

To receive a report from the Community Hub Team Leader and consider any actions and associated expenditure

Report to: Library Sub Committee

Date of Report: 10 January 2025

Officer Writing the Report: Community Hub Team Leader (CHTL)

Part Pursuant to: Library Sub Committee 29 August 2024, minute number 12/24/25

Officers Recommendations:

Members to ask questions of the Saltash Library Hub service contained within the report, with the opportunity to set a further resolution if felt appropriate to do so.

Members to consider the response to minute 12/24/25, with the opportunity to set a further resolution if felt appropriate to do so.

Where the Library Sub Committee wish to extend the library operational hours a recommendation to the Personnel Committee will need to be made.

Report Summary:

The window refurbishment has played a significant role in the reduction of community and library services. The decision to relocate an interim library service to the Guildhall for a short-term period became necessary after discussion with Horizon Windows working procedures and health and safety requirements over the scheduled 4/5 week refurbishment period. The interim library service has been able to continue the click and collect library service, but the location of the Guildhall has proved problematic for many people to access by either location or parking facilities. Community groups have found alternative accommodation, and we have had to postpone or cancel nearly all events and activities.

Footfall has dropped to approximately 10/15% of our usual numbers and book loans have dropped significantly. October down 35% and November 32.7% against this time last year.

Messaging and marketing our opening plans were difficult due to the continual changes in completion dates for the curtain walling. The side windows and door are scheduled to be installed during this first week of March which has allowed for a January opening and a full January of events and activities. Towards the end of February, the library will need to close (period to be confirmed) to allow time to relocate to the Guildhall on a temporary basis.

As stated, planning events and activities on shifting sands has been difficult. However, Autumn Biowatch has been successful in building on the Summer Biowatch inclusive of the citizen science database campaign. We continue to work with Plymouth University on this continuing environmental project. Events and activities have been scheduled post February window refurbishment. The community and schools will all continue to work with the Community Hub.

February we 'kick off' the South West Reading Challenge for all ages and abilities, this runs through to June and has steadily built up over the past two years. We are now able to programme in some 'Wellness' activities for February due to the delay in the side window refurbishment. Due to these delays dropping from February to March, UK Science week has now been moved to May. The theme for this year is 'Change and Adapt' and our three sub-themes are:

1. Environment 2. Technology 3. Space.

We have Spaceport Cornwall, Space Detectives and Plymouth University Robotics and A.I. and Biology departments lined up to help.

This means that we can launch Spring Biowatch with appropriate events and activities for the latter half of March when we return to the Library Hub from the Guildhall.

For April we have our new re-arranged longer two week LIT-FEST scheduled in (as opposed to previous Octobers). This will feature author visits, forums and creative workshops as well as a writing competition (Short story, Poem and Haiku) while May will continue to be our Community History Month.

Currently working with our Development and Engagement Manager I have applied for a number of small grants to help with our event budgeting.

During the refurbishment period we have been able to engage and outreach more to pre-schools, junior schools and the Community College. Interest is higher than ever and can be attributed to newer teachers with ideas to partner with the Library and Community Hub and ongoing school budget restrictions.

Optimistically in 2025, the internal refurbishment works, when completed, will allow the Town Council the opportunity to extend events into the evening and allow for a potential income stream. Hiring of an improved community hub facility will also be a possibility. As just about 70% of the town's population are either working or in school during conventional Library Hub opening hours, the evening opening opportunities could enable us to appeal to a bigger and wider demographic.

At the last Library Sub Committee meeting, Members resolved:

12/24/25 **TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE COMMUNITY HUB TEAM LEADER AND CONSIDER ANY ACTIONS OR ASSOCIATED EXPENDITURE.**

The CHTL briefed Members on the report received and contained within the circulated reports pack and spoke of a successful year to date with Library Hub events and activities being well attended.

The CHTL reported that the Home Library service had not seen an uptake in users since being led by the Town Council, despite promotion.

Members discussed Cornwall Council's Mobile Library service and if it was possible for the mobile service to visit remote areas of the town and attend town events.

Members enquired about the possibility of reintroducing the pop-up library to further engage with the community. Members also requested the CHTL explore the option of extended opening hours.

The CHTL expressed confidence that Saturday operating hours could be extended.

It was proposed by Councillor Bickford, seconded by Councillor Dent and **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the report and the CHTL to investigate Cornwall Council's mobile library availability to visit remote areas in the town and attend town events;
2. That the CHTL investigate reintroducing the pop-up library and extension of opening hours on Saturday afternoons;
3. That the CHTL is to report back to a future Library Sub Committee meeting on the outcome of points one and two above.

Point 1 above - on investigation the mobile library has only minimum availability with dates. We have used the service before and would recommend investigating using its services again at outdoor events such as Regatta. Other than that, we want people to come through the Library Hub doors and not being diverted elsewhere.

Point 2 above - pop-up library marketing - these could be at May Fair, Regatta and the new Fore Street market area, to schools and commercial companies e.g. Waitrose. Successful recruitment is required prior to any outreach library work.

Point 2 above – extension of opening hours on Saturday afternoon's - The opportunity to extend opening hours will be dependent on successful recruitment.

The idea of extending it to an evening and creating a weekly 'club' (Possibly Bingo) evening in association with the library opening seems a positive way forward. Other libraries have extended opening hours this way. As suggested in the CHTL report we would be able to extend hours as well for evening 'special paid events' when upgraded internal facilities are completed.

We have experienced two members of staff leave the Library Hub creating a 47-hour loss to the rota. When the situation is resolved, we will endeavour to look at the possibility of extending opening hours to either an evening or Saturday afternoon – Please note; extension of operational hours will require consideration of the Personnel Committee and staff consultations.

Signature of Officer:

Community Hub Team Leader