

## Report from Willingham Library staff to Willingham Parish Council

Willingham Library has experienced many changes in the way it delivers its service during the past year.

We closed our doors to the public in March 2020 and staff were asked to be part of a "Response Team". This involved taking requests from the public to carry out tasks, such as shopping, collecting prescriptions, etc. As our Willingham Hub was already up and running, we had very few requests from this area.

Unfortunately, we were not able to run the Summer Reading Challenge, to which the Parish Council always generously contributes, in its normal format. The challenge took place, nationally, entirely online.

In August, we re-opened our doors, offering a limited service. Customers could reserve books online or over the phone in 2 ways:-

- Select & Collect - whereby they suggested a genre of book and the library staff chose from their own stock. The customer then collected the books in the library lobby, adhering to strict Covid-19 protocols.
- Reservations - customers could request a specific book. The request would be fulfilled from the County stock and sent to our library for the customer to collect.

Both of these services were provided free of charge. Customers could also book a library computer.

At the beginning of November, we were able to offer 2 weeks of "managed browsing", whereby customers could enter the library to choose their own books, providing details for Test & Trace.

After the November lockdown, we went back to how things were in August. The only difference being that customers are now charged 50p for reserving a particular title. Select & Collect books remain free of charge.

Throughout the pandemic, new customers have been encouraged to join online and collect their cards from their branch library. We have seen a steady stream of new customers, which is encouraging. Recently, a new App (Overdrive Libby) has replaced the old RB Digital one, which allows library customers to download e-books, audio books and magazines. This facility has been well used throughout lockdown.

In addition, there have been numerous online activities for the public to participate in. The Library at Home volunteers are currently not able to go into the homes of those who are vulnerable, housebound or shielding due to Covid-19 restrictions. However, they are still able to deliver books and audio CDs to these people and have a brief chat on the door step. Engage and Rhymetime sessions are also available online - more information is available at [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/libraries-leisure-culture/libraries](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/libraries-leisure-culture/libraries).

Staff have undertaken many training courses (again online) to keep up-to-date with an ever-changing situation.

We truly hope "normal service" can resume as soon as it is safe to do so.

Sue Shimmens & Christine Benton  
March 2021