

THE HIVE

AN EXCEPTIONAL LIBRARY
WITH CHILDREN AT ITS HEART



The **Hive**
a partnership between



UNIVERSITY OF
WORCESTER



worcestershire
county council



OPENED IN JULY 2012 BY HER LATE MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II, THE HIVE IS EUROPE'S FIRST FULLY INTEGRATED UNIVERSITY AND PUBLIC LIBRARY

AN EXCEPTIONAL LIBRARY WITH CHILDREN AT ITS HEART

THE HIVE IS THE HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL RESULT OF A GROUND-BREAKING EXPERIMENT BRINGING TOGETHER A UNIVERSITY AND LOCAL AUTHORITY TO WORK IN PARTNERSHIP TO CREATE A TRUE COMMUNITY FACILITY.

FOREWORD

The Hive has reimagined what a library should be in the 21st Century, connecting and engaging communities, creating opportunities and promoting a love of learning.

With its mixture of plentiful study resources and innovative social, cultural and heritage facilities, covering 10,000 square metres of space, over five floors, The Hive is more than just a library.

The Hive, and the site on which it stands, is jointly owned by the University of Worcester and Worcestershire County Council. It brings together people from all ages, backgrounds and communities. It is a shared space where use is defined by what visitors want to do, not by who they are. Public library books are shelved alongside university texts; study spaces and computers are shared; and staff are not behind desks but are walking the floors throughout the building, ensuring support and advice is always close to hand.

At its heart is the exceptional children's library, a place where families, schools and parents groups can come together to be inspired and share in the joys of reading. Since opening, The Hive has hosted more than 40,000 visits from schoolchildren and supported more than 4,700 adults with community learning and developing vital job skills. Meanwhile, almost 47,000 people have attended events provided by Worcestershire Archive & Archaeology learning and outreach services.

By working together, the University of Worcester and Worcestershire County Council's shared belief in learning and inclusion has provided a cultural, learning and information centre of excellence for the City and wider region's residents, as well as the University's students.

Professor David Green CBE DL
Vice Chancellor and Chief Executive
University of Worcester

Councillor Marcus Hart
Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member
with Responsibility for Communities
Worcestershire County Council

MORE THAN
A QUARTER
OF A MILLION
BOOKS AND
12 MILES OF
ARCHIVE
COLLECTIONS

“Nearly four times as many children are now taking out books to read. Kids who had never set foot in a university before go there voluntarily to do their homework. University students run drama workshops for children at the weekend. And The Hive’s work club and adult learning programmes are having a big impact too, with a growing track record of people securing jobs or picking up their education again.”

David Willetts, Former Minister of State for Universities and Science, in 2014

“The Hive is a classic example of inclusivity. It’s always busy, with wonderful learning and recreational facilities. It has students there, members of the public there, it’s well used, it’s open from 8.30am to 10pm every day of the week, everybody gets on with each other and the costs are shared.”

Andrew Manning-Cox, Former High Sheriff of Worcestershire, in 2022



A PLACE FOR ALL

THE HIVE HAS BECOME A BEACON OF SUCCESS, HELPING TO BUILD RESILIENCE, CONNECTION, INDEPENDENCE AND PROSPERITY IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND SEEKS TO INSPIRE PEOPLE OF ALL AGES, FROM ALL BACKGROUNDS TO ASPIRE TO HIGHER EDUCATION.

It is a place where children, students, business people and citizens can come to be inspired, to learn and to share.

By its first birthday, more than a million books had been issued and 1,290 young people aged between 11 and 16 had signed up to become a member of the library at The Hive.

By comparison, in the same period the year before at Worcester Library (July 2011 – January 2012), 100 young people joined the library service, so The Hive has increased membership 12-fold in this age category.

The innovative staffing model sees staff from the Council and the

University working closely together with shared values, and aims to provide a consistent level of service to all customers.

Strengths and skills in one team are shared with others, giving staff the chance to develop and progress, and the events programme draws on both internal staff and external partners to provide an exceptionally wide variety of events, far more than either the University or Council could provide themselves.

The Hive has an influence on library and heritage developments nationally and internationally, with staff constantly in demand as consultants and conference speakers.



“The Hive is an incredible community resource for students and residents alike. I saw schoolchildren and parents using the facility, as well as students from the University. It breathes life into the City.”

Bridget Phillipson,
Labour’s Shadow Education
Secretary, in 2022



“The Hive is a great example of a civic university in action, in terms of partnership working with the Council to deliver a shared service for students and the community. It’s the way that the University and community are integrated together to provide an outstanding service for all.”

Richard Brabner, Director of the UPP Foundation, in 2022



THE BIRTH OF THE HIVE

THE LANDMARK BUILDING WAS ALMOST A DECADE IN PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT AND CAME AT A TIME OF INCREASING PUBLIC LIBRARY CLOSURES AROUND THE COUNTRY.

The Hive was borne out of a belief that the University’s resources should be available to all. Long renowned for its high-quality teacher training, the University housed an impressive collection of children’s books and classroom resources which, aside from the occasional staff member’s child or school visit, lay out of reach of the very people they were intended to inspire – children.

Now those collections are at the very heart of The Hive’s children’s library, available for children to discover. The extensive classroom resources, filled with items to teach about other cultures, history and geography, can be borrowed by teachers, parent and toddler groups or individuals.

The University of Worcester and Worcestershire County Council were united by a desire to work more

closely together and a belief that by doing so, services for both partners could be improved and exciting opportunities for learning and inclusion generated.

The aim was to improve the services that both partners could provide via a sustainable, state-of-the-art library facility, also housing a customer service centre, and historic archive and archaeology services within one building. All of these aims have been realised in practice.

The Hive now stands proud as an asset in the City, and has contributed significantly to the urban regeneration of the local community, transforming a brownfield city centre site that once housed the local dustcart depot.





A STRIKING DESIGN

THE HIVE IS A RESPECTFUL EXPRESSION
OF THE REGION'S RICH HISTORY.

Designed through collaboration between the University and County Council staff and the design team at architects Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios, The Hive is a respectful expression of the region's rich history with a distinctive roofline, augmented with seven irregular cones, that rises over the City, complementing the surrounding historic landscape, with its Cathedral and distant Malvern Hills.

Internally, the building was designed to include a mixture of public and private spaces with different functions. As well as communal browsing and reading areas, a café, and council customer services centre, there are meeting rooms and hundreds of private study spaces. Stock is integrated in a single sequence, not on separate floors, so public library books can occupy the same shelves as academic texts.

"What an amazing idea to marry up the local authority with the University to create a place like this. It's a wonderful, original idea and it's panned out to be absolutely brilliant."

Best-selling author **Michael Rosen**, speaking in 2013, when he performed the official opening of the children's library.

The inspirational Children's Library, one of the largest in the Country, includes unique storytelling spaces like the Story Pit and the enchanting Story Island, and is filled with a range of fun and interactive learning resources.

The library has drawn praise from many quarters, including former Children's Laureates Dame Jacqueline Wilson and Michael Rosen.

The Hive has won numerous awards for its design, concept and use over the past decade, including Best Sustainability in a Project at the Partnership Awards, Best Contribution to the Local Community by a University in The Guardian University Awards, Outstanding Library Team in the Times Higher Leadership and Management Awards and three awards from the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), including its prestigious National Award.

There have been several awards for environmental sustainability and architectural excellence, for community benefit and for design and innovation from the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors.



MORE THAN A LIBRARY

THE HIVE HOUSES OVER 250,000 PRINT BOOKS. BUT IT IS SO MUCH MORE THAN A LIBRARY IN THE TRADITIONAL SENSE – IT IS A PLACE WHERE VISITORS CAN COME TO CONNECT, TO ENGAGE AND TO BE INSPIRED.



From heritage and archives to arts and culture, from business to health, The Hive offers a host of services which align directly to the government's seven national public library outcomes:

1. Cultural and creative enrichment
2. Increased reading and literacy
3. Increased digital access and literacy
4. Helping everyone achieve their full potential
5. Healthier and happier lives
6. Greater prosperity
7. Stronger, more resilient communities

CHILDREN AND SCHOOLS

THE HIVE IS REGULARLY FILLED WITH CHILDREN WHO COME TO READ WITH THEIR FAMILIES, TO BORROW BOOKS OR TO STUDY.

Almost 125,000 children and parents took part in free family events during The Hive's first decade, including weekly Bounce and Rhyme and Rat-a-tat story telling sessions.

The Hive has hosted more than 40,000 school children, as well as local Scouts, Brownies and other groups who regularly take part in activities.

The Children's Library, with its amalgamation of the University's school national curriculum resources, and books and imaginative literature from both the University and the public library, is one of the largest – and arguably most beautiful – children's libraries in the UK.

It helps children and young people to achieve their potential, supporting learning through the provision of quiet space to study, access to learning resources and opportunities to engage in activities for all ages that encourage reading, improve literacy, develop STEM skills, promote successful study techniques and support wellbeing. The library also houses extensive resources available to the many hundreds of trainee teachers in the University's Institute of Education, as well as for local schools and teachers, community groups and individuals, who are looking for inspiration or props for engaging children in different activities.



"The Hive nurtures a love for literature, sparks creativity and allows young minds to embark on literary adventures."

Swaroop Rawal, leading educator in India, named one of the world's top 10 teachers in 2019

"By bringing together the University's huge collection of reading resources with a public library and making a vast quantity of children's books available to local schools and parents, The Hive has become a focal point of supporting a love of reading."

Worcester MP Robin Walker, former Schools Minister and Chair of the Education Select Committee, in 2023



A DISTINCTIVE
ROOFLINE,
AUGMENTED
WITH SEVEN
IRREGULAR
CONES, THAT
RISES OVER
THE CITY



“As students, we were offered free apples during the Easter study break and members of staff also spoke to us about the importance of taking regular breaks, trying to snack healthily and making sure that we knew where to go if we wanted a quiet place to study. Throughout the day, The Hive had a real sense of the people working hard. Thank you to staff at The Hive for being kind and helping us learn for our future careers.”

Extract from a student’s letter, published in Worcester News

EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

THE HIVE IS A HUB FOR LEARNING, A PLACE WHERE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS, SCHOOL AND COLLEGE PUPILS AND ADULT LEARNERS SIT SIDE BY SIDE AND ENGAGE IN EDUCATION AND RESEARCH. IT SUPPORTS AND SHOWCASES RESEARCH THAT BENEFITS SOCIETY AT LARGE.

The varied adult learning programme helps people to secure jobs or start formal learning having never been confident enough to do so before.

The University library, with its extensive collection of academic texts and books, is largely housed on the upper library floors, providing a wonderful study facility which all are welcome to use.

Since opening, 70,000 academic queries have been answered by university library staff and more than 4,500 school, college and university students have attended Study Happy events, designed to help them look after their mental and physical health while studying.

In addition to Study Happy, over the last 10 years more than 6,250 sixth form and college students from 40 schools and colleges have visited The Hive for research skills sessions, helping with the transition to university.

The Hive is unique in offering a university library enquiries service to all members of the community. This is now being extended out to library users across the county.

The Hive also acts as a venue for showcasing and engaging the community in the University’s extensive research activity through exhibitions, displays, lectures and interactive discussion groups.



“The students enjoyed the opportunity to visit a university library.”

“The skills learned are easily transferrable for our learners in the libraries and colleges that they will be accessing.”

Comments from local teachers



“I always love The Hive – the way it really involves parents with new babies and helps people out of education or training to excel in their careers. That’s very unusual.”

Vivienne Stern MBE,
Chief Executive of
Universities UK, in 2022



EMPLOYABILITY AND SKILLS

THE HIVE HELPS PEOPLE ACHIEVE THEIR POTENTIAL, SUPPORTING THEM INTO FURTHER EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT THROUGH THE PROVISION OF OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN AND DEVELOP NEW SKILLS, VOLUNTEER, GAIN WORK EXPERIENCE AND ACCESS JOB-SEEKING SUPPORT.



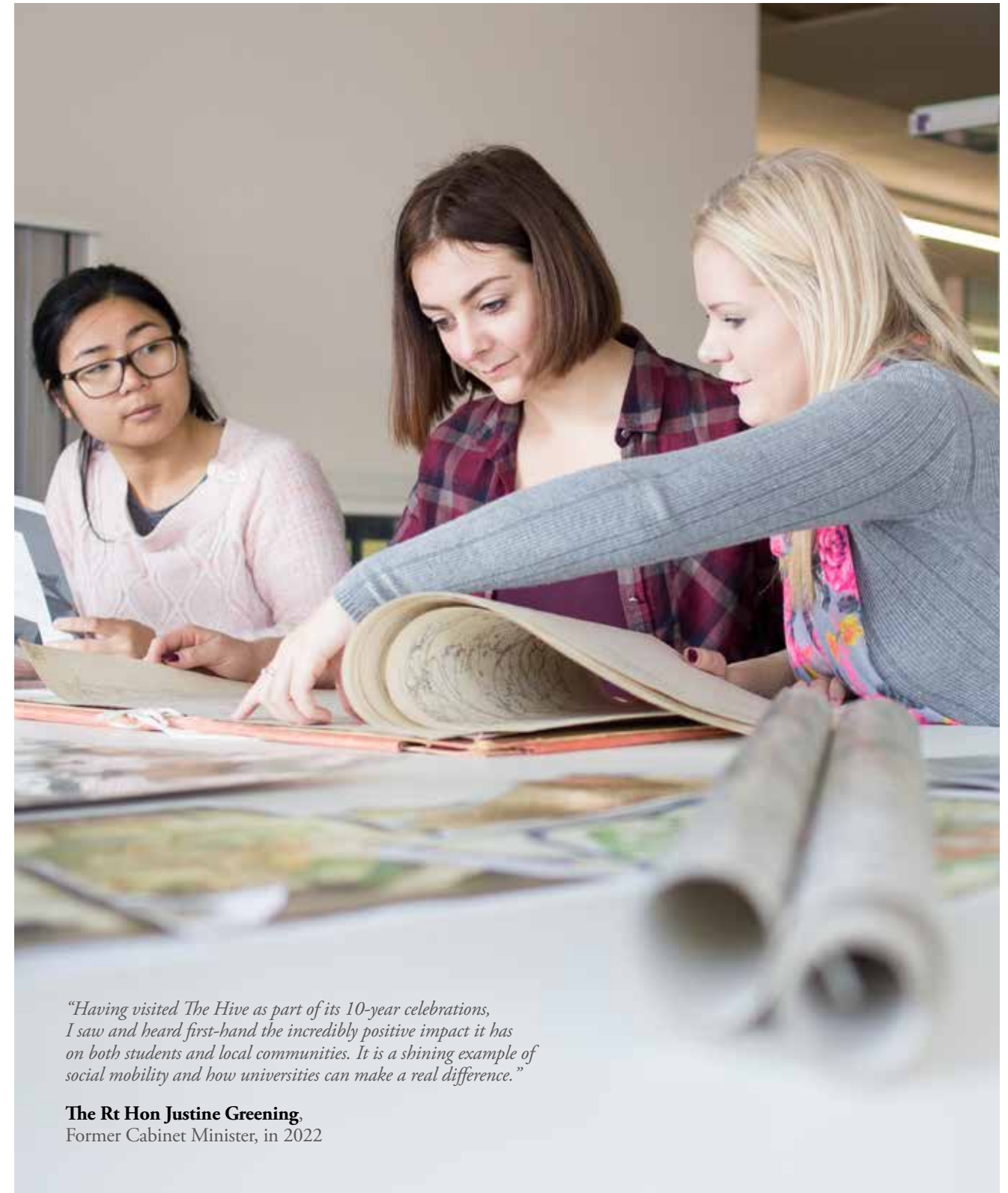
More than 4,700 adults have been supported with community learning and developing vital job skills in The Hive's first decade.

There is a weekly Job Club to assist people in creating CVs and applying for jobs, and there are opportunities throughout the year for young people to gain work experience.

The Hive partners with Youth Hub (WCC Learning and Skills and the Department for Work and Pensions) to host two Job Fairs a year, which regularly have more than 250 people in attendance. They also host

multiple training sessions for people between the ages of 15 and 24 looking for work in several different sectors including nursing, midwifery, paramedics, security services and construction.

Since running the Job Fairs, more than 50 people have received engagements into recruitment processes by local and national businesses, and many others have taken the opportunity for training in areas which will increase their employability.



"Having visited The Hive as part of its 10-year celebrations, I saw and heard first-hand the incredibly positive impact it has on both students and local communities. It is a shining example of social mobility and how universities can make a real difference."

The Rt Hon Justine Greening,
Former Cabinet Minister, in 2022



ARTS AND CULTURE

THE HIVE SUPPORTS CULTURAL AND CREATIVE ENRICHMENT THROUGH THE PROVISION OF ACCESSIBLE EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES THAT INSPIRE, INFORM AND PROMOTE ASPIRATION.



Its arts and culture events have attracted more than 300,000 people in the first decade; they have come to see major exhibitions, performances and lectures.

The cultural programme is co-developed with partners and local communities, engaging a wide and diverse audience. It gives a platform to new and emerging artists to engage audiences and brings national figures such as Roger McGough and Jacqueline Wilson, and touring

exhibitions such as The Royal Photographic Society, to local communities.

There are regular author and poetry events, exhibitions and displays, talks and workshops, theatre and dance sessions, children's events and activities, live-streamed events, webinars and online discussion groups. Themes to date have included Migrating Communities, The Environment and Sustainability, and Living Well.



HERITAGE

ALMOST 47,000 PEOPLE HAVE ATTENDED EVENTS PROVIDED BY WORCESTERSHIRE ARCHIVE & ARCHAEOLOGY LEARNING AND OUTREACH SERVICES OVER THE LAST DECADE.



Explore the Past at The Hive promotes a strong sense of place and local heritage, connecting and educating people through a wide range of archive and archaeology activities that provide opportunities to undertake research and engage in learning, community projects and cultural events relating to Worcestershire's heritage.

There are more than 12 miles of county archives in the building, with rare documents on the Civil War, industrial and landscape development and personal histories through centuries of diaries and records. Among the specialist documents and artefacts is Shakespeare's marriage bond.

THE HIVE HAS
WELCOMED
MORE THAN
6.4 MILLION
VISITORS





HEALTH AND WELLBEING

THE HIVE PROMOTES HEALTH AND WELLBEING, SUPPORTING HEALTHIER AND HAPPIER LIVES THROUGH THE PROVISION OF A SAFE AND WELCOMING COMMUNITY SPACE FOR ALL, WITH RESOURCES TO SUPPORT SELF-HELP AND OPPORTUNITIES TO CONNECT WITH OTHERS AND GAIN SKILLS AND CONFIDENCE.



There are Italian, French, Spanish and Russian language cafés which help people to find like-minded individuals and brush up on their conversation skills; the Health Walk meets in the building every Wednesday morning, encouraging people to improve their fitness as well as helping them to feel less isolated.

The Hive also has a collection of Reading Well books, recommended by health experts or those with lived experience, which are designed to

help people to understand and manage their mental health and wellbeing.

The Study Happy initiative repeats throughout the year, during assessment periods for university, school and college students, encouraging them to study in a mindful way, making sure they take regular breaks, promoting healthy eating and sleeping patterns as well as providing activities which help the students to rest in between studying.

DIGITAL INCLUSION

The Hive is helping to reduce the 'digital divide' by improving access and literacy, helping people to grow digital skills and confidence through free access to computers, the internet and Wi-Fi and providing support to use IT and access online services from Library Digital Champions and Access to IT learning courses.

The statistics show that 70% of the use of the desktop computers in The Hive is by members of the public, while students use the digital

resources largely (though not exclusively) through wireless access.

In its first decade, more than 150,000 users have been supported to access PCs, while more than 700 people have benefited from a support session with The Hive's digital champions.



GETTING INVOLVED

The Hive boasts an army of generous volunteers who give up their time to help others, as Digital Champions helping to provide support to people with low digital skills, or as delivery drivers for the Library Service at Home customers who are unable to come to the library themselves.

There are also Event Volunteers providing much-needed support during busy event days, and Meet and Greet Volunteers making sure people receive a warm welcome as they come through the door. Since opening, more than 15,200 hours of time have been given by volunteers.

"There's a sense of achievement when I have been able to help someone get connected online and enhance their quality of life in a number of ways. I also go home with positive thoughts knowing I have personally helped individuals."

Elizabeth, Digital Champion



"Elizabeth kindly helped me find information on the internet which I am truly grateful for. She is a credit to the community and certainly does her job very well."

Hive user



“The BIPC has been most supportive to me throughout my initial journey of launching the company.”

Suki Pantal

Founder of Suki's Curries and Spices



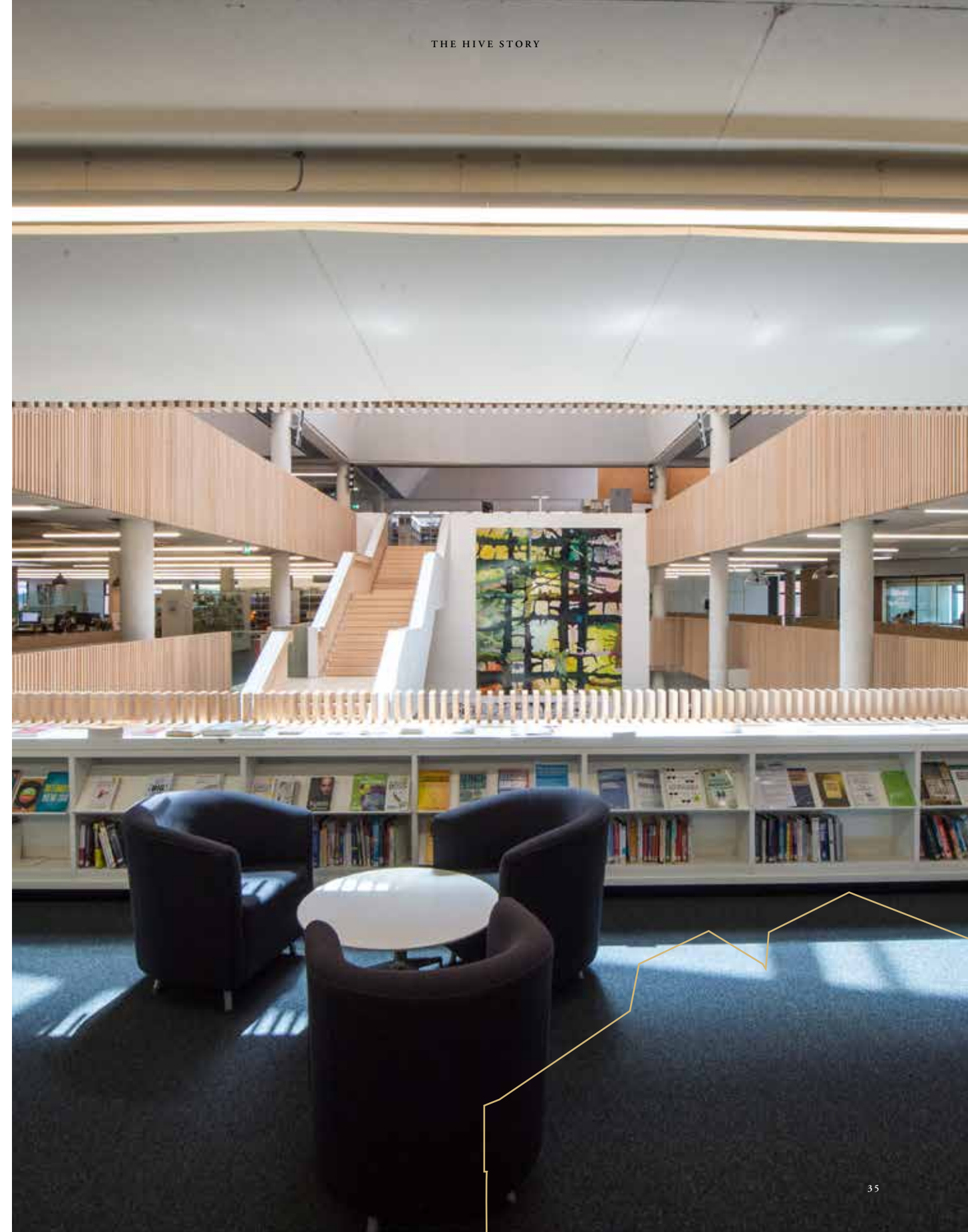
BUSINESS

The Hive promotes greater prosperity, supporting enterprise, entrepreneurship and business growth through services that include comprehensive business resources, advice on intellectual property, opportunities to learn from local business and signposting to other business enterprise services.

In 2021, a Business and Intellectual Property Centre (BIPC) was launched, providing free and accessible business advice, support,

information and resources. In its first three years, the Centre supported more than 100 start-up businesses a month with advice and resources.

The business support programme has seen more than 3,000 attendees since launching in 2021 and continues to work alongside other organisations, including Worcestershire Growth Hub, local networking groups and the University's Business School, to provide cohesive business support across the local business community.



"The visit to the Hive was fantastic; the building itself is a wonderful example of sustainable design which really engaged the imaginations of our young people. Despite their young age, our Beavers are already building strong opinions on the state of our planet and the tour clearly demonstrated what can be achieved."

Local Scout Leader

SUSTAINABILITY

THE HIVE HAS BEEN RECOGNISED AS OUTSTANDINGLY SUSTAINABLE IN ITS BUILDING DESIGN.



Through innovative parametric modelling, laminated timber was used instead of 250 tonnes of steel in the roof, saving 2,000 tonnes of CO² compared with a concrete or steel alternative, and a biomass boiler uses locally sourced wood chip to generate heat.

Around 43% of the water used within the building is harvested from rainwater. By incorporating

sustainable measures such as these, and many others, The Hive achieved an 'A' rating for its Energy Performance Certificate, and in 2013 won the BREEAM Outstanding award, which sets the standard for best practice in sustainable design. It was also named as Building Awards Most Sustainable Project in 2013. A Sustainability Trail and regular tours showcase the building's credentials.

ACHIEVEMENTS
IN THE FIRST
DECADE:



Welcomed more than
**6.4 MILLION
VISITORS**

Signed up almost
**160,000 NEW
LIBRARY
MEMBERS**

Hosted more than
**40,000 SCHOOL
CHILDREN**

Hosted events
attracting almost
**300,000
ATTENDEES**

The Business Centre
has provided more than
1,360 EVENTS
and one-to-one sessions to
support Worcestershire
start-up businesses

Almost
47,000 PEOPLE
have attended events
provided by Worcestershire
Archive and Archaeology
learning and outreach
services

Loaned out almost
**7 MILLION
BOOKS**
and other resources

**43% OF
THE WATER**
used within the building has
been harvested from
rainwater

More than
4,000
school, college and
university students have
attended our Study
Happy events

Supported over
4,700 ADULTS
with community learning
and developing vital
job skills

Almost
125,000
children and parents
have taken part in free
family events

**70,000
ACADEMIC
QUERIES**
have been answered
by University
library staff

More than
700 PEOPLE
have benefited from a
support session with
Digital Champions

Supported over
150,000 USERS
to access PCs

More than
15,200 HOURS
of time have been given by
generous volunteers

FIND OUT MORE

To explore The Hive further and to stay up to date with the latest developments, please visit our website at www.thehiveworcester.org



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