



Culture, Libraries & Information Update

February and March 2023

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As we emerge from the coldest months and head into longer days and (hopefully!) some pleasant weather, I hope everyone had a restful and enjoyable Easter. Thank you all for your efforts to keep our services running despite the challenges presented by having to avoid non-essential spending in recent months.

I'll keep you all informed as we see what the emerging picture looks like for 2024/5. As always, everyone in the Section is welcome to feedback about how we can do things differently or ideas for income generation.

Libraries and Information

Staff at Colwyn Bay have been busy working with library design consultants Opening the Book and colleagues in the Mental Wellness team to transform the first floor of the library into a bright, welcoming and refreshed reader-friendly space. Re-organisation of stock and installation of new furniture will allow us to develop more wellbeing activities and to provide a dedicated space for older children and young adults to spend time. Huge well done to Sharon, Cheryl, Andrew, Morag, Eunice and the team for their work.

Staff have been able to undertake a number of important and useful training sessions during March, including Anti-racist library collections, WG grant funded work led by CILIP Wales, which took place at Theatr Colwyn.

Speakers included; Manon Gwynant from Pontio, who worked on a project with the North Wales African Society to produce a children's book ['The Fish Princess'](#) (published early summer) and Marie one of the trainee tutors from North



Wales African Society, also Arwel Jones, head of publishing development at the Books Council of Wales. Librarians from across Wales discussed stock selection, promotion and community engagement against the backdrop of Oriel Colwyn's exhibition 'Home in another land.'

As usual, **World Book Day** has been a great success. This year, the team worked with Magic Light Productions, Conwy Valley and North West Wales Community Railway Partnership and Creating Enterprise to welcome more than 300 children to celebrate World Book Day across Llanrwst, Conwy and Llandudno libraries.





On the 11th March, Conwy library welcomed Pamela Petro author of 'The Long Field' to celebrate the launch of the paperback edition. As part of her tour around Wales she shared personal insights about how the concepts of Hiraeth and Cynefin contributed to the book. Conwy staff also represented the Library Service and the Culture Centre at Conwy Seed Fair this year.

Training – six members of the library team, alongside a Mind representative and Social Care Mental Wellness team colleagues attended The Reader three day training programme and are now Shared Reading facilitators. The team alongside colleagues previously trained will provide regular community based Shared Reading opportunities in our libraries. [Shared Reading - The Reader](#)



Good News! We submitted a funding application to the Welsh Government under their TRI funding stream for Iconic Buildings and were successful in being awarded a grant of £150,000 which, together with a previously awarded business case will enable us to carry out essential repairs and upgrading work to the roof, elevations, windows, lighting and toilets throughout Colwyn Bay Library building.

Welcome to Sam who has joined our Information Team and **thank you** to Denise Hughes who has worked with the Library Service for more than 24 years. Thank you for everything, Denise, and enjoy your retirement.

Culture

Creu Conwy Culture Strategy is being rolled out across our five largest towns, where new Town Teams are meeting every two months and have good representation from local businesses, community leaders and creatives. Action plans have been drafted for each area and funding is being sought to enable some exciting community driven programmes.

Amdani! Conwy is up and running with newly appointed officers in post based at our partner organisations Disability Arts Cymru and Community and Voluntary Support Conwy. This inclusive volunteering project will be piloted in Llanrwst and Conwy before being rolled out across the County. The team will be meeting with Llanrwst library staff at the end of March to introduce the project.

The brilliant **Artists and Makers of Conwy exhibition** previously at Conwy Culture Centre has now toured to Llandudno Library. Looking behind the recognisable artwork and names, Conwy photographer Graham Hembrough RCA reveals Conwy Artists and Makers in their working environment.

Our **Young Creatives** project is nearing the end of delivery for 22/23 with emphasis now on gathering feedback and case studies from participants and





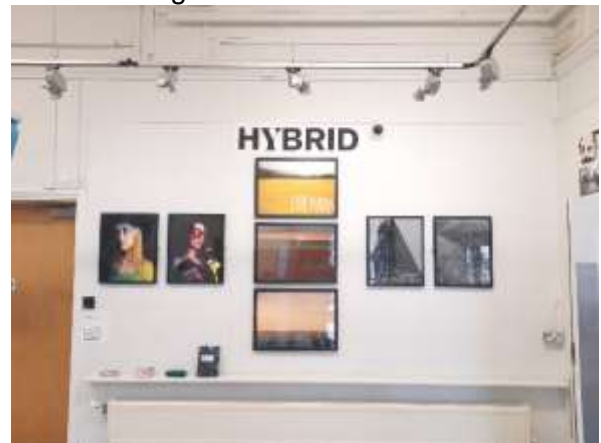
creative facilitators. Thanks to brilliant work from Sian, Ceri-Ellen and the team, the project has been awarded CCG funding (£40,000) and Arts Council Wales funding (£50,000) to continue to deliver this programme under the banner of the Culture Strategy and with the new name of **Creu Conwy Ifanc**. The funding awarded also includes supporting a mentoring programme for young people as part of the next **Winter Sounds Music Festival**.

Colwyn Bay's M-Sparc on Tour pilot project has now come to an end. Initially meant to be a 3 month pilot, supported by our Imagine Colwyn Bay project, the pilot has lasted 16 months. A total of 70 business and community events have been held - attended by nearly 700 people. There have also been 140 Maker Space users ranging from freelance creatives to young people excluded from mainstream education and 480 co-working space users. The project leaves a legacy of creative technology learning and improved local networks. The maker space equipment (3D Printers etc.) will continue to be used for community benefit through Penrhos Avenue Pupil referral Unit and Tape Community Music and Film. M-SParc are keen to maintain the links and partnerships developed in the area.



A new Oriel Colwyn exhibition 'Home in Another Land' by Glenn Edwards/Vanley Burke opened in February. Paul Sampson's work has also included:

- Anti-Racism conference hosted in the exhibition space for CILIP/Libraries - the gallery space provided an artistic and inspirational setting for the event.
- 'This Is Me' a partnership project with Cartrefi Conwy was shortlisted for Arts & Business Cymru arts in the community award (work highlighting/celebrating older Cartrefi Conwy tenants) - exhibition to be installed in Venue Cymru main exhibition area.
- Hybrid - an exhibition of Coleg Llandrillo FdA photography students work opened at Coed Pella and has now been moved to Bae Colwyn Library. Now working with Llandrillo BA Photography students in prep for their final show exhibition.



Archives

- During February delivered a number of one to one sessions for local business people to discover the history of their businesses/premises and how they could use heritage to improve their offer. We had excellent feedback.



- We have been hosting and co-hosting a number of events from the Conwy Family History Society to Ysgol Llangelynnin (with Libraries) to supporting Museums with their LGBTQI+ heritage events.
- Recruited two more volunteers during this period from both ends of the career ladder, a sixth former and a retired former archivist.

Museums

The Museum Service held two events for LGBTQ+ History Month in February: a clay love spoon craft activity led by local artist Katie Ellidge and a celebration event which featured talks about personal experiences by Rev Sarah Hildreth-Osborn, and about the Welsh LGBTQ+ Counties project by Norena Shopland, and a performance on the life of Conwy-born Victorian sculptor John Gibson by Jane Hoy and Helen Sandler of theatre company Queer Tales From Wales – as well as rainbow cake!



The events created welcoming spaces in which people could be together and celebrate their different stories. From the feedback, it was clear that the aim of letting people know that archives and museums are safe spaces was achieved.

The Museum Service welcomed students from Bangor University on work placement modules for the first time. The students are being taught collections care, including handling, labelling, packing, the museum paperwork process and the museums database catalogue Modes.

We have been preparing and working hard towards Museum Accreditation which has now been submitted and will be assessed by panel in May.