

To receive a report on the Library Hub fees and charges and consider any actions and associated expenditure.

Report to:

Library Sub Committee

Date of Report:

16.09.2026

Officer Writing the Report:

Community Hub Team Leader

Purpose of the report:

To review the introduction of charges for the use of hire facilities, events and workshops at Saltash Library Hub, and to consider options that support the financial sustainability of the service whilst maintaining accessibility, inclusivity and community benefit.

Officer's Recommendations

Members are asked to:

1. Approve the continued free use of tables within Saltash Library Hub during normal opening hours for charities, community groups and non-profit organisations, recognising the community benefit and minimal operational cost associated with this usage.
2. Consider the introduction of a commercial hire charge for businesses and individuals using the library space for profit, with charges applied in accordance with the proposed fee structure.
3. Consider the introduction of out-of-hours hire of Saltash Library Hub, subject to an appropriate booking agreement, conditions of use and availability of caretaker to facilitate access.
4. Support the continued provision of free or low-cost library events and workshops wherever possible, recognising their contribution to community wellbeing, engagement and increased use of library services.

5. Consider a threshold-based approach to charging for events and workshops, whereby fees are introduced only when delivery costs, material costs or specialist requirements exceed agreed limits.
6. To recommend to the Services Committee the introduction of additional fees and charges relating to the Library Hub service for implementation in the 2027/28 financial year.

Report Summary

This report considers whether charges should be introduced for the use of hire facilities, events and workshops at Saltash Library Hub. It reviews current usage, the potential impact of introducing fees, and options for ensuring the library remains financially sustainable while continuing to provide an inclusive community space.

Facility Hire

At present, there are no charges for members of the public or organisations to use spaces within Saltash Library Hub. The space is used by a variety of community groups, charitable organisations, non-profit organisations, local residents and tutors.

Most bookings are small-scale and typically require only the use of a table within the library during normal opening hours. The library currently does not offer refreshment packages as part of room or space hire.

Potential charging options could include:

- Day rate for exclusive use of the library (Wednesdays only)
- Hourly rate for exclusive use of the library (evenings, weekends and Wednesdays)
- Hourly rate for table hire

Current Use of the Space

The majority of organisations using the library space are charities, non-profit organisations and community groups. Many of these organisations operate with limited budgets and may find room hire charges difficult to accommodate.

Uses of the library space include:

- Information and awareness stalls
- Community support groups
- Health and wellbeing services
- Children's activities

- Author talks
- Feedback and consultation sessions
- Educational talks and workshops
- Creative activities

Examples of recent users include Healthy Cornwall's Active Lifestyle and Wellbeing Awareness programme, Children's Hospice South West, the Library Knit and Natter Group, adult colouring groups and local author events.

Organisations have also delivered free creative workshops for library users. For example, Make It Better delivered a collage workshop attended by Brunel Primary School pupils alongside a workshop for adults.

A consistent theme throughout activities delivered since November 2025 has been community wellbeing, education, creativity and social connection.

Considerations for Introducing Facility Hire Charges

A key reason for introducing charges would be to generate additional income to support the ongoing operation of the Library Hub.

However, most current users require minimal resources and utilise the space during existing opening hours. Consequently:

- There is little to no additional staffing requirement.
- Sessions do not generate significant additional running costs.
- The current level of community use has not created a financial burden on the Library Hub.

There are examples of libraries in Cornwall charging for room hire. However, these libraries generally have dedicated, private multi-purpose rooms available for exclusive use. Saltash Library Hub is an open-plan facility and does not currently have a comparable bookable meeting room.

For this reason, introducing broad charges for community use may not be appropriate.

Proposed Approach

For community organisations, charities and non-profit groups using a table during normal opening hours, use of a table should remain free.

For commercial organisations or individuals using the space for profit, such as:

- Private tutors
- Independent businesses
- Commercial service providers

a modest hire charge could be introduced, reflecting the commercial nature of the activity while remaining affordable.

One thing to take into consideration when deciding on implementing a charge for using a space within the library is that they may choose to cease their events (for example Clarks Auctioneers) or decide to use another establishment. This would be a negative impact on the library due to reduced public engagement and footfall.

Administration time for processing payments will be increased should fees be introduced for hire of the library.

Hire Out of Hours

Interest has been expressed by members of groups, organisations and workshop facilitators to use the library outside of usual opening hours. Not only would this provide a private space, but it could also generate additional income for the library.

- Similar booking agreement as with hiring other Town Council buildings.
- A special library agreement should be created prior to booking, stating that no books, furniture or equipment should be moved etc. unless agreed beforehand with the CHTL.
- Commercial and community rates.
- The same process could be followed where the Casual Caretaker could open and close the premises. If the hire were on a Wednesday that the CHTL were working, the CHTL could open and close the premises subject to availability.

The table below shows some suggested prices, please refer to **Appendix A.** for a table with Town Council fees and charges, along with local venues also available for hire.

Saltash Town Council	Dimensions	Cost Per Hour	Extras?
Library - Exclusive use of Library Wednesday day, evenings and weekends (Saturday pm/Sunday) (Community Charge)	Up to 140 people standing (160 including mezzanine level)	9am – 5pm £15.00 Evening/ Weekend £25.00	Refreshments extra
Library - Exclusive use of Library Wednesday day, evenings and weekends (Saturday pm/Sunday) (Commercial Charge)		9am – 5pm £25.00 Evening/ Weekend £30.00	Refreshments extra

Library - TV section or rear bookshelf - Wednesday day, evenings and weekends (Saturday pm/Sunday) (Community Charge)	Up to 90 people standing Up to 50 seated	9am – 5pm £10.00 Evening/ Weekend £15.00	Refreshments extra
Library - Exclusive use of Library - Wednesday day, evenings and weekends (Saturday pm/Sunday) (Commercial Charge)		9am – 5pm £15.00 Evening/ Weekend £25.00	Refreshments extra
Library - Table hire (Community Charge)		Up to 2 hours free of charge	Refreshments extra
Library - Table hire (Commercial Charge)		During Library opening hours £2.50 per hour or all day £10.00	Refreshments extra

Event and Workshop Charges

Saltash Library Hub has developed a strong reputation for offering free or low-cost workshops and events. These activities help ensure that the library remains one of the few venues in Saltash providing accessible and inclusive opportunities for residents of all ages.

Recent community survey feedback highlighted the importance of maintaining the library as a free and welcoming asset that can be enjoyed regardless of an individual's financial circumstances. Wherever possible, Community Hub Assistants and the Community Hub Team Leader plan and execute in-house craft workshops which require little to no expenditure. By utilising found objects and supplies gathered over time, material costs for the workshops are very low.

For more specialist workshops, where specialist equipment and materials are required, costs should be recouped through ticket fees.

Considerations

If fees were introduced for workshops and events, both affordability and inclusivity should remain key considerations.

A threshold-based approach could be adopted.

External Facilitators

Where an externally commissioned workshop exceeds a predetermined delivery cost, a ticket fee could be introduced to recover the additional expenditure.

For example:

- Workshop delivery cost: £175
- Threshold: £150
- Ticket income introduced to recover the £25 shortfall

For a workshop with 10 participants, this would be a charge of £2.50 per person.*

*Eventbrite have a fee for any chargeable ticket sales, this cost can be absorbed by the organisation or added to the final ticket price when selling tickets online.

Library-Led Activities

A similar approach could be applied to events delivered by library staff which are repeatable and where excess materials can be re-used on other workshops.

For example:

- Materials cost: £65
- Threshold: £50
- Ticket fee introduced to recover the £15 difference

This approach would ensure that charging is only considered when costs exceed an agreed level and would help maintain access to the majority of activities free of charge.

For bespoke workshops that require specific tool or materials to be purchased, which cannot be used for other library workshops, tickets should be charged at a rate to cover the material cost.

Financial Considerations

Library budgets are carefully managed to ensure events and activities remain accessible to residents.

External funding has supported a number of workshops and events during the current year, helping to reduce pressure on the library budget and enabling a wider programme of activities to be delivered at little or no cost to participants.

Free and affordable events contribute significantly to:

- Increased footfall.
- Higher levels of community engagement.
- Expanded use of library services.
- Improved wellbeing outcomes.
- Strengthened community connections.

The evidence suggests that introducing charges for general community use of tables within Saltash Library Hub may be disproportionate given the limited impact such activities have on staffing and operating costs and the social value they deliver.

A more balanced approach would be to:

- Continue offering free access for charities, community groups and non-profit organisations during normal opening hours.
- Introduce a modest commercial hire rate for businesses and individuals using the space for profit.
- Ensure refreshment charges cover costs while remaining affordable.
- Maintain free or low-cost events and workshops wherever possible.
- Introduce event fees only where delivery or material costs exceed agreed financial thresholds, or when bespoke workshops require specialist tools and/or materials.

This approach would support the library's commitment to accessibility and community wellbeing while providing opportunities to recover costs where appropriate and generate modest additional income.

How Does This Meet the Business Plan?

The recommendations support the aims of Saltash Town Council by ensuring Saltash Library Hub remains an accessible, inclusive and sustainable community asset. Maintaining free use of library space for charities, community groups and non-profit organisations promotes community wellbeing, social inclusion and engagement.

Introducing modest charges for commercial use, out-of-hours hire and refreshments will generate income to support the long-term sustainability of library services while maintaining affordability for residents. Continuing to provide free or low-cost events and workshops supports lifelong learning, creativity and community participation, while the proposed threshold-based charging approach ensures specialist activities remain financially viable without creating unnecessary barriers to access.

Overall, the recommendations balance financial sustainability with community benefit, helping the Library Hub continue to deliver valuable services, activities and opportunities for local residents.

Signature of Officer:
Community Hub Team Leader