



Service Excellence Award



We were honoured to win the Service Excellence Award, conferred by the Scottish Library and Information Council (SLiC). It was presented to the Library's Executive Manager, Karen Fraser by author Teresa Breslin OBE, who was one of the judges. We got a trophy and £1000 prize money which we used to buy equipment for the library.

Chair of SLiC Alan Clarke said: "Shetland Library provides a perfect example of inspiring local leadership, ensuring all generations are catered for, from young families enjoying Bookbug to elderly users seeking digital support services. The breadth of their offering is testament to the encouragement and training provided to their staff, who have played an instrumental part in securing this win today".

“ Always find something to listen to. Never have time to read but can always find time to listen to an audiobook. Great service. Keeps me in the loop when others are reading. ”

“ Dear Shetland Library, we joined as visitors during our holiday and loved sitting reading your great selection of books ”

Make a Noise in the North



“ I am very grateful that our local library has such a good audiobook service with a wide selection on 2 platforms. ”

We teamed up with our rivals Orkney Library and Archive to win £5000 funding from the Public Library Improvement Fund for services to the visually impaired. We bought new audiobooks, games, jigsaws, magnifiers and other equipment and ran information drop-ins with our partners. The project included a staff exchange, allowing Orkney and Shetland staff to visit each other's libraries and share good practice. We also ran an audiobook survey and invested in extra audiobooks.

Tech to Take Away

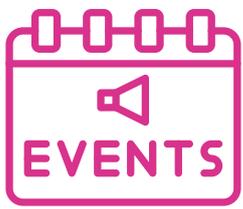
We got new devices from Connecting Scotland and a £2,000 business support grant from SLiC to buy podcasting equipment. This means there is more and better equipment for members to borrow including tablets, Chromebooks and MiFi units. We held 'Discovery Days' so that partners and customers could try things out.



“ You do wonderful things in here! ”
Customer reaction!

Tech Help for all Ages

The Library gives essential digital support, whether using computers and printers, downloading ferry vouchers or using and borrowing portable devices. We also know that Internet safety is a concern – actor Steven Robertson helped us out on Internet Safety Day by reading a story about the perils of meeting people online.

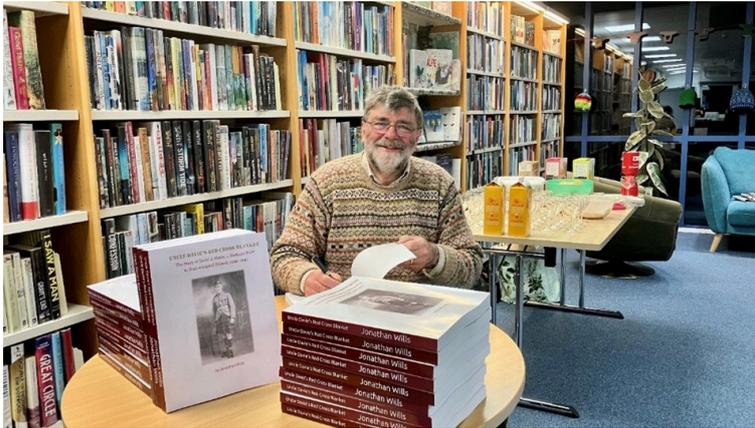


We held 575 events last year, attended by 7446 people.



92,705 visits to Lerwick Library up 3% on 2023-24. Up 27% on 2022-23!

Supporting Writers



“ A book group member told us they found the group really helpful, due to going through a difficult time. Focus on reading and discussing was a good way to get their mind on other things. ”

New Sign!

It might not seem such a big thing, but it took a few years to erect a sign at the new Library! Thanks to the SIC Roads Department for their help.



We hosted many busy book launches including ones for the late Christian Tait, Westside Writers Group, Jonathan Wills, Jen Hadfield and Donald Murray. Our Open Mic sessions also provide a supportive venue for sharing favourite poems or new work.

School Libraries - Focus on Reading

Our Anderson High School Library concluded a 3-year project with their English department that focussed on enjoyment of reading. It was bolstered with funding from Harper Collins and the School Library Association. It meant a lot of extra work for our school library staff but showed results because they could assess which pupils needed extra support and give them targeted help and encouragement. Over 70% of pupils surveyed felt more confident about reading at the end of each year. Research shows that attainment rises when pupils read for pleasure, and reading contributes to a better vocabulary, increased empathy, reasoning skills and knowledge of the world

Our school libraries serve a big age range and are the only libraries many young Shetlanders use, so fostering enjoyment and choice in reading is a big part of their role.



You have no idea the difference this makes to his day.
Complex Needs Learning Support Worker after a story session in AHS library.



New Online - Vintage TV and Film

Our newest service is Bfi Replay, which lets you access thousands of vintage clips and shows from the archives of the British Film Institute. Perfect for homework, research and reminiscing, you will find everything from vintage news clips, to documentaries, talk shows, kids tv and more. Available on computers in the Library only - just ask staff.

Bookbug

Bookbug continues to make a real difference to children and families. We trialled 'Bedtime Bookbug' which gave more working families the chance to attend. We built a great link with UHI Shetland who include Bookbug in Early Years training, and we organised a major 'Shared Practice' event to bring together all the partners and session leaders who deliver the programme. Bookbug is too big for us to do alone! Shetland News did a great report on Bookbug, which you can read online here:

www.shetlandnews.co.uk/2025/05/22/true-team-effort-years-stories/



Seeing our grandsons gaining in confidence is wonderful and the leaders of Bookbug are extremely friendly and welcoming. A lovely, safe space for peerie ones to have fun.

Our Mobile Library made 980 visits



Home Delivery staff made up and delivered 2,064 bags of books

 Bluesky

We have over 7,200 followers on Facebook, 450 on Instagram and it's a great way to engage. We have dropped out of Twitter but have started posting on Bluesky and already have over 900 followers.

A Good Yarn in the Library

People value us as a warm, free space to hang out for study, socialising or activities. Our makers' group helped make our fabulous 'Toorie Tree' at Christmas. People could make and take warm hats and optional donations to the food bank raised over £400. A Makers group meets at our Yell community library too.

We held many other social events that boost wellbeing, such as book groups, reminiscence, poetry, writing workshops, meditation and crafts. We stayed open for several days between Christmas and New Year, a time when many people really appreciate a place to go.

“
*I love the Memories group listening to everyone's stories.
I go home and think for a long time about what we have discussed.*

”



We loaned 12,838 eAudiobooks - 15% up on last year.

We loaned 4,082 eBooks - 2% up on last year.

Check our website for links to all our online services including free reliable reference sites, eBooks, newspapers and social media.

<https://www.shetland.gov.uk/libraries>



Going International

Congratulations to Senior Library Assistant, Louise Scollay who won a paid trip to the European Cultural Foundation Conference (If Libraries Ran Europe) in Amsterdam. Her poem about libraries and dementia 'Every Day for the First Time' was played at the event and has since been widely applauded.

Louise is pictured far left with other winners in Amsterdam.



Congratulations

Investing in Staff



It is no mean feat to work towards professional qualifications while in a full time job, so well done to Tanya Odie who last year qualified as a Chartered Librarian while managing our school library service.

Professional Registration demonstrates a commitment to developing skills that meet the changing needs of library services. Several of our other staff are also working on professional qualifications.

In the Council's 'Viewpoint' survey of staff we got some of your highest ever scores for job satisfaction, management support, training, teamwork and work-life balance. Library work is hard but also very rewarding, because the commitment our staff put in makes a difference and generates lots of customer appreciation.

And our drivers got great scores all year for driving performance!



Fun, Creativity and Learning

We started Monday Lego Club and were overwhelmed by demand! Parents are keen to find off-screen activities, and they join in so it is a real family activity. Children help set rules and choose themes and projects. Some Lego was donated by Tesco's Community Champion. The remainder was second-hand donations, which attendees helped to clean and sort - great recycling!

“ This is a fab library, I put it down to the pleasant staff making everyone welcome ”



We had 208 entries to Young Writer 2024. The quality continues to be high, and we are keen to get more dialect entries. Activities like treasure hunts, jigsaws and games have been popular with families spending rainy days in the library.

Challenges

- Front doors! - our automatic doors have been out of order for over a year. Huge apologies. We are working on a solution.
- Systems - our new catalogue management system has needed a lot of time and troubleshooting. Luckily customers mostly just see the benefits!
- Tourist Information - the closure of the Visit Scotland office has meant more work for our staff as visitors seek help from the Library.

Plans/priorities

- A new look Summer Reading Challenge coming soon.
- How Good Is Our Public Library (HGIOPL) - we'll be evaluating ourselves and asking for your feedback.

A customer was 'very impressed and grateful' for our LGBT display