

Library Business Plan

General information

In 2018 Cornwall Council reviewed the level of library service provision throughout Cornwall as part of Cornwall Council devolution programme. Saltash library was one of the sites within the devolution programme and the Town Council were given the option of transition from Cornwall Council to Saltash Town Council.

The future of Saltash Library was safeguarded after being transferred to Saltash Town Council on 1st March 2019 as part of a devolution transfer from Cornwall Council.

The Town Council reviewed the recruitment of staff and increased the opening hours within the first few months of transition in support of the community.

The number of library members as at 30th October 2020 who chose Saltash as their home site and have a PL12 postcode is 6,155¹ and it is anticipated that the membership will continue to rise due to the Town Council continuing to provide all key services essential to a modern library, plus various events and activities, to improve wellbeing and promote equality through learning, literacy and cultural activity.

The Town Council recognised the importance of the library as an established current and ongoing asset for its community, and identified the refurbishment works² required to enable the service to continue in the long term.

The Town Council view the library as a long term asset and investment for the town and seek to identify and generate income streams where any opportunity may present itself.

The Library Sub Committee reviewed the refurbishment and window replacement works in June 2019, and since considered all aspects, researched, and sought advice concerning the works required, taking all necessary steps to ensure the Town Council are fully aware of all the implications and the benefit to its community.

It has become even more evident over the months of the pandemic how vital the library service is to its community, with footfall figures of up to 100 per day for the use of the click and collect, IT service, and small browsing section.

Prior to lockdown, Saltash library welcomed on average, 3,500 to 4,000 customers per month, not only to use the library service as we know it, but to take part in the community activities and events for all ages.

¹ Refer to page 2 of the Library Business Plan for further details on the library membership

² Refer to page 8 of the Building Consultants Repairs, Future Uses and Alterations Report for a list of works and costs

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It is considered that the proposed refurbishment and window replacement works will enable the library to become a community hub now and in the future with a significant increase on the footfall.

Saltash library customers remain members of the Cornwall library service and will continue to borrow from the Cornwall wide stock of books, CD's and DVD's, as well as having access to online newspapers, e-magazines, eBooks and computers.

Saltash Town Council have worked hard to establish the library as a community hub offering various increased activities and events for its community.

Cornwall Council approved the planning application submitted by Saltash Town Council to carry out the refurbishment works at the library.

Library Membership

The number of library members who have chosen Saltash as their home site and have a PL12 postcode:

Date	Members
30-Oct-2020	6,155
31-Dec-2019	6,056
31-Dec-2018	5,684

The number of library members who have a PL12 postcode and have chosen any home site including Saltash:

Date	Members
30-Oct-20	6,279
31-Dec-19	6,179
31-Dec-18	5,826

The number of library members who have chosen Saltash as a home site and have any postcode including PL12:

Date	Members
30-Oct-20	6,327
31-Dec-19	6,228
31-Dec-18	5,846

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Goals and objectives

- To bring the community of Saltash together creating a community multiuse wellbeing hub
- To increase the footfall and joining of new members
- To offer more services, events and regular activities
- To engage with the community
- To engage with businesses in the town
- To be part of local events
- To identify the areas in the local community that need support and include in the outreach programme
- To increase the opening hours
- To offer a café facility
- To invest in refurbishment of the building to a high and efficient standard for the community of Saltash.

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Description of products and services:

Part of the devolution transition agreement was to continue providing Cornwall Council payment services, such as, council tax, council rent, bus pass applications etc. However, Cornwall Council reduced the service during the pandemic to online/postal service. Staff now support customers by signposting to the correct department.

Library Facilities

- Self service areas with the assistance of staff if required
- Five computers with internet access and free Wi-Fi
- Printing, scanning and photocopying facilities
- Local newspapers
- Magazines
- DVD's & CD's.

Regular Events and Activities

- Beginners computer lessons
- Adult colouring
- Knit and Natter, Craft and Chatter, for any age and ability
- Scrabble club
- Pluss Workroutes Team: to provide support and guidance in getting back to work
- Cornwall Councillor Surgery held every Saturday from 10:00 am to 12 Noon. Meet one of the Saltash Cornwall Councillors to discuss any local issues.

Children's Activities

- Storytime sessions for under 5's
- Book start Rhyme time with music man and his guitar
- Lego club.

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Outreach Community Programme

Each year there are a range of events and activities held at Saltash library in conjunction with the Universal Library Offers aimed to connect communities, improve wellbeing and promote equality through learning, literacy and cultural activity.

The Town Council add additional events and activities for all ages throughout the year by working with local groups and organisations.

Staff and Training:

On transition there were two TUPE members of staff transferred to Saltash Town Council employment contracts. As part of the TUPE conditions their job descriptions remain as Cornwall Council.

Saltash Town Council recruited two Library and Information Assistants and one Community Hub Team Leader.

Majority of staff come with a wealth of library experience and knowledge including outreach work and excellent customer service in order to drive the library forward. Staff professional development is kept up to date.

SWOT Analysis:

Strengths

- Location
- Opportunity to increase opening hours
- Opportunity for a café operator
- Office space to rent
- Office space to accommodate STC staff offsetting rental costs
- Rental on closed days and evenings
- Free parking
- Create a health, leisure and wellbeing facility with neighbouring bodies
- Vending machine operation
- Engage with Fore Street businesses
- Engage with the community
- Registration Service.

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Weaknesses

- No interest from café operators
- No facility developed to generate income
- Current opening hours
- Location is not a town centre walk by location it's a destination
- Lack of interest in events/activities
- No requirement for a library
- Registration Service occupying office.

Opportunities

- Cinema evenings
- Engage with the community holding regular day/evening events
- Retail – sale of items relevant to library services (bookmarks, reading glasses)
- Generate income
- Rental
- Business hub desks
- Crèche
- Market stalls
- Café providing catering services
- Public fully accessible toilet
- Tourist Information Desk
- Heritage
- Schools, College and Universities
- Mobile book units to allow flexibility in the layout of the library and accommodating events.

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Threats

- Caterers not interested
- No revenue
- Hidden maintenance and running costs
- Loss of library and community hub support
- Parking charges
- Leisure centre café.

Operational Hours:

The Town Council reviewed the current operational hours against the number of staff, existing hours, and role profile, and agreed to increase the opening hours by operating on a Friday.

Public Consultation Results

The initial public consultation held in August 2020 was to seek residents' views on the proposed library refurbishment and window replacement works and provision of café creating a multiuse hub facility for its community.

Advertising took place in the Town Council noticeboards, website, social media, banners, leaflets and the Saltash Observer.

Consultation periods:

1. Initial consultation held August to September
2. Second consultation held November to December

431 people responded to the initial consultation but did not answer all the questions.

Details as follows:

Q1. How often do you visit Saltash Library?

- | | | |
|--------------------------|------------|--------|
| • Daily | 1 person | 0.23% |
| • Weekly | 97 people | 22.51% |
| • Monthly | 113 people | 26.22% |
| • Less than once a month | 161 people | 37.35% |
| • Never | 59 people | 13.69% |

All 431 people responded to the question.

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Q2. Do you support the refurbishment and modernisation works?

- Yes 372 people 86.71%
- No 57 people 13.29%

2 people skipped the question.

Q3. Do you consider the refurbishment and modernisation works will enhance your visitor experience?

- Yes 352 people 82.82%
- No 73 people 17.18%

6 people skipped the question.

Q4. Following the refurbishment and modernisation works is it likely you will visit the library on a more regular basis?

- Yes 304 people 71.19%
- No 123 people 28.81%

4 people skipped the question

Q5. 313 people added additional comments and can be viewed here:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/stories/SM-P89TPGDY/>

118 people chose not to leave additional comments.

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To date 443 people have responded to the second consultation. An updated figure in terms of responses will be provided at the Extraordinary Full Town Council meeting to be held on the 22nd December 2020 following the closing date of the 21st December 2020.

Details as follows:

Q1. Are you in favour of Saltash Town Council proceeding with the library refurbishment works at a council tax precept increase of 2% which is the equivalent of an additional £4.00 per year for a Band D equivalent dwelling.

- Yes 311 people 70.20%
- No 132 people 29.80%

The responses for both consultations are very similar in terms of numbers received.

Upon return of the public consultation results and tenders received, it enabled the council to reaffirm its decision to proceed with the loan application.

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Finance Officers Report:

Since Saltash Town Council took over the library in March 2019 its first identified priority from a building survey was to replace the roof which was desperately needed. The goal was to improve energy efficiency and make the building water tight.

During 2020/21 emergency works to the heating system had to be carried out which was also not originally budgeted for. The council had to use its EMF funds which was also put aside to go towards the refurbishment works.

The next essential work within the library refurbishment plan is to replace the curtain walling of the building. This will improve the condition of the building and to further improve on energy efficiency and also to make it more appealing to generate increase footfall enabling the council to move forward with its business plans.

A part of the business plan for the library is to offer an additional facility for the hub which is a café provision infrastructure this will also be provided as part of the cost of the refurbishments works. It is yet to be determined if the café facilities and operation will be provided in-house, by a commercial operator or a community group.

The council up to December 2020 rented an office for the finance department and due to the Covid -19 impact this hasn't been suitable for the finance staff to be able to operate from. Also due to the continued growth of the Town Council it is essential that further office staff accommodation is sourced. Therefore, as part of the refurbishment works an office is going to be built on the mezzanine within the library so that the space can be utilised to its full capacity.

Due to the all of the above the council had to make the decision to put forward a loan application for the entire cost of the works for the internal and external refurbishment so the cost could be spread over 10 years for its community.

The cost for the internal and external refurbishment works according to approved tender £220,105. With a Cornwall Council contribution of £15,000. This leaves a balance of £205,105. The council agreed to put forward a loan application of £200,000 and the remaining balance of £5,105 to be precepted in 2021/22. The cost of £220,105 includes surveyor's fees and a contingency of 10%.

The cost of new equipment and furniture is estimated to be £30,000 which has been precepted separately in 2021/22. If the contingency is left from the above works, then this could cover this cost instead.

Regarding the patio area refurbishment the estimated cost of this is going to be at a cost of £9,000. The amount for this would also need to precepted separately in 2021/22.

A further contingency of 10% for the works has been agreed to be transferred from reserves if needed. This will cover any unexpected increase in the cost of materials due to Brexit and market fluctuation costs.

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Actual funding needed:

Major Works	Amount
Replacement of Curtain Walling and Office Screen	£102,300
Internal & External Refurbishment including office and café provision	£103,405.80
Surveyor Fees	£14,399.41
Patio Area to the front of the building	£9,000
New Equipment and Furniture	£30,000
Total	£259,105.21
Less Cornwall Council Contribution for Curtain Walling	(£15,000)
Less Precepted Earmarked Funds	(£44,105.21)
Total Shortfall	£200,000

Loan Affordability

The Town Council has identified that it can afford the loan repayments with a 2% increase on precept and the result from the public consultation has been in favour of this increase. Next year's budget has been set with the annual loan repayment and it is included in the five year forecast.

In the event that the Town Council will not be able to cover the repayments due to financial difficulty a mitigation against such risk has been put in place. Over the last few years, the Town Council has built up a contingency reserve equal to 5 months of its operational expenditure. Therefore, the Town Council would be able to meet the repayments of the loan by using the contingency funds and also cover any other statutory operational expenditure of the Town Council. In 2019/20 the loan repayment was precepted, however due to Covid-19 impact there was a delay with the project and loan application being progressed and submitted therefore the council agreed to transfer these funds to an EMF to be used against a future loan repayment.

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Supporting Documents

1. Budget Forecast including Loan Repayments
2. Library Budget
3. Capital Reserves as at 14th December 2020
4. Contribution from Cornwall Council - £15k on commencement date
5. Building Consultants Repairs, Future uses and Alternations Report
6. Library Overview Report.