
NEWS RELEASE



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For Immediate Release
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Minister for Libraries, Rob Wilson opens two state of the art libraries in Hertfordshire

Today (Thursday 16 March) Libraries Minister, Rob Wilson officially opened two new state of the art public libraries to Hertfordshire residents. Mr Wilson unveiled a commemorative plaque at each library where he met with staff and members of the public before cutting a celebratory cake to mark the occasion.

Hemel Hempstead library opened its doors to the public in January in marking the completion of a major building project in partnership with Dacorum Borough Council to improve the library service for the local community. The new facility is part of a wider regeneration project for Hemel Hempstead with the aim of attracting more people and greater investment into the town.

Watford Central Library reopened to the public in November 2016 after being fully refurbished to create a bright, welcoming, flexible, tech-enabled facility for users within the original 1920s building. The refurbished library aims to improve the general library service offering whilst providing modern technologies to a growing local population.

Libraries Minister Rob Wilson said, "Libraries are extremely important to the communities they serve, not only as places to borrow books, but where people can learn new skills and find out about what's going on in their local area."

"I am delighted that Hertfordshire County Council is investing in its library service. By introducing innovative technology and providing

flexible spaces, Hertfordshire is showing how modern libraries can work for residents in the 21st century."

Both libraries have more books and resources; the new spaces have been designed to be flexible and inclusive allowing for a variety of community groups and activities to take place. Both Watford Central and Hemel Hempstead Library are delighted to host a CreatorSpace. CreatorSpace is a new concept for Hertfordshire Libraries, providing opportunities for library users and local community groups to explore and develop their skills and confidence in a range of new technologies in a safe and supportive environment.

CreatorSpace resources on offer include a 3D printer, iMac's loaded with professional standard audio and video editing software, tablets, a digital cutter, digital embroidery and sewing machine for craft activities and Chromebooks and Raspberry Pi kits for use with young people's coding clubs. CreatorSpace offers creative groups, taster sessions and short courses, supported by library staff and volunteers.

Teresa Heritage, Cabinet Member for Public Health, Localism and Libraries said, "Libraries are about so much more than books nowadays, they are a hub for the community. Hertfordshire County Council is continuing to invest in our Libraries in line with our Inspiring Libraries Strategy which launched in 2015."

"Our aim in Hertfordshire is to celebrate libraries as a vibrant community asset, provide cutting edge technology for the benefit of residents and promote libraries as an enhanced gateway to reading, information and well-being."

Sally Marshall, Dacorum Borough Council Chief Executive said, "The new library for Hemel Hempstead has been an integral to the success of the Forum in the first few months of opening. The vision of the Forum was that it would be a community hub for the people of the borough and through our partnership with Hertfordshire County Council it has become just that."

“From the new building, residents are offered cutting edge library services, a place for both residents and businesses to meet and an important learning resource for Hemel Hempstead, all under one roof.”

For more information or to find your local library visit www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/libraries or call Hertfordshire Libraries on 0300 123 4049.

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Cabinet Member for Public Health, Localism and Libraries, Teresa Heritage via the Press Office on 01992 555967

PICTURES ATTACHED

- Unveiling of the plaque and celebratory cake cutting to mark the opening of the new Hemel Hempstead Library by Libraries Minister Rob Wilson and Teresa Heritage, Cabinet Member for Public Health, Localism and Libraries on Thursday 16 March 2017
- Libraries Minister Rob Wilson with Teresa Heritage, Cabinet Member for Public Health, Localism and Libraries, Frances Button, Chairman, Hertfordshire County Council and Darren Walford, Chairman, Watford Borough Council at Watford Central Library
- Visitors enjoying CreatorSpace technology at Watford Central Library
- Libraries Minister Rob Wilson learns to play a 'Makey Makey Music' banana piano in Hemel Hempstead Library CreatorSpace

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