

Warwickshire Libraries

Our NPO

The NPO explained:

Since 2023, Warwickshire Libraries has been funded by Arts Council England as a National Portfolio Organisation (NPO).

Our purpose is to reach new audiences and communities, focusing on target areas, by delivering innovative, data-led, high quality cultural experiences.

Meet the Team



Dr Anjna Chouhan

NPO Creative Producer

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Louise Minton

NPO Creative Co-ordinator

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The NPO team are also part of the **LEAD (Library Engagement and Development) team**, where we work alongside **Jessica Dunnicliff, Stephanie Kelly and Aimee Hawkins.**

Our Objectives



Celebrating Warwickshire's rich heritage and diverse communities through targeted co-creation.

We work with communities and creative practitioners to engage targeted groups, enabling us to champion their stories and connections to libraries and the wider county.

Develop partnerships to position Warwickshire Libraries regionally and nationally.

We convene meetings with Warwickshire and Midlands library NPOs, are a part of the national library NPO network and are active members of other organisations that support culture and communities.



To be bold, innovative and dynamic in our approach, with a strategic focus on creating opportunities areas (e.g. Nuneaton and Bedworth, and North Warwickshire).

We work alongside communities and library colleagues in the north of the county, utilise data to inform our programming and are bold in our testing of new approaches to ensure exceptional delivery.



Our 2024-25 Successes

8,510

EVENT
PARTICIPANTS

118

PARTNERS & CREATIVE
PRACTITIONERS

358

ACTIVITY DAYS

Figures from our 2024/25 event evaluation and feedback forms completed by event attendees evidenced:

73%

Improved Attitude
Towards Libraries

11%

Increase in Warwickshire
Library Visits

23%

New Audiences

4

Creative Commissions

73%

Increased
Happiness

2

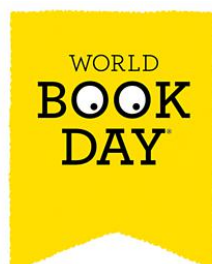
What's On
Guides Published

Our funders, Arts Council England, highlighted at our annual review:



- Our outstanding performance as an NPO
- Another exceptional and brilliant year
- Best practice in the arts and cultural sector
- Our successful testing of new methods and approaches

Our Partners



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



External Partners

- 1623
- Anjali Dance
- Art at the Alex
- Art in the Park
- Arts Award
- Aunty Jen Productions
- Coventry Biennial of Contemporary Art
- Culture Central
- Events from History
- Five Acre Community Farm
- Hill Top - Big Local
- Hunt's Bookshop
- Imagine Bamboo
- Lillington Primary School
- Lillington Youth Centre
- Macready Theatre
- National Trust
- Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council
- Nuneaton Museum & Art Gallery
- Orbit Housing Association
- Percival Guildhouse
- Pursuit Festivals
- Recovery & Wellbeing Academy (NHS)
- Rock Choir
- Rugby Art Gallery and Museum
- Rugby First
- Rugby Food & Drink Festival
- Rugby Literary Festival
- Severn Trent Water
- The Smallpeice Trust
- University of Warwick
- Warwickshire Pride
- Warwickshire Wildlife Trust Youth Committee
- Warwickshire Wildlife Trust
- WCAVA
- Wembrook Community Centre

Internal Warwickshire County Council Partners

- Active Travel
- Adult Community & Learning
- Business Intelligence
- Child Friendly Warwickshire
- Climate Change & Sustainability
- Community Partnerships
- Community Safety & Trading Standards
- Country Parks
- Education Strategy & Transformation
- Enabling Services
- Family Information Service
- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Working Group
- Migration Services
- Public Health
- Virtual School
- Waste Management

Our 2025-26 Activity Strands



WARWICKSHIRE VOICES

Celebrating Diverse Communities

...by challenging stigmas and stereotypes, through storytelling and the Hidden Stories programme.



WARWICKSHIRE ROOTS

Empowering Communities

...through Fun Palaces, developing the Youth Advisory Board and the internal Library's Dragon Den programme for staff.



WARWICKSHIRE GOES GREEN

Supporting Environmental Responsibility

...through our free annual family friendly festival, Park Life Reads and The Big Green Schools Tour.



WARWICKSHIRE BARDS

Celebrating Past, Present & Future Bards

...through the Children's Folio Tour, developing the Young Poet Laureate programme and offering a series of Open Mic Nights.



WARWICKSHIRE MAKES

Expanding our Digital Outreach

...and engagement programme and launching *Librarium: a Warwickshire Libraries' Podcast*.



WARWICKSHIRE MOVES

Enhancing our Health & Wellbeing Offer

...by piloting a free and accessible series of Yoga for Wellbeing courses for adults and babies.



WARWICKSHIRE AFTER HOURS

Developing Income Generation

...through piloting and creating a sustainable model for income generation.



WARWICKSHIRE EATS

Cultivating Stories Around Food

...by supporting families to enjoy healthy eating habits, and celebrating communities, their recipes and the human stories behind them.



WARWICKSHIRE READS

Growing our Cultural Offer

...through Book Bingo, the annual Bookmark competition and attending outreach events.

NPO CASE STUDY

Hidden Stories: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Communities

In 2024, we celebrated and shared Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller (GRT) heritage across Warwickshire through creative workshops, library events, and educational resources. Led by Gemma Lees, the project created inclusive spaces for cultural exchange and learning between GRT and non-GRT communities.

Gemma Lees is a disabled artist of Romani heritage, and daughter of beloved Romani storyteller, Richard O'Neill.

"I was able to both act as a role model to the Traveller children and design a programme of workshops which reflected their cultures back to them in a positive light [...] I feel very honoured to have worked with them." - Gemma Lees



Impact:

- **70%** new audiences to Warwickshire libraries
- **6 x** GRT library sign-ups
- **80%** of participants noted a change in their attitudes

Project Outputs:

- 5 x libraries – 188 children / 73 adults (261 attendees)
- 1 x event at Police HQ – 50 attendees
- 1 x library trip for 24 year 5s
- 6 x workshops with Wolvey CofE Primary School
- 1 x educational library resource
- 5 x films
- 1 x new poem

"This year we have been privileged to have been able to work with Gemma. The children have responded so well. They have enjoyed participating in art, poetry and hearing stories from the GRT community. Gemma has always been enthusiastic and shown a real kind and caring manner when working with our children."

Matthew Parker, Head of Wolvey School

"Gemma is the best GRT teacher"

Pupil at Wolvey C of E School

"10/10 – Best day of the year"

Attendee of event

NPO CASE STUDY

Key Activities and Impact

KEY ACTIVITIES:

School Engagement

- 6 workshops at Wolvey CofE Primary School
- 24 Year 5 students (6 GRT, 18 non-GRT)
- Activities included: cardboard vardos, black patch gypsy dolls, basket weaving, proggy rugs and polonius ponies.

Library Tour

- Five-location library tour
- 261 participants
- Libraries exhibitions with craft stations, storytelling tents and anonymous question boxes for GRT cultural queries
- Regular Q&A sessions fostering community dialogue

Additional Programming

- Field trip to Nuneaton Library—many students' first-library visit
- Warwickshire Police HQ celebratory event
- Educational resources created for lasting impact



CULTURAL IMPACT:

- **80%** of children learnt new information about local GRT history
- **95%** felt the project effectively celebrated GRT History Month
- **70%** discovered new library services

The project's significance extended beyond local impact, earning feature coverage in Traveller's Times magazine, reaching national audiences within the GRT community.