



Culture, Leisure and Sport Cabinet Member Bulletin Councillor Oliver Lewis April 2019

Latest News

Libraries

Libraries investment

The Labour manifesto set out our ambitions to invest in our libraries and turn them into modern and attractive facilities for our residents. I am pleased to announce that from 1 April 2019, the libraries book fund will increase by 9%. In addition, Croydon Council has taken the decision to join the London Libraries Consortium, which will enable our readers to access a much wider range of book titles and online resources than they are currently able to.

Realising the potential of women:

Our libraries have partnered with Yuliana Topalzy from My Out Space, one of Maserati's 100 most inspiring entrepreneurs, to "realise the potential of women," particularly those with children, by supporting them with digital skills, financial advice and support into work or business. Central, Norbury and Thornton Heath Libraries each hosted Yuliana's International Women's Day celebrations in early March, a marketplace event for women to access support and develop their skills for employment or self-employment.

SPINE festival: Stronger Minds

SPINE festival is a partnership between London Libraries and Apples and Snakes, England's leading Spoken Word organisation. The festival celebrates creativity and community in libraries across London.

As part of the festival, our libraries hosted a wellbeing fair for teens on Saturday 9th March 12 -4pm at Central Library: Stronger Minds was a free creative fair aimed at empowering young people to talk about their wellbeing and express themselves about the issues they face. The range of partners involved included Rap Therapy, Well Versed Ink, Oasis, Reaching Higher Youth Charity, Imagine Independence, Croydon Music and Arts, Off the Record, NHS Young People's sexual health service, Lives Not Knives, Young People Insight and Good Wolf People theatre company.





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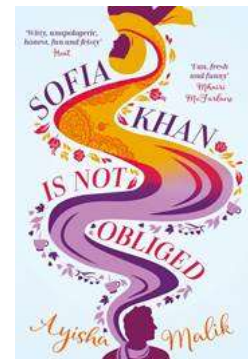
The SPINE-commissioned spoken word production, *Crowded*, was performed by three exciting young poet-performers: Desree Gumbs-Carty, Laura Rae and Slam the Poet, telling the story of ordinary young people whose anxiety, depression and desire leads to harmful and destructive behaviours.

The library's range of "Shelf Help" books, providing 13 to 18 year olds with expert endorsed advice and information about anxiety, stress, bullying, exams, and more were promoted during the SPINE Festival in all our libraries across Croydon.

<https://readingagency.org.uk/news/media/shelf-help-the-books-helping-british-teens-turn-the-page-on-mental-health.html>

Cityread

Sofia Khan is Not Obligated by Ayisha Malik and published by Bonnier Zaffre is unveiled as 2019's Cityread book. Croydon readers will be treated to a visit from this year's author, Ayisha Malik, on 10th May (6.00-7.00pm) at Ashburton Library.



The month-long Cityread celebration of reading, focusing on one book, and helps Londoners discover and celebrate their city through its stories. During this eighth annual festival, our ambition is to turn Croydon into one massive, interactive book group.

Museum

A collection of paintings and photographs of local residents is being showcased in Croydon Arts Collection's 'Croydonians' exhibition, running until 20th April. Items include portraits of an Addington blacksmith and his wife, a Mayor and celebrities from the past and present.

In the Croydon Museum there is an exhibition commemorating the end of the First World War, featuring untold stories for our citizens and their experience of peace, protest and conflict. Work has started on a Heritage Lottery Funded Project entitled Home Front led by Digital Drama and working in partnership with LB Merton. This will capture WW2 stories, especially on events during 1939 such as evacuation and

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create a new soundtrack over existing WW2 local film. We hope to showcase this as part of a Clocktower Late on 6 September 2019.

Museum staff are developing an exhibition celebrating 100 years of social housing in partnership with Housing colleagues. Work is underway to interview and archive stories of social housing from residents and staff.

Culture

Talawa comes to Croydon

Talawa Theatre Company is to take up residence within the redeveloped Fairfield Halls in Croydon, giving the UK's primary Black theatre company a 200 seat studio and offices. This will be the first time since 1995 that Talawa's headquarters will feature an on-site performance space. The new space, opening to the public on 16 September 2019, will operate as a central hub for Black artists, develop a community outreach programme, and allow the company to create, develop and premiere new work.

We are absolutely delighted to welcome Talawa and incredibly proud that they have chosen Croydon as their new home. Their vision and ambition in changing the face of theatre, attracting diverse audiences and creating platforms for the work of Black artists, is internationally renowned, and we are excited by the conversations we have already had with them about the potential for them being based here. Our multi-million pound investment transforms Fairfield Halls into world-class arts centre, putting culture at the heart of our regeneration and creating a wealth of new opportunities for our communities to access the arts. Talawa recognise and share our ambition, and we very much look forward to working with them as we make this become a reality.