

Evaluation Summary Year Two (2019/20)

The Library Presents (TLP) brings quality arts activities into towns and villages across Cambridgeshire. The programme is run by Cambridgeshire County Council in partnership with Babylon ARTS and is funded by Arts Council England for four years. This summary covers the second of those four years (2019/20). Please note that statistics relating to audience responses and demographic information are compiled only from the 21% of attendees who returned feedback.



Vinland (Ely)



Journey into Space (Whittlesey)



Dark Matters (Histon)

DELIVERY

In Year Two, The Library Presents set a target of delivering 60 workshops and 50 performances for the core programme of activity promoted through the seasonal TLP brochure.

The number programmed was 63 workshops (17 different types) and 50 performances (33 different types).

In Year One there had been 62 programmed workshops and 59 programmed performances. The reduction in performances in Year Two was to enable a greater focus on additional commissions and ease pressure on the capacity of staff and venues. Only one workshop had to be cancelled (Performance Skills in Wisbech) due to travel issues and an inability to reschedule. As a result of the Covid-19 outbreak, 5 workshops and 7 performances were postponed.

The actual delivered core content of Year Two was: 57 workshops and 43 performances.

28 venues were utilised (23 libraries, 4 community spaces and a mobile library van).

Non library venues used:

- Wisbech Museum (for Wisbech Library)
- Christ the Redeemer Church Hall, Cambridge (for Barnwell Rd Library)
- Barnwell Baptist Church (for Barnwell Rd Library)
- Ely Market Square (for Ely Library)

13 Venues reached 90% capacity or above for a performance.

On occasions a TLP activity ran in conjunction with another community event. In all of these instances the event was a great success. Benefits included an increase in publicity, volunteer support and attendees. Example were:

- The History of Jazz (Cherry Hinton). Also promoted as part of the Cherry Hinton Festival.
- Moon (Ely Market Square). Also promoted as part of the Babylon ARTS 'Leap into Dance' programme.
- Lantern Making (Chatteris). Also formed part of the Chatteris Christmas light switch on celebrations.

Alongside the main programme of two seasons of co-programmed activity for paying audiences, the project programmed the following additional activity:

- **A Family Book Festival** (with 540 pupils engaging in related outreach work).
- **A touring SpyNet Exhibition** (181 attendees).
- **4 Taster sessions** which engaged 90 people and resulted in approx. 7 follow up ticket sales.
- **2 Testing sessions** utilising a mobile library van.
- **11 training sessions** attended by 39 staff and 26 volunteers.
- **Arts Award activity** with 254 young people.
- **Performances and workshops in 2 Artsmark schools** which benefited 147 young people.
- **Creative activities with looked after children** which engaged 27 young people.
- The **Big Read & Write** Live author event (postponed due to Covid-19).
- **Targeted work with non-English speakers** and those with English as a second language (postponed due to Covid-19).



Rumpelstiltskin (Whittlesey)



Curse of the Mummy (March)



Lady Chillers (Mobile Library)

ARTISTS

The programme offered a range of art forms including: Visual Art, Music, Drama, Comedy, Magic, Circus, Puppetry, Literature, Spoken Word and Dance. Visual Art was the most prevalent with 56 activities (51%). This is due to the fact that most workshops fell into this category.

127 artists and their supporting technicians were employed across all TLP Year Two activity.

101 of these were connected with the main brochure programme.

39 acts (79.5%) were new to TLP.

28.5% of artists programmed to deliver activities had culturally diverse backgrounds / protected characteristics (target 10%).

This was a notable increase from the 13% represented in the first year.

TLP is maintaining a good balance between national and region artists in the programme. **57% of all artists programmed to deliver brochure activities live in the East of England.** In the Autumn 2019 brochure, 19% of artists were specifically from Cambridgeshire; a connection that gave the scheme a strong local relevance.

Content for the brochure seasons was selected via a call out for artists from the project's arts partner, Babylon ARTS. From the responses, Babylon ARTS compiled menus for each season containing 50 activities. From these, library staff, volunteers and members of the public selected their preferences. **735 people contributed to this selection process.** This was below the target set of 800 but a significant increase on the 431 who contributed in Year One.

Artists were supported via a development day (20 participants) and individual artist development surgeries (38 participants), both organised by Babylon ARTS.

Feedback from artists regarding their experiences of delivering in libraries and working with the project team was very positive, with all artists keen to work with the project again in the future.

I was pleasantly surprised that a library was not only a new type of venue for a jazz presentation but had remarkably good acoustics, books being a very good sound absorber. (Paul Higgs - A Brief History of Jazz)

The space at March Library was a really good size for our show, and enabled us to 'connect' well with the audience. Once the seating was put out and the lighting in place, we didn't even think of it as being different from any other performance space. Our shows are 'self-contained' tech-wise and the library staff were so accommodating, with the space empty and ready for us which facilitated an easy get-in. (Dreamcast Productions – De-Lovely)

It was a great experience. We learned a lot of how to deliver a workshop in various library settings, we got to know new places, met lovely people and had really good feedback by the participants. (Sibylle Hutter - Lantern Workshops)

A great event to be part of. We hope to bring another piece to you in the future. (Half Moon – The Goose Who Flew)



The Great Cabaret Safari (Arbury Court)



The Goose Who Flew (Soham)



Romeo & Juliet (Cambourne)

ATTENDANCE, TICKET SALES & PRICING

1,982 paying workshop participants / performance audience members were engaged. A further 231 tickets had been purchased for the postponed activities which would have brought the paid total to 2,213.

Adding the 1,581 people who attended tasters or free events an overall total of **3,563 people were engaged across all activities.** This is an increase on the total number reached in Year One (2,399) and surpassed the Year Two target of 2,700.

Audience averages were 28.5 per performance and 11.4 per workshop. Workshops were consistently popular across all art forms and exceeded their target of 10 per activity. Performances varied in audience numbers with geography, timing, content and target group all playing a part. Overall performances fell below their average target of 40 per event.

The two channels for purchasing tickets were at a participating library or via Cambridge Live (in person, by phone or online).

Cambridge live direct purchases: 1024 (52.5%) Inc. Counter sales (4), Phone sales (155) and Web sales (865)

Purchased in Libraries: 715 (37%) Logging into online system (544), on the door (86)

Unknown purchase route: 208 (10.5%). This figure relates to the 208 family saver tickets the point of sales for which cannot be logged by the current system. Cambridge Live is proving increasingly popular as a ticket outlet with a 7.5% increase in users from Year One. This trend grew steadily throughout Year One and continued in Year Two.

It is important that TLP is accessible to the communities it serves and that as much as possible people are not prevented from engaging because of price barriers. For this reason **'Family Saver' tickets were available, special interest groups were offered group discounts and Time Credits were accepted.**

It is also important that audiences appreciate the monetary cost of staging quality activities. Therefore the need to ascertain views on pricing was identified and the public surveyed.

Number of people questioned at performances: 36

Too cheap (2) About Right (33) Too expensive (1)

Number of people questioned at workshops: 45

Too cheap (5) About Right (40) Too expensive (0)

All public feedback relating to pricing was favourable:

Excellent value for money for quality of performers. (Curse of the Mummy/Sherlock Holmes - March)

Great shows and workshops at affordable prices - great! (Origin of Species – Ely)

Brilliant value for money. (Willow Workshop – Ramsey)

This supported a planned increase in prices for the Spring 2020 season:

- The standard performance price rose from £7 to £8 with concession prices remaining the same.
- The standard workshop price rose from £5 to £6 with concession prices rising from £2.50 to £3
- Family show tickets remained at £4 each / £14 Family Saver

STAFFING & VOLUNTEERS

The role of front line staff in supporting the delivery and promotion of TLP remains vital. 53% of 20 staff questioned regarded their experience of TLP as hard work but this was balanced by the fact that 65% enjoyed meeting the artists, 71% viewed it as fun and **82% saw that it offered new ways to engage with the public**. Importantly, **76% now see supporting TLP as an accepted part of their work** (an increase of 16% from Year One).

I have found all the activities enjoyable, fun, attending performances I would not normally go to. Meeting the performers is fantastic and seeing how they interact with our customers is great. Hearing the Feedback which is usually very positive and how much the audience have enjoyed the experience has made this project fun to be involved with. (Staff feedback)

Even though TLP is at times hard work, hearing the positive feedback has been worth the work involved. (Staff Feedback)

I feel that holding these events has been a positive experience for the libraries and myself as I have gained a range of knowledge in a variety of areas. I thoroughly enjoy helping to support, organise and attending these events and will continue to be involved in the coming seasons. (Staff Feedback)

This year it has been important to explore the relationship between TLP and the library service to ensure that it is healthy, effective and mutually beneficial. The working group, senior library staff and the TLP team have done much to ensure the concerns and queries of the front line staff have been listened to and addressed. Information and guidance has been circulated and more regular channels of communication have been opened. In addition Year Three will see the recruitment of TLP 'Champions' from front line staff to support the project.

At the end of the first year, 124 people had expressed an interest in volunteering or requested more information. By the end of Year Two this figure had risen by 30 to 154. 28 of these people are members of library friends groups and 74 are new volunteers for whom TLP represents their first time supporting local libraries.

77 have so far gone on to actively support a TLP activity. This support has included serving refreshments (Inc. bar work), promotion, setting up / packing down, collecting feedback, box office work, welcoming participants and technical support.

I have learnt new skills. (Volunteer Feedback)

Interesting and helpful training. (Volunteer Feedback)

It gives me a way to support my local library. (Volunteer Feedback)



The Victorians (Wisbech Museum)



Greyhounds (Chatteris)



De-Lovely (March)

MARKETING

TLP is promoted through a wide range of channels. These include brochures, posters, social media, radio, newspapers, websites and library displays. **The seasonal brochure remains the most potent marketing tool** with word of mouth also proving very effective. Coverage was secured on local radio and in over 20 publications. As of March 2020, TLP had 420 Instagram followers, 419 Facebook followers and there have been 9,593 views of the TLP web page.

This this year has seen a steady increase in the number of people finding out about the scheme through external sources (as opposed to in a library). By the end of the year this figure had reached 43% of those questioned. This is in no small part due to the contracting of Conscious Communications to coordinate and extend the reach and frequency of TLP promotion.

PUBLIC RESPONSE

586 people completed feedback. This represented 26% of all brochure participants and surpassed the Arts Council requirement of 380 responses. The total number of responses is lower than Year One (603 responses) due to the 12 Covid-19 postponements. Had these brought in the anticipated 70 additional forms then the total would have been similar.

When reviewing activity quality:

89% viewed it as 'Very Good'	Year One: 81%
11% as 'Good'	Year One: 18%
0% as 'Neither good nor poor'	Year One: 1%

The programme was positively received with the scores consistently high across all the content. No attendees rated an activity 'poor' or 'very poor'. The project received 289 additional comments. 254 were positive, 35 negative/mixed.

On a scale of 0 – 10, the average score for the likelihood of attendees recommending TLP was 9.6 (Year One: 9.6)

The average score for the likelihood of attending a future TLP activity 9.6 (Year One: 9.5)

My children had a lovely time, fun and educational. (Art & Science Workshop – March)

We all loved making our lanterns. Very inspirational! (Lantern Workshop – Warboys)

Loved it - so amazing to take home art! (Printing Workshop – Soham)

Great workshop - fun, factual, friendly. (Performance Skills Workshop – Ely)

5*! Brilliant for adults and children! (Bazazi Brothers – Huntingdon)

Absolutely fantastic performance. Fantastic evening. Thank you. (Improvised Book Club – March)

Lovely opportunity to experience something a bit more unusual in a local venue! (Mahajanaka – Huntingdon)

It is so good to have this calibre of music in our library here in St Ives. (Mazaika – St Ives)

Totally enchanting! (Rumpelstiltskin – Ramsey)

Had a brilliant time. Haven't laughed so much in ages!! (Curse of the Mummy/Sherlock Holmes – March)

What talented and inspiring women! Thank you for your confidence and energy! (Great Cabaret Safari - Arbury Court)

Of the 492 people who answered the question ‘How welcoming / helpful were the staff?’ the responses were as follows:

Very good: 446 (90.6%) Good: 43 (8.8%) Neither good nor poor: 3 (0.6%)

These figures illustrate an increase in the level of customer care. The result of:

- Staff and volunteer training.
- Staff and volunteers becoming more aware of the needs of their audiences.
- Staff/volunteers becoming more comfortable and knowledgeable about how to use their spaces effectively for activities.
- The purchase of lighting, sound equipment, backdrops, chairs, tables and bar kits to create conducive environments.

From the outset, it has been important for TLP to provide a consistently high quality of content coupled with a high quality of customer experience. The intention being to encourage people to become repeat attendees who have confidence in TLP programming and who are more willing to take a chance on a new act safe in the knowledge that they are guaranteed a good experience in a welcoming environment. Year Two has seen an increase in comments reflecting this with a number of attendees showing great support and loyalty for the scheme. Further evidence is that **53% of the 500 people who answered the question ‘Have you attended a The Library Presents event before?’ responded Yes.** For those who had engaged with TLP before, the average number of times they had attended was 2.

Had a lovely evening (again) (Dark Matters – Histon)

Another lovely workshop. More please (smiley face). (Linocut Workshop – Ramsey)

Excellent. I have recommended TLP lots of times. (Mazaika – St Ives)

A fantastic show. We LOVE The Library Presents! (Origin of Species – Ely)



A Brief History of Jazz (Cherry Hinton)



Too Pretty To Punch (Ely)



Linocut Printmaking (Chatteris)

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHIC

GENDER: Of the 500 people who stated their gender, the majority remains female (74% - identical to Year One).

AGE: It was very encouraging to see the 35 to 44 age bracket emerging as the largest percentage of attendees (18.6%) but the teenage audience remains elusive and will continue to be a target for future years (12 – 24 year olds representing just 6.1% of attendees). Year Two saw a more comprehensive and accurate collecting of ages (1,352 people representing 49% of all brochure activity participants). Year One used different age categories and did not collect accurate ages for any people accompanying the person completing the survey. Therefore a direct comparison is limited.

ETHNICITY: Year Two saw a positive increase of almost 10% in the number of people engaging with the programme who did not identify themselves as White British. 27.2% of the 500 people who provided ethnicity details.

DISABILITY: The programme has seen a slight increase (2%) in the number of people with disabilities accessing activities. The majority (85%) do not identify themselves as having a disability.

MOTIVATION: On the whole the order of motivations remains similar to Year One, with 'to be entertained' remaining at the top, and to 'learn something' and to 'educate my children' staying prominent due to the high workshop content in the programme. The role TLP activities play in community building and allowing opportunities for interaction with others remains high with a large number stating 'to spend time with families and friends' as a motivation. It is encouraging that the importance of sustained quality and the uniqueness of the programme can be reflected in the increase seen in number of people wishing 'To do something new / out of the ordinary', 'learn something' and 'be inspired'.

AUDIENCE SEGMENTATION: Dormitory Dependables remained the most frequent audience segment at TLP events, increasing its share of the audience from 27% in Year One to 33% in Year Two. This is higher than the regional average. TLP saw an increase of Experience Seekers and Kaleidoscope Creativity. Work is needed to achieve targets for Home and Heritage, Heydays and Facebook Families.

PREVIOUS ATTENDANCE: Year Two saw little change in the number of first time attendees, 47% (Year One 46%).

TRAVEL: 427 people provided postcode data allowing us to see a 14% increase in the number of attendees travelling from outside the immediate location of an activity to attend (primarily for performances). The Year Two travelling total was 68%.

RELATIONSHIP TO LIBRARY USE: There has been a decrease in the percentage of participants who are library members (Year One 86% / Year Two 81%). This illustrates that non-library regulars are engaging with the programme and that TLP is bringing new people into libraries. Libraries can explore how they can engage this new footfall to recruit new library members and encourage them to utilise other library services.

TLP is taking existing library users to new libraries across the county. Out of the 375 current library members going to TLP activities 77 (20.5%) are going to a library they have not visited before. This is primarily for performances (45).

This movement of library users acts as evidence of the attraction of TLP. It also justifies the use of marketing tools such as the brochure that provide information on all locations as opposed to just the library where they are displayed.



Creative Virtual Reality (Ely)



Dastan (Cherry Hinton)



Moon (Ely Market Square)