



# Cultural Services Annual Report

2023-24



**Lancashire**  
County  
Council





## Foreword

Welcome to the Annual Report 2023-24 for Cultural Services. This year we are offering two versions of the report. This summary report highlights key statistical information which demonstrates the breadth of delivery across all of the services included within the Cultural Services family. The full report is available online.

Julie Bell, Head of Cultural Services, Lancashire County Council



## Culture and Heritage highlights...

- Heritage Learning Lancashire's 'Lancashire Schools' Storytelling Festival' celebrates storytelling whilst supporting literacy and encourages young people to engage and be creative with words and movement and make connections into Lancashire's rich and diverse cultural heritage.
- Lancashire Archives developed a new programme of exhibitions with Lancashire Museums Conservation and Collections Team culminating in the launch of the 'Shaping the Future: Lancashire Women's Lives, 1950-1980' exhibition.
- Facing the Past – Black Lancastrians is an exhibition by artist Lela Harris and was opened by Turner Prize winner Lubaina Himid. Developed with local partners and schools for the Judges' Lodgings Museum, it features new portraits highlighting the lives of Black Lancastrians from the 1700s.
- Lancashire Music Service have developed 'The Girls Can' project which encourages young female musicians and technicians aged 12-18, to build confidence by providing opportunities to learn from female music industry professionals.
- Lancashire Choir of the Year was held for the second year with Nelson Civic Ladies' Choir named as the 2023 winners, and the People's Choice was the Capricorn Singers.
- Lancashire Artist of the Year was launched to celebrate the artistic talents of Lancashire's residents. Calendars with all twelve finalists' work have been sold in cultural service venues to support activities for Lancashire young care leavers.
- Clarets Collected was launched this year to bring together a fan-led Burnley Football Club Archive to Burnley Library.



## Health and Wellbeing highlights...

- We worked with County Council partners to provide our Home Library Service to Extra Care Scheme housing in Whitworth, Ingol and Accrington.
- Lancashire Outdoor Education invested in electric minibuses to ensure minimal environmental impact and facilities to support future generations to experience the wonderful surroundings.
- A new accessible Book Bus for the School Library Service allows for exchange of stock and is equipped with a wheelchair lift, enabling easy access for all pupils.
- An accessible instruments library has been created by Lancashire Music Service offering a wide a range of instruments designed for SEND pupils.
- Library Quiet Hours create a calm atmosphere by reducing sounds and lighting. Sensory Tents and equipment create a quiet, calm area for children to enjoy.
- Mobile libraries are fully accessible with a lift for people who may need assistance with their mobility.
- Warm and Welcome was well received with more young people accessing the warm drinks after school, giving them the opportunity to see our digital resources, books and access free Wi-Fi. Homeless people also appreciated a warm, welcoming, and safe environment.

## Digital and Information highlights...

- A new online mobile library map has been developed so people can view where and when the mobile library vans stop.
- We've launched a new 'What's On' event listing to make it easier for people to find, view and book our events.
- New STEM champions developed activities to inspire customers to engage in science, technology, and coding, through high quality STEM-based library sessions.
- Heritage Learning Lancashire introduced a STEM special events week 'Castle Crushers' at Clitheroe Castle Museum investigating the use of science and technology, whilst a STEM session at Queen Street Mill has been created to understand 'How things work'. The 'Whole lot of History' podcast has continued to develop.
- New digital screens installed in 19 libraries enable us to share information updates and promotions to our customers.
- We supported people with visas, court and tribunal appointments, and voter ID for elections through our Assisted Digital offer.
- We continue to develop our local history offer in libraries across Lancashire.

# Reading and Learning highlights...

- 'Reading Heroes', Lancashire Libraries new summer reading programme encourages children in Key Stages 1 and 2 to continue reading. Parent feedback showed that 86% believed that it encouraged their children to read more over the holidays.
- Heritage Learning Lancashire delivered a second 'Lancashire Schools Magic Fest', using the art of magic to develop numeracy and literacy, and other soft skills.
- Lancashire School Library Service held their first 'Fantastic Book Awards' and 'Brilliant Book Award' celebration event with nearly 300 children attending.
- Lancashire Book of the Year 2023 saw over 300 year 9 pupils from 32 schools who selected Win Lose Kill Die by Cynthia Murphy as their winner.
- 'Lancashire Stories' was shared in Prison Libraries with author Nathan Parker delivering workshops. He gave a motivational talk on the possibilities of writing and captivated the audience made up of prisoners and staff.
- Lancashire Music Service supported learning opportunities to young people in their musical journey, as well as the county ensembles including two symphony orchestras; jazz orchestra; concert and a brass band.

## How to find out more

Read a full version of our 2023-24 annual report at: via QR code



### Follow us on X and Facebook

@LancsLibraries @LancsArchives @LancsMuseums  
@LancashireSLS @LancMusicHub @HLLancashire



# Reading and Learning



Delivered

**26,576**

events in libraries



**2,594,231**

library visitors/footfall



**2,880,307**

eBook/newspaper/magazine  
downloads



**17,782**

children have participated  
in our Reading Schemes.



Hosted

**310**

courses in libraries from  
Lancashire Adult Learning  
with 2054 enrolments.



loaned

**3,202,594**

books



**9,420**

children registered for our  
'Reading Heroes' summer  
scheme with 42% completing  
the reading element and 58%  
reading at least 1 book.



**68,716**

new library members



Children from over

**170**

primary schools voted for their  
favourite 'Brilliant Book Award' read.



Lancashire School Library  
Service loaned

**59,564**

books to primary, special and nursery  
schools, and 19,034 pupils were  
engaged in reading and learning  
activities.



Lancashire Music Service supported teachers with

**21,884**

hours of vocal activity to support  
the model music curriculum  
which has singing at the centre of  
learning.



**22,535**

books were read by children taking  
part in 'Reading Heroes'

# Health and Wellbeing



**Volunteering:** Cultural Services are one of the biggest users and supporters of the Lancashire Volunteer Partnership.

We supported

# 326

library volunteer positions, with over a third of these being **Culture Hacks** (aged 11-24)

It is brilliant that so many young people are gaining valuable life experiences with our support and are encouraged to use their skills and enthusiasm to support our library reading programmes and activities.

Museums recruited and supported **90 volunteers** to help support visitors. Archives supported **over 100 volunteers** contributing over **3,500 hours of their time** to our collections and digitisation projects.

Volunteers increased across Cultural Services to **577** which is a **10% increase** over the previous year.



# 64

Lancashire Libraries were awarded the 'Libraries of Sanctuary' status which recognises and celebrates those who go above and beyond to show solidarity and welcome to sanctuary seekers and refugees.

**Exercise in libraries** expanded in 2023, with seven libraries Friends' groups gaining funding from Active Lancashire and Sport England to provide a range of exercise sessions to support the health of our communities.

# 6,500

participants and

# 288

schools visited Lancashire Outdoor Education centres to engage in outdoor experiences.



# Amplify

Lancashire Music Service's Youth Voice group, attended the Citizen's Assembly event in Birmingham, organised by Music for Youth. They helped to develop a manifesto for music education to be presented to government.

# 68



welcome packs with resources promoting library services and books / dual language books were gifted to relocated **Afghanistan refugees**.



# Culture and Heritage



Lancashire Archives secured a

## £222,000

investment from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the Friends of Lancashire Archives for the **Keeping East Lancashire in the Picture** project working with photographic collections in East Lancashire libraries.



Crowdfund Lancashire attracted over

## £1.3m

on community projects across the county.

Over

## £544,000

was contributed by the Lancashire Culture and Sport Fund to community arts and sport projects, which levered an additional **£840,000** in funding from local people, businesses and both local and national funders.



Lancashire Archives accepted

## 170

new collections into the Archives

and created

## 77,000

new public catalogue records



## 118,237

visitors to our **museums and heritage tours**, including **11,196** as part of schools' visits led by our Heritage Learning Team or site teams.



## 8,756

people visited our **Fun Palaces** in October

We held **23 Fun Palaces** in Cultural Services venues, including libraries, museums, and Lancashire Archives. It is an annual weekend of events where arts, crafts, science, technology and digital experiences are a catalyst for community engagement and fun participation for everyone.

Heritage Learning Lancashire delivered over

## 60

outreach sessions to over

## 2,600



pupils.

# Digital and Information



Use of technology to support Lancashire Music Service's instrumental tuition programme has continued to grow with over

# 12,949

hours of digitally supported teaching and

# 10,180

new students being provided with access to online learning.

Our library staff have been helping tackle digital poverty as part of the National Databank scheme which provides free SIM cards from Virgin Media, O2, Vodafone and Three. The SIM cards have mobile data, minutes and text and are available to those in digital poverty.



We have provided

# 245

SIM cards in 2023-2024.



# 3,672

interactions to enable people to upskill and learn new digital skills.

School Library Service's Fantastic Book Awards enabled over

# 800

pupils to attend their author events online.

