

## So much more than books

**Jackie Coroon** is a librarian with Live Life Aberdeenshire and graduate from MSc Information and Library Studies. Here she reflects on her career in libraries.

I started working in libraries in 2005 when I was employed as an ICT Tutor with Aberdeenshire Libraries supporting older adults getting to grips with new technologies. This role was meant to be for nine months as I was covering maternity leave. My plan was to become a secondary school teacher of Business Studies and the role of ICT tutor was to give me experience of working with learners prior to applying for the post grad course at Aberdeen University.

I quickly fell in love with my job and was delighted when I was offered a permanent role and the idea of becoming a secondary teacher fell off the radar. Very soon, I became passionate about libraries and how they are at the core of communities, especially in a rural authority like Aberdeenshire. Libraries are so much more than books, becoming familiar with the diversity of what libraries offer attracted me to the MSc Library and Information Studies course at Robert Gordon University. I applied for the course and was so fortunate to receive a bursary to cover an element of the costs. I graduated in June 2012 and was proud to call myself a qualified librarian.

Upon graduation, I immediately started work on my CILIP Chartership as wanted to keep up the momentum of developing my skills and knowledge in the field of librarianship. During this time a vacancy for the role of Network Librarian at Alford Community Campus arose; it was a post that required the successful candidate to provide a library service to primary and academy schools as well as to the local community.

This post was varied and diverse and called on all aspects of learning that I had studied during my time at RGU. I worked with various departments in the Academy, including English, Social Studies, Science and Additional Support Needs, tailoring information and digital literacy learning to specific teaching plans and learning abilities. I also provided a scaled down version of the information and digital literacy programme for primary classes to demonstrate how the children could access and utilise our library databases to support class project research.

I became involved in the Early Years forum in Alford and eventually became its joint chair. During this time, we worked with a local parent Autism support group, where I found out how to adapt spaces in a library setting to make them more comfortable for children on the Autistic spectrum. We held Autism information mornings where partners were invited to have a stand and promote the support that they could offer families in the area.

One of the most memorable experiences during my time at Alford was when we were allocated funding via Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC) to host the first ever *Get It Loud in Libraries* (GILL) events in Scotland. This activity required me to facilitate, plan and organise a music event for the Alford community with the support of the GILL team. The musical entertainment for the night was Callum Beattie, who is now regularly played on national radio. Whoever would have thought a national singing star would have played a concert in our library! To organise the event I recruited senior pupil volunteers; they were an amazing support as helped me promote the event to around the campus and the community. On the night, we were sold out. All ages of the community attended including the Head Teacher, teaching staff, pupils, and families of Alford.

When I first started working in libraries in 2005, I never envisaged one of the activities I would be organising would be a live a music gig in a library setting. I was so proud of our service for delivering

such a successful event, and the skills I acquired in this role enabled me to apply for the position I now have which is Reader and Events Development Librarian.

During the COVID pandemic, I was required once again to develop new skills. I was assigned to work with a cross-service team of Live Life Aberdeenshire staff to create a virtual space on our website called Live Life @ Home. The purpose of this space was to provide our customers with a one-stop shop of activities for people to do whilst they were in lockdown. The success of these pages has led to them becoming a permanent resource on the Live Life Aberdeenshire website.

During lockdown, I have also developed filming, recording, and editing skills including planning and facilitating virtual events. Last year I even filmed myself making an Easter bonnet for our Easter holiday offer.

It is hard to condense all the amazing opportunities I have been involved in as a librarian with Live Life Aberdeenshire Libraries. Above is a very small sample of activities and tasks I have been involved in. All I can say is being a librarian is an amazing profession, no two days are ever the same, the role is varied, you will get to work with the most amazing communities and schools, and it is a fantastic feeling being able to make an impact on those you support.