

Working with public libraries



Who we are

Independent creative company with public sector values.

Internationally known as a thought-leader for libraries.

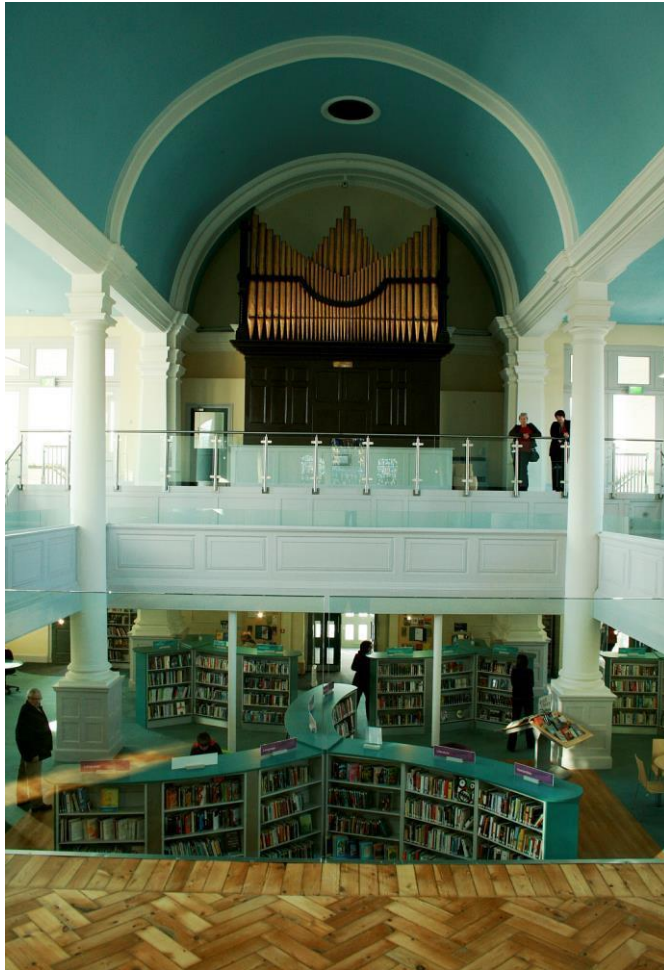
Passionate advocate for libraries to external stakeholders while challenging library managers and staff as a critical friend.

Based in Pontefract in the UK, and in Willamsport, Pennsylvania, our staff are drawn from the arts, education, web development, retail and marketing. We bring this wide range of skills to help libraries modernize and meet new challenges.



Pontefract office built to our own design

Areas of expertise



- **Audience engagement** - understanding the psychology of library customers
- **Library furniture design** - 95% of UK library services have a piece of our furniture
- **Library staff training** - 20,000 staff have taken our training courses in 5 continents
- **Library interior design** - designed and installed 300+ public and 400+ school libraries

Understanding what makes libraries special



Southwater One main library floor



Breathing Space at Southwater on a winter evening

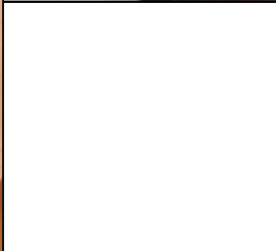
Defining the elusive qualities that make a library special to its community has been a life's work at Opening the Book. In physical terms library values translate into accessibility; a sense of belonging; ownership; stimulus; comfort; and help if you want it but not if you don't. The products a library offers may change but the access, experience and facilitation to use them both independently and with support remain the same.

Rachel Van Riel is an internationally known speaker on library values and their translation into physical design and has been a consultant to library services in Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands, Ireland, Canada, the USA, Australia and New Zealand as well as in the UK.

Awareness of different customer groups



Libraries are for everyone



Space planning to meet varied needs



A public library is one of the most complex operations to plan. Buildings are usually designed either for education or leisure - a library does both. Institutions cater for experts or beginners, individuals or groups - libraries do both. Many environments can target specific audiences and meet their needs - families, young professionals, elderly people, children, students – this makes design much easier. A library is for all these people and must balance their conflicting needs.

A library has elements of a community centre, a creative space, a classroom, a club, a church and a council information point. These may be differently balanced according to the priorities of each community.

Creative zoning



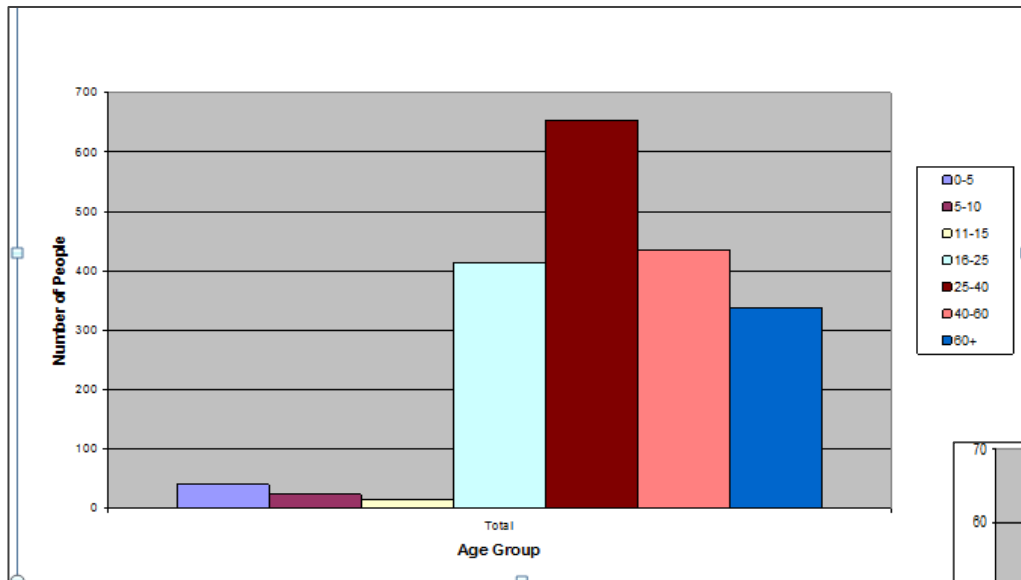
We work with you to fully understand your priority audiences and services. We then design a zonal scheme which gives the right balance between areas for different offers, activities and ages.

Zones can be flexible; we advise on how to manage through time as well as space. This example is zoned for noise and length of visit as well as for different customer groups.

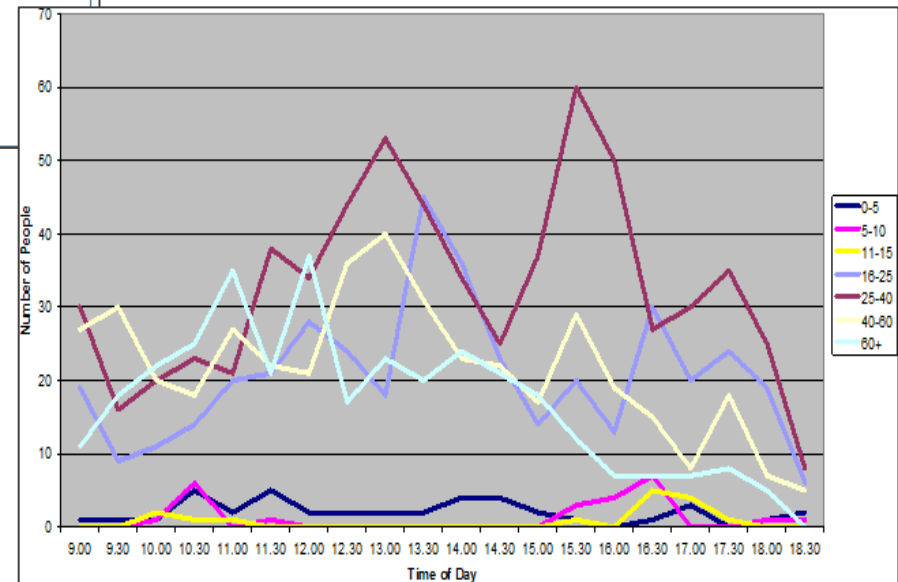
Example library zones:

- Healthy Living showcase at entrance on right
- Large children's with space for events in front
- Dedicated YA separate from children (orange carpet)
- Study and meeting rooms top right
- Traditional stack and study area to left

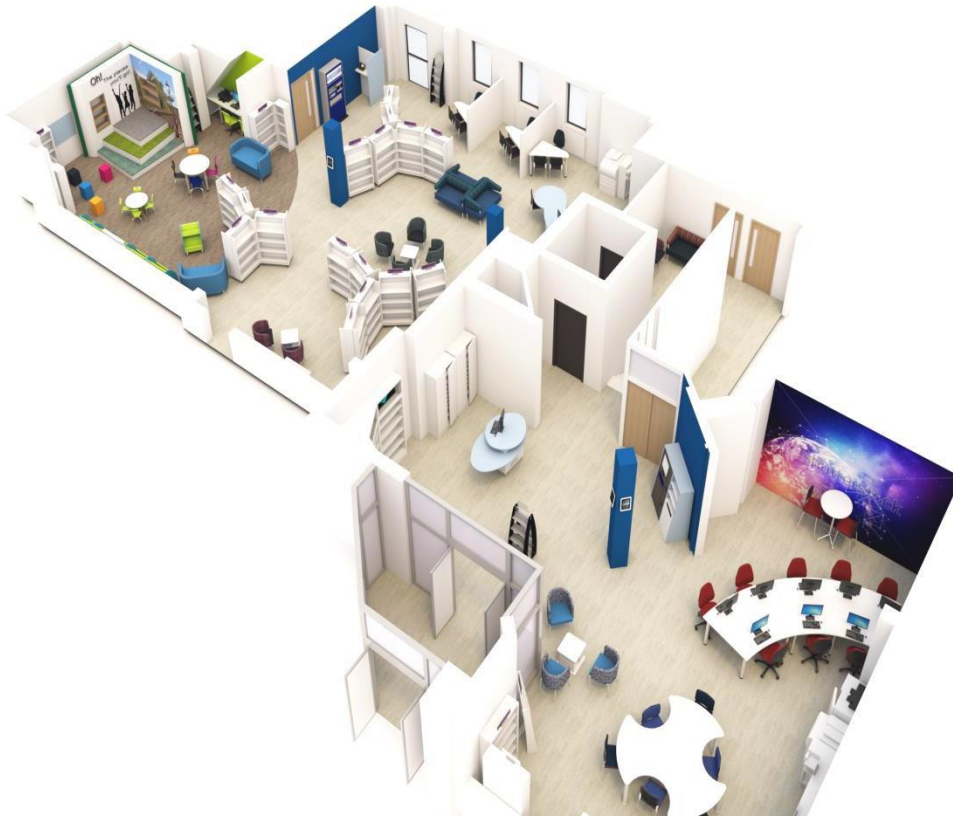
Designs based on research



- 60,000+ customer interviews carried out by library staff on our online training courses
- 1500+ observations carried out by library staff as part of our face-to-face training courses
- 500+ in-depth interviews about reading as part of setting up reading groups
- Based on Paco Underhill and other retail psychologists



Strengthening communities



The library as a social hub plays a key role in enabling communities. Opening the Book designs create:

- A place where people want to go
- An accessible and inclusive welcome for everyone
- A crossover point for generations and backgrounds
- A local information hub
- Space for groups to meet
- Space for community partners to hold pop-up events
- Flexible furniture to enable large events

Co-location and partners



We have designed libraries in health centres, theatres, cafes and sports centres as well as with museums, registrars and education centres.

At Southwater One and Newcastle-under-Lyme we revolutionised council customer services.

At South Woodford in London we redesigned the library to create space for a gym which paid for the library refurbishment.



A welcoming space for everyone



One day in the life of
Niagara-on-the-Lake
Library



Autism-friendly design

This library is autism friendly

Some of our visitors might make noises.

This helps them cope with stress.

Talk to a member of staff to find out more.



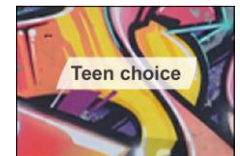
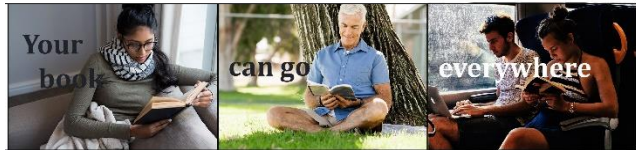
- No clutter
- Space for privacy
- Clear navigation
- Calm colours in a coherent environment
- Autism-friendly hours?

Visual impairment, arthritis and dementia-friendly design



- Careful use of tonal contrast in colour schemes
- High contrast clear signage
- Seats easy to get up from
- Clear navigation with landmarks

Vibrant reading experience



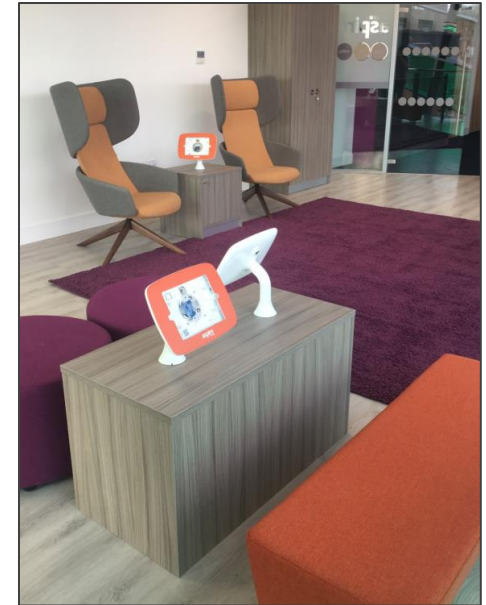
Lightbox bookcases provide a retail-style promotional hotspot. Graphic panels are front-lit to create maximum impact. We design attractive graphics to promote the chosen part of the collection.

Spaces to grab, browse and linger



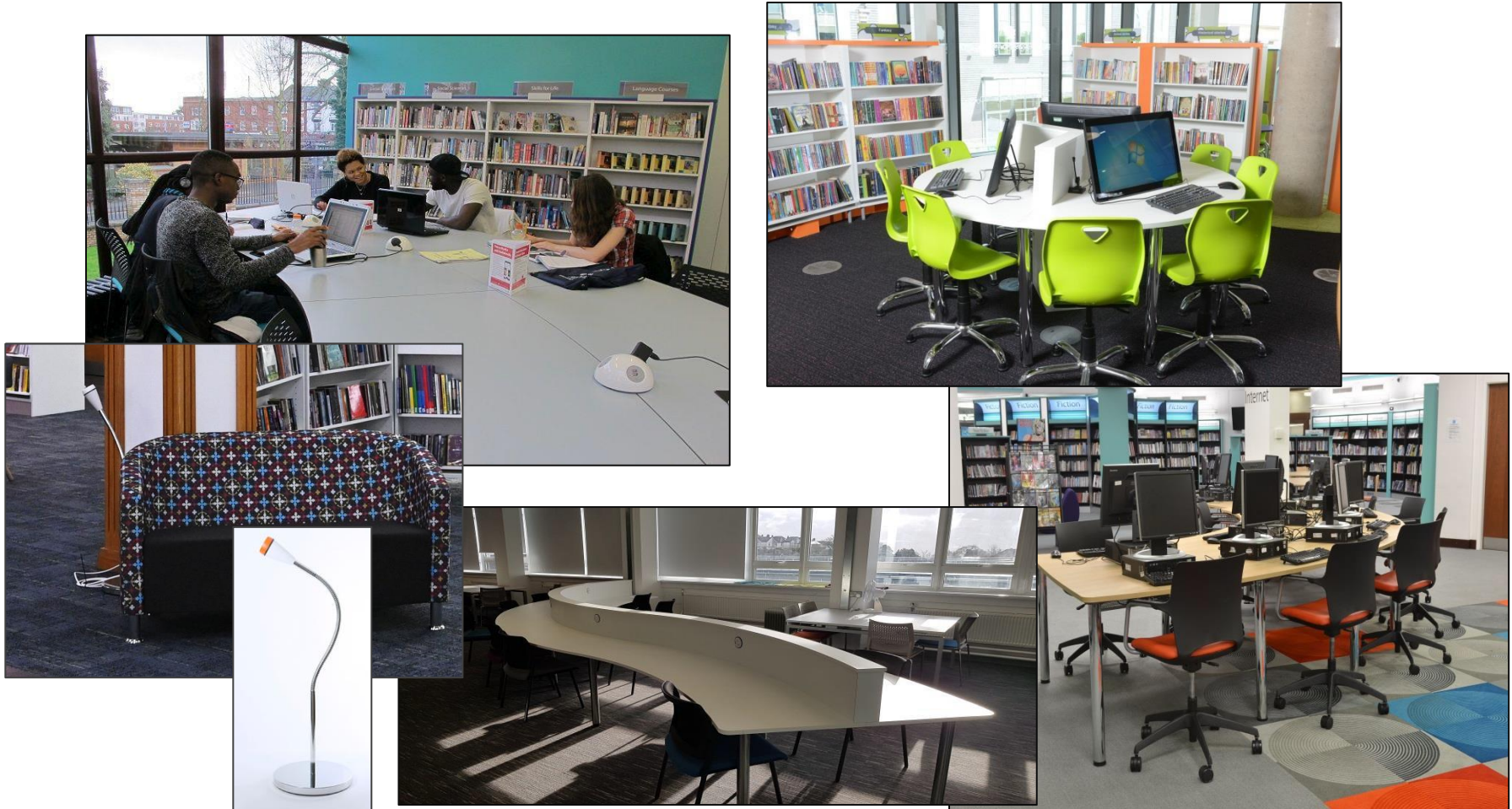
Wanstead Library

Making the most of the digital world



Wall-mounted,
freestanding, inset into
cabinets, on shelf ends –
lots of possibilities to
integrate digital offers as
budget allows

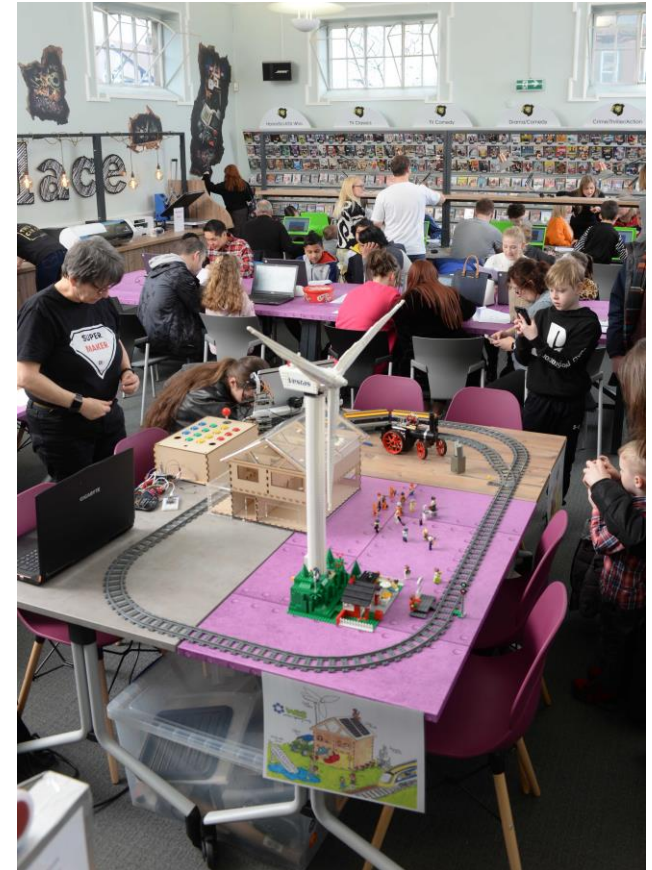
Computers, tablets and power for BYOD



Flexible study, activity and makerspace areas



Makerspace at Gateshead Central Library



Flexible study, activity and makerspace areas



**Innovation Suite at
Stafford Library
and Makerspace at
Oxfordshire
County Library**



Mobile makerspace



Flip-top write-on/wipe-off tables and funky storage at EDGE award-winning Redbridge Lab Central



Economic growth

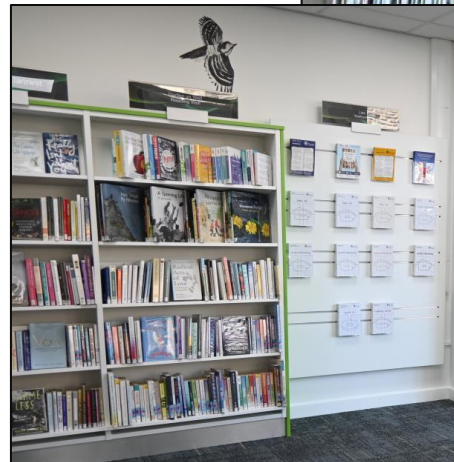


Smart areas for business advice, meetings and individual workspace

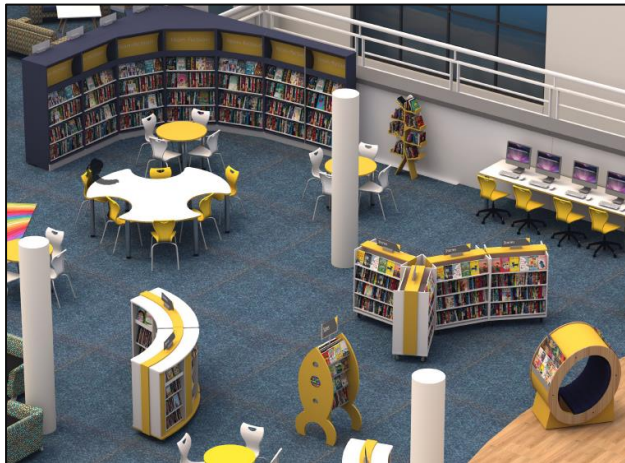
Health and wellbeing



Health zones of all sizes such as health display walls for Telford and a Macmillan Health Hub (Hwb Iechyd) as a rural outpost for cancer support in a rural library.

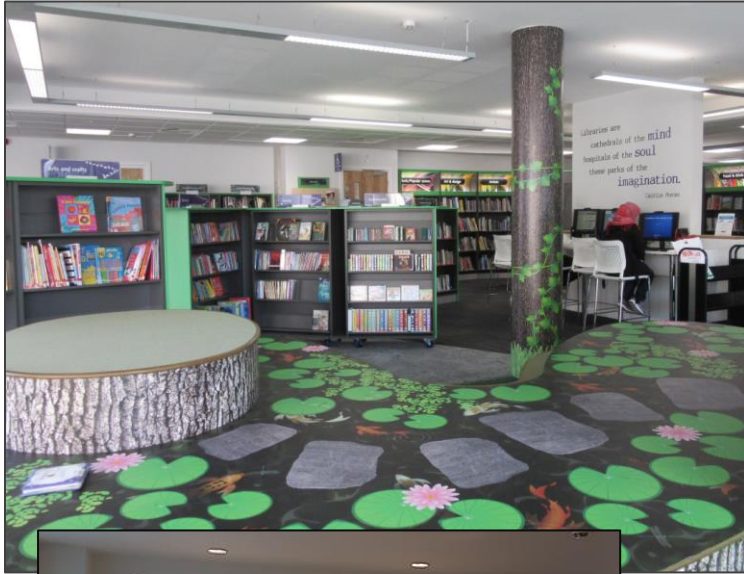


Exciting children's spaces



'Wow' factor – children's

Furniture, graphics and colour bring books alive



'Wow' factor – children's



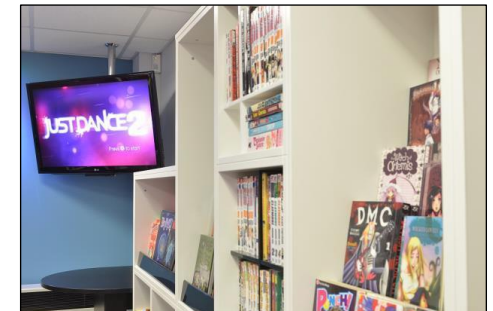
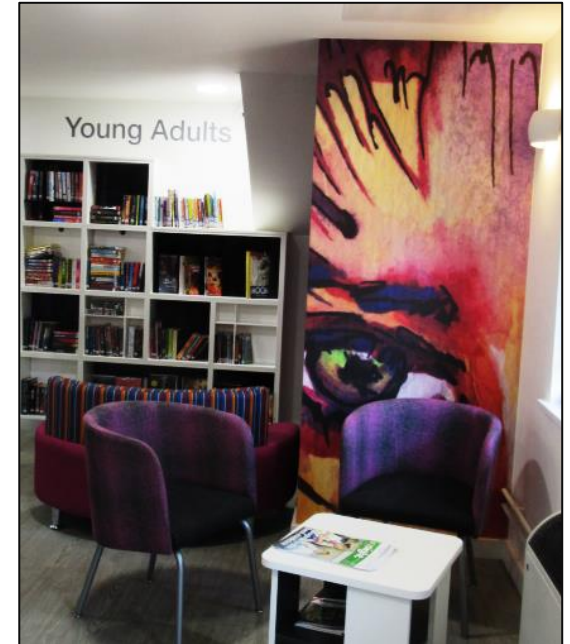
The children's library at Llanrwst was given a woodland theme using illustrations by a local artist.

The large feature unit included a fox den, a tree house and magnetic board games .

'Wow' factor – young adult

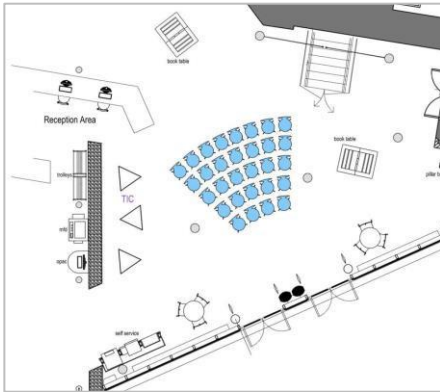


Friendly, comfortable and full of things to do

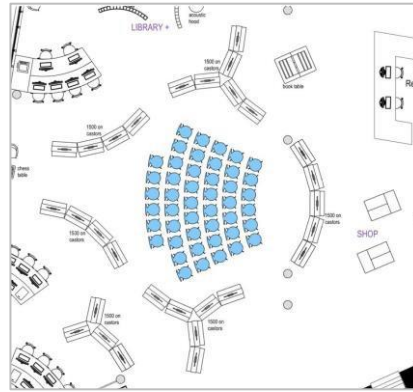


Flexible furniture for activities

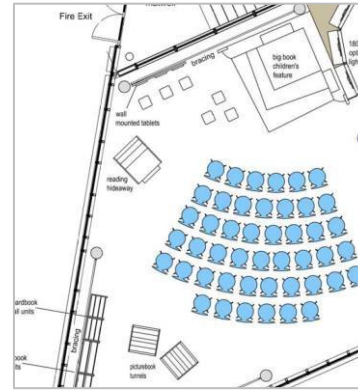
Furniture in our layouts can be easily moved to provide ample space for events both while the library is open and out of hours. We can integrate useful storage behind the bookcases to hold event seating and tables.



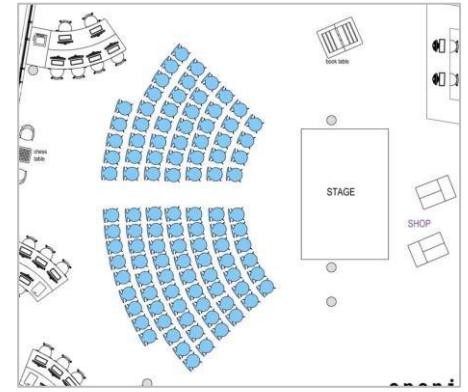
Event for 30 in atrium



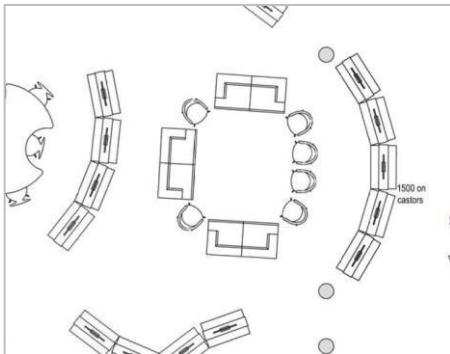
Event for 46 in main library



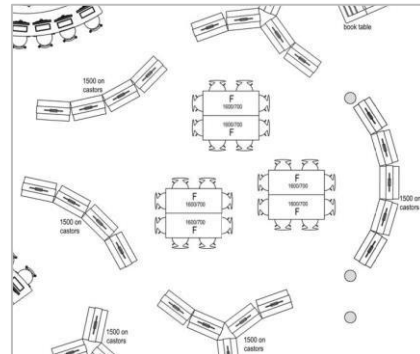
Event for 46 in children's



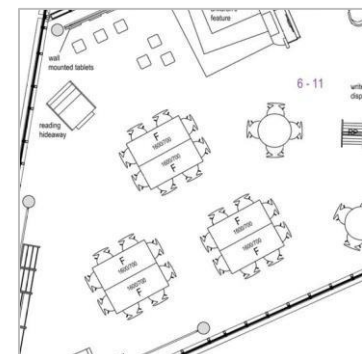
Event with stage for 104 in main library



Group of 12 in main library

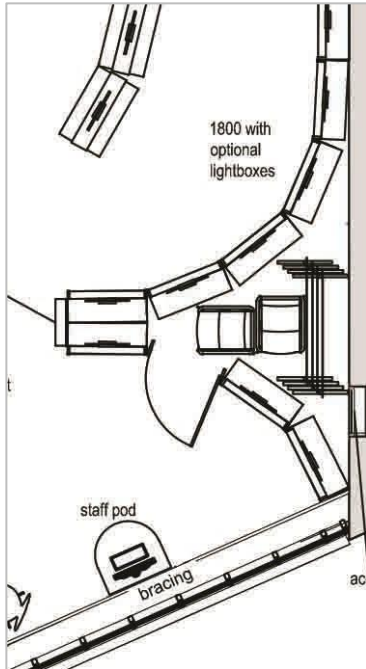


Workshop for 24 in main library

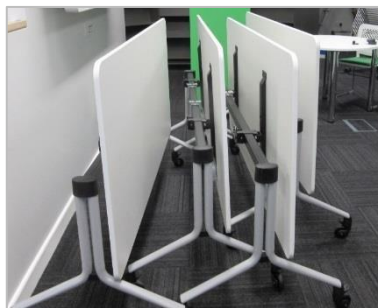


Workshop for 32 in children's

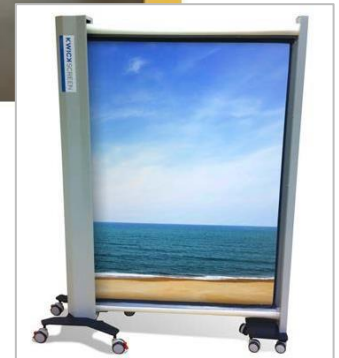
Flexible furniture for events



Stackable chairs can be conveniently stored alongside flip-top tables in the specially created storeroom behind the bookcases in this design.



Systems like Kwickscreen are perfect for dividing spaces during occasional events. The screen is retractable and fitted with castors, so it is easy to move and store. It bends to any shape, not just straight lines. It can be custom printed with logos and images or it can be fitted with a write-on/wipe-off surface.



Flexible display and storage



Opening the Book has designed and produced attractive display units for pop-up shops in museums and libraries.

These can be customised with different shelves and attachments to suit all types of merchandize and can be fitted with lockable cupboards/drawers for storage.



Our mobile display stand (above) can be fitted with slatwall panels to hold acrylic pockets for leaflets or velcroable fabric for posters.

Our mobile promotional pod (left) can be used to support particular events like Summer Reading, further education or health programmes.

Design team



Rachel Van Riel - Director

Lead design consultant guaranteeing that a high level of advice and attention is available throughout each individual project. Brings wide international as well as UK library design experience.



Carol Cooper - Business Director

Costing, logistics, liaison with suppliers and contractors. Highly skilled and disciplined project manager who keeps every project on budget and on timetable.



**Olive Fowler
Design Manager**

Interior design to create visual impact with colours, finishes, seating, graphics.



**Richard Van Riel
Layout Designer**

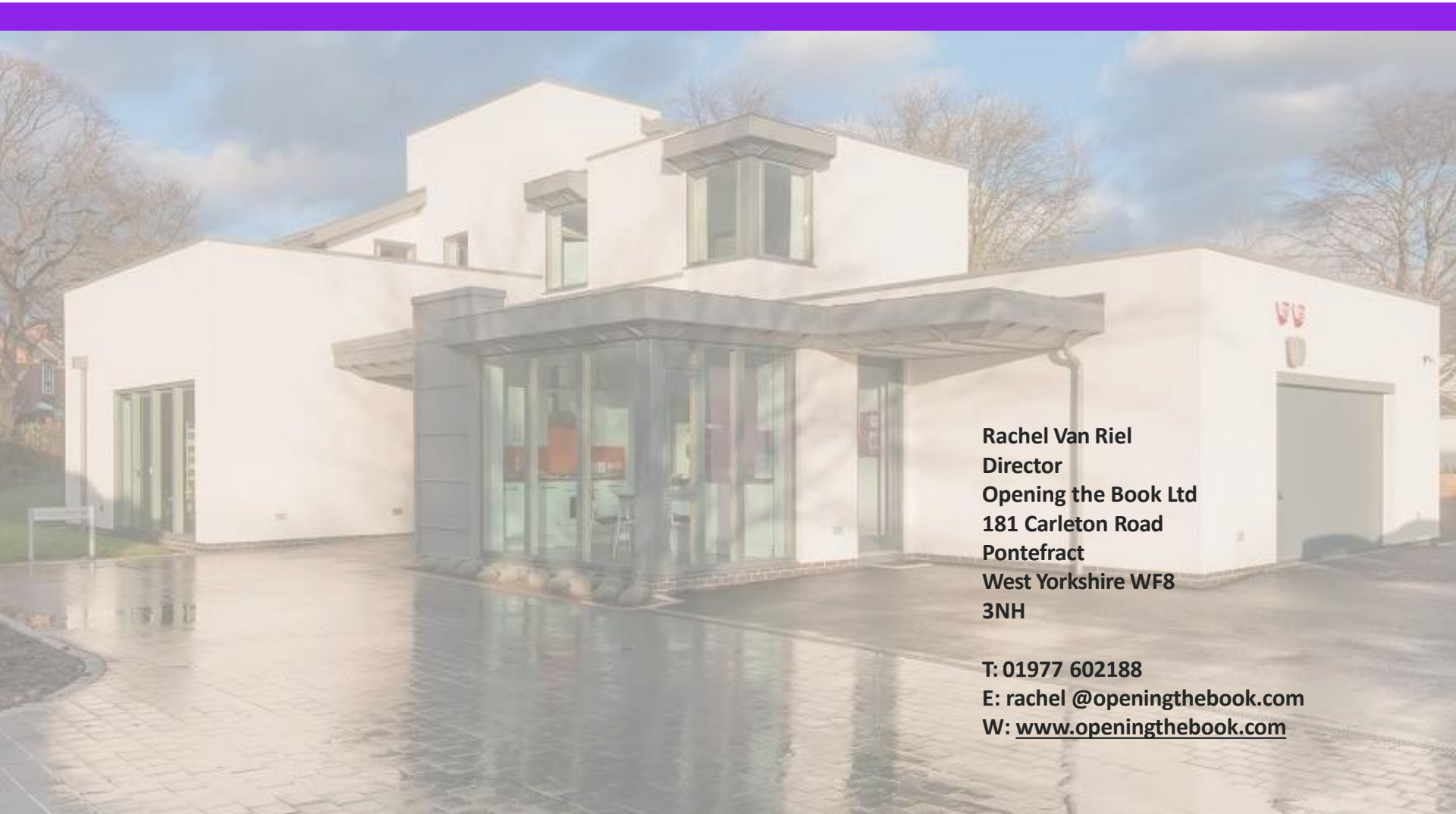
Space planning and operational design for smooth people and workflows.



**Amera Salajee
CAD Designer**

Scaled plans and 3D visualisations to show how the project will look in reality.

Contact



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