

Libraries Partnership Board Meeting
13th February 2023, 2.00pm till 4.00pm
Penketh Library
Meeting Minutes

In attendance:

Members

Lynton Green (LG) – WBC – Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Services
Cheryl Siddall (CS) – Livewire and Culture Warrington, People, Performance and Resources Director
Joan Grime (JG) – Friends of Culcheth Library
Peter Lewenz (PL) – SWISH
Eleanor Blackburn (EB) - WBC - Head of Inclusive Growth and Partnerships
Rachel Ralston (RR) – LiveWire Strategic Library Manager
Gary Borrows (GB) - Save Warrington Libraries

Board Support

Kate Gibbons (KG) on behalf of Garry D’Arcy (GD) – WBC, Partnership and Commissioning Officer

Community Attendees

Albert Hartley (AH)	Linda Riley (LR)
Susan Morris (SM)	Christine Smith (ChSm)
Philip Forshaw (PF)	Mary Ross (MR)
Fiona Barry (FB)	Sandra Carfield (SC)
Geoff Fellows (GF)	

	Actions
<p>1. <u>Welcome and apologies</u></p> <p><u>Apologies received from</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steve Cullen – Citizen’s Advice Bureau • Emma Hutchinson – LiveWire • Garry D’Arcy – WBC Supporting Officer • Gillian Mortimer – Community Attendee • Andrew Mortimer – Community Attendee • Jim Billington – Community Attendee • Janet Evans – Community Attendee • Amanda Juggins (AJ) – WBC - Deputy Head of Business Intelligence, WBC • Emma Hutchinson (EH) – LiveWire and Culture Warrington, Managing Director 	
<p>2. <u>Minutes and Matters Arising</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minutes to be updated/amended with the following points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Remove Cllr from Joan’s name - Cabinet summary to be brought back – change to - summary report to be submitted to the Cabinet and shared with the Library Partnership Board 	GD

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request made to clarify if Steve Cullen has stepped down or not – potential replacement needed. 	GD
<p>3. <u>Library Strategy Refresh</u></p> <p>EB – advised, members will have seen the final draft of the refreshed strategy. We have taken on board the latest comments, however we have not necessarily changed everything but we have added and amended where we felt it was important to do so.</p> <p>Thanked members for all of their input and feedback and confirmed this has been really helpful. This is a refresh not a rewrite so we have not gone out for consultation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 5, there are a number of elements which we will continue to oversee as part of this group. Complete investment into libraries, there is opportunity for income and savings. We know this is becoming more challenging so it is important to have this as a priority. Increase volunteers and build on partnerships with Friends & Families groups. <p>EB recommended the strategy for approval.</p> <p>GB –I think this strategy refresh is a testament of pulling together the original strategy 4 years ago. Was there a template for this?</p> <p>CS – advised, at the time of writing the strategy there wasn't many others published, so it's credit to Warrington for pulling together the format.</p> <p>GB – added, the strategy does include 'The How' are we going to achieve this but we need more detail. Are we going to have a plan for staff to know and understand how their work underpins the strategy?</p> <p>CS – confirmed, each team has a site plan which links to the strategy and individuals personal development reviews are also link to this to ensure there is a gold thread throughout. We ensure that everything we do links to the bigger picture. Rachel & my team have strategic overview of it all.</p> <p>GB – added, there are a long list of things that follow on from this strategy, but to be realistic we need to ask is this achievable within 3 years? Or do we need to priorities? What do we see as the main priority for each centre?</p> <p>EB – replied, there isn't as much new things within the strategy as you may think. It is a large service and the challenge is communicating the range of activities and service that take place. It is hard to present everything covered by the libraries and the team to this group. The presentation just scratches the service.</p> <p>RR – added, the team are great. I have someone leading on each area. We would never want to not continue to deliver what we are doing.</p>	

<p>GB – asked, is this the core stuff or activities which we are trialling?</p> <p>RR – confirmed, the core service will always be there, however other activities will travel round to different libraries. The team now hits all the priorities.</p> <p>CS – continued, I echo what Eleanor says, we’ve always been everything to everyone and we will always do our best to deliver. From a strategic point of view, we know what is deliverable operationally and what is achievable.</p> <p>PL – added, it starts to look dated before it’s been printed, lots of reference to Covid.</p> <p>LG – asked, what is next with regards to the timing, publication?</p> <p>EB – advised, we will need to relaunch the strategy. As it is refresh it won’t be massive but we will upload it to the website, carry out a press launch and send some paper copies to libraries and to the Libraries Partnership.</p> <p>GB – asked, is this not going to Cabinet?</p> <p>EB –it will be presented to Cabinet as part of our update report, but we won’t need Cabinet approval.</p> <p>GB – asked, can we add a flyer in with council tax bills to promote the libraries?</p> <p>LG – advised, there is an advertisement on LiveWire promotions and services which is already going in with the tax bills.</p> <p>CS – added, this advert does refer to libraries.</p>	
<p>4. <u>Libraries Service Update</u></p> <p>RR – Delivered presentation to the board detailing key updates:</p> <p>Staff update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A member of the Library Service staff will attend each of the Library Partnership meetings going forward. • Sandra – is in attendance today. Sandra is our Reading and Culture Lead who is responsible for Reading promotions, groups, events, National partnerships etc. • Jemma – our outreach and engagement officer & Library team support has left. We have therefore decided to split this role into two posts. • Amy – is our Outreach and Engagement Officer. 	

- Tyler – is our Library Team and Digital Support, who has taken over social media platforms and has recently launched an Instagram page for libraries.
- Chloe – is our Community Librarian who is part way through a post grad, and we are looking forward to new ideas which can be brought to the libraries.

Highlights since last meeting:

- RLWC was massive for the libraries who delivered 11 dedicated sessions. We linked with Libraries Connected and Culture Warrington who delivered lots of activities and crafts. We also held a number of meet and greet sessions with Warrington Wolves player, Joe Philbin.
- Lymm Library celebrated their 100th Birthday by hosting a Murder Mystery event with a talk from author David Nolan. Peter Rabbit has also seen its 120th Birthday.
- Woolston Library held a Fun Palace, which included activities such as mini golf, crafts, pixel art etc.

Current Projects:

- Book Trust steering group is in development. An Early Year's representative from Warrington Borough Council are helping us to reach targeted families.
- Frontline staff training will be taking place with Active Warrington. Training to support our staff to manage different situations such as dealing with young people.
- Six Digital sessions with Warrington Youth Zone have taken place which delivered Pixel Art and Coding. This provided an opportunity to showcase the libraries digital resources. The event was really successful, therefore we have plans in place to deliver this again.
- Children's Mental Health Week was 6th – 12th February. The library have sent out activities and reading well resources.
- Every Looked After Child in Warrington at Primary School will receive 6 packs of resources throughout the year, one at each half term.
- Cyber-pop up with Cheshire Constabulary and Women's Health Survey will be taking place.
- Warm Spaces sessions are taking place at 11 sites. Since they have been available, the service has been accessed by 113 people in November and December. We will continue to over this until end of Feb/beginning of March.

PL - asked for more information about what the Book Trust offer

RR – replied, the Book Trust engage with Early Years, which includes all children under the age of 5. Children receive a pack including books at various points. The first is issued at a babies 6 weeks check-up appointment. There is a 1-2 year old pack and a 3-4 year old pack targeting disadvantaged areas.

GB – asked, are the packs also distributed via the NHS?

RR – confirmed, the baby packs and 1-2 year old packs are delivered by the NHS and community nurses. The 3-4 year old packs are distributed via our education settings. The Early Years adviser is supporting the libraries with which are in the most disadvantaged areas for distributions.

GB – asked, does this involve them attending our libraries?

RR – confirmed, yes they will visit as part of a school visit.

CS – added, our targeted areas also receive funding to support bring disadvantaged families into our libraries. This in place in our 4 target areas to support an increase in attendance numbers.

Looking forward:

- Penketh are hosting a Miss Nobodies event to celebrate Women’s History month – this event is already sold out (60 tickets).
- World Book Day is in March. The libraries have lots of different events taking place across the branches as well as having books and vouchers available to give out. The libraries staff team have agreed to dress up and walk around Time Square to hand out vouchers.
- Developing social media campaigns and introduction of new platforms e.g. Instagram. We have a set of twins who will attend every library branch and will take part in a variety of activities on offer.
- Programme for Hi-Vis Fortnight for Visually Impaired People in June. A further update on this will be provided at the next meeting.
- A User Survey is currently being devised, this will be ready to be rolled out in September.
- Moving e-book and e-audio to Borrowbox. The libraries have recently moved their e-books and e-audio from RB Digital to Overdrive due to a company buyout. Overdrive is very American and they don’t have the audio provisions available. Borrowbox has a wider range available as well as access to more English authors.

CS – added Borrowbox also have a bigger platform to help people move from e-books, magazines etc.

RR – advised, we have been selected to take part in PLR sampling – Public Lending Rights. The author doesn't get the benefit of the book via the library service as the book is borrowed and passed on as opposed to being purchased. PLR total up the number of borrowings and the author receives a percentage of these rights.

GB – asked, do we get paid?

RR – advised, we don't get paid but we can claim expenses. If selected it is statutory that you take part so we don't get a choice.

LY – asked, this will benefit English Authors then?

RR – confirmed, yes.

AH – asked, the e-books and magazines, are currently on one platform, does this mean the new system will transfer users or will everyone need to re-register?

RR – advised, we are not buying the e-magazines from Borrowbox just yet, we will do a gradual move over to magazines. People will need to re-register, however Belinda said they can manage this easily and they will help people to transfer via emails, online chat etc.

CS – advised, there is 24/7 support available from Belinda.

GB – asked, what are the digital spaces? Are they physical or Instagram e.g. digital?

RR - advised, we don't have anything digital other than our IT spaces. We do have 3D printers and chrome books which we can use to make digital spaces.

GB – asked, have we done any of this yet?

RR – confirmed, yes, we have moved the 3D printer to a few sites, this has been received really well and we are looking to expand this offer.

GB – asked, what age group are we targeting?

SC – advised, teenagers at the Warrington Youth Zone were our targeted audience, but overall a range of ages.

GB – suggested this an opportunity for sponsorship for local businesses. In terms of sustainability we need to look at not shifting equipment around.

RR – It is great to get out into the community, however it would be great to have a dedicated space set up.

EB – informed the group that the equipment was bought via external funding from Cheshire and Warrington LEP

FB – asked, will Borrowbox give Ukrainian children access to books?

RR – advised, there are a range of different languages available, however they are checking about Ukrainian and will come back to us.

PL – asked, is there any indication on how things are responding post covid?

CS – confirmed we are about 80% recovered. Some sites are struggling, Penketh being one of them after the refurb as people have migrated to other sites. Some events and marketing have been put on to re-engage communities. Stockton Health and Lymm are doing really well. We’ve seen people come less but borrow more. The events, are doing extremely well. The team are now looking to covert people attending events into attending the library.

CS – Thanked the Friends Group for their support.

ChSm – advised, we have always encourage people to get library cards, especially the children.

CS – added, we’ve seen lots of schools returning and re-engaging in Culcheth, however a concern is sustaining some of these events with current staffing levels and resources.

GB – asked, have we engaged with the social isolation community?

RR – advised, Social services support engagement with families. We have groups within elderly people homes planned to take place and a virtual tour for Warrington’s Long Covid group.

EB – added, the Warm Spaces sessions have also supported the social isolation groups.

RR – added, we need to continue this work.

CS – advised, we need to collate the impact that this has on people, understand how and why they feel as a result of this as appose to collating numbers.

RR – advised, the team have been tasked to work on collating feedback.

5. Building Refurbishment

EB – provided the update on each refurbishment:

Penketh

- New Jane Forshaw community space is open (where the meeting was held)
- Children’s library has all new furniture
- Shelving replaced
- Refurbished toilets
- Improvement to the front of the building

Culcheth

- Contractor has been appointed and approved– Anthony Deaver Construction.
- The earliest the work will commence is 13th March. We need to liaise with LiveWire on this as we also know the police are currently using the Parish Council room.

EB – asked RR to pick up what will happen during closure.

RR – advised, we may reinstate click and collect and direct people to Birchwood as this is the closest library. Possible pop up. No set plans currently as we need to understand the timescales.

RR – continued, the tender did come in over budget, however Warrington Borough Council have confirmed they will support the project so it can be completed. There are some savings still to be made and we have a meeting on 2nd March at 2pm to discuss this with LiveWire and the working group.

ChSm – advised, we have an awful lot of things to move out of Culcheth.

CS – advised, we will support you with this and we will have a meeting to discuss this further. We need to give 3 weeks’ notice.

GD – asked, can you remind us what is included in the scheme?

CS – advised, it is similar to the Penketh refurbishment.

EB – added, it is very similar however there are more external works. Mechanical and engineering – new boiler already in place.

- External new porch and covered areas
- Guttering repairs
- Moving main reception desk to the right and creating a new community room
- New décor and flooring
- Shelving Replaced
- Accessible toilet

EB – continued, there was a donation from an individual which has enabled us to boost the refurbishment.

Birchwood Hub

EB – advised, this is more than a library project, this is a whole hub project which involves moving Birchwood library into the Birchwood tennis and leisure facilities. The library will go in the old bar and improvements to the leisure facilities will be completed along with and a new community space being created.

EB – continued, the tender process has been completed, however the decision is at Cabinet this evening. We will have a 7 days stand still period and then formal appointment can be made and time scales will be agreed.

RR

<p>EB – added, we are liaising with the school so we don't disturb the school time table and exams with the building work. The tennis hall is also used for the count in the event of an election – we don't have any planned until May 2024, but we need to be mindful of a surprise general election being called.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">6. <u>Contributions from the public gallery</u></p> <p>MR – asked, apart from the cost, why do we not get the Warrington Guardian at the library anymore?</p> <p>RR – replied, we have made a decision post Covid to only have them at Warrington Central. There are lots of reasons why this decision has been made. We have 13 libraries and it is a challenge to have a paper copy at each. It is available online at each of our libraries which can be accessed on the computer and support is provided by our staff if required.</p> <p>MR – added, I do have an email from Matthew. It is desirable the digital offer available as we notice this will attract teenagers and younger generation, however, Penketh has recently been reported as the area with the oldest population in Warrington with 22% of its population being over 70. Some users are not digital literate and don't even use phones. I feel a lot of older people are not coming in as they can't read the paper.</p> <p>RR – advised, we did do a user survey and we have not received any feedback regarding the Guardian newspaper.</p> <p>CS – added, we've not really been asked for it by our users, other than more latterly in Penketh</p> <p>RR – added, sourcing the paper at 13 locations is also tricky and staffing levels are not the same. There are also cost and environmental issues. The cost of the paper, means 10 books per branch less per year. We have to standardise everywhere and run the sites to the best of our abilities and resources.</p> <p>SM – added, results from an Ofcom survey demonstrates how different age groups consume information differently. Younger people usually tend to use the internet where older generations are reliant on TV and physical resources. Penketh have an older population, you want to standardise everything but not everything is standard.</p> <p>MR – asked, can the Friends group provide the guardian?</p> <p>AH – added, I understand the points made, however an ongoing commitment from a voluntary group is different. We understand the cuts being made and we wonder how this will effect services going forward?</p> <p>JG – added, people may not be aware that newspapers are available online. Can this be communicated better or even a computer set up with it available so they don't need to worry about accessing it?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">RR</p>

PL – advised, the issue of not having newspaper in libraries was also raised in Stockton Heath and is linked in with the Warm Space sessions. I accept Rachel’s argument that it needs to be across the board. The Friends group can have a discussion how we can best support this and keep it consistent.

CS – added, I worry about the financial pressure this will add to voluntary Groups.

GF – raised, Warrington library is closed on Mondays and Tuesday, how long will this continue for?

CS – advised, the reduced hours support the Sunday opening as people are more available to take up the activities and events. Staffing shortages also contributed to this decision, therefore we are not considering changing this back currently and if we did we would need an increase in staffing budget.

CS – continued, the location of the library also makes it unattractive in the evening and there was low footfall of an evening. Now we see an increase footfall at the weekend.

RR – added, we can also accommodate more class visits on a Monday and Tuesday now across the library and museum.

CS – advised, we have a better collaboration with the museum and school visits now.

GB – advised, you have reminded me this decision was made based on its contribution to increase revenue. We need to look back on this and see what the impact has been.

LG – advised, we have this information, however the issue is we have had Covid within the middle of it which will have impacted the outcomes.

CS – added, schools are struggling to bring children to museum street as the cost and availability of coaches with seatbelts is a challenge.

EB – added, we are probably 12 months away from us being able to carry out a review of impact.

GB – asked, do we have any grants applications in currently?

RR – replied, we are looking at grants available from this Spring.

PL – asked, do you have any plans for the Coronation? Can the Friends Group have an early view of this as we will also be planning and would like to align plans?

RR – advised, we are thinking of having an activity based in town centre and spreading out from there.

GF – asked, the school visits do they come as a one off or a course of 10. What is the cost of the packs for Looked After Children so Penketh can look into some funding for this as it’s a shame for all children not to get it.

<p>RR – advised, we have looked into a way for all children to be provided with a box with the Headteacher from Birchwood. The packs were expensive but we can purchase the resources and Birchwood pay for this out of the school budget. It is £10 per pack.</p> <p>GF – advised, the Penketh pool is up and running is there any way we can link with libraries?</p> <p>RR – advised, we do work together at other sites. For school visits, the coaches fit two classes, so one class attends the library and one the pool and swap over.</p> <p>GF – asked, with regards to the Warm Spaces, the 113 people over 13 sites is this in addition to normal footfall or inclusive?</p> <p>CS – advised, this is included in the footfall.</p> <p>SM – advised, at the library opening, Cllr Higgins suggested something for the patio area. Can we jet wash it and get some potted plants?</p> <p>CS – confirmed, yes this is fine. Are you going to work with a school on this or an eco-group?</p> <p>SM – advised, no we wasn't going to as it's such a small space.</p> <p>CS – agreed, yes that is fine.</p>	
<p>7. A.O.B.</p> <p>None</p>	

Day	Date	Venues	Time