

Local News

Suffolk Libraries Launch the First Ever Celebration of the County's Library Service

Suffolk Libraries has officially launched a day of celebration to generate support for the county's library service.



The first ever *Suffolk Libraries Day* will take place on Saturday 12 October, at the end of National Libraries Week.

Suffolk Libraries Day will see special events take place at all 44 libraries with the aim of showcasing everything libraries have to offer the community. The day will also raise funds to support the county's library service. During the week leading up to *Suffolk Libraries Day* a *Book Journey Challenge* will also take place with Suffolk businesses coming together to get the book from Bungay to Haverhill, visiting all the county's libraries in between.

The book will cover a total distance of 323.9 miles with companies sponsoring each leg and transporting the book in a range of quirky and inventive ways including an American muscle car, a tractor, tandem and vintage coach. Many major Suffolk companies have signed up so far including Adnams, Ipswich Buses, Hughes, Care UK, EO, East of England Co-op, Exterion Media, Scarlett and Mustard, Ryan's insurance and Realise Futures.

The chosen book for the Book Journey is *The Huntingfield Paintress*, a historical fiction novel by Pamela Holmes which is set in Suffolk.

Bruce Leeke, CEO of Suffolk Libraries, said: "Suffolk Libraries Day will be a fantastic opportunity to highlight the huge impact our libraries have on making Suffolk such a great place to live. All our libraries are thriving community hubs that are there for everyone. The exciting diversity of our offer continues to drive people to our sites, especially for events and activities."

Suffolk Libraries is a charity which was launched to run Suffolk's library service in August 2012. Seven years on and all 44 libraries continue to be focal points for the local community. Highlighting this, over the past four years the number and range of events and activities in libraries has increased with the number of people attending them rising by 29 per cent. Suffolk Libraries also runs a mobile library service, two pop-up library services and the county's prison libraries.

Bruce added: "Our success story is down to the hard work of our staff and people in the community who continue to support us and champion our libraries. Suffolk Libraries Day will raise awareness that we are a charity and need to raise more income as we're likely to face many challenges in the future.

We've had some great support for the Book Journey already and there'll be lots of opportunities for local people to get involved in Suffolk Libraries Day events so if you have any ideas or want to support us please get in touch."

Pamela Holmes, author of *The Huntingfield Paintress*, added: "I was thrilled that my book was chosen to be part of the Book Journey. I went to school in Suffolk and have given talks in several of the lovely local libraries in the county so I'm very proud to support this campaign to highlight the value of libraries to their communities."

Ashley Shorey-Mills, General Manager of Hughes Smart, said: "Hughes are supporting the Suffolk Libraries Day Book Journey, because we feel, as a Suffolk company who started out in Lowestoft nearly 100 years ago, we need to support our local services. The work Suffolk Libraries do in engaging with their local communities and offering services that go way beyond just books is fantastic, and so when we heard about this event we knew we wanted to be involved as much as we could. Suffolk is an incredible place, and it's going to be amazing to see the support from the people of Suffolk as this book travels across the county."

Andy Wood, CEO of Adnams PLC, added: "The writer Sidney Sheldon once wrote that 'Libraries store the energy that fuels the imagination. They open up windows to the world and inspire us to explore and achieve, and contribute to improving our quality of life.' We totally agree and this is why we are proud to support Suffolk Libraries Day and the other great initiatives that support learning through our Adnams Community Trust."

On *Suffolk Libraries Day* itself there will be a wide range of activities taking place in libraries with the mobile library service joining in too.



Activities across the county confirmed so far include a sponsored readathon at a local school, a children's disco, a sponsored walk/bike ride between the three libraries in Saxmundham, Leiston and Aldeburgh, a photography competition, LEGO building session and a battle of the bands event.

Suffolk Libraries CEO Bruce Leeke and author Pamela Holmes at Felixstowe Library launching the *Suffolk Libraries Day Book Journey* with library staff.

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