

## Press Release

**WINNERS OF THE NAG PUBLIC LIBRARY PROJECT OF THE YEAR GRANT 2023**

**24<sup>th</sup> May 2023**

### **NAG Public Library Project of the Year Grant 2023**

Oldham Libraries have won the NAG Public Library Project Grant for 2023 with their “Language Barrier Breakers” project. This work will support vulnerable ethnic minority residents to easily access library resources that develop English Language Skills, promote social integration, and support their wellbeing. The project will receive £5000 to enable them to offer a range of bespoke wordplay, conversation, and craft activities for weekly English and support sessions. The money will support the purchase of infrastructure items like tablets and course materials but also offer broader training and awareness for all staff to ensure everyone feels confident approaching the challenge of language barriers.



*Photo credit: Kooj Chuhan. A group take part in craft activities at Northmoor Library /ALT text Four women wearing hijabs and jackets sit along a table. An Oldham Libraries assistant is standing in the background. The women are working on a craft activity involving red paper and coloured pens.*

The project impressed the NAG Executive Committee due to its value for money, sustainability and innovation. A high number of people could potentially benefit from the initiative within Oldham and the activity plans created during the project will be available as a resource for other library services to build similar offers giving an even greater value for money.

Anna Homer, Development Officer from Oldham Libraries said:

“We are so excited to receive the 2023 Project Grant, which will allow us to greatly expand the reach and impact of our English support sessions through the addition of bespoke activities and new resources. Demand for ESOL courses far out-strips availability in Oldham and our more informal sessions keep increasing in popularity! Our groups allow Oldhamers for whom English is an additional language to build confidence, make friends and have fun, along with accessing wider support systems.

Developing our own language and craft activity resources and building the confidence of our staff will enable us to create an infrastructure that will support both our English groups and our communities for many years to come, as well as allowing us to share our learnings and activity framework with other library services. We are grateful to NAG for the opportunity to continue building links within the borough between new arrivals, residents with English as an additional language, our volunteers, our libraries, and the wider community.”

Our previous Chair, Alison Millar explains the motivation behind providing this fund:

“I am keen that NAG gives opportunities for public libraries to learn from each other and because of that I am so pleased that NAG are offering this award. While we welcome innovative new projects we are also excited to fund the “what if?” type of project. Have you had something that you have wanted to give a go for a while? Do you have a problem that you would like to try out solutions for? Then this NAG grant is for you. If you are awarded the fund all we need afterwards is for you to share your experiences with other library colleagues.”

The project will be presented to other NAG members at an event in 2024 and will be featured in our Members’ journal *Taking Stock* to enable sharing and discussion.

### **Notes to editors:**

#### **About this Grant:**

The NAG Public Library Project of the Year Grant was designed to enable public libraries to take forward an innovative project, which may have already had a pilot phase, and develop it further. All applicants must be NAG Members. The grant offers one £5,000 award. Applications usually open in December of the previous year with a deadline in March.

The previous winners are Vision Redbridge Culture & Leisure (2019), Wandsworth Libraries and Derbyshire Libraries (2021), Buckinghamshire Libraries (2022).

For further information contact:

Jennie Hillyard, Business Development Manager NAG

Email: [nag.office@nag.org.uk](mailto:nag.office@nag.org.uk)

#### **About NAG:**

NAG is a voice for everyone from all sectors associated with library and information resources, Chief Officers, librarians, publishers and service suppliers – providing leadership and a source of shared expertise for its membership in the public, academic and private sectors.

NAG produces industry standards and impartial good practice guidelines relating to its core purpose. It offers opportunities for education and training, knowledge sharing and networking through its series of regional seminars and workshops.

About our winners:

Oldham Libraries, part of Oldham Council's Heritage, Libraries and Arts service, operate 12 libraries across this diverse Greater Manchester borough. They were awarded Libraries of Sanctuary status in 2019 and continue to be committed to offering a place of welcome to all.