



## Culture, Libraries & Information Update

October 2022

### Croeso

It has been a challenging and tumultuous couple of months, and in spite of this, staff are continuing to deliver an exceptional service. Thank you for everything you do. Please note that we have changed our name to **Culture, Libraries and Information** to better reflect the work of our service. Please be sure to update your email signatures and correspondence.

#### Staff Cafe

Thanks to everyone who attended a staff reflection session. I hope these can drive collaboration and problem solving across our section. In future we will be calling these our virtual **Staff Café** so please look out for invitations to the next round of sessions. Come along when you can and join informal discussions around common issues.

#### Meet the team?

One of a few good ideas from the last staff reflection session is to help colleagues put names to faces and learn about the others working in our section. If you're happy to, please send image of yourself to be included in the next update together with a sentence to say what you enjoy most about your role.

Another recurring topics has been the use of Teams. We've looked into the option for staff training but this isn't running at the moment. However, you can follow this link to see a number of useful videos on how to get the most out of Teams [Microsoft Teams Introduction Training \(conwy.gov.uk\)](https://www.conwy.gov.uk/microsofteamsintroductiontraining).

We also offer a warm welcome (and in Myfi's case a warm welcome back!) to new staff joining the section in September and October and hope you're settling in well.

- Nia Jones and Myfanwy Jones - Library Assistants, Llanrwst Library
- Natalie Hughes – joining us from the events team as Creu Conwy Programme Coordinator.

#### The rising cost of living

Our libraries provide a brilliant Warm Welcome to our communities, this winter more so than ever. However, it's important to remember that these are challenging times for staff too. It's important that we take care of ourselves. If you're finding things difficult you are not alone. Reaching out to a trusted colleague for a chat can make a big difference.

Our Mental **Health First Aiders** are: Sharon Morgan, Morag Wright, Gaynor Jones, Amy Joinson, Eunice Roberts, Anne Thomas, Eirian Jones, Kate Brown, Tracey Payne-Davies, Leah Edwards, Medi Ashton.

Our **Time to Change Champions** are: Denise Williams-Usher, Helen Goddard

**Diolch,**

**Helen**



## Culture

Our well-attended 'Cultural Conversation' session took place at Mostyn, on the 13<sup>th</sup> October to gather sector input and feedback into the **Creu Conwy Culture Strategy** action plan, which will be ready to share before Christmas. Follow up Town Team meetings have been held or scheduled to continue to develop local culture strategy activities and a number of 'toolbox talks' have been held on the culture strategy for staff and members.



Creu Conwy supported the delivery of some great additional activity across our library spaces this September as part of **Open Doors**. Everything from vertical dancing at the Culture Centre to a family friendly treasure hunt in Colwyn Bay. **Winter Sounds** music festival is going live between the 25<sup>th</sup> November and 4<sup>th</sup> December, so keep an eye out for the programme to be published in the next couple of weeks.

**Casglu**, the Creu Conwy project to map people's perceptions and connections with culture across the county is being finalised. Gwenno Eleri Jones from DoWell Associates is pulling stories together into a giant map that will capture beautifully what people in Conwy value about local culture and heritage.

Suspended stories, Conwy Culture Centre

**Amdani! Conwy** a new Creu Conwy project has been awarded £250,000 in funding from the Spirit of 2012 Volunteering Cities fund. This prestigious grant will support the development of event volunteering across the whole county and will be delivered in partnership with Disability Arts Cymru and CVSC with an emphasis on inclusive, accessible and fun cultural volunteering opportunities.



**Amdani!**  
Conwy

Ceri is working on a rebranding of the Young Ambassadors scheme with the newly named **Culture Champions** scheme – which is all about giving young people aged 16-25 who have an interest in the arts and culture, a chance to gain valuable experience within the sector with opportunities to volunteer at various cultural events and activities across the county. A call-out will be going out soon for this and we hope to link this with Amdani! Once the project officers for the project are in post.



Culture team launched the **Mini Art Explorers** at Colwyn Bay Library this month – these sessions are funded by a grant from CCG grant and are open to children 2 – 5 years old and their adults. Two more sessions will run this year, working to a Christmas theme.

**Caru Celf** half-term visual art workshops in partnership with Urdd Conwy are running at Betws-yn-Rhos village hall. The sessions are led by artist Artist Jwls Williams offering participants a chance to experiment with new techniques from photomontage, collage, painting and stencilling.

**Lleisiau Carneddau Voices** is a new project from the culture team working in partnership with the Carneddau Landscape partnership and Artist Rachel Evans who has been running workshops with Ysgol Aberconwy students using oral history recordings of stories from the Carneddau area to inspire creative artwork. The project will culminate with an exhibition at the Conwy Culture Centre at the end of the year.



The **Archive team** has been carrying out digital outreach for rural schools with 2 out of 3 bespoke packs delivered to primary schools in Dolwyddelan and Capel Garmon and another for Betws-y-Coed in preparation. A separate project for Ysgol Dyffryn Conwy's year sevens is also in progress. Staff from the National Library of Wales team have visited to finalise the plans for dedicated terminals to be installed in the Archive and in Llanrwst Library. These will provide public access points to audio-visual resource held by the National Library and will be accompanied by an activity programme.

We are delighted to welcome Rachel Evans as our new **Museum Development and Accreditation Support Officer**. Rachel, who is from Penmachno, joined us in September from her previous role with Cadw. Rachel has been working on The Welsh Museum Festival, together with Shirley, our **Fusion** officer. The Culture Centre is decked out in bunting with help-yourself activities for children and teenagers. There are also four Roman art workshops being held throughout half term with artist Wendy Couling. Shirley and Rachel are also working on a project to deliver a series of events with the Archive team, Hwb



Penmachno and the National Trust including a call out for historic photos and objects working with People’s Collection Wales.

The Culture Centre museum collections and reminiscence boxes are being included in a project called **House of Memories Cymru**. Initially a National Museums Liverpool project, staff from NML have joined with Amgueddfa Cymru, supported by National Lottery Heritage Funding, to produce a bilingual reminiscence app for people living with Dementia and their families. Ten items have now been digitised and uploaded from Conwy’s collections.

**Oriel Colwyn’s** current exhibition opened on 15th October. **35 SUMMERS** celebrates approximately thirty five years of music photography by Mark McNulty. It is the first full retrospective of his vast music photography archive featuring nearly 400 photographs. Each one-off print can be purchased and will be signed by Mark. Profits from the sales will be split between Conwy Food Bank and Oriel Colwyn. Reserve yours now!



Oriel Colwyn’s latest **Photo Film Club** was held on Wed 26th October and featured **RAY & LIZ** by esteemed photographer Richard Billingham. The film was screened for FREE, with the option to donate to Colwyn Bay Food Bank. More than 90 people attended on the night.



*“Hi Paul, thank you so so much for dropping the Amazing donations off. Truly wonderful and it's very much appreciated for what you organised to support Conwy Food Bank. It will be such a MASSIVE help to us”*

The **State of Independents** (phase 2) work, along with Colwyn Branding has gone up on both Peacocks empty shops windows and The Imperial Hotel windows in Colwyn Bay. This



phase of the project has engaged with and celebrates an extra 40 local Independent businesses in Colwyn Bay's town centre ([www.stateofindependents.com](http://www.stateofindependents.com)).

**This is Me** is a CultureStep-funded project to engage with older tenants within Cartrefi Conwy's housing. Tenants have been photographed in their own homes with items of importance to them. Stories have been heard about their lives and recorded with a storyteller. The finished work (pics and words) will be collated into an Oriel Colwyn exhibition and publication.

## Libraries

### Croeso Cynnes

CCBC is posting a leaflet to all households in Conwy County between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> November to provide advice and information on the cost of living crisis. This will promote a range of services, including our libraries, as well as sharing the community support number previously used during the Covid pandemic (01492575544). Thanks to our brilliant Information Team for preparing to handle these calls.

Libraries are providing free warm drinks and snacks at scheduled times (see attached posters), which is funded by the Welsh Government's discretionary cost of living grant. Some wonderful feedback has already come in about customers spending extended periods in the library spaces, reading, playing games and socialising with friends. Staff have done a great job of raising awareness of our service offer, especially encouraging customers to sign up to our digital library and access titles for free. Lovely feedback from Medi and the team in Llanrwst.

*“Several families playing the board games whilst drinking their warm drinks. Lovely to see individuals who came start chatting to each other whilst making tea. Two who had been working here all day in silence, started talking over the tea and ended up chatting for over an hour. One individual came to Shared Reading this morning and Warm Welcome this evening - they must have spent over 5 hours in the library today, and I suspect the warm space, the company, and the warm drinks were very much appreciated.”*



Adam Price, Leader of Plaid Cymru visiting the Culture Centre to learn more about Warm Spaces, which received coverage on BBC Wales and S4C news.

After some delay, the 2020 / 2021 **Welsh Public Libraries Act** report has now been received from the Welsh Government and will be presented to Cabinet on 8.11.2022. Our cabinet member for Leisure and Culture Councillor Aaron Wynne, has commented;

*“Conwy Library and Information Service...continues to perform well. Despite the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic and the significant financial challenges faced by the Authority, the service has gone above and beyond what is expected of them.”*



Library usage figures are increasing. Since June the number of monthly visits and enquiries have been heading on an upward trend, testament both to the brilliant work of our staff and to the critical role of our libraries for communities at this time.

### Community Libraries

Our community libraries were established in 2014, and a review has now been undertaken of the model to see what has worked well. The report recommends that the service level agreements with each community library are renewed, that funding is sought to build capacity and recruit new volunteers, and that work is done to identify sustainable funding streams. I have been meeting with both community libraries and town and community councils to begin a dialogue about how to progress the recommendations of the report.

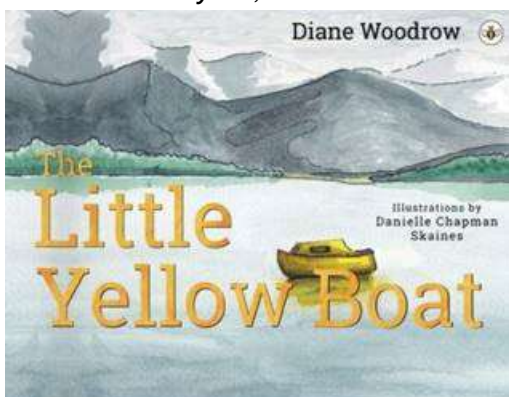
### Staff Development

Three members of staff have started the Cultural Heritage Level 5 Apprenticeship, and four on the Foundation Degree in Library & Information Management.

### Library activities

There have been a number of popular arranged visits to our libraries which have been very successful. Merched y Wawr groups visited both the Culture Centre and Glasdir, Llanrwst, leaving some great feedback;

*Dear Gaynor, a short note to thank you from the bottom of my heart for an excellent meeting last night, we learned so much about the Library and all the resources available on our doorstep! Hoping everyone will be keen to use the services more after last night!*



Over 20 people attended the launch of 'And', Isabel Adonis at Llandudno Library, Isabel has been a great supporter of our service for many years. Many activities are scheduled for half term too, including Author Diana Woodrow who will be reading her story for under 5s titled *Little Yellow boat*.

Halloween and Bonfire night themed activities have also started across our libraries. The Colwyn Bay team had huge attendance at the Spooky Storytime last Tuesday of 27 children, many in fancy dress – well done to Penny and all.

