

## **Looe Town Council**

### **Library and Community Hub Committee Report**

#### **2022/2023**

First of all, may I express my gratitude to all the staff in the Library and Community Hub for their hard work over the past year. It is thanks to their commitment and dedication that the Library and Hub are thriving and are providing a major resource for the people of Looe and visitors alike.

The use of the Library has increased by 26% over the past year and it is not simply books! There is active encouragement for everyone to use the Library in Looe and good connections have been made to particularly ensure children use the facility.

The Hub provides numerous clubs and groups which are well attended and numbers continue to grow. WeAreWithYou and Health Works for Cornwall are grateful for the regular use of the little office which works well for the services they provide and offers an opportunity for clients to visit the Library. Staff continue to signpost residents to any services they require particularly Cornwall Council.

In addition a basic computing course has recently begun and there is already a waiting list!

There is a new notice board in the foyer to promote local ,non-commercial, events and groups. It is hoped that in due course that art exhibitions may take place in this area showcasing local artists.

Obviously tourist information is very important particularly with our new status as Shipton Abbott! Time has been spent fine tuning the information leaflets ensuring that they are up to date and succinct – they are very popular. The trailer is also in good use.

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Similarly, the Visit Looe website is proving very popular and provides detailed breakdowns about the type of enquiries of those intending to visit out town as well as much useful detail about accommodation, local events and activities. My thanks to our partners involved with the website and particularly those involved in the Looe Ambassador Scheme which is thriving with enthusiastic members exchanging information and ideas. More are welcome!

Finally, we have the return of the Food Festival on the 10<sup>th</sup> of September and once again my thanks to the staff who have all worked extremely hard to achieve this. Hopefully it will lead to bigger and better things!

Councillor Jon Holmes

Chairperson

**Catherine Foley, Supervisor, Looe Library & Community Hub**

12th May 2023

People are using the Community Hub for a range of reasons. In addition, to using the library service to borrow books, people come for a safe and friendly place to go and to interact. Some people also come to find out information and get advice, or they simply need a coffee and a chat. When people move to the area we help them register for the council services and give them recycling bags. We are the front desk for Looe Town Council, tourist information and we signpost services for Cornwall Council.

We have worked hard this year to encourage people to come back to the library. We advertise on the noticeboards in town and regularly on social media. Our hard work has paid off as we have now more borrowers using the library than ever and the numbers of issues continue to rise – a 16% increase in issues from this time last year, plus Looe Library is currently ranking 5th out of the 28 library sites in Cornwall! This is such good news as it means more people are reading and learning again, engaging with the community and

making use of this free resource and the activities and events we offer, provided by the Town Council.

All our activities are free and open to everyone. For children we run weekly Stories & Songs plus a Lego Club at weekends. We invite children's authors in for workshops and storytelling sessions. Two local authors; JT Scott and Emily Thuysbaert, have led sessions. We have run a variety of craft workshops; at Christmas, Easter, Halloween and also to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee and the King's Coronation. We have worked hard to connect with the local schools, last summer we went to Looe, Pelynt and Duloe schools to promote the Summer Reading Challenge. We have had 2 local schools visit the library and hope this will grow.

For adults we run a Knit & Natter social group. We offer free Wi-Fi, people can sit and charge their mobiles, we have two computers, and we give computer support when we can – we also recently run a basic computer course and offer a printing and photocopying service. We cannot process forms but we do help with advice on how to fill them in, and we photocopy the necessary documents. Vulnerable people can use our phone to talk to the council and we make calls on their behalf, we get help when we know people are sleeping rough.

Last Autumn, we ran a Wellbeing Hub, which we then turned into a Warm Space during the winter months. Our Warm Space was open and available to everyone and provided a safe and friendly space to have hot drinks and snacks, Volunteer Cornwall helped fund provisions and volunteers Looe Lions came regularly and helped visitors feel welcome. I'm sure we will run a Warm Space again, during the winter.

For the housebound and those who just find it too difficult to get along to the library, we have the Looe Home Delivery Library Service where our volunteers, Andy & Malcolm take books to doors and stop for a chat. We have visited one local residential home for a Storytelling & chat session and plan to do more of these.

We are fortunate to be able to use the council chambers for our craft and library workshops and events and this is also the area we used for our Warm Space over the winter.

We have reached out to local organisations to offer support, I met with Age Concern and The Derby & Joan Club and U3A and am working to build connections with other community groups. Currently we have Health Works for Cornwall and WAWY using space to meet their clients.

We have improved and updated the content of our tourist information leaflets, our latest leaflet, Beyond Paradise – a mini tour around the program's locations in Looe, has been particularly popular. We have improved the look of the foyer with smart leaflet racks and a noticeboard – this has been very popular.

We are now fully staffed with a talented team of four part-time members of staff, each one bringing different skills and ideas, all very hard-working. If people come in unhappy or disgruntled, we try our best to help and invariably they leave feeling more positive.