

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:

14.09.2026

Officer Writing the Report:

Community Hub Team Leader

Purpose of the report:

To update members on recent library hub activity.

Officer's Recommendations

Members are invited to review, ask questions, and note the report.

Report Summary

The summer has brought significant change. Following internal refurbishment, the library has reopened in the main building as a vibrant, flexible space that users have welcomed enthusiastically. Outreach sessions continue, workshops remain popular, and feedback on the improved facilities has been unanimously positive. Staff and borrowers are delighted with the fresh, accessible community hub.

Outreach in the Community

Outreach has been a key focus area for the library in recent months, delivering a variety of events, stalls and sessions to the community to raise awareness and promote the library services.

- Waitrose stall

Community Hub Assistants visited Waitrose with a stall to promote the Library Hub. Engagement was high, approximately 70 people stopped to talk with the library team. This was an excellent opportunity to reach an audience who may not have visited the Library Hub before. Due to the policy that Waitrose follow, no signups could be completed on site, however, many took forms to fill out at home and expressed interest in library groups and events. Feedback was positive from staff and a worthwhile outreach opportunity.

- Care Homes

Two Community Hub Assistants have been developing a Care Home outreach programme with the homes in Saltash. Visits to the homes started during the refurbishment project and have since developed into regular sessions both at the care homes and in the library hub. The sessions have included setting up homes with their own cards, online resource sessions such as BorrowBox and Pressreader, bringing tailored reading material to the residents and other creative activities. The Community Hub Assistants collaborated with Tamar Nurseries to provide sunflower seeds and pots in a session where residents planted sunflowers to keep in their rooms. These sessions have been well received and promoted well being in the residents. Following completion of the refurbishment at the library, some care home residents have visited the library for a meet up and to participate in the Mingle Mondays community coffee morning, this has been made possible by the addition of a public toilet in the library, improving accessibility.

- BAPS

A session for the Blind And Partially Sighted group in Saltash demonstrated how accessible library resources offer features that those with blindness or partially sighted can use at home. Audiobooks and accessibility features were explored in this tailored session run by the Library Hub.

- Picnic in the Park

Another successful Picnic In The Park brought together many families, promoting library services, children's activities and events.

Highlights of the Summer

- Saltash Regatta 2026

The Library Hub's attendance at the Saltash Regatta was successful at engaging with a wide audience and promoting the library services. The weather was favourable, albeit a little on the warm side! One useful exercise was the suggestions sheet where members of the public could write down anything they would like to see at the library. These suggestions include; A Murder Mystery event, try a musical instrument, history for children, Cornish lessons, a bug hotel, fancy dress and more. Engagement was strong with many of the groups, activities and library services promoted. In addition to the stall, there was a dedicated craft area where children were able to decorate handmade books by one of the library team. The ages of visitors was mixed, offering a wide audience and range of feedback. There was plenty of interest in upcoming events and around 15 new members signed up to the library that day. The Community Hub assistant noted that the stall was in a good location and provided an area where visitors could dwell. Promotion of the Cornwall Reading Challenge, the improved library space and online resources resulted in a

positive, engaging and informative session. Future attendance in following years is favourable following a successful outreach event at the Regatta.

- The Grand Re-opening

The Library Hub Grand Reopening event was very well attended, with positive feedback regarding the improvements to the space. Speeches, refreshments, poetry recitals, creative writing, book binding and children's craft made for a varied and successful celebration of the library opening its doors to the public again.

Attendance from the Mayor and Chairman of the Library Sub Committee made it a special day and many smiling faces filled the new library space.

- Pokémon and Beyblade Meet

The Pokémon and Beyblade meet up for young people was created following feedback from young library members. The day was busy, packed with fun and saw a large number of children use the space for hours. The meet up encouraged socialising, reading and play in a safe and inclusive environment. Since the event was so popular, more of these sessions have been requested.

- Dinosaurs and Robots

The Dinosaur and Robot Session was developed in response to feedback and engagement with young people at the Saltash May Fair. The interactive dinosaurs and robots attracted significant interest and encouraged children and families to visit the library, helping to increase engagement with library services and promote greater use of the space.

- Fossil Fuel Activity

Interactive learning sessions were delivered through the Track2Learning scheme, families engaged with the fossil fuel sessions where they explored fossil fuels.

- Cornwall Reading Challenge

This year's Cornwall Reading Challenge has seen a significant increase in participation, with 295 children signing up compared to 273 last year. Completion rates have also risen considerably, with 182 children successfully finishing the challenge, up from 125 in the previous year. These are the highest participation numbers on record for Saltash Library, both for starting and finishing the challenge! When book borrowing and reading generally is on the decline, this makes this achievement so much more exciting.

Library staff have played a key role in this success by actively promoting the challenge through school visits, outreach events and in-library activities. Events and book displays were also tailored to support the challenge, helping to encourage participation and inspire reading. The summer period has been particularly busy, and it has been wonderful to welcome so many children and young people into the library

to take part. We are incredibly proud of the results and it has set the bar high for next year.

- Development Hub

The Library Hub has been awarded Development Hub status through a partnership with Oaklands Community Centre. Funding has been secured to deliver a programme of wellbeing services across four key themes: Start Well, Live Well, Age Well and End Well. Funded through the Integrated Care Board, the initiative seeks to improve physical health, mental wellbeing and overall quality of life, while helping to reduce demand on NHS services through early intervention and community-based support.

Working collaboratively with Oaklands, the funding will support a year-long programme of wellbeing activities. The Library Hub's primary focus is the Start Well theme, and the successful bid will enable the delivery of a range of activities, events and workshops, including Baby Yoga, Pregnancy Yoga, the *How to Catch a Book Witch* theatre production, children's creative clay sessions and weekly community coffee mornings.

The partnership aims to build on this Development Hub status by strengthening links with additional organisations and expanding services available to the local community.

In addition to the funding for the wellbeing initiative, the Library Hub and Oaklands have also been awarded funding to deliver 16 breathwork sessions to help improve and support breathing in the community. These sessions will be delivered across the two sites, enabling people of all ages and backgrounds to improve their mental and physical well-being.

- Building Digital Confidence and the Community Tech Scheme

In September, the Library Hub launched a new weekly session at the library called Building Digital Confidence. Having taken on public feedback and the want for more digital skills and support in the area, weekly sessions have been set up to support this. This self-directed learning provides clear learning, structure and can be accessed at home too, supporting those who want to build basic digital skills. Using the Learn My Way online digital learning, sessions are structured around different topics such as 'Staying Safe Online', 'Using your device' and 'Managing your health online'. Individuals can either bring their own device or use one of the library's laptops or tablets. Sessions are aimed at guiding individuals using the Learn My Way software, where they can complete subjects at their own pace. A member of the team is there to support participants and troubleshoot. The sessions have been positive, with 6 attendees in the second week. As the workshops continue and develop, the sessions can be adapted through participant feedback. Cornwall Council run a Community Tech Scheme, Saltash Library have been loaned two new

laptops and two new tablets for community use in the library. These do not require a library card and can be used anywhere in the building.

- Kid's Craft Club

Throughout the summer holidays, the Library Hub launched a weekly kid's craft club suitable for all ages. Some examples of these weekly activities include leaf crown making, bookmark making, paper twirlers, pinecone animals and treasure map making. Children were excited for these sessions and customers enquire regularly about the next activity. Continued efforts to keep engaging with children of all ages will help to maintain good footfall to the library hub following the end of the summer holidays.

- Explore Your Dreams

Explore Your Dreams was a unique evening event for children, designed to encourage creativity, imagination and a love of reading. Attendees created their own dream catchers, enjoyed hot chocolate and listened to bedtime stories in a relaxed and engaging environment. To enhance the experience, many children attended in their pyjamas, alongside library staff who embraced the theme and helped bring the event to life.

The event attracted approximately 30 participants and received overwhelmingly positive feedback from both children and parents. Its success has led to requests for similar themed events in the future. The concept was inspired by the Extraordinary Explorers theme of the 2026 Cornwall Reading Challenge, encouraging children to explore not only the world around them, but also their own imaginations and dreams.

- Carers Group with MHA Communities Cornwall

MHA Communities Cornwall have started sessions at the library to support those living with Dementia. The sessions run by MHA offer a safe, supportive space for both the carers and cared for offering activities, guidance and companionships to those living with Dementia. The attendance has been good and the sessions run on the 1st and 3rd Monday of the month.

- Slime Making Workshop

Hugely popular and highly interactive, this Slime Making workshop went down very well with young people. The Science Booth Cornwall delivered a hands on and entertaining workshop.

- Memory Box Sessions

Cornwall Libraries have a number of 'Memory Boxes' which have been developed as aids to support people living with Dementia. The nostalgic prompts are multi-sensory and encourage viewers to dive back into a time from the past. People living with Dementia respond well to these prompts as generally, the long-term memory is still intact and often evokes fond, happy memories. These boxes have been taken to the

Memory Box sessions (Community Enterprises) and feedback has been positive. The boxes have also been used for the care home sessions at the library.

Other positive events have been;

- Adult's Creative Writing
- Pocket Map Making
- Clarks Valuation Day
- Care Home Meet Up

Future Events

- Start Well Sessions and Events

The Start Well programme is already delivering positive outcomes within the Library Hub. The weekly coffee morning has increased visitor dwell time and provides a welcoming, inclusive space for people of all ages to come together. Scheduled alongside the library's Story Time sessions, the initiative aims to encourage intergenerational connections and strengthen community relationships.

A fully funded six-week Baby Yoga course will be delivered by a local facilitator, offering benefits for both parents and babies. The sessions support bonding, promote relaxation, improve sleep and mobility, and create opportunities for parents to build supportive social networks. As the course is fully funded, it is accessible to families from all backgrounds.

The programme also includes a fully funded six-week Pregnancy Yoga course delivered by Tamar Yoga. These sessions are designed to support the physical and emotional wellbeing of expectant mothers through gentle yoga, breathwork and meditation. Benefits include improved mood, reduced stress, stronger mind-body connection and support for postnatal recovery.

Creativity and self-expression are important contributors to wellbeing, and a children's creative clay workshop scheduled for October will provide a fun and engaging opportunity for young people to develop new skills, build confidence and explore their creativity.

In addition, the library will host a performance of How to Catch a Book Witch, an exciting theatre production for children and families. Funding for the event ensures it is free and accessible to all young people, regardless of their financial circumstances or background, helping to promote inclusion while encouraging engagement with reading, arts and culture.

- Christmas Workshops for the Light Switch On

Extensive planning and preparation into this year's Christmas Light Switch On Creative Workshops will see craft sessions at local primary schools to make Winter Wonderland themed items. Schools have booked sessions to make either reindeer headbands and jingle bell bracelets or snowman lanterns. The workshops have been made possible by funding for materials from Saltash Scrap Store. All year 6 children will have the opportunity to create their own Christmas item to either walk in the parade with or take to observe the Light Switch On event. There is also the capacity to run additional sessions at the library throughout the October half term, allowing more children to access the sessions. Strengthening the relationships between the local schools and the Town Council will help to increase engagement and promote children's wellbeing through creativity.

- Wellness Month and the Well-Fair

As part of the Well Hub funding, Saltash Library Hub and Oaklands Community Centre will be hosting a Well-Fair event at the library where organisations offering support around wellbeing will be able to promote the services. Attendees will include; The local Social Prescriber, Saltash BAPS, I-Sight Cornwall, U3A, Memory Box, Oaklands Community Centre, MHA Communities Cornwall Healthy Cornwall, Amber Dougerty Breathwork, Arthritis Action, Volunteer Cornwall and others. There will also be a free children's creative clay workshop (Funded by development hub funding) and refreshments. Showcasing the networks around the area and offering free signposting to the community.

- Laura and Jack Sweet Children's Author Talk

Mother and son author duo, Laura and Jack Sweet will be talking about their book and delivering a fun illustration workshop at the library to promote their co-written book Vines of Vengeance; The Adventures of a Dog Called Toad.

Future adults creative art/craft workshops to be delivered in-house include

- Wet felting coasters
- Creating a recipe scrap book
- Weaving
- Silver clay jewellery
- Still life drawing social

Overall, the report shows that Saltash Library Hub has made strong progress since reopening its refurbished space, with positive public feedback and increased engagement across library, outreach, creative, literacy, digital and wellbeing services. Successful activities at the Regatta, Waitrose, local care homes and community events have broadened awareness and access, while the Cornwall

Reading Challenge recorded increased participation and completion. New and developing initiatives—including Building Digital Confidence, care home outreach, support for carers and people living with dementia, children's activities and accessible resource sessions—demonstrate the Hub's responsiveness to local needs. Partnership working with Oaklands Community Centre, schools, community groups and wellbeing organisations has also secured Development Hub funding for a year-long programme of free Start Well and wider wellbeing activities. The planned programme of yoga, creative workshops, theatre, seasonal events, author activity and the Well-Fair will further strengthen the Hub's role as an inclusive and trusted community venue. Taken together, the activity described in this report demonstrates clear progress in promoting reading, learning, creativity, digital inclusion, social connection and early community-based support.

Operational Update

Following the relocation back to the main library building, operation of the library service has returned to normal. Overwhelming positive feedback from the public has demonstrated how the improvements have enhanced users' experience of the library. The new curved library shelving is of high quality and makes the space a flexible and cosy environment, whilst adding some colour to the space.

As mentioned previously, we have had the best Reading Challenge yet and the library feels busy and well used. 3 Summer Reading Challenge volunteers supported operations over the summer, and they have been wonderful, helping with daily tasks, listening to the children who come in to update their progress in the reading challenge and assist with prepping craft activities. Our regular volunteers continue to support the library service, and their contributions are greatly appreciated. Library systems and software's are generally running well with no major issues since returning to the library building.

How Does This Meet the Business Plan?

The activity detailed in this report directly supports Saltash Town Council's Business Plan 2024–2027 and its vision for a greener, more inclusive and prosperous town with an excellent quality of life for all ages. By providing free and low-cost events, accessible resources, digital support and welcoming community spaces, the Library Hub helps ensure that Council services are inclusive, responsive and accessible to residents from a wide range of backgrounds.

Health and Wellbeing: The Development Hub programme, Mingle Mondays, Baby Yoga, Pregnancy Yoga, carers' sessions, dementia support, care home outreach and the planned Well-Fair improve physical, mental and social wellbeing. These activities

provide early, community-based support, reduce isolation, strengthen social connections and help residents access specialist advice and local services.

Recreation and Leisure: The refurbished Library Hub and its programme of reading, arts, crafts, theatre, author events and children's activities directly support the priority to maintain and improve the library service and increase access to high-quality leisure and learning opportunities. The growth in the Cornwall Reading Challenge and the strong attendance at family events demonstrate positive outcomes for children and young people.

Inclusion, Skills and Community Engagement: Building Digital Confidence, accessible resources for blind and partially sighted residents, outreach to care homes, school workshops and attendance at community events help reduce barriers to participation. By listening to feedback and adapting activities in response, the Hub also supports the Council's commitment to consultation, effective communication and services shaped by local need.

Overall, the work strengthens the Library Hub as a central community asset and provides clear evidence of progress against the Business Plan's priorities for health and wellbeing, recreation and leisure, inclusion, learning and a better quality of life for Saltash residents.

Signature of Officer:

Community Hub Team Leader