

## Lockdown Case Study:

Anna Leslie, Librarian, Taylor High School, Motherwell,  
North Lanarkshire

### Supporting the Health and Wellbeing of the School Community during Lockdown

Anna Leslie is the librarian at Taylor High, a school in Motherwell, North Lanarkshire. She was appointed as full-time SLRC Manager in 2010 but now works part-time with her job-sharing partner and is always looking for creative ways for the library to engage with her school community. Anna certainly wasn't prepared for lockdown to stop this!

#### The Lockdown Cookbook

During the first lockdown, Anna wasn't sure what she was going to do but remembered the words a wise school librarian - Sheila Toonen from Elgin Academy - had said to her at a library conference: *'Bring yourself and the positive things in your life to the library.'* This had always stayed with Anna and because she was at home doing lots of cooking she was inspired and came up with the idea of an online *'Lockdown Cookbook'*.

Anna was keen to know what others in the school community were cooking so she got in contact with the Principal Teacher of Home Economics and Wellbeing via email and suggested the idea. He thought it was a great idea and they both promoted it on their respective Twitter pages and the school website; Twitter was often used for communication during this project as it was quick and effective. Anna has found that, over the years, some of her most successful projects have been through collaboration and having another member of staff driving the project forward with her was invaluable.

Staff and pupils were asked to submit their recipes to either Anna or the Principal Teacher and she originally thought that if she received ten recipes, she would be happy. However, the cookbook ended up with about thirty recipes so the idea obviously connected with others.

Once Anna had received all the recipes, she began to edit them for the school website, thinking at the time that "if we are ever in a lockdown again these may come in useful". Well, they did!

During the second lockdown, Anna promoted the cookbook again through Twitter and often made some of the recipes from the it herself. A parent commented on Twitter about how much she loved the cookbook and that some of the recipes had become firm family favourites. A pupil also commented about a recipe they had tried out for their family. Success - Anna was able to reach pupils and parents during lockdown proving that an online school community cookbook was extremely worthwhile.

#### Recording slides for YouTube

For World Book Day 2021, Anna, again, just wasn't sure what she was going to do or how she was going to engage with her school community. However, once more, she took inspiration from her life. Well, her husband's life really as he often recorded PowerPoints and presentations for work and Anna started wondering how she could use this to inspire the school community? The idea she came up with was to produce a PowerPoint and record herself reading an extract from a book.

Anna decided to use *"The Fabled Beast Chronicles: First Aid for Fairies"* by Lari Don and her first step was to contact the publishers, Kelpies, to seek their permission to do this. She is always wary when it comes to copyright but they were very supportive. She then began to produce a PowerPoint with images of the book and characters in the story. At the beginning Anna thought she would read a chapter; after all, she read extracts from

books all the time to pupils, but she found she was so nervous! And reading a book aloud to a computer screen was actually more nerve racking than she thought it would be. Anna read the blurb at the back of the book and five pages which introduced each of the mythical characters in the chapter. This felt like the right number of pages and ensured the reading was not too long. After she had finished her recording, she uploaded it to YouTube. “ that way the pupils, parents and other followers on Twitter could see what the school librarian had been up to for the World Book Day 2021 in lockdown. The recording was also placed on the school website. It was a different and creative way to approach reading for pleasure and Anna has decided this is something she would like to continue.

### Reading Lunches for Staff and School Librarians

Another activity for World Book Day 2021 that Anna organised was a reading lunch for school librarians across Scotland, especially as she was feeling a bit down in the dumps about the second lockdown, and decided to focus on her own health and wellbeing. Anna was trying to read as much as possible during the lockdowns and chose to mimic the activity the Scottish Book Trust ran during the first lockdown called ‘*Reading Lunches*’. She contacted fellow school librarians via Twitter and asked them to share what they were reading with their lunch on World Book Day 2021. School librarians from her own and other local authorities joined in at the same time on Twitter with their chosen lunch and book, giving them an opportunity to come together to celebrate reading. It was a real boost for her wellbeing to see what books other school librarians and staff were reading and it also afforded her with a chance to take time out of her day to read. Wonderful!

### Researching Websites for Departments

During both lockdowns, Anna and her job-sharing partner produced and reviewed a list of websites for departments across the school; she then emailed these lists out to the relevant staff members. Anna and her partner would search independently for websites then share what they had found via email. This was worthwhile. Although much of the time they found the same websites, there were times when each suggested useful sites the other had missed - working together enhanced these lists and they will now be added to the library catalogue. Anna would like to think that the school library at Taylor High has supported the health and wellbeing of not only her own school community but also the wider school librarian community during both lockdowns. For her, it only further highlights how a school librarian can bring various parts of their community together.