



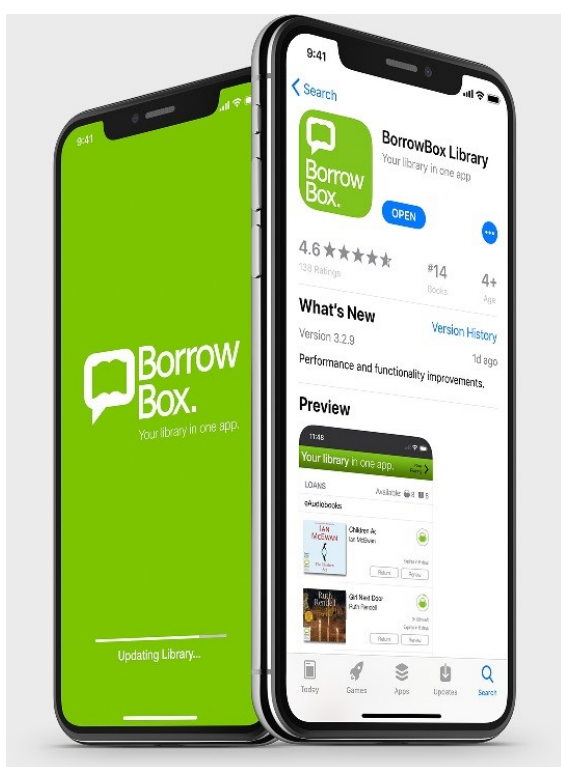
Inverclyde Council
Cultural Services
Annual Report 2020-2021

LIBRARIES

2020 proved to be a challenging year within the library service as we adapted to the COVID-19 pandemic but also a year of new opportunities for library users and staff as many library services for adults and children moved online. We also trialled a blended model of delivery to ensure that adults, children, young people and families could continue to access and engage with library services and programmes while adhering to restrictions.

This included the provision of online Bookbug sessions, craft activity sessions, Library Club, Splash Panel and the *Libraries Inspire!* programme for young people. We continued with our informal learning offer for adults, *Techy Tea Breaks*, tailoring it to support digital literacy challenges. Videos covering *staying safe online*, *wellbeing* and *staying connected* were posted on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube twice weekly.

Since June 2020, videos have had over 1,500 media playbacks and there is now a bank of over 90 short videos for beginners who use iOS and Android devices.



We focussed our spending on our popular eBook and eAudio book services which enabled those customers with access to suitable devices to continue reading uninterrupted. Electronic book promotions have included 'Books to Make You Smile' for World Book Night in April 2020, 'Mood Boosting Books' for Mental Health Week, and eBooks celebrating cultural diversity for Refugee Week. Between April 2020 to March 2021 5,676 adult eAudiobooks in total were issued, an increase of 2,383 on the previous year and 11,220 adult eBooks, an increase of 5,986 on the previous year. Inverclyde Libraries also welcomed 252 new e-members in the last 12 months. We saw an incredible rise in issues of Children's eBooks of 194% and eAudio issues rise by 174% compared with year 2019/20. The issues of Young Adult eBooks also increased by 50% compared with the previous year. The BorrowBox service was promoted continually to ensure access to books was always available at home and in school.

In February 2021 in response to the Scottish Government and SCVO's *Connecting Scotland* initiative, Inverclyde Libraries launched another learning service, 'Device Advice', which sought to support those within the Inverclyde community given and/or using mobile devices. This service had initially been delivered in-person in branches until lockdown but was now offered via a twice weekly phone-in service. It offered advice and support about issues ranging from using Zoom to navigating PDF files and using our BorrowBox service. This service was ongoing until May 2021 with plans to have staff trained as Digital Champions to support future delivery.

As part of our Readers' Services, *Read & Recommend* was introduced and was set up on Facebook to give readers a space to come together and discuss books and reading. As of the end of March 2021 the group had 192 members. Reading themes run for three weeks and have covered coasts and waters, (stay at home) holiday reads, uplifting reads, Scottish crime, strong female leads, and thrillers. Comments posted on the page have included, "I love being part of the group, and I have loved the themes chosen so far ...It's great! I love it! Thank you!" The group continues with a push to reach 200 members.



Another new initiative which launched in July 2020 was the summer reading challenge for adults, *Virtual-e-Reading*, to encourage reading for pleasure and potentially improve literacy and reading confidence. The challenge invited people to read books and write or record a message about what they enjoyed about the challenge. Our winner, Anne, was selected and awarded her prize in September.

With the absence of in-person book groups this year Inverclyde Libraries held an online book group. The group was launched in November during Book Week Scotland and invited library members to get together online to discuss books. The feedback from the group has been very positive with those attending engaging well with the group and gaining reader development benefits: "A good [book] choice which generated an interesting discussion... A book I would have probably not chosen off the book shelf". The group is ongoing.

Although very different this year, Book Week Scotland, funded by the Scottish Book Trust, was celebrated by Inverclyde Libraries in November 2020. The theme was 'Future'. For adults, participation packs were provided and best-selling crime writer, Alex Gray, recorded a video about libraries and her work which was posted onto the council website and YouTube channel. She also wrote a special message, *Read All About It*, encouraging the Inverclyde community to look to the future which was sent out in packs and published in the *Greenock Telegraph*. The Online Book Group was launched, and in partnership with Your Voice, 80 books were distributed to New Scots' families within Inverclyde. Also during the celebrations, two Scottish Book Trust-funded Live Literature sessions were delivered to 28 students within HMP Greenock by award winning Scottish author, Chris McQueer. Despite the COVID-19 restrictions in place, the sessions were well received with some very positive feedback: "Has got me thinking about picking up a book" and "...cheered me up, very funny".



Inverclyde Libraries remains committed to improving the health and wellbeing of the Inverclyde community. Reducing social isolation and loneliness in particular have remained a priority, particularly as the prevalence of both has potentially increased due to COVID-19 restrictions and shielding. In response to this Inverclyde Libraries continued to connect with our housebound customers as soon as restrictions allowed and in June 2020 Inverclyde Libraries developed COVID safe working practices and re-started our popular 'Books on Wheels' (BoW) service and extended it, initially to anyone over 75, shielding, or otherwise in need of deliveries. This proved to be so popular that when the January lockdown was announced we extended the service again and opened it to any customer who requested it.

In the period June 2020-April 2021 we made over 1,400 deliveries comprising of nearly 8,000 items. (Books, talking books, DVDs and children's Library Club and Bookbug Borrower resources)

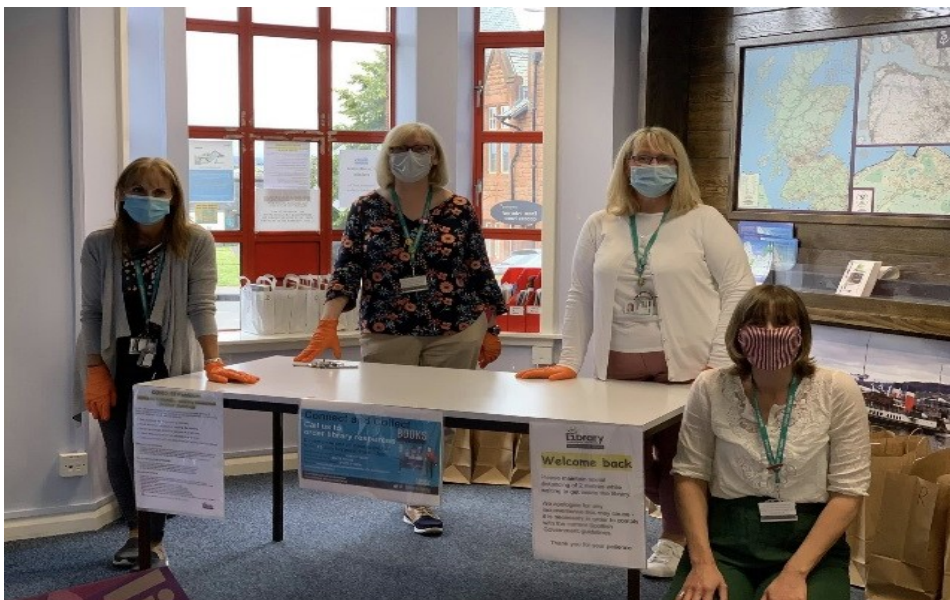
Several of our grateful customers have taken the time to thank us and to emphasise the difference these deliveries have made to them during lockdown.

Hello Friends at Inverclyde Library. "Thank you so much for bringing a new dimension to my life in the way of books. It has filled an empty space during our lockdowns, and I am so very grateful. I feel privileged, and wish I could do something in return other than say a very huge Thank You – 1 million of them".

"The book deliveries from the library have been a Godsend. My husband had been very low since Christmas as he's usually very active and able to go out and about. The books have helped so much as it's given him something to take his mind off of being stuck in during lockdown." "With very grateful thanks for the excellent book collection service. You've helped to keep the gloom away!" "Inverclyde Libraries has been a lifeline for mum - thank you"

From July 2020 following further relaxing of restrictions, we were able to open our branches and offer a new innovative 'Connect & Collect' service for customers. This service gave borrowers the opportunity to choose books from our online catalogue and have them packed by staff ready for collection at the door.

However by far the most popular option saw customers taking advantage of the library staff expertise and allowing them to choose books for them. This resulted in customers reading and enjoying titles they would never have chosen for themselves.



Staff waiting to welcome customers back in July 2020

"I'm (the Library's) biggest fan, and I just want to say how much I appreciate the service. You pick the best books for me!"

"These ladies in the Gourock Library are wonderful. They have been supplying myself and my husband with 5 books each over the last few months and they have all been amazing."

We chose over 10,000 items for just under 3,000 customers in the period July-December 2020 when unfortunately we had to stop the service after a further lockdown was announced in January 2021.

In partnership with Inverclyde Royal Infirmary and the Inverclyde Centre for Independent Living, Inverclyde Libraries launched a distribution service for NHS patients to collect hearing aid batteries and walking stick and crutch ferrules from library branches. The services were launched in August and September 2020 respectively. In total 263 hearing aid batteries and 2 ferrules were distributed from library branches until the end of March 2021.

Our essential public PC service also resumed in July 2020 albeit on a restricted basis to allow for social distancing and enhanced cleaning regimes. Although customers use our PCs for a variety of reasons we are committed to offering PC access for Inverclyde residents claiming and maintaining Universal Credit accounts. In the period from July-December 2020 there were 458 PC bookings across Inverclyde accessing the Universal Credit site.



Inverkind

Embracing kinder communities
through your local library



Inverclyde
council

Also to enhance social wellbeing, Inverclyde Libraries collaborated with Carnegie UK Trust in February 2020 to create space for kindness within libraries. An Inverkind virtual Chatty Café was launched in January 2021 to coincide with 'Blue Monday'. This created an opportunity for people to get together online and chat, and hopefully also gain the mental health benefits connecting with others can offer. Participants were gifted with a tote bag and mug featuring the Inverkind brand logo, and a teabag and biscuit. These participation packs were also gifted to our BoW and extended BoW customers in February along with a message of kindness from some of our young Library Club members. These small acts of kindness were greatly appreciated by our customers with many contacting us to convey how much:

"Thank you all for the lovely gift of mug, teabag and biscuit..." and "The drawing and message from the "kids club" brought a tear to my eye."

For families, 69 Online Bookbug sessions were delivered on Facebook. The sessions were a mixture of Live and pre-recorded scheduled sessions which have built up into a collection of always available sessions. The 69 sessions attracted 45,617 views with a reach of 123,326. Bookbug Borrowers Club restarted when Connect & Collect services were available resulting in 883 books being issued to members. The distribution of Bookbug bags was delivered on schedule with 1,330 bags (baby and toddler) being delivered in partnership with the Health Visiting Team and 730 Explorer bags distributed to Early Years Centres. To develop the existing 'Au-some Libraries' programme for people with autism, an 'Au-some Bookbug' Facebook Group was created. Members enjoyed a monthly 'Au-some' Bookbug session along with regular Makaton signing posts.

As part of Inverclyde Libraries' culture and creativity offer to embed libraries as cultural hubs, Inverclyde Libraries continued with the Making Waves project and created a Making Waves website to showcase the works created by participants last year. It launched during the *Galoshans* Festival in October 2020; artists wrote about their work and background for the 'meet the experts' page, and participants wrote about the sessions they took part in during the project and examples of their work were displayed in the website galleries.

The Public Library Improvement Fund was also used to create two online Chatty Cafés to encourage existing members of our library Chatty Cafes, and perhaps new members, to engage online, learn a new skill and gain the health & wellbeing benefits associated with group engagement and creativity. Six online instructor-led and staff-supported sessions were run. Our instructor, Jennifer Andrew, a Royal Horticultural Society-certificated professional gardener, guided the group through themes including types of plants, sowing seeds and fruit and vegetables. Resources were provided and the project culminated in the group planting seedlings in window boxes for adorning library branches. We also hope to bring our online and in-person groups together for a project at the end of 2021.

Comments about what participants enjoyed during the sessions included: "The relaxed atmosphere, friendly faces and the passionate way the talk was given by Jennifer" and comments about wellbeing benefits included: "I enjoyed both the practical and social elements of the sessions.", "It prevented isolation..." and "It was always something to look forward to..." Participants also appreciated the staff support, "The support was excellent" and all said they would attend these sessions again.

We also ran 'Chatty Crafters' with ten participants registered for crochet sessions delivered by local instructor Gaye McLean. With staff support Gaye produced six videos which were posted to YouTube and the link added to a private Facebook page which the participants joined and interacted upon over a six week period. Again resources were provided and the Facebook page monitored by staff. The group worked towards creating a crochet book. When asked why they joined the group the responses included, "To learn a new skill", "I missed the company at the classes so this was the next best thing..." and "...thought that library groups would be a good way of getting involved in community activities". The things people enjoyed were, "good instructional videos..." and "I could go at my own pace and stop and start the videos".

The opportunities for participating in real life activities were limited, however we did manage to take part in the Kilmacolm Scarecrow Trail organised in the village by St Columba's School. The Scarecrow 'hidden' in the window of the library was a popular addition to this fun activity.



Branches also celebrated Halloween in the usual fashion with witches helping to deliver 'Books on Wheels' to customers from Gourrock library.

All schools across Inverclyde were invited to participate in our “*Libraries Inspire*” schools’ programme and each of the sessions was adjusted for 2020-21 to enable ‘virtual’ library visits/workshops blended with classroom based worksheets and the provision of related book stock to encourage school-based reading for pleasure. The programme 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.

During the ‘Let’s Talk About Books’ virtual library visit P5 pupils discussed different genres and authors, completed the Book Personality Quiz and Would Like to Read preferences sheet which enabled library staff to select a title especially for them. Pupils were encouraged to review these books using Dear Future Reader templates, develop confidence in discussing books and reading and register for library membership enabling access to our full range of eBooks and eAudio and library based services e.g. Connect and Collect book borrowing. As a result of this workshop 11 children joined the library.

“Receiving books specifically chosen for each child was really special. It motivated them and excited them to read” - P5 Teacher

At the Primary 1 virtual Bookbug family gifting session, the children met library staff and participated in pre-recorded Bookbug storytimes featuring the books contained within their pack. They also received some top

tips for drawing in an exclusive video message for Inverclyde’s P1 pupils from a very special guest illustrator, Ross Collins, illustrator and author of *This Is A Dog*. Pupils were then encouraged to create their own drawings on a postcard to send to Bookbug which on the reverse allowed them to vote for their favourite books. Each class was provided with a very special Bookbug Post Box to return their cards to the library and their votes were submitted by Inverclyde Libraries to the Scottish Book Trust for the national Bookbug Picture Book Prize. As a result of this session, 66 Primary 1 children joined the library.

“The pack helped hugely with the planning. I was able to make the bag gifting an event for the children with much less effort than I would have needed to without the support. It was hugely appreciated.” - P1 Teacher



In 2020-21, 4,126 resources were delivered to 19 schools. Six virtual library visits were delivered with views of 417. An online survey was sent out to all 19 schools who participated in Libraries Inspire! 13 responses were received and 100% found the Teacher’s Pack and session resources that were sent out in advance of the session useful. 3 schools participated in a pilot ‘whole school book borrowing’ programme. Book boxes were prepared and delivered for each class in the school giving access to the library stock while in-person library visits could not take place.

“We have loved working with the library over the last few years and can’t wait to get back to visiting again when this is allowed. The boxes have been brilliant and we have loved taking part in the virtual events on offer too”

“Having the box of age appropriate books has been invaluable during COVID. Our class libraries were dismantled, so independent reading had all but stopped. Now with the help of the box of books and an ‘isolation box’, we have returned to BEAR time each day. Thank you so much!!!”

Library club, the popular after school club for 8-12 year olds, transformed into Library Club @ Home. Library Club @ Home was launched in September 2020 as an alternative means of running Library Club during the COVID-19 pandemic. Session plans were modified to be able to be carried out at home with craft materials and Lego being available through the Connect & Collect model. When collections could not continue due to tightened restrictions the club continued with bags being delivered via home delivery. 143 bags were distributed throughout the period, 576 books were issued. Six online meetings were held with a combined total of 27 participants. The programme of online meetings was further enhanced with special author visits thanks to Live Literature Funding from the Scottish Book Trust. Paul Bristow, Lindsay Littleson and Julie McNeill held online events for the club members.

"What amazing opportunities you are providing through these experiences. Thanks again!" (Library Club @ Home parent)



Due to the restrictions in place in summer 2020, a digital challenge platform was created by The Reading Agency ensuring the Silly Squad-themed Summer Reading Challenge was available to support children to continue to read for pleasure over the summer. In Inverclyde we adopted a blended model by promoting the Reading Agency online challenge directly to schools and via press, website and social media throughout the summer holiday period. We recognised however that many of our families enjoy the events and activities that we run alongside the Summer Reading Challenge and may miss the direct support of the library in their challenge progress. Local promotion activity included online Crafternoon and Bookbug sessions, a programme of summer stories and an Extreme Reading Competition. When Connect & Collect became available, families could request a Silly Squad pack containing books and activities to allow them to take part in the challenge. In partnership with Barnardos, we delivered Silly Squad activity and book bags to families most in need. Working with Summer Childcare Hubs, resources and books were provided to facilitate the Summer Reading Challenge further.

292 children took part in the Silly Squad Summer Reading Challenge, a significant drop from our usual figures of over 1,000, and shows that the physical 'traditional' challenge with activities being held in the library is much more popular than an online model.



Wherever possible the libraries' young people's programme moved online to a blended format. Singing Santa visited South West Library for a live online singalong. This event was promoted via daily Elf on the Shelf updates posted on social media by branch staff and by Santa Mail Boxes available in each branch.

Book Week Scotland saw the launch of the 'Future Illustrator' Competition. An impressive 93 entries were received with the winning entries now featuring in the new eBook 'Say Hello to the Library Animals' available to library members on BorrowBox.

Programmes for our Young Adult members were also modified due to the circumstances. The Splash Panel Collaborative is open to anyone aged 13 years or over who lives or works in Inverclyde. Splash Panel offers a fresh, new approach to creating and producing art and creative writing inspired by comics and graphic novels. The Splash Panel delivered a series of virtual workshops and encouraged young adults to create new comic content whilst building a sense of a virtual comic community. Each month The Splash Panel members collected a Resource Kit from their local library filled with art supplies, inspirational comics and graphic novels and a series of challenges on a theme. During periods of lockdown, resources were emailed to participants.



The annual creative writing competition for secondary schools took place in Sep-Oct 2020. Award-winning Scottish poet Jenny Lindsay recorded video workshops which were available to schools across Inverclyde supported by Live Literature Funding. Winning entries were recorded and compiled into a spoken word showcase entitled Voices of the Future on YouTube and also made available as an eBook on BorrowBox.



In October 2020, Inverclyde Libraries successfully bid for Public Library Improvement Fund support for 'The Library of Kindness' project. The overarching aim of this project is to provide a library response to the unprecedented challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought to our community. With kindness at its core, this project will provide children and young people with access to uplifting, positive books, activities, resources and messages along with ensuring the library service is providing the resources and books which our young people most need to manage their mental wellbeing. Consultation has taken place with Education, and partners and resources are being developed for delivery.

With the continuing lifting of restrictions, the library team are looking forward to exciting new opportunities ahead and are planning to extend the current learning, digital and readers' services to include blended online and in-person services, climate change projects, film education, virtual reality experiences and 3D printing in 2021-22.

PERFORMANCE

Activity	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Library visits	671,212	682,714	529,804
Loans	162,730	142,292	109,611
PC Users	34,226	30,231	3,023
Adult Events—Participants	4,902	4,349	5,072*
Children & Young People Events - Participants	30,318	34,106	59,711*
Museum visits – online	57,076	33,586	48,146

*Denotes online views/engagements

WATT INSTITUTION

2020 was a challenging time for the sector as a whole and for the Watt especially coming so soon after it's reopening following the building restoration project, which was nominated for a 2020/21 Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland (RIAS) Award. The results are not yet known at the time of writing. Not being able to immediately start to reconnect with our public after so long was a disappointment, however it did mean we were able to prioritize work behind the scenes on the collections and start to plan for the next few years.

We were successful in several significant grant applications during 2020, including funding from the National Heritage Lottery Fund to support a programme of change within our galleries over the next three years where the emphasis will be on getting more of our amazing collection out on display, expanding interpretation and developing new storylines to reveal the fascinating history behind Inverclyde, its peoples and the unique collections held in the Watt. The project will also support the creation of a dedicated creativity space within the Watt for use as a creative learning base for community groups and users of the Watt.

We worked with National Galleries Scotland on an audit of our Fossil Collections as part of a national collections awareness raising initiative, the results of which will be made public on the National Museum Scotland website. We also worked with ArtUK on recording and making public works from our sculpture collection, the results of which can be seen on the ArtUK website an interactive portal where the public can submit information and questions to grow our and their knowledge of the works in our collections.



**Captain
Watty!**

The successful Great Place Scheme came to an end at the start of 2021. The project had been a great success in engaging with the public and communities in raising awareness of the area's rich heritage, from the creation of community memory boxes, loan boxes for schools, exhibitions, quizzes and activities from 'Where's Watty?' to *Galoshans* and preparation for *Lockdown Life*, a commemoration of life during the pandemic in Inverclyde which will be launched in 2021-22. Partnership project work with Coves Community Nature Reserve on the Watt Wander and with academics on the 'Remembering Sugaropolis' initiative all proved both successful and popular.

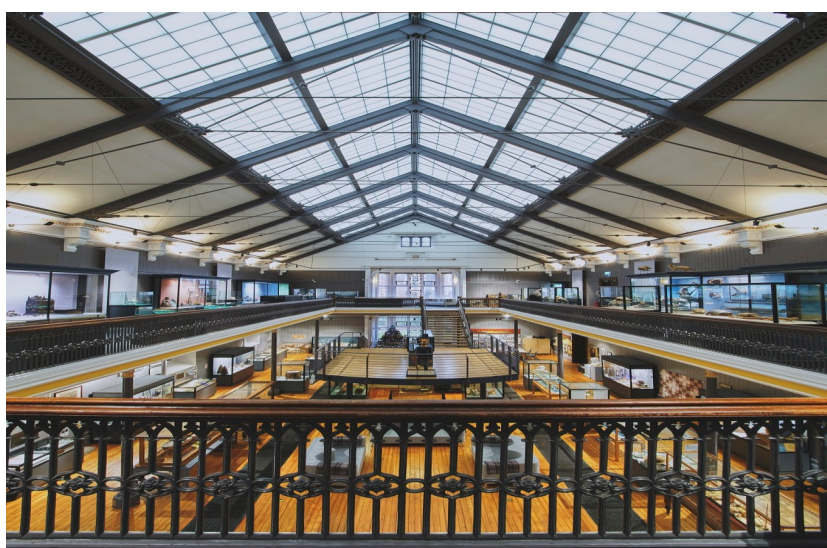
Inverclyde Archives have had a busy year 'behind the scenes' as the Watt Institution remained closed due to the various lockdowns. During 2020, four accessions were received by the Archive collection from members of the public and local organisations including the records of the Greenock Wanderers Rugby Club and an addition to the current collection of the Greenock Rotary Club. Both sets of records have been appraised and box listed and will be catalogued during 2021. From January 2021, two accessions were received including a donation of the records of the former Mariner's Asylum in Greenock which have been appraised and will be box listed and catalogued shortly. There have also been two internal transfers from the McLean Museum collection to the Archive of business records, including a collection relating to the dry docks of Greenock which includes Inchgreen. This has proven already to be of much local interest. The total amount of accessions received between 2020 to date is approximately 24 linear metres.

A virtual enquiry service continued in order to meet the needs of service users and some resources such as access to Ancestry and the British Newspaper Archive were made available to members from home (online) to help bridge this gap in service offering.

Staff have been working on a plan to make the Watt Library historic book collection available to the public for the first time in many years. Inventory of this large collection is being carried out along with condition checking and cataloguing. The books are located in the gallery of the Watt Library, currently as closed stacks. The aim is to make these special collection books available to the public by appointment in the same way as material from the Archive collection once they have been appraised for suitability of viewing and handling.

Our volunteer programme goes from strength to strength even though volunteers were rarely on site in 2020-21. A number of volunteers have been transcribing documents at home using digital scans provided. Two further Archives volunteers have been recruited during 2020 – 21, making a total number of 12 registered volunteers. Volunteers assist with various tasks including inventory of the historic book collection, transcribing documents, digitisation of early newspapers from the collection and archives cataloguing.

During December 2020, the Archives took part in a national social media campaign led by the Archives and Records Association where each day was assigned a topic relating to Christmas with #ArchivesAdventCalendar as the main theme. The aim was to highlight images within the collection and share them to make them accessible to the public.



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.

Music services were badly hit by the restrictions wrought by the pandemic as the playing of certain instruments was not allowed, peripatetic staff who would normally attend several schools each day was not possible, and groups, bands and ensembles could not meet to play together. Sadly the Gala concerts held by the service each December and March also had to be cancelled. The teaching of music online is particularly difficult, but our instructors came up with creative ways to use technology to continue to engage their pupils. A new online recruitment video has been developed to support recruitment of young people into the service, virtual recording challenges and competitions were promoted, and the young musicians from the service contributed to the council 12 days of Christmas virtual performances.

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 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. Delivery had to be adapted for 2020-21 and included the creation of online teaching materials and "how to" videos being uploaded to Clickview to support both staff and pupils. When possible face to face class lessons were delivered but much of this year's teaching was adapted to be delivered live via virtual platforms.

