

Annual Report 2015

Introduction

Progress on the implementation of “*Opportunities for all*” the national strategy for Public Libraries 2013-2017 continued in 2015. Key actions progressed by Offaly Library service includes:

- Implementation of the **Open Library pilot** initiative in Banagher and Tullamore Libraries.
- Roll out three **Literacy programmes**:
 - Read Anything, Anytime, Anywhere –Primary School programme
 - Summer Reading Adventure and Summer clubs
 - Once upon a Story time – preschool literacy programme
- Participation in **Libraries support Business and Employment** pilot.
- Collaborative project with Offaly Local Development providing **Work and Learning centres** in libraries.
- Lead authority for **Midlands Libraries books and media tender** 2015.

Performance

Overall the trend in increased use of the library service continues. A continuous review of library services activities including opening hours, staffing levels and evaluation of services based on financial constraints remains in place. The number of loans and visits decreased due to the temporary reduction of opening hours in Tullamore Central Library during 2015. The demand for wifi, study spaces and access to meeting rooms has increased.

	2014	2015	%
Members	14,330	14,557	1.58%
Visits	259,520	250,221	-3.58%
Internet/wlfi	145266	197378	35.87%
Loans	278,397	259,381	-6.83%
Web hits	79831	95171	19.22%

Open Library

A Pilot initiative funded by DECLG Government was launched in Banagher and Tullamore Library in January 2015. Both Banagher and Tullamore Library are open from 8am – 10pm, 7 days a week to library members on a self service basis outside of current opening hours. Users access the buildings using their library card and PIN when staff are not present.

Users are able to borrow and return items, connect to the Wifi, study, use library computers and printing facilities. The service is available only to members of the library who are over 18. 1,152 people have registered to use Open Libraries in Banagher and Tullamore. Over 18,000 visits have taken place during unstaffed hours in 2015.

Open Libraries is a significant customer service development for libraries and has the potential to transform the use and value to the public of the services and the civic space provided by the council.

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Library Management System (LMS)

A new National LMS system is currently being implemented in public libraries. Offaly Library service is in phase 3 and the system will go live in June 2016.

This new system will provide the following benefits for customers:

- One **single library membership card** to access all Public libraries in the Country.
- Users will have access to library collections, resources and digital content of all public libraries in one search.
- Virtual library accessible to all members.

Culture and educational programme

Our regular events include book clubs, storytelling activities, author visits and exhibitions.

Events included

- Science Week
- Positive Ageing Week
- Culture Night
- Heritage Week
- Birr Vintage Week
- Hullabaloo children's Art Programme
- Author Visits e.g. Geraldine O Neill
- Book Launches
- Christmas Programme

Local Studies and Archives

Work carried out during 2015 includes:

- The listing of all private collections
- New access policies
- Conservation of the DeRenzy collection
- Transfer of Minute books to the Archive from Tullamore Town Council / Edenderry Town Council and Birr Town Council
- Cataloguing of the Belmont collection

2016 Commemorations

The Library service is actively involved in the Council's 2016 Commemoration programme. The following projects were progressed during 2015.

- Schools Education Pack
- 1916 Bibliography
- Conservation of the 1916 Minute Book
- Digitisation of 1916 newspapers
- Conservation of the 1966 commemoration film
- Heritage week Talks by Dr. Philip McConway on 1916

Libraries support Business and Employment

Offaly Library service is participating in a national pilot project to determine how libraries can support business, enterprise and employment and strengthen links with the LEOs, Intreo services and other relevant bodies, and to avoid any duplication of services.

Literacy

- **A literacy Conference on Right to Read** took place on September 23rd 2015 in Dublin Castle where the Right to Read government initiative was launched. In 2016 Offaly County Council will implement a literacy action plan. The plan will involve local communities, child care groups, schools, adult education and other key sectors of the community.
- **Schools Programme:** During 2015 Offaly Libraries initiated a new literacy programme - **Read anything, anytime, anywhere** - with primary schools in County Offaly for 2015. 64% of primary schools in Offaly signed up to the programme.
- **Summer Literacy program:** Visits to libraries during the summer increased as over 800 Children participated in **the Summer Reading Adventure and Summer clubs**.
- **Pre-School Reading Initiative:** A new pre-school reading initiative called "Once upon a story time" is under development. This project is aimed at getting childcare providers and parents involved in reading with children and using interactive story time from a young age.

Digital Resources

Our digital resources including e-books, e audio books, and e-magazines continue to grow in popularity and will be replaced by a single national online resource services accessible by the members of all local authority library services from the 2nd January 2016.

Priorities for 2016

1. Progress plans for a new Community Library in Edenderry included in the national library capital programme 2016-2021.
2. Continue to deliver Open Library hours and examine the feasibility of expanding the service to other libraries in Offaly.
3. Prepare a new Library Development Programme 2017-2021.
4. Implement the new national shared Library Management System during 2016.
5. Participate on the 2016 Commemorations committee and implement a programme of events.
6. Progress linkages and collaborative *approaches* to supporting economic initiatives, employment, business and job creation.
7. Continue to focus on literacy and provision of a literacy programme.
8. Facilitate and promote life long learning to ensure skills requirements are met and deficits addressed.
9. Promote heritage and culture through programme of events in Libraries.
10. Continuous review of library services activities to include opening hours, staffing levels and evaluation of services.