

## End of Year Report 2020-2021

At the end of financial year 2019-20, the three-year Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Bradford Libraries to provide a hybrid library service was extended for a further year until March 2021.

Once again, however, it has been a year of considerable change at Baildon Library causing a great deal of upheaval, and there have been a number of significant issues that have impacted greatly on the service and its delivery during the past 12 months:

### 1. Changes to Structure of Bradford Libraries

'Hubs' were introduced in January 2020 comprising of the three main libraries in Bradford, which are based at City, Keighley and Shipley libraries. Each hub is responsible for a cluster of libraries. Baildon Library is part of the Keighley cluster which includes libraries in the following areas:

- Addingham;
- Ilkley;
- Silsden;
- Burley in Wharfedale;
- Menston;
- Bingley;
- Idle.

In December 2019, the number of Bradford Libraries team leaders was reduced from 12 to three - one in each cluster. A relationship officer was also appointed within each cluster to provide support for community-managed libraries. Baildon's main point of contact continues to be the team leader and with some, albeit minimal, communication with the relationship officer. The main consequence of this change has been that, due to their increased workload, there is rarely a team leader in person on site at Baildon to support staff, and support is now provided remotely via telephone and email.

### 2. Closure of Ian Clough Hall

It is still unclear as to what the next steps are regarding the premises of Baildon Library. As no alternative premises were located in 2019/2020, Bradford Council agreed on 13 February 2020 that the library could remain in situ until a suitable location for the library is found. No further progress has been made on finding alternative premises to date. The building is increasingly in a poor condition, in particular, there are significant issues with the roof which has led to leaks throughout the building, which has, in turn, caused roof tiles to fall down, and has damaged stock. There is considerable water damage to the facilities in the kitchen, the men's and ladies' toilets, and the flooring in the staff corridor. Finding alternative premises for the library has become a pressing issue.

### 3. Lockdown due to Coronavirus (Covid-19) Pandemic

Baildon Town Council (BTC) met on Thursday 19 March 2020 to agree the best course of action for the Town Council due to the escalating situation regarding the Covid19 pandemic. It was decided that all volunteers would be withdrawn from Baildon Library in order to keep them safe. The library closed at 12pm on Saturday 21 March 2020.

The official statement that was released in relation to the library was as follows:

*Baildon Town Council will withdraw the Town Council volunteers from service at Baildon Library until circumstances change. The continuation of library services in the Baildon branch library will therefore be a decision for Bradford Council, as the Libraries Authority.*

A national lockdown was announced by the government to start on Monday 23 March 2020 and Bradford Libraries took the decision to close all Bradford Libraries from this date.

## **Service Delivery**

Despite the changes to the staffing levels, the coronavirus pandemic and the lack of certainty about the future location of Baildon Library, the service has continued to be delivered successfully.

### **Promotion of Online Services throughout Lockdown 1**

Whilst the library was closed during the first lockdown, the volunteer coordinator compiled a repository of online resources for library users on the Baildon Town Council website. This was widely promoted in the community via social media (Facebook and Twitter). The purpose of this was to enable library users to be able to access e-books, e-magazines, e-newspapers and e-audio books as well as access to Family History research software for free. It also directed people to online children's story performances and free home-schooling and reading resources for primary-aged children. Two of the library volunteers also developed crosswords and anagrams that were shared with library users for entertainment.

### **Reopening Baildon Library following Lockdown 1**

The UK government agreed that UK libraries could re-open from 4 July 2020 with an Order and Collect service but no public access to library buildings. A Libraries Recovery Toolkit was published by Libraries Connected (<https://www.librariesconnected.org.uk/resource/service-recovery-toolkit-word>) in June 2020 which detailed the procedures libraries should put in place and the appropriate use of PPE. This has been updated regularly throughout the year to reflect new developments.

Throughout July, the volunteer coordinator undertook 1-2-1 consultations with each library volunteer (42 in total) to explain the new measures that would be put in place and to find out their views on returning to volunteering. Following each consultation, a report was written to reflect the responses, concerns and support needs of each individual volunteer. 34 volunteers were keen to return to the library at this stage. This information was then fed back to Bradford Libraries.

A service delivery model for Order and Collect and Returns was distributed by Bradford Libraries in July and a risk assessment was undertaken for Baildon Library on 23 July 2020.

The volunteer coordinator used this model to create a risk assessment for volunteers referring to the guidance created by Libraries Connected. Within this document were clear, detailed actions to be taken by BTC staff and volunteers in order to minimise the risk of contracting coronavirus within the library. The new systems were communicated to the volunteers in August via mandatory Zoom meetings using photographs to demonstrate the new layout of the library facilities in order to ensure that all volunteers understood the new working methods and were given opportunity to ask any questions before returning to the work place.

Baildon library reopened on Tuesday 1 September 2020 with paid staff for the first week in order to trial the systems and eradicate any issues. Volunteers returned to the library on 7 September 2020. Volunteers were asked to sign a 'Volunteer Charter' on their return to the

workplace to affirm their commitment to adhering to safe behaviours whilst carrying out their role.

## **Lockdown 2**

During the second lockdown in November 2020, the government said that UK libraries could remain open for Order and Collect and Returns. 19 volunteers were willing to come into the library to deliver the service during this time and the rota was fully staffed.

## **Lockdown 3**

As in lockdown 2, UK libraries were able to remain open for Order and Collect and Returns during lockdown 3. 16 volunteers were willing to come into the library during this time, some signing up for 2 shifts per week and, therefore, Baildon Town Council has been able to keep the library operational during this period.

## **Further Re-opening of Services**

Bradford Libraries contacted the volunteer coordinator on 18 March 2021 via email with a broad outline of plans to re-open the library service further by enabling library users' access to IT equipment, study space and browsing. It has been proposed that level 1 libraries will re-open from 12 April and Baildon Library will re-open from 24 May although to date BTC has not received any confirmation or information regarding this proposal directly from Bradford Libraries.

## **Volunteer Support**

The volunteer coordinator has continued to maintain contact with volunteers during the last year with regular communication via Three Rings in order to keep them up-to-date with developments at Baildon Library.

In addition, the volunteer coordinator has maintained telephone and Zoom communication with all volunteers during the last year, as well as being present in the library for volunteers during their shifts.

## **Virtual Awards Ceremony**

In June 2020, the volunteer coordinator held a Virtual Awards Ceremony to celebrate Volunteers Week 2020. All volunteers were thanked for their continued support and dedication to Baildon Library, despite the continuous uncertainty. A number of volunteers were given awards for their contribution to Baildon Library which included the following categories:

- Highest number of hours;
- Involved in the most projects;
- Stepping in at the last minute;
- General Good Egg;

Special acknowledgements were also given to the volunteers who:

- deliver storytime sessions;
- run the family history drop-ins;
- create book displays in the library;
- cataloguing the local studies collection;
- organising the art and music collections.

It is hoped that an actual event can be delivered in the near future.

## **Recruitment of new volunteers**

Recruitment and induction of new volunteers has been on hold during this financial year. There are not currently enough shifts for existing volunteers due to the reduction in operational hours. Additionally, it would not be possible to provide adequate training due to current social distancing measures.

A number of people have made enquiries about volunteering at Baildon Library. Those who were keen to find a role quickly were signposted onto the Volunteer Bureau, the details of those who wished to wait were recorded and will be contacted once recruitment re-commences.

## **Support for Local Charities/Organisations**

The library has continued to support the following organisations throughout 2020/21:

- **ShIPLEY Area School Uniform Bank** has a permanent donation point at the library and donations are collected on a fortnightly basis;
- Donations were collected for **Homeless Hampers** for several months in late 2020.

## **Volunteer Kitemark**

The volunteer coordinator had started to compile the evidence required for the Volunteering Kitemark for the Bradford District with the aim of submitting this for review in May 2020. Due to the pandemic, the Bradford Volunteer Bureau were unable to process portfolios during this year. This will be re-visited in 2021/22.

## **Award for Rhyme Challenge 2020**

The Bradford Libraries Rhyme Challenge is aimed at under 5-year-olds and is delivered annually in Baildon Library by two of the volunteers. Younger library users take part in events in the library and are awarded completion certificates.

For their contribution in January/February 2020, two volunteers were awarded first place for the Bradford Libraries Rhyme Challenge Best Practice Award in a library. The prize was awarded at a Zoom ceremony led by Bradford Libraries in November 2020 and was announced by Councillor Sarah Ferriby. A framed certificate is now on display in the library.

**Report compiled by Rachel Gallagher, Volunteer Coordinator, Baildon Town Council**

**April 2021**