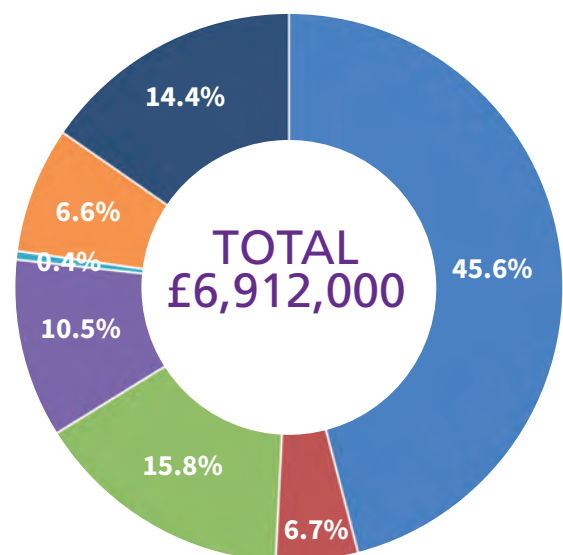
In April 2017 we launched a new supporter scheme called Suffolk Libraries Extra to raise additional funds to support the library service. So far we've raised around £4,000 and have about 100 members.

There are three membership levels – **Silver** (£20 a year) **Gold** (£50 a year) and **Platinum** (£150 a year). We're very grateful to everyone who has signed up so far and would like to acknowledge the support of our platinum members:

- Sheila Ash
- Guenever Pachent
- Mary Holmes
- Shirley Sadler
- PS Human Resources Ltd
- David Wild
- Jessica Duffy
- Gale Pryor

If you or your organisation would like to support Suffolk Libraries in this way please email extra@suffolklibraries.co.uk or visit www.suffolklibraries.co.uk/extra

Our budget for 2016/17



Frontline staff	£3,157,000
Supplies	£464,000
Support services	£1,089,000
Property	£725,000
Insurance/legal costs	£28,000
IT support	£455,000
Stock	£994,000

Chief Executive's Message

This is my last Annual Review with Suffolk Libraries as I will be retiring in early 2018.

I have been on an incredible journey, having been inspired by books from an early age and working as a librarian was my dream job.

I have seen the library service evolve and change in many ways since I started as a trainee librarian in the West Midlands in the 1970's; I've witnessed key developments such as the internet, self-service and Sunday opening and library eBook lending.

Some of my proudest moments have come as CEO of Suffolk Libraries over the past five years, particularly as our achievements have come in such a challenging period for library services everywhere.

It's important to remember that Suffolk Libraries has an enviable reputation. Outside of Suffolk, we are seen as innovative professional leaders and are respected by everyone for what we have achieved. We have worked hard together to create a modern and sustainable library service which is:

- ***Valued by local people and library users***
- ***Valued by our partners, who can see what we bring to the table and how we contribute to Suffolk communities***
- ***Valued by our funders - the county council, the NHS and, from 2018, The Arts Council.***

From 2018, we will be an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation, considered as nationally significant with excellent local delivery. It also means we'll receive £703,000 over a four-year period to develop the digital skills of young people through arts and culture.

This review celebrates the many highlights of 2016-17 but I also want to reflect on the many highlights and achievements which have contributed to the successful delivery of the first five years of our contract. I have been very honoured to have played my part in the first five years of our story, and feel especially privileged to have worked with such committed and dedicated staff, volunteers and Board members.

Despite the undeniable challenges ahead, I'm sure the continuing story of Suffolk Libraries will be a successful one.

Alison Wheeler, Chief Executive.



“ *It's important to remember that Suffolk Libraries has an enviable reputation.* ”

Suffolk Libraries

Customer comments:

“Suffolk libraries provide a brilliant service which I value hugely as an avid reader. The service to get any book ordered to the local branch is a wonderful bonus. Suffolk residents should be proud and grateful for the service provided, and do all we can to protect and enhance it in the future.”

“The libraries in Suffolk provide an invaluable service to the community. They are important for social interaction and the use of facilities for people who for economic reasons would not be able to access all the facilities for learning, leisure, social etc.”



Mini Monsters
Creepy Crawly
Roadshow. (photo
by Daren Waters
of Waveney Valley
Media)



Exercise
sessions at
Halesworth
Library



The Big Scrumdiddlyumptious
Lunch Party at Brandon Library

Suffolk Libraries

Ipswich County Library,
Northgate Street,
Ipswich, IP1 3DE

Tel: 01473 351249

Web: www.suffolklibraries.co.uk

 @SuffolkLibrary

 www.facebook.com/SuffolkLibraries

Supported by

 **Suffolk**
County Council