



# Performance Report

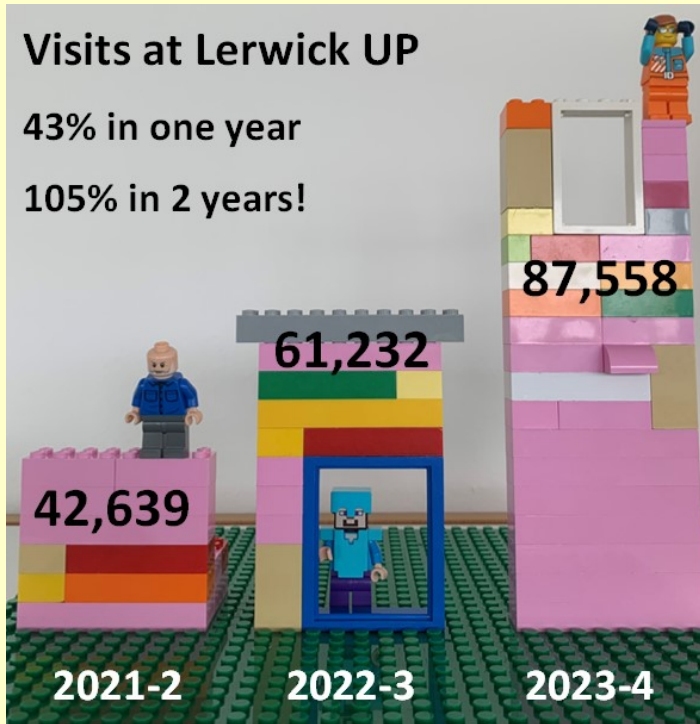
## Library use rises again

Our young customers made us a graph in Lego! Visits to Lerwick Library have leapt up in two years and are also 13% higher than pre-Covid.

### Visits at Lerwick UP

43% in one year

105% in 2 years!



Borrowing of books fell by 7%, but this was not unexpected because last year was a bumper one for loans. Visits and other usage figures show very healthy and active use of the library. **Bookbug** was a star again! Attendance went up an amazing 51% and we held 197 sessions, up from 146 last year.



“As a parent the library's Bookbug sessions were a wonderful bonding session for me and my daughter, and later son. Both are keen readers today.”

## Warm and welcoming

There was a serious week of snow in January 2024 which shut down most of Shetland. We managed to keep the public library open throughout, because we had staff who lived near enough to walk to work. This was very much appreciated by customers. For many people, the library is their only option for a free, warm, welcoming and accessible place to spend time.



With the help of partners we host a good variety of activities in the library, mostly free. We ran 46 events for adults, and 692 people attended. Our space is not just about books but about culture, creativity and community. It is also a place people meet, work, study or connect online. During the year, our Memories Shetland group has become established and is a great source of friendship and connection, meeting every month to chat and reminisce.



## Help with technology

One of the most important things we do is help folk negotiate the digital world. We linked with Transport Scotland and SIC Transport Planning to help concession card holders claim their new digital ferry vouchers. Library staff assisted and reassured over 300 people who didn't have smartphones or couldn't get the app to work.

We helped over **300** of you with ferry vouchers



*"The modern world is hellish for folk like me and I'd get left behind and be lost if I didn't have this help."*

Every day our staff are offering this kind of help and support, and the library is often the only place people can come to print, scan and use computers. Our partners Adult Learning increased the length of their 'Lunchtime Learning' sessions too, and are with us every Monday to help with IT issues and much more.

## Giving value and saving money

Our Local Government Benchmarking 'cost per visit' figure for 2022-23 fell from £2.17 to £1.62. This was because our number of physical and virtual visits rose while our budget did not.

We won a grant of £5,500 in a joint bid with Orkney Library to enhance services for the visually impaired.



In our 2023 customer survey, 93% said the library saved them money.

*"I would not have achieved success in gaining employment without access to library facilities."*

*"New to Shetland - I wanted to find out more about history and heritage. Borrowed books that I could not have afforded to buy. Also, I work remotely - from a rural location. It's great for my mental health to occasionally work out of Lerwick library - I get companionship and a day in town!"*

## Keeping children reading

Our school libraries did great work getting bairns reading all year. Our AHS library surveyed S1 and S2 pupils taking part in their Reading Strategy, and 77% felt more confident at the end of the school year than the start.

We ran a busy summer of reading activities to help close the 'literacy gap' during holidays too. These included Summer Reading Challenges for children and adults, Tall Ships Bookbug and Code Clubs. We also joined partners in Picnic and Play sessions round Shetland, which allowed 350 extra adults and children to visit the mobile library.



Joseph Coelho, the children's Laureate visited Shetland, and we were able to set up classes of delighted bairns to meet him.

Young Shetland Writer got 312 entries and prizes were presented by author Tamsin Mori in a ceremony at the Library. Partners Shetland Arts arranged mentoring for the two senior winners, so they could meet with a published author to develop their talent. Winning entries are on our website. [www.shetland.gov.uk/libraries/young-people-1/4](http://www.shetland.gov.uk/libraries/young-people-1/4)

**5,947** big and little people came to Bookbug!

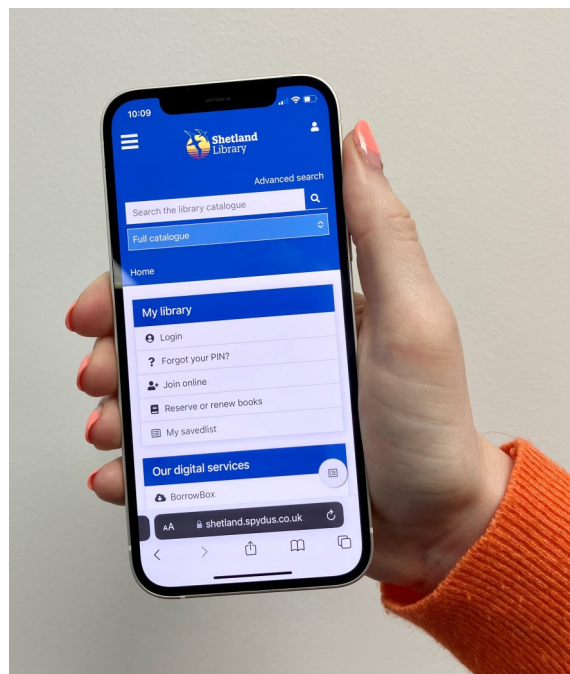
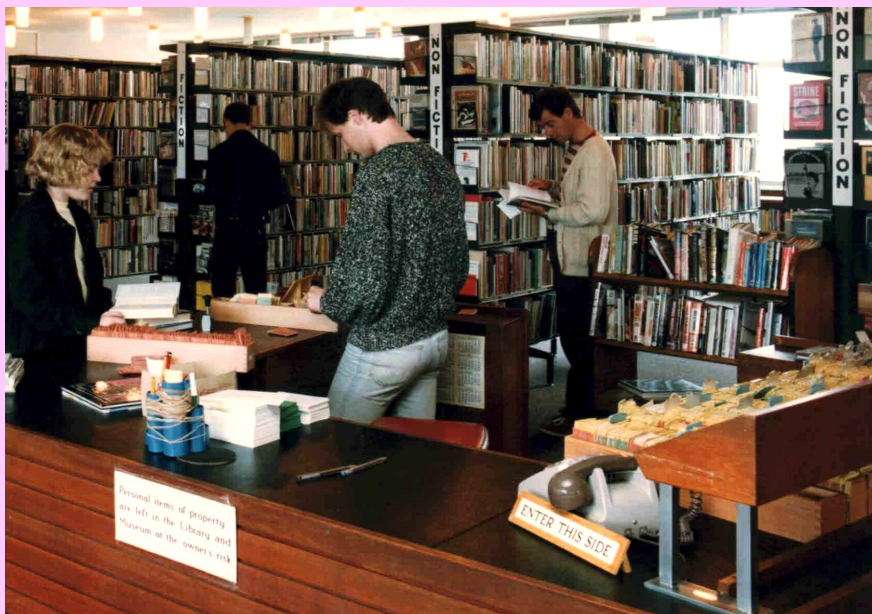
'Get them early' is our motto and Bookbug is a huge joint effort by our staff and partners such as NHS and Early Years settings. We worked with Shetland College to make sure Early Learning and Childcare students understand Bookbug too - getting staff early, as well as babies, is important!

# A new system smoothly installed

**Our biggest project** was our new Library Management System, Spydus. We use this to run all our databases and functions, including the book catalogue, customer database, stock management, loans and renewals, reservations, customer messages, cataloguing and ordering. It also integrates with the library's public computer network and two eBook services (Libby and Borrowbox) so that members can access them.

**A little bit of history** - at one time we used the Browne System to manage loans. Older members will recall the yellow tickets in each book which were placed in small envelopes when a book was borrowed, then filed in a myriad of long wooden boxes. You can see this in operation in our lovely retro photo from the 1980s!

**In 2003 we joined the 21st Century** with an online system, Talis. Twenty years later we have replaced it, to allow better co-working with other Scottish authorities and efficiencies for staff. The bulk of the implementation work was done by the library team and within current budgets. Customer service was affected very little during the changeover and we stayed open right through, though here was furious activity behind the scenes for many months!



## How is it better for YOU?

- A new, smarter site AND an App for browsing, borrowing and reserving
- More book details and cover images
- View our eBooks, eAudio and eMagazines in the same catalogue
- Join online and get immediate access to our online services
- View library events on the new catalogue site
- Family grouping – members can opt to be linked to a 'head of family', so that account changes are easier
- The 'head of family' can view the loans of linked children, up to the age of 12, without having to log into their account separately

### Our new catalogue



*6,561 hours of PC use*

*97,662 website visits*

*24,097 catalogue visits*

*5,091 book reservations*

*81,468 social media engagements*

*36,545 e-Book, Audio, Magazine & Newspaper loans*



### Our 3D library tour



## Other highlights of our year



We added new mobile library routes to meet increased demand. We are not (yet) delivering by helicopter though!

We got a 92.7% satisfaction rating in the Scottish Household Survey, one of the highest in the country.

In our Scottish Public Library Survey, 100% of you said the library was important to you and 98% said it was a welcoming place to visit. You left us hundreds of comments about the impact our service made on you.

We introduced new book groups and began a series of events to highlight our amazing Shetland Collection.

We held fantastic book launches for local authors Siùn Carden, Donald Murray, Sally Huband and Marsali Taylor. It was also great to host the launch of visiting author Nick Grainger's amazing story of a Shetland boat journey, [The Voyage of the Aegre](#).

During Book Week Scotland we held open mic poetry, yoga, zine making and craft workshops. We also had a lovely poetry session on National Poetry Day on the theme of refuge.



Our staff are Superheroes (but don't always dress like this!)

*"It is a positive space, always welcoming and with highly trained staff. They go out of their way to make the library work for their community and they all deserve medals for their efforts!"*

*"The library has allowed me to integrate into Shetland life. Even after many years here it continues to be an excellent way to stay in touch with what is happening in Shetland and beyond. It also has made me feel part of the community."*

*"The library van visits my home. I can order books and browse the shelves. It delivers books to my neighbours who cannot get to the library and enhances the lives of those living in our community."*

## Plans and challenges

**WiFi on loan!** - Last year we bid to Connecting Scotland for Chromebooks and MiFi units, and this



year we will have them ready to lend. We also have exciting plans to lend podcasting kit. Did you know you can already borrow tablet computers from us?

**Bookbug** - We are looking forward to a great 'shared practice' event in August to bring together everyone who makes Bookbug work. We are really excited that we have been able to organise this during schools in-service so that our school based colleagues can come.

**Make a Noise in the North** - our joint project with Orkney Library will see us swapping staff, ideas and expertise to work on service improvement, particularly for the visually impaired.

**Community libraries** - we will focus on improvement of our community libraries because we are aware that the limited opening hours makes access difficult. As part of this we are involved with the new Brae school project, hoping to increase access to our library there.

**Public computers** - we are getting help from the ICT department to improve our public computer set up. We have all coped too long with time consuming printing problems and are looking for solutions!

**The Big Picture** - there will be new national strategies for school and public libraries in challenging times. A recent [survey by Scottish Book Trust](#) makes salutary reading on both the impact libraries make and the pressure services are under. A library is described as a 'levelling up factory', which is a great phrase! Like all Council services we have to find savings and be efficient. We will carefully manage our staffing, including a further management restructure.

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

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