



### NEW Library

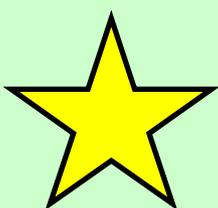
In November 2021 we finally opened our new building, a fantastic new space for Shetland's public library.

The move took us six weeks and was a great team effort. During this time, we kept essential services like computer access and book requests running. The Library did not have to shut completely, even for a day.



The building was officially opened by Ann Cleaves on 11 December 2021. Ann knows a lot about libraries and stressed their importance for children, for literacy and for wellbeing. She said that many cities "don't have this size of library, this number of books, this variety of books and the facilities here".

CASE Shetland created a [virtual tour of the new library](#).



### Top of the UK!

In 2020-21 we loaned the **most books** and had the **most visits** per head of population in the whole UK. This was because we managed to come back so strongly from the Covid lockdown, thanks to our determined and committed staff.

We moved ALL our books – around **141,000** of them. (over **6,000** blue boxes)



We re-used all our furniture, equipment and shelving.

There were around **24,000** visits to the new library from November to March.

The children's area is **3 times** bigger.

There are **60%** more books on display, and new sections for classics, book groups and Nordic Noir.

Loans of Shetland books are up **56%** compared to 2019— people love the new Shetland Room.

*"All the little cubby holes and seating areas felt like an invitation to stay awhile and read"*



## LGBT award

Our school library got special mention when Anderson High School was awarded the LGBT silver charter. The Library worked closely with Youth Services and school

colleagues to make the Library inclusive, including running a project about Section 28, the 1980s legislation which prohibited the 'promotion' of homosexuality. All our school Libraries also began a Read Diverse reading project, spotlighting books which had themes around race, diversity and difference.

"The school created an excellent poster explaining why having LGBT inclusive books is important to young people and why the school has LGBT+ inclusive books in their library. LGBT inclusive books can be identified by a rainbow sticker which can be removed upon a student's request. We thoroughly commend Anderson High School for this and their commitment to LGBT inclusivity in the school library."

## AHS Reads

This project run by our AHS library provided new resources to help dyslexic readers. It was enabled by a successful bid to the School Library Improvement Fund, which paid for group reading sets, 'reading pens', audiobook sets and tinted overlays. The Library then worked closely with the English Department to help pupils with reading.

"The resources have had a clear impact on learners... We have focused on developing confidence and discussion around reading, especially with lower ability pupils or pupils who lack belief in themselves. The group reading sets have allowed pupils to pair up and read aloud to each other... It has allowed some brilliant discussion about the books within groups and this has heavily supported learners who would have struggled to read the book independently." - English Teacher

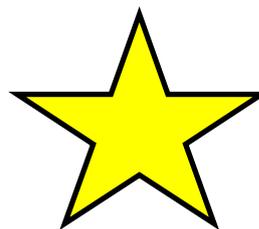
## Reading Ambassadors



Twelve enthusiastic Sandwick volunteers worked with their school library to promote reading through newsletters, displays and events. They have helped with Empathy Day, Harry Potter Day, Roald Dahl Day, Bookbug and lots of other things including 'Reading Buddies' which involves helping P1-3 pupils to choose books. They have also helped select new books for the library.

## Writer in Residence

Also at Sandwick, our school library assistant Zuzanna O'Rourke set up a 3-week [residency with author Elizabeth Wein](#), centred round the 1944 Mosquito airplane crash in Cunningsburgh. Zuzanna also led S2 pupils on a LONG walk to the crash site!



## Awards – nearly!

We made the shortlist for Library of the Year and our talking newspaper team was shortlisted in the Libraries Connected awards.

**36%** of Shetland's population are members. Many non-members use the library too.

**28%** of our members are under 16 years old

By the end of March 2022 we had **21,554** followers on Twitter and **5,227** on Facebook.

## Books to the door

Our home delivery service, established after lockdown, has continued and grown.

We delivered **19,342** books on **2,543** household visits in 2021-22.

Our 'Peerie Van' travelled over **24,000** km.



We also got the 'big van' out and about to do fixed stops and visit schools and events. We consulted customers on what they need and started to redesign a new-look schedule.

"I started using the mobile service when I was on crutches - I can now get to the library but because I have no car, this service still allows me to borrow more heavy books."

"I have enjoyed getting a delivery of books each month selected by the Library service. It has been fun reading the books selected. Some I probably wouldn't have chosen from the shelf. I'm grateful for the job library staff have done through these changing times of living with a virus. Thank you."

"Without the use of your computers I would not have been able to find work and accommodation [after moving back to Shetland]. It has been invaluable."

"This is a most valued service and I can't thank you enough for 1. The brilliant books 2. The library staff banter, 3. The whole service! THANK YOU." - Home delivery customer

## Community libraries

Our Unst and Yell school branches reopened to the public—Baltasound is open Tuesdays 4 to 6pm and Mid Yell Wednesdays 6 to 8pm during the school term. Our staff there pitched in to help with home deliveries in the islands too, AND they have recently restarted Bookbug in the isles.

We successfully bid for grant funding of **£4,860** to provide public computers in the branches—this project was delayed by the infamous 'supply issues' but we will be ready to launch later this summer.



## Bookbug

We worked hard to bring back Bookbug despite Covid restrictions, and over **1,000** people attended our sessions. Bookbug can benefit the youngest babies, developing early literacy through rhyme and song.

*"I definitely do think Bookbug has **made a difference**, it's made me make sure I set 10-15 minutes aside every day, to read with him"*

"My peerie boy never used to sit for a story at home. Sadie at the library has been reading to them every week, and now he brings a book to me at home."

## Covid has been a challenge, but everything is on the up again now:

**Loans.** Despite restricted opening hours for half the year, our loans of children's books are almost back to pre-Covid levels.

**Members.** Membership numbers went down due to Covid but are on the rise again.

**Online access.** Hours of computer use went up **78%** as we gradually restored full access.

**Opening hours.** We restored most of our pre-lockdown opening hours when we opened the new library. In July 2022 we will restore Monday evenings to get fully back to normal.

**'Click' sessions.** We resumed our popular digital support drop ins on Tuesday mornings.

It has been a big year and here are just a few more highlights:

**Book Week Scotland** - working with partners, we ran fantastic nature themed family events and talks.

**COP26** – we ran a community art project about climate change, [Da Lay o' da Laand](#).

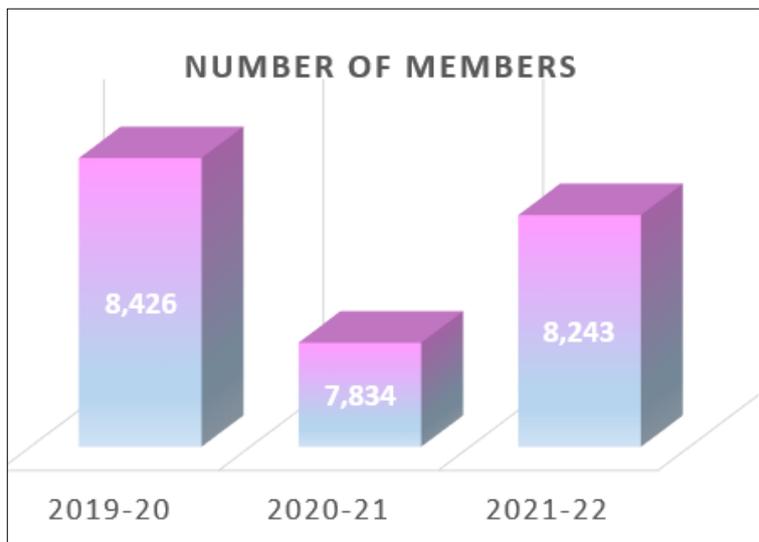
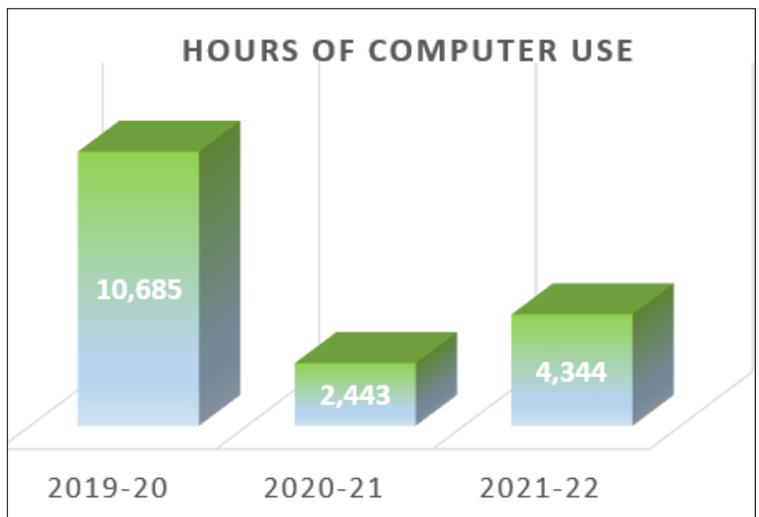
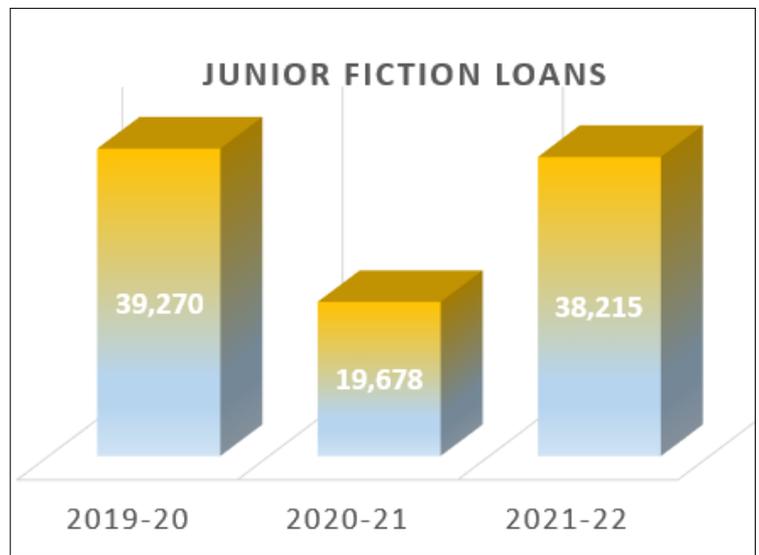
**Book launches** – we hosted launches for Christine de Luca, James Sinclair, Barbara Fraser and Marsali Taylor.

**Bards in the Bog** - we ran another round of our much loved poetry project, and volunteers read the poems for our talking newspaper.

...and we ran an **Easter egg hunt** ON the library van!

## Priorities for 2022-23

A new better mobile/home delivery service; more digital access, outreach and support; a school library reading strategy; services for wellbeing; more book groups; LOTS more Bookbug; Every Child a Library Member; a new super-duper microfilm reader!



*"... your collective sense of commitment and humour has served your community well. Your optimism shines through many concerns. It appears you've come through the pandemic stronger and brighter, ready to continue serving." – Facebook comment*

For more information check our website, or call us on 01595 743868

[www.shetland.gov.uk/libraries](http://www.shetland.gov.uk/libraries)