

Library Report for HVL Annual General Meeting March 2022

Introduction

When Harbury Village Library was established in 2012 our constitution defined our objective as, “To operate a library in the village of Harbury”. Recognising that we had never set out what was meant by “operate a library” the Steering Committee has adopted the following definition:

With a particular emphasis on the education of children and young people, Harbury Village Library provides services in the nationally defined areas of Reading, Health and Wellbeing, Information and Digital, and Culture and Creativity.

Details of what is included in each of those nationally defined service areas can be found in the [Overview of Universal Library Offers](#) produced by Libraries Connected, the representative body for heads of library services.

Using this definition allows us to check that what we already do properly falls within the scope of what a library should be doing; that any new initiatives we plan are appropriate; that there are no areas of service which we are not covering.

When we look at how we’ve developed over the last 10 years it turns out that, to adapt a phrase from Gilbert and Sullivan, “We are the very model of a modern English library”.

2022 in Numbers

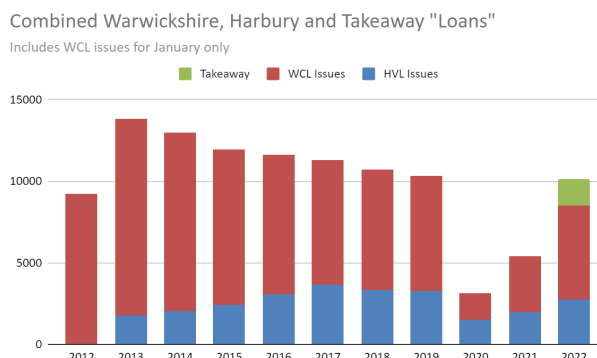
2022 was the first full year of “normal” operation since the start of the pandemic. Although footfall and book issues are both down on 2019, our recovery has been solid and seems to compare well with national averages.

Visitors

The total number of visitors to Harbury Village Library in 2019, excluding evenings, was 15,841. This is 82% of the figure for 2019. There were peaks in May and August presumably as a result of the Cake and Shake afternoons and the promotion of the Summer Reading Challenge. The “[Public Libraries 2022: Netloan Customer Survey Reports](#)” states that nationally “average footfall has reached nearly 70% of pre-Covid levels, up from around 50% at end of 2021”. Good to see that we’re doing better than this.

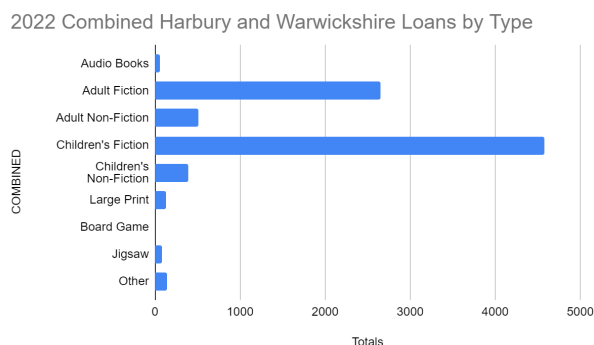
Book Loans

Loans of books from both Warwickshire and Harbury collections were around 82% of the figures for 2019. If we add in the estimated “loans” from the Takeaway Shelves our issues are almost the same as 2019.



Loans by Book Type

The majority of our loans in 2022 were of Adult and Children's fiction (85%). Note that the figures for Children's Fiction include loans of Board Books and Picture Books which are not separately recorded in the Warwickshire figures.



An objective for 2023 is to increase the number of loans for non-fiction books, particularly from the children's section.

Our loans of Large Print and Audiobooks were very low. This is a national trend resulting from the increased use of streaming services. We are working with Warwickshire County Libraries to rationalise the number of items in these categories on our shelves.

Volunteers

We have been extraordinarily fortunate to have such a loyal group of volunteers, some of whom have been with us since the beginning and now bring a wealth of experience that helps to keep the library running smoothly. In the last few months we have been able to attract a significant number of additional recruits. Our pool of volunteers now numbers over 50.

Summer Reading Challenge 2022

The theme for this year's Summer Reading Challenge was "Gadgeteers". Fifty eight children participated, of whom sixteen completed the challenge. We went out of the way to create displays of books appropriate to the theme and were pleased to notice a very significant increase in the numbers of children's non-fiction books that were borrowed during the summer.

During the summer we also ran two children's craft workshops with a Gadgeteers theme. Particularly thanks to Masa Chiba who ran one of the workshops at which children were able to create a traditional Japanese spinning toy.

School Links

We were thrilled when our links with the school were re-established and class visits recommenced. So far Reception and Class 3 have visited and, we hear, thoroughly enjoyed themselves. We will do all that we can to continue to strengthen this link, including investigating ways we can support the school's new reading initiatives, including the Accelerated Reader Programme.

Community Hub

Particularly since the pandemic we have started to play a more significant role as a Community Hub, supporting the work of other organisations in the village in a number of ways:

Ticket Sales

Since we are open 5 ½ days a week we have been a popular place for local groups to offer tickets for sale for their events and activities. This has been particularly so since we have added the option to accept card payments. Most recently, in the week starting Monday 20th February we sold £636 worth of tickets on behalf of village organisations.

Recycling

We now have recycling collection boxes in our foyer for:

- Medicine Blister Packs
- Electric toothbrush heads
- Bras
- Inkjet Cartridges

A priority now is to rationalise this space to create more room in the foyer.

Food Bank Collections

The foyer is also a collection point for Food Bank donations and for Hedgehog food.

Warm Welcome Space

Harbury Village Library is a nationally registered [Warm Welcome Space](#). Whenever the cafe is closed we have “help yourself” tea, coffee and biscuits available. Even if not planning to borrow a book people are encouraged to drop in and sit, chat or read a newspaper. Even as temperatures rise there’s a need for places for people who live alone to come and interact with other members of the community.

Activities and Events

Regular activities taking place while the library is open are:

Pre-school storytime

Primary School Class Visits

Tunes and Tales

Board Games Afternoons.

Even when the library and cafe are closed, our building is a busy place. Activities and Events which have taken place over the last year include:

- Book Group Meetings
- Language Classes
- Children’s Craft Workshops
- Parish Council and other Meetings
- Folk Club Choir Rehearsals
- Music Concerts

Library Reorganisation

We knew at the start of 2022 that we needed to reorganise the library space, but there were a series of dependencies that necessitated a step by step approach. During the summer we made the first major change by adding wheels to the bookcases which did not already have them.

This change made it easier to reposition the bookshelves, and as a result allow us to push the bookshelves to one side to make a much bigger space for activities and events.

Over Christmas we moved the shelves to their new locations, creating a larger and more open Children's Area. In parallel with this we started a major review of our stock of Blue Label books, significantly reducing their number and as a result making a good start in reducing the number of boxes in the foyer. This work is continuing. We also created a shelving unit for jigsaws which finally allowed us to clear the tops of the bookshelves.

This reorganisation has not been easy, but the library team has come up with innovative ideas, showing a determination to arrive at a solution that benefits our whole organisation.



Richard Fowler
Library Lead

February 2023