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Inverclyde Council  
**Cultural Services**  
Annual Report 2018-19

## INTRODUCTION

It has been a busy year for Cultural Services, with **671,212** visitors across our service points (including online), borrowing **162,730** items and **35,220** people attended **1,931** events and activities, from Bookbug sessions, to author events and IT classes, to local history talks. We have continued to evolve our service delivery to ensure its relevance to local communities as well as introducing new aspects of our offer. This report only illustrates a brief snapshot of the year's achievements and work undertaken by Cultural Services staff.

## LIBRARIES

Inverclyde Council operates a network of six public libraries in central Greenock, Barr's Cottage, Port Glasgow, Kilmacolm, Gourrock and Inverkip & Wemyss Bay. Inverclyde Libraries provide services to anyone who lives, works or visits Inverclyde and this includes access to books, reading and authors; free internet access, support to use technology; learning opportunities; and events and activities.



During 2018-19 we held an inaugural staff conference where all library staff gathered to work on launching a new vision and mission statement for the library, as well as new strategic objectives to guide our work and priorities in the coming years, and revised customer service standards.

The afternoon gave all staff the opportunity to look at the impact our services have on individuals and was only one of a number of training and development opportunities offered to all staff throughout the year, designed to ensure staff are equipped to offer the very highest levels of service.

In February 2019, Inverclyde Libraries undertook a validated self-evaluation of the service using the How Good Is Our Public Library Service framework and received a Level 5 rating (very good) for Q1 5 – Vision, Strategy and Continuous Improvement. The review found major strengths in library provision, including clear links between strategic goals and corporate plans, cultural plans, and the national strategy for public libraries; commitment to ongoing staff training and excellent staff training contributes to a staff group highly engaged and supported to develop and implement innovative practises; and a good track record of attracting external funding to drive service improvement and innovation.



Our Programme Development team (3.73 FTE) offer a diverse programme of events and opportunities across Inverclyde, including informal digital learning, author events, book groups, access to national programmes, and forums to share knowledge and experiences. Services are delivered or supported by frontline staff, are available to all, and are free of charge.

Our Learning Offer, 'DiscoverIT @ the Library', provides informal learning sessions to encourage learning and digital participation. Throughout 2018/19 we increased opportunities to learn new digital skills delivering 96 digital sessions attended by 211 people. We also assisted 78 attendees at our 'Device Advice' drop-in sessions and delivered Family History sessions to 11 learners.



Inverclyde Libraries continue to work in partnership with the Inverclyde Council Community Learning and Development service by hosting basic computing courses and work clubs, both of which aim to enhance the employability skills of jobseekers. Over 1,000 participants attended the sessions throughout the year.

With support from the Scottish Book Trust, our Live Literature programme for 2018/19 included appearances by acclaimed Scottish author Graeme Macrae Burnet and BBC radio presenter, Theresa Talbot. Also to coincide with the 'Lifting the Lid – 400 Years of Food & Drink in Scotland' display, provided by the National Library of Scotland, we hosted cookery themed events which were delivered by Fife Food Ambassador, Christopher Trotter, food writer and novelist, Sue Lawrence and writer and literary critic, Lesley McDowell. We also ran a number of events for Rebel-themed Book Week Scotland.

In addition to our live author events, we also offer readers the opportunity to share a love of reading through our Book Chat book groups of which we hosted 29 sessions in 3 library branches. Overall attendance was 179 throughout the year.

To help address local and national concerns over social isolation, we established 3 Chatty Cafés in our libraries: 'Chatty Crafters', 'Bead & Blether' and 'Remember When...' where people from the Inverclyde community can come along to take up a new hobby, reminisce or just chat to others over a cup of tea and a biscuit. We held 69 sessions and attendance was 391 people throughout the year.



We completed our Au-some Libraries! Project in December 2018 and it now continues as a valued addition to our Inverclyde Libraries' programme. Our libraries are all autism accessible, providing a variety of specialist resources, autism-related book stock, and staff support to those with autism and their families. In September 2018 we also launched Au-some Afternoons which provide dedicated library access to those with autism or additional support needs and their families, and include a Makaton-signed Bookbug session for babies, toddlers and pre-school children followed by Quiet Library time for adults and young people.

Outreach activities continued during 2018-19, working with a variety of valued partners - HMP Greenock, Broomhill Court, Belville Community Garden Trust, and NHSGGC. For those who find physical access difficult, we also provide a 'Books on Wheels' service which delivered 2,919 books to housebound library members.

We continued and expanded our Macmillan Cancer Support provision in Inverclyde Libraries, adding a weekly drop-in session at Port Glasgow Library on Tuesday afternoons. In our continued quest to ensure that our libraries are community hubs, we also offer Action on Hearing Loss drop-in sessions at Port Glasgow as well as Future Skills drop-ins on an ad-hoc basis across the service.

A change in the referrals procedure from Future Skills to Citizen's Advice Scotland has meant a re-think about how we support and refer customers who need support accessing digital services such as Universal Credit. We now work in partnership with Citizen's Advice, and host a weekly drop-in session in Central Library. This session provides an opportunity for new Universal Credit claimants to be given one-to-one assistance in a friendly informal environment. This assistance is available up until the first Universal Credit payment is made. Libraries also provided PC access for 5712 customers to access their accounts with 652 of these given additional assistance from library staff.

In 2018/19 Inverclyde Libraries welcomed thousands of children and young people to the library to promote reading for pleasure and to encourage families to access all the free literacy and learning resources available:

- 773 children visited the library for special 'gifting parties during which all Inverclyde P1 pupils received their P1 Bookbug bags.
- 2,211 children made 108 visits to the library with school groups.
- 3,082 children were reached through library outreach work.
- 361 children made 36 visits to the library with their Early Years settings.
- 36 children made 5 family visits to the library through an ongoing partnership with Barnardos Early Years service.





We extended our Library Club programme for young people aged 8-12 years. Library Club now operates in three libraries. Club members meet once a week to develop their literacy, craft and digital skills in the library space. This year, there were 71 meetings of Library Club with 424 visits from Library Club members and 315 books borrowed by young people through club meetings. Parents said: "I believe they have both benefited with the interaction with other children, self expression and simply enjoyed their time at the club"; "My youngest son has become more of a reader since joining. I will make sure this continues".

Build it! sessions took place in 5 of our libraries for Doors Open Day weekend. 94 people visited libraries specifically for Doors Open Day and took inspiration from Inverclyde's rich architectural heritage to construct local buildings from Lego.

We launched the *Libraries Inspire!* Programme in February, formalising and consolidating our ongoing work with Inverclyde's network of primary schools. Libraries Inspire! is a series of public library based workshops designed to enhance primary school literacy programmes and promote library membership. Primary schools across Inverclyde were invited to participate in each of the sessions delivered at their local library. Libraries Inspire! meets all four strands of the Curriculum for Excellence and aims to inspire children to read for pleasure and for them to be inspired by all the services available at their local library.

Between February and March, 468 young people visited the library through 14 Libraries Inspire visits. 32 children joined the library as a result of this contact.



The Summer Reading Challenge is delivered with the aim of ensuring reading levels do not 'dip' over the long summer holiday period. Library staff inspire children to read six books over the summer holidays to promote reading for pleasure and establish or maintain positive reading habits.

1,037 children participated in the Challenge across Inverclyde. 60% of these young people read at least six books through the challenge – this made Inverclyde's completion rate higher than the national average of 57%. The number of children joining Inverclyde Libraries as a direct result of this initiative (105) was the fifth highest in number in Scotland. With Inverclyde being one of Scotland's smallest authorities, this success is proof positive that the Summer Reading Challenge plays a key part in increasing access to public services for young people in Inverclyde. The percentage of the 4-11 year old population who participated in the challenge in Inverclyde was amongst the highest in Scotland at 14%, lower only than Fife and Renfrewshire at 16% and the Shetland Islands at 15.3%. Of particular note was the percentage of boys participating in the challenge in Inverclyde – at 47% this was the second highest engagement percentage for this group across the Scottish local authorities. The Challenge was promoted widely across the authority with the support of school partners and community groups and was complemented by a range of free literacy-based activities and events running in libraries throughout the summer.

This year's Holiday Activity programme saw 880 children attend 80 free events run by library staff across all Inverclyde libraries aimed at increasing access to educational leisure activity during school holiday periods. One parent commented: "Library visits were a massive part of my childhood and I have ensured it has been the same experience for E. The range of activities on offer within the libraries in Inverclyde is amazing and we are lucky to have committed, enthusiastic staff like you all to encourage that love of reading in the next generation".



In partnership with W S Graham Estate and local secondary schools Inverclyde Libraries delivered a writing competition open to all secondary school pupils in Inverclyde. Inverclyde Libraries also facilitated the participation of school pupils in the flagship centenary celebration event at the Beacon, and celebrated the life and work of W S Graham with a poetry reading event during Book Week Scotland which also showcased the work of local adult writers from Greenock South West Library Writers Group and Greenock Writers Club.

Children aged 0-5 years participated in the hugely popular and educationally significant Bookbug Sessions delivered by Inverclyde Libraries. We ran 590 sessions which were attended by 9,231 children and their 8,664 parents. Parents said: "Good opportunity to get my son interacting with children his age and to be comfortable visiting the library"; "Gives us something to get up and out of the house for on a Saturday"; "The Bookbug Sessions have been a very important part of his development and learning, especially the interaction with other children"; "It's always important for mums to get out and about with the children. great for mums and kids alike"; "The staff are amazing, kind and thoughtful and we look forward to coming every week"; "Bookbug is a fabulous service run by the library. My children and I have been attending for nearly 7 years and we love it".





## WATT INSTITUTION

The McLean Museum and Watt Library were closed to the public for the whole of 2018-19 to allow an extensive programme of fabric repairs to the building complex to continue. The annual lecture programme of the Greenock Philosophical Society was held at the Central Library.



The main work of the Museum service in 2018-19 has been to facilitate the major repair works in the Watt Institution, now concluded, and provide curatorial assistance to commercial removers tasked with moving exhibits and cases at different stages of the contract. The artworks and ship models which had been decanted to an external specialist art store were returned at the end of the contract and Museum staff members have started to refresh and reinstate the displays.

The Curator attended meetings of the James Watt Steering Group organising commemorative events to celebrate the achievements of the Greenock-born engineer, James Watt, in recognition of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death in 2019. The Curator gave a presentation about James Watt to Kilmacolm Primary School in November to tie in with the school's involvement with the World of Walking website's *James Watt Walk* launch, supported by the Great Place Scheme. A newsroom style presentation about Watt featuring selected primary 7 pupils from Kilmacolm Primary was filmed by students at West College Scotland for the website and the film was projected onto the Municipal Buildings in January to mark the date of Watt's birth.



New acquisitions were catalogued and digitised including Clyde Pottery wares and an Italian watercolour painting of a Scotts' steam yacht, and a stained glass window designed and constructed by the artist Alec Galloway commemorating Inverclyde's involvement in the Dardanelles campaign of WW1 was installed in the upper bay window in the Museum.

The McLean Museum is a significant partner in the National Museums of Scotland's current Ancient Egypt and East Asia Programme. The Curator was filmed in December for a National Museums of Scotland presentation aimed at adult learners relating to the Museum's excellent Ancient Egyptian collection.

A painting from the Caird Art Collection, *Still Life with Pomegranates* by Mary Armour, was loaned to Kirkudbright Galleries for the *Stars of Scotland* Exhibition.

The temporary service point at the Heritage Hub continued until the end of 2018, allowing public access to local history book collections, archives and social history collections. Following its closure in December 2018, a temporary service has been set up at Central Library to allow visitors to access the collections prior to the reopening of the Watt Institution later in 2019.

A number of donations were received over the last year, with two notable larger donations of records from the former Greenock Academy and a collection of glass plate slides of images taken by Mr Kennedy, a local photographer who sadly passed away this year. The Kennedy collection of photographic slides have been digitised by one of the current Archive Volunteers, and are a wonderful record of Greenock in the 1970's. Both of these accessions are sure to provide a great deal of local interest and engagement.

The “Sugaropolis” project, which is an ongoing collaboration between the Watt Institution, Abertay University, Edinburgh University and St Andrew’s University, continues with researchers from these three organisations making regular research trips to access and study the collections in Inverclyde. Two workshops took place during the summer of 2018 where the public were invited to attend a drop in event to share reminiscences and taste sugary treats based on historic recipes. Additionally there was a local history talk focusing on the wives of local men involved in the Sugar Trade organised to coincide with one of the week long research visits. Further workshops are being planned for later in 2019.

Some of the current Archives volunteers worked on a local history project called “Matron, Medicine and Mayhem” which consisted of collecting oral and written testimonies from those who previously worked in healthcare in Inverclyde. The project participants were thanked with afternoon tea to coincide with and celebrate the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the NHS.

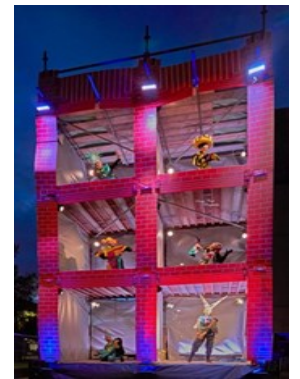
Finally, propaganda posters from the Watt Institution’s social history collection were projected onto the Scottish Parliament building on 11 November to mark the centenary of Armistice Day.





## GREAT PLACE SCHEME

In 2018, Inverclyde was awarded c. £200,000 from the Great Place Scheme (GPS) fund, administered by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. The aim of the GPS is to empower communities to use heritage as a vehicle for regeneration. Inverclyde's project – *Stories Frae the Streets* – uses the power of the story and storytelling to engage local people in heritage activity, building skills and civic pride in the process. The project is funding a dedicated Project Officer, and Heritage Apprentice, to facilitate this activity. Specific projects in 2018-19 were a learning programme and street spectacle in relation to the *Galoshans* Play as part of the *Galoshans* festival, where a professional street theatre company worked with Inverclyde community groups to create a 'play in a day' which took inspiration from the *Galoshans* play but had community participants developing and performing contemporary versions they had themselves created. These were subsequently performed as part of the *Galoshans* street parade finale, combining high quality professional street theatre with community-driven performance, celebrating part of Inverclyde's unique intangible cultural heritage, and the human need to tell stories. The Great Place Scheme has also facilitated a James Watt-themed arts and music project to celebrate the inventor's bicentenary in 2019 – **When Art Tells Tales** – where a local artist and musician have worked with diverse community groups in Inverclyde to provide an artistic response to Watt. The art and music created will be showcased at the Beacon Arts Centre during the Watt bicentenary weekend in August 2019.



Finally, Inverclyde Cultural Services team successfully bid for a Digital Storyteller, 1 of 5 residencies across Scotland supported by Scottish Book Trust. The Digital Storyteller uses recording and sharing of personal stories to improve digital skills, and allow people to feel their individual stories and life experience are heard and recognised. Initial outreach to community groups took place, in particular with groups where voices could be considered to be marginalised. The Storyteller not only allowed individuals to tell their personal stories, but also provided an opportunity for groups to shine a light on their activities and encourage community members to use their services. He has also carried out training for library staff to ensure these new skills are embedded and sustainable going forwards.

## PERFORMANCE

Activity	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Library visits – in person	271,341	276,177	256,465
Library visits – online	146,738	152,608	414,747
Hard copy loans	166,037	154,957	148,905
Electronic loans	10,997	13,587	13,825
PC Users	39,421	36,075	34,226
Adult Events—Participants	2,818	3,703	4,902
Children & Young People Events - Participants	23,361	25,651	30,318
Enquiries Received	37,274	54,178	52,616
Museum visits – online	44,355	57,053	57,076