



Inverclyde Council
Cultural Services
Annual Report 2019-2020

INTRODUCTION

It has been a busy year for Cultural Services with 682,714 visitors across our service points (including online), borrowing 142,292 items, and 39,051 people attended 2,241 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. The year was sadly curtailed by the lockdown required in response to COVID-19 which saw our libraries and museum close to the public on 18 March, and the schools on 20 March.

LIBRARIES

Inverclyde Council operates a network of six public libraries in central Greenock, Barr's Cottage, Port Glasgow, Kilmacolm, Gourock and Inverkip & Wemyss Bay. Inverclyde Libraries provides 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.

This year Inverclyde Libraries has continued to provide access to a varied programme of free and inclusive activities and events within Inverclyde including reading, writing, learning, digital, and cultural opportunities. Library staff have also worked with a wide range of local and national partners to support the health and wellbeing of those living in Inverclyde. Our library branches provide access to a variety of services, resources, and activities specifically designed to support and encourage healthy lifestyles, and promote individual and community wellbeing.



2019-20 was a very successful year for our Live Literature programme, A Chat With... The programme, part-funded by the Scottish Book Trust, was designed to celebrate the Year of Conversation and encourage groups who meet within the libraries, and the general public, to connect with an impressive array of professional authors for a conversation about reading and writing for pleasure.

Part of our programme also included outreach events in Broomhill Court's Suite 16, and two in HMP Greenock, where one prisoner commented: "It was good to hear something different and it's appreciated you would take the time to come in and speak to us."



Conversations in the library continued during 'Blether'-themed Book Week Scotland in November, again funded by the Scottish Book Trust. Big Creative Conversations, was held in Greenock Central Library with Scottish stained glass artist and painter, Alec Galloway. Alec displayed some of his own art and also encouraged attendees to express their own thoughts in artistic ways.



The event also showcased the work some of our Chatty Café and Creative Writing groups do within the libraries, and encouraged people to reminisce about the past with old photographs of Greenock and some local artefacts.

During 2019-20, Inverclyde Libraries delivered and supported both formal and informal adult learning programmes in our library branches and the Watt Institution. Our own learning programme, DiscoverIT @ the Library, is committed to digital inclusion and has been refreshed this year following feedback from both staff and learners. The content of the basic IT course, Bring IT On!, has been reworked around the Scottish Council of Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) Essential Digital Skills Toolkit which ensures learners are equipped with both the foundation and essential digital skills increasingly required in day-to-day life. Our Device Advice mobile device sessions have been rolled out further, becoming part of our outreach programme in Broomhill Gardens which delivered 22 sessions between August '19 and March '20 with 63 learners attending. The appreciation is evident by this feedback from one of our Broomhill Gardens' attendees, "Fantastic service, so beneficial for the community." In keeping with this, a new mobile device Chatty Café, Tea and Touchscreens, was launched at Gourock Library as a means of progression and to encourage those attending to discuss their digital experiences in a relaxed group over a cup of tea and a biscuit.

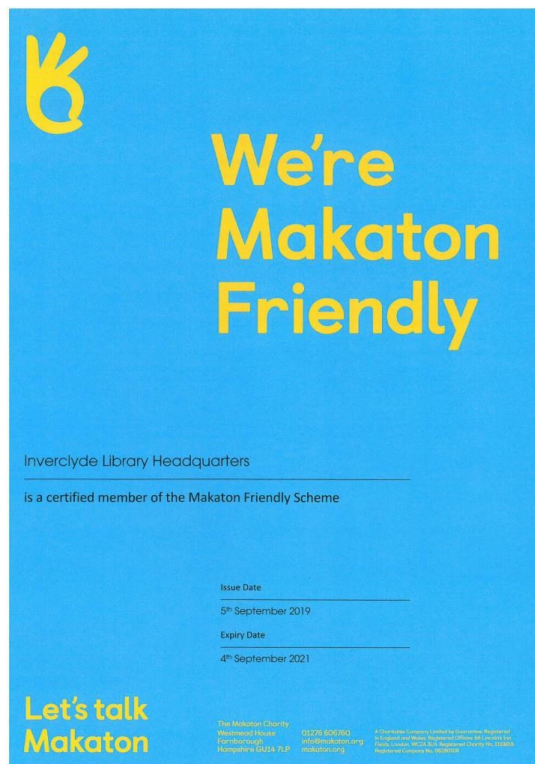
New and innovative opportunities were offered this year via our WhIT's the Script sessions which offered the chance for learners to use their newly acquired digital skills to create a story using audio, video and pictures. Another addition to our learning offer was Family History, a genealogy course for beginners using a mixture of online resources and the wealth of local and family history information available at the Watt Institution. In total, Inverclyde Libraries provided 141 learning sessions with 293 people attending.

Inverclyde Libraries also works in partnership with Community Learning & Development department to facilitate work clubs and basic computing courses in three library branches for those seeking employment, as well as various drop-in sessions and Gaelic courses.

Inverclyde's libraries also remain a vital source of IT equipment and support, with over 4,000 log-ins to Universal Credit accounts in 2019-20 and library staff providing assistance in more than 250 cases.

As part of our Health and Wellbeing offer, Inverclyde Libraries is committed to reducing social isolation and loneliness within Inverclyde and has continued to provide opportunities for members of the community to come together within the libraries. Our Chatty Cafés, Creative Writing, and Book Groups run throughout the library branch network and invite all members of the community to take up a new hobby, learn a new skill, share thoughts and ideas, or simply chat with others over a cup of tea. We continue to develop these programmes and throughout the year have increased the Chatty Cafés from three to five groups and from January 2019 to March 2020 held a total of 202 sessions with 762 attendances. We have also introduced a new evening Book Group for those who cannot attend during the day and will continue to widen access where possible.

Inverclyde Libraries is also committed to making our resources and services as inclusive as possible. In June 2019 we held our annual Make a Noise in Libraries (MANIL) event where we showcased devices and services to assist those with sight loss or impairment. As part of our Au-some Libraries! programme we have continued to make our resources and services as autism accessible as possible. This year during our Au-some Afternoons in Central Library we offered creative art opportunities to those with autism or additional support needs, as part of our Making Waves project. In September 2019 Greenock Central Library was also awarded a Makaton Friendly Award as many of our staff are Makaton trained and can support those using Makaton sign language.



Our main project this year was Making Waves which was funded by the Public Library Improvement Fund (PLIF) and aimed to establish libraries in Inverclyde as cultural hubs. The adult activities included art sessions delivered by local artists Annie McKay, Martyn Mckenzie and Kate McAllan, and creative writing sessions delivered by writer Catherine Simpson. Each of our providers tutored and supported their groups, encouraging them to display their work at our celebratory exhibition planned for March 2020. Unfortunately the exhibition was postponed due to the outbreak of Covid-19 but will be rescheduled whenever possible to showcase the fantastic work that all of our groups produced.



In addition to all of our events for our adult library users, Inverclyde Libraries is strongly engaged in literacy work for children and young people with a dedicated team delivering a wonderful array of books, activities and events to encourage younger readers to explore and develop a lifelong love of reading. We 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:

886 people visited the library for special gifting parties during which all Inverclyde P1 pupils received their P1 Bookbug bags.

6,373 people experienced a promotional message about the services of Inverclyde Libraries during an outreach visit from library staff.

3,001 people made visits to the library with school groups in addition to the *Libraries Inspire!* visits listed below.

590 people made visits to the library with their Early Years settings in addition to the *Libraries Inspire!* visits listed above.

37 people participated in family visits to the library through an ongoing partnership with Barnardos Early Years' service following outreach visits by library staff to Barnados.

In 2019-20, we extended our Library Club programme for young people aged 8-12 years, now operating in four libraries. Club members meet once a week to develop their literacy, craft, Lego and digital skills in the library space.



The young people said when asked what they liked about Library Club:

'That's very hard to say...I think EVERYTHING!'

'The friendly adults and children. The snacks!'

'PLAYING GAMES!!!! Getting snacks!!!! Getting books!!!'

'The arts and crafts - all the things we make we get to take home'

Family fun Lego sessions took place in 5 of our libraries for Doors Open Day weekend. 46 people visited libraries specifically for Doors Open Day Lego sessions and took inspiration from the bi-centennial commemoration of James Watt's death.



The ***Libraries Inspire!*** programme formalises and consolidates our ongoing work with Inverclyde's network of primary schools and Early Years establishments. Libraries Inspire! is a series of public library-based workshops designed to enhance early years and primary school literacy programmes and promote library membership. Primary schools and Early Years establishments 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 April 2019 and February 2020, 2,291 people visited the library through 86 Libraries Inspire! visits. 193 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 encourage children to read six books over the summer holidays to promote reading for pleasure and establish or maintain positive reading habits.

In 2019, 1,109 children participated in the Challenge across Inverclyde (an increase of 7% from 2018), 654 completed the challenge (an increase of 5% from 2018) with 92 children joining the library for the first time. The percentage of the 4-12 years old population who participated in the challenge in Inverclyde was second highest in Scotland at 14.9%, lower only than East Renfrewshire at 15.3%. The completion rate of 59% in Inverclyde was higher than the national average of 56%. The number of new library members was also the 8th highest in Scotland. 12,128 books were issued to participants during the Summer Reading Challenge 2019. The Challenge was promoted widely across the authority with the support of school partners and community groups. Throughout the summer, events and activities supported ongoing challenge activity, and an awards ceremony was held in September to celebrate its success. 778 children and 511 adults attended these events.



1,972 people attended 119 free events run by library staff across all Inverclyde libraries aimed at increasing access to educational leisure activity during school holiday periods.

Children aged 0-5 years participated in the hugely popular and educationally significant Bookbug Sessions delivered by Inverclyde Libraries. Between April 2019 and February 2020 we ran 548 sessions which were attended by 8,740 children and their 8,459 parents. A parent said: 'Bookbug is just amazing. There's a social aspect to it that benefits my child and me by mixing with other kids and parents. It has helped her confidence and mine and she is learning every week that she comes. The staff are amazing, kind and thoughtful and we look forward to coming every week. Love every bit of it!'

At recent P7 visits we asked pupils to write a 'Love Letter to Libraries' – we were amazed how many remembered Bookbug - it obviously had a lasting impact on their love of books and reading. We continued to deliver weekly Bedtime Bookbug Sessions at Port Glasgow and South West Libraries designed to help families with bedtime story times and to offer alternative options for attending Bookbug Sessions for working parents in addition to our Saturday morning session at Central Library.



This year Bookbug's Big Party took place at Port Glasgow and this increased our geographical reach in large-scale events. We also organised a special Bookbug's Big Picnic party for families in partnership with Barnados at Greenock Central Library after successfully sourcing funding from Scottish Book Trust and a fun 'stay and play' after each of our regular 10 weekly sessions.

We continued to deliver our annual Bookbug Session Leader training day which enabled us to provide a relevant and appropriate response to requests for Bookbug Session Leader training. The 17 trainees included a number of parent volunteers who have been empowered to take increasingly active roles in sharing Bookbug services in their local communities.



Scottish Book Trust announced in March 2020 that the recipient of the inaugural Bookbug Hero Award was Myra Mains: Senior Library Assistant for Young People's Services at Inverclyde Libraries. The Bookbug Hero Award seeks to honour someone working with Bookbug who has used the programme to make a real difference to the lives of the young children, families and communities they work with. As winner of the Bookbug Hero Award, Myra received an array of picture books worth £500 from Walker Books.

Myra was nominated by her colleagues and our partners and has been described as the 'smiling face of Inverclyde libraries'. She was one of the first in Inverclyde to complete Bookbug training back in 2011, and since then has been programming and delivering sessions, as well as mentoring and supporting other staff to do likewise and creating partnerships with other groups in the community. Myra has helped 6,053 Bookbug Sessions to take place in Inverclyde, benefiting 184,073 children and parents.

Life in libraries is never dull and frontline library staff participate in a wealth of training opportunities to keep their skills up to date. One of the main objectives in this year's staff training programme was looking at the customer journey in libraries with a view to analysing and improving the experience library customers have when joining and accessing Inverclyde Libraries' services.

Staff, members of the public and other stakeholders then attended an interactive session at our 2019 staff conference where we identified and implemented adjustments to our procedures to improve customers' experience. We tested these improvements by utilising a mystery shopper and an online questionnaire, the results of which told us we were moving in the right direction.

In our branches we have had both exciting and moving events over the past year.

In June, the family of the late Mrs Lynne Rowan gathered in Gourock Library to gift a lovely bookcase, couch and collection of books in her memory. This gift was made possible thanks to the generosity of Mrs Rowan's family and friends following her sudden death in December 2018. Mrs Rowan was a regular attendee at the Gourock Library Bookbug sessions where she enjoyed many happy songs, stories and interaction with her Granddaughter Abigail.



 **Inverclyde Libraries**
August 13, 2019 · 🌐

We were delighted to see Joseph Coelho in Kilmacolm Library today as part of the Library Marathon. Good luck with the rest of your journey.
#LibraryMarathon #LoveYourLibrary #JoinYourLibrary
<http://ow.ly/O33K50vwaVK>

At Kilmacolm Library we had a visit from the wonderful children's poet and author Joseph Coelho who is on a quest to celebrate the inclusive, vital role libraries play in our lives. As part of his 'Library Marathon' Joseph is visiting and joining a library in each authority and receive his library card and we are delighted that he chose Kilmacolm Library where he became a member of Inverclyde Libraries and received his library card.

Joseph is plotting his progress on a giant library marathon map on his website at www.thepoetryofjosephcoelho.com and is tweeting and blogging his journey around the UK.



Over the course of the year we welcomed several new members of staff to Inverclyde Libraries including a new supervisor at Port Glasgow library.

Craig has been in post since July 2019 and one of the first things he did was to work with our Young People’s Services team to transform the children’s area into something brighter, more colourful and overall more welcoming to families and young people.

Craig who previously worked with Inverclyde Libraries as a Library Assistant says of his new role: *‘It’s been a quick learning process since returning to Inverclyde Libraries, and having an opportunity to take charge at a branch like Port Glasgow, which is so well thought of in the community, it has been extremely rewarding. It’s given me the opportunity to build on established relationships within the community as well as develop new ones through various projects and programs. No two days are the same which is one of the things I really enjoy, one minute you’re teaching a beginners IT class, the next you’re building towers out of pasta and marshmallows at Library Club!’*



PERFORMANCE

Activity	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
Library visits	428,785	671,212	682,714
Loans	165,544	162,730	142,292
PC Users	36,075	34,226	30,231
Adult Events—Participants	3,703	4,902	4349
Children & Young People Events - Participants	25,651	30,318	34,106
Museum visits – online	57,053	57,076	33,586*

*Figure is lower than previous years due to a change in analytics software which is more efficient at removing false page views generated by web crawlers, and, due to GDPR, people can now opt out of having their site visits recorded.

WATT INSTITUTION

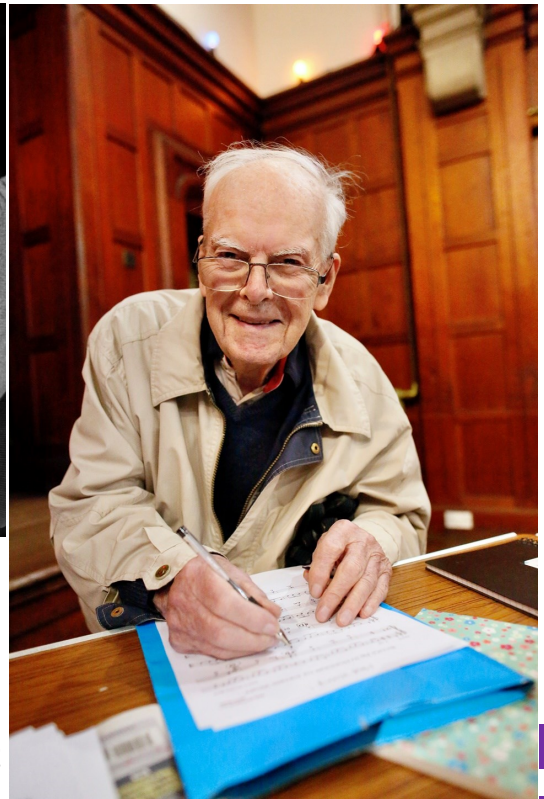
The McLean Museum and Watt Library were closed to the public throughout most of 2019-20 to allow an extensive programme of fabric repairs to take place.

The Watt Institution, comprising the McLean Museum & Art Gallery, the Watt Library, the Watt Hall, and Inverclyde Archives, reopened to the public on 22 November 2019. The annual lecture programme of the Greenock Philosophical Society recommenced at the Watt Hall from January 2020 and will thereafter continue to meet there.



The major piece of work for Watt staff in 2019-20 was the preparation for the reopening of the Watt Institution to coincide with the James Watt Bicentenary celebrations throughout 2019. This was a lengthy process due to the scale and complexity of the work required, including repatriating several thousand objects, books and archives from the collections which had been either stored externally or stored in a temporary store; inventory; selecting items for display or storage and new research and labelling for the contents of displays. Various physical works relating to the refurbishment also continued during this time.

From opening in November 2019 to closure in mid-March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Watt Institution welcomed over 8,000 people through its doors, and feedback about the refreshed facility has been very positive.



- Watt Institution staff also contributed significantly to research and events surrounding the James Watt bicentenary, with the Museum Curator producing a James Watt exhibition in the Watt Hall and the Archivist giving a paper on Watt and his relationship to Greenock at a Watt conference held in August 2019 at Birmingham University.

The Watt Institution was supported by the Great Place Scheme project, and staff from the latter provided the events and activities programme for the Watt upon re-opening.

The Archive was successful in obtaining a grant from the Friends of National Libraries to buy a scrapbook which was owned by a former Librarian at the Watt Library; Allan Park Paton. The Archivist worked alongside the Fine Arts Curator to research the works contained within and the service is planning to apply for funding to have the object conserved.



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 funds a dedicated Project Officer, and Heritage Apprentice, to facilitate this activity. Specific projects in 2019-20 included the development of a Heritage Strategy for the area. The Project Officer worked closely with Jura Consultants and icecream architecture, (specialists in heritage consulting) to carry out a large-scale public consultation on the Inverclyde public's views on the heritage of the area and the role of the Watt Institution in particular, and the subsequent production of a 10 year plan to achieve the vision of a strong, sustainable heritage infrastructure operating across the public, private and third sectors, engaging in cross-sector initiatives to grow the heritage sector in Inverclyde and capitalise on under-used tangible and intangible assets.

The second artists' residency of the GPS project was When Art Tells Tales, a James Watt-inspired project for his bicentenary year. The brief for local artist Annie McKay and local musician Yvonne Lyon was to deliver an expressive arts project engaging Inverclyde's residents, using a variety of media, to facilitate a dialogue within a group around James Watt and shared heritage. Part of this brief was to work with a variety of diverse audiences and also to target non-traditional heritage engagement.



Participants were aged from 11 to 93 years and were drawn from local schools and local community groups such as Reach for Autism, and Moving On amongst others. The participants were briefed on the theme of "James Watt" with input from the McLean Museum Curator and visual and audio stimuli from sites of interest such as Heriot-Watt University, The Waverley, The Comet and the Watt Library, which they could interpret creatively in any way they wished. The creative work produced was of an extremely high quality. Visual art workshops in drawing and painting produced small to large charcoal drawings, watercolours and acrylic paintings inspired by Watt's innovations. Musical compositions included a Scottish Suite (4 short pieces in one: Waltz, Jig, Reel, Strathspey), The Steam Suite (4 short soundscapes: clouds, rain, fire, steam), The Rock (short piece about the Tin mining) and a Waulking song and there was an opportunity for participants to go to a recording studio to be recorded professionally. Incorporating local history and stories into each piece contributed to increased community pride. Over 150 Inverclyde residents and visitors attended the opening night of the exhibition and recital which was held in the Beacon in the bicentenary weekend in August 2019. The response from the public and participants was overwhelmingly positive.

The GPS Project Officer also worked with the Museum Curator and Assistant Curator (Fine Art) on a project funded by National Museum of Scotland to introduce the McLean Museum's significant East Asian collection to young people. Various volunteers from the 15-24 age group, including several Inverclyde school pupils, formed a Young Curators' Group and learned skills in heritage research, conservation, and world cultures, with a final event planned, created and curated by the young people.

MUSIC SERVICE

The Inverclyde schools' Instrumental Music Service and Inverclyde's Youth Music Initiative are run by staff within Cultural Services who work peripatetically across our schools' estate providing musical tuition at Early Years, Primary and Secondary level. The Music Service is a real strength in Inverclyde with many successes on both the local and national stage. 1,178 children and young people received music tuition in 2019-20 and 220 pupils participated in Inverclyde's choirs, bands and orchestras. The groups participated in church concerts, Armed Forces Day, and the Glasgow Phoenix Choir. They also presented the hugely well attended annual Christmas concert, although sadly the Gala concert traditionally held in March had to be cancelled due to COVID-19. Inverclyde's concert Band and wind Orchestra achieved Gold and Gold Plus Awards at regional and national events. Inverclyde is the only local authority in Scotland which has qualified for the finals since the festival started 10 years ago.

Funded by Creative Scotland, Inverclyde's Youth Music Initiative ensures every pupil receives one year of free music tuition by the time they leave primary school. In Inverclyde we seek best value from our funding and utilize it as creatively and innovatively as possible. The project provides a minimum of 12 hours of music to all P6 pupils; a 2 day per week musician in residence at Lomond View Academy (which has led to some pupils presenting for SQA qualification units); specialist music programmes and CPD at Craigmarloch School and Garvel Deaf Centre; opportunities for children at various primary schools to form a Streetband for the Galoshans festival; and delivery of CPD for classroom teachers supported by music education software.

