

NEW ERA FOR LOOE LIBRARY

Plans to renovate the library building on the Millpool by Looe Town Council are on schedule to be completed by the end of October.

Looe Town Council has exciting plans to create a 'community hub' in the building so residents can access a wide range of services all under one roof. The council is moving its offices into the first floor of the library building with new meetings rooms and a fully accessible council chamber with lift.

The library will be relocated downstairs. There will be a dedicated section for children's books with a wide range of activities planned including fun events and activities as well as catering for the more vulnerable in Looe and surrounding areas.

Mayor of Looe Cllr Martin Gregory said, "The Town Council would like to apologise for the disruption to services while the building is being remodelled." "We have arranged for the Millpool Centre next door to offer public access computer during the closure as well as the click and collect service. Our staff have also been promoting the Library Summer Reading Challenge by visiting local schools. We are pleased to have been able to arrange an extra stop on the Mobile Library Service so that it now calls in the space opposite the library once every four weeks. This means that customers still have the chance to choose books from library shelves and we have had some very positive feedback from those who have used this service. People can of course still use the Borrow Box service to download e-books and audio books."

The renovations are being overseen by a working party including Councillors Viv Sullivan, James Lundy and Paul Penhaligan working with a local quantity surveyor, architect and builders.

Looe Town Council Library and Community Committee chaired by Cllr Edwina Hannaford are developing a vision for this much loved facility with the library at its heart. The Council wants to ensure residents have access to a wide range of books, e resources and downloads befitting a modern library offer. We want to especially cater for children to start them off at an early stage on a lifelong love of reading. We want the building to be a safe space that residents can come to get information and help.

The Town Council will also be delivering Information Services on behalf of Cornwall Council, making it easier to access more council services from a single site. The Information Service brings information on Council services closer to where residents live, including information on library services, housing, benefits, council tax, disabled parking badges and refuse and recycling. Advice will be offered on how to get information about Cornwall Council and Looe Town Council services like parking permits. Residents will be able to make payments for council services and free internet access will be offered so residents can apply for jobs and benefits and check their emails.

Some residents will remember when the building was named the Discovery Centre offering tourist information. Tourism is very important to Looe so the Library Community Hub will continue to offer basic visitor information. However the Town Council are also developing a mobile Visitor Information Centre trailer which will be towed to various locations across the town. It is hoped that the trailer, which is currently being kitted out, will be operational in time for Looe Live music festival. It is also planned that the trailer will promote Looe as a visitor destination outside of Looe at other events like the Royal Cornwall Show or further afield.

The Town Council have recently been through a restructure with new staff appointed to take its work forward. A new Library Community Hub Manager is in the process of being appointed to deliver our vision which includes cultivating a family of volunteers to help enhance the library offer with story reading, crafting, knit and natter, Lego club, local history sessions and linking up with other groups and organisations within the town. We also want to expand the 'Looe Visitor Information' ambassadors scheme to welcome people to our lovely town and highlight all we have to offer as a seaside resort.

Linking with the Councils environment committee led by chair Cllr Viv Sullivan, a free external water refill point is being included in the renovation. Other measures to minimise the buildings impact on climate change are being developed.

An open day is planned for early November so residents can find out about the range of services on offer and celebrate a new secure future for the library as a community hub.
For more information contact Looe Town Council 01503 262255 www.looetowncouncil.gov.uk