

## **Key Achievements delivered 2019 -2024**

Cultural Services staff have delivered on all the strategy objectives through a wide range of projects and initiatives during the last five years. Every year Cultural Services provides an annual report all of which demonstrates how year on year the services within the department have delivered for the residents of Lancashire. The examples below demonstrate some of the success stories over the last five years.

### **Delivery during the pandemic**

In response to the Covid 19 pandemic offers were quickly developed to go online and our digital resources were expanded. Our frontline services adjusted their offer to ensure premises were made Covid-secure. 'Six of the Best' became a new book collection offer. 'Tackling Inequalities funding' enabled libraries to deliver exercise and wellbeing sessions to help reduce the negative impact of the pandemic following lockdowns. This piece of work was delivered in collaboration with Active Lancashire and Friends of Libraries groups across the county. The National Lottery Heritage Fund project, 'Kick the Dust', saw young producers make a short film about young people's experiences of living through the pandemic, which has been preserved at Lancashire Archives.

### **Digital Services**

The Transparent Language Online service was introduced to support library members to build listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in over 110 languages. The service is available via an app which allows members to access their online courses and save their progress as they develop their language skills. We also introduced the standalone PressReader app which provides access for library members to thousands of national, local and global newspapers with 90 days of back issues as well as a wide range of popular magazines. Further investment in digital has seen the installation of 58 Self-Service machines in libraries, and the introduction of online payments for library account holders and a new corporate event ticketing and marketing system.

### **Reading Offers**

Readers of all ages benefited from our range of programmes.

- Little Steps was introduced through libraries to help pre-school children to develop speech, language, and a love of stories engaging 2,573 children in 2022/23. This is an important offer as Speech and Language is seen to be a key area that requires support and is part of targeted work of the Best Start in Life Board to ensure school readiness. It is also one of the key areas that the Inclusion Service are dealing with.
- Reading Heroes was introduced as our new summer reading scheme for libraries for 4-12 year olds with 9,420 children participating in 2022/23 seeing an increase in previous years. It was developed following consultation with children, families, teachers and library staff. Evaluation of the 2023

programme showed that 86% of parents claimed that their children read more over the summer because of Reading Heroes. Feedback from schools has indicated that Reading Heroes inspired children to read more regularly particularly keeping up the momentum over summer so that children returned to school after the summer break ready to learn with their reading level at least maintained.

- Lancashire School Library Service took delivery of a new BookBus to visit all 208 subscribing schools annually.
- Lancashire Stories was commissioned to create a new collection of short stories connecting to Lancashire enabling people to read together with accessible and engaging stories for adults and young adults. The stories were available both in written and audio formats. Over 13,500 people engaged with the stories in 2022/23.

### **Museums and the Heritage Learning Team**

Judges' Lodgings Museum secured funding to deliver the Gillows Gallery project: Facing the Past. A partnership project to decolonise and re-interpret collections relating to the Transatlantic Slave Trade and Slavery through new commissions and community education. A major conservation project: Rochdale - Your Townhall Reborn, has involved volunteers working with skilled conservators to restore this historic building alongside the ambitious regeneration of the town centre. This was part of a new approach to specialist practical training in museum skills introduced by our Conservation and Collections Team.

The Lancashire Schools Magic Fest delivered by Heritage Learning Lancashire used the performance art of magic to advance and strengthen functional and soft skills. 190 pupils from 6 primary schools connected with their local museums and heritage sites to create, design and build magic shows inspired by their local heritage, collections, and diverse communities.

### **Fundraising to support creativity and physical health.**

Working with our local communities, we have developed over 30 constituted Friends groups to support some of our libraries and respond to the local needs and opportunities within those areas. The Friends have secured additional financial support and provided their local knowledge and expertise to help support library offers in their areas.

The introduction of Crowdfund Lancashire has enabled communities to raise funds for community projects which improve access to cultural activities and contribute to health and wellbeing with support from Lancashire Culture & Sport Fund. During the first year over £838,000 of external support was secured to support 82 projects with over 500,000 participants across all 12 districts of Lancashire.