

Wiltshire Council

Environment Select Committee

Date February 2017

Calne Community Hub and Library – review of the first six months

Purpose of Report

1. To update the Committee on the success and progress of the new Calne Library model, including a breakdown of usage for each library in Wiltshire.

Background

2. In summer 2016 the Calne library building was refurbished to make better use of space and to create a new Community Hub.
3. The refurbishment focused on creating improved space and facilities for the entire community - of all ages - to provide a focal point and vibrant place for the town and surrounding area. It also became home to the Calne Community Hub which relocated from its premises in Phelps Parade.
4. The refurbishment included movable shelving to enable larger meetings and events to be held in the library area. Open+ - a state of the art automated card access system - was also installed to allow access to the new hub and its facilities outside of library opening hours.
5. A new bookable meeting room, for up to 16 people, and a smaller breakout room for 1 to 1 meetings, was also provided.

Progress to date

6. In August 2016, the Calne Community Hub relocated to the refurbished building vacating the Wiltshire Council owned retail unit previously provided for its use in Phelps Parade. In October 2016, Citizens Advice Wiltshire also relocated into the hub, providing its services and advice on Monday and Friday mornings.
7. The Calne Community Engagement Manager is also located at the hub and regularly hosts community meetings and gatherings. Other council officers use the hub to meet with local people and organisations.

8. The new hub has seen an increase in the numbers of local people using and visiting the building and benefiting from its informal and user-friendly atmosphere.
9. Visitor figures show an increase of 5.1% since its opening (5 month period). This is set against a national and local trend of a decline in library visitor numbers.

Improved access

10. The relocation of the Community Hub, combined with the implementation of the Open+ card access scheme, has resulted in library customers, community groups and visitors to the hub being able to access the building and all its services and facilities on Wednesdays - a day the library was previously closed and outside the opening hours of the library.
11. There has been a total of 2,932 visitors to the library on Wednesdays in the first 5 months - an average of 139 people per Wednesday.
12. The building is also now accessible from 8am on weekdays and 9am on Saturdays and available for evenings as bookable space by a wide range of community groups (as highlighted Appendix A) This has resulted in a 37.5% increase in the opening hours.

Increased users and community opportunities

13. Library membership has increased by 5.6% (5 month period) compared to the same period last year.
14. Thirty nine diverse community groups and organisations now use the building and a total of 282 room/space bookings were made by these groups in the first 5 months. New groups have also been established including a support group for parents with children on the autistic spectrum and an accessible art group.
15. Demand for the meeting rooms and space continues to grow and the new hub has received very positive feedback from the groups using it
16. The flexible shelving in the library area has enabled the space to be used for larger meetings and events. The community area board meetings are now held in the building, the Our Community Matters JSA event and a theatre performance of Romeo and Juliet also took place in this space.

Customer Survey – initial results

17. A customer survey is currently being undertaken to gather further feedback from customers and user groups and organisations. This information will be reviewed to help develop the services and facilities that the hub can provide.

18. The initial responses (from more than 100) show 92% of users are either 'Satisfied or Very Satisfied' with the new Community Hub & Library. When asked if they used the building more or less since the refurbishment 35% said they'd used it more.
19. Of those customers who had used the library during Open+ sessions, comments include:

"I feel that it's important to get maximum use out of a public building"
"The system is really awesome" "It's easy to use"
"The library is nice and quiet during the early morning Open+ sessions"
"Love the coffee from the Hub on Wednesdays"
20. A few negative comments have been raised around issues relating to heating and noise levels. These have either been resolved or review is underway.

Open+ access system

21. The Open+ system has proved to be a reliable way to extend the opening hours of the hub and enabled access in the evening for community bookings. 160 individuals have registered for Open+ access since mid-September 2016. This is steadily increasing each week. There have been 63 evening group bookings between Mid-August to Mid-January where building access was provided by the system. Appendix A lists the groups and organisations regularly using the building.
22. The Open+ card access system has also been used to extend library opening hours in the mornings from 8.00am on weekdays and 9.00 on Saturdays, providing unstaffed access to the building and its facilities.
23. This is the first stage in a planned extension of library opening hours using the system, providing a gradual approach to building up use to allow it to be fully tested. An induction covering safety and security matters is given to customers who register to use the system. Access to a telephone with pre-programmed emergency and buildings helpline numbers are provided - no calls have been made to date.

Next steps

24. Initial feedback highlights positive support for the newly refurbished space and access to facilities. This has been achieved without additional staffing or caretaking requirements, or compromising the security of the building.
25. Options for further increased access (outside of community room/space bookings) including additional evening opening hours for the public will now be taken forward and the early morning access will be actively publicised.

Background Papers

None

Appendices

Appendix A – Group bookings and regular usage

Appendix B – Breakdown of usage in Wiltshire libraries

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Appendix A

Group bookings and regular usage

Access 2 Art Group
Air Quality Group
BBC World Service
Calne Community Area Board
Calne Fairtrade
Calne Gaming Club
Calne Green Party
Calne Labour Party
Calne Lions
Calne Bowl Project
Calne Men's Shed
Calne Rotary Club
Calne Summer Playscheme
CATG meetings
Citizens Advice Wiltshire
Community Safety Forum
Community Transport
Dementia Action Alliance
Domestic Abuse Charity
FairTrade Group
HACCA
Health & Wellbeing Steering Group
Health Trainer
Heart for Calne
Job Club
Learning Curve
Local Youth Network
Marden Vale PTA
MPs Surgery
Older People Carers Voices
Older People Champions Area Cluster
Our Place
Pins & Needles Knitting Group
Registrar
Richmond Fellowship
Sewing Group
Spectrum (Autism) Support Group
Tourism Working Group
Wiltshire Addiction Support Group
Wiltshire College Careers
Wiltshire Council Officers meetings
Wiltshire Family Learning Workshop
Wiltshire & Swindon Users Network

Appendix B

Breakdown of usage for Wiltshire Libraries 2016 - Apr-Dec 2016			
	Issues/renewals (inc %age for web & callpoint renewals)	Registered Members	Visitors
	Apr-Dec 16	Dec 16	Apr-Dec 16
North Mobile (BB)	24,883	2,342	7,738
South Mobile (CG)	24,483	2,279	8,087
Homes Mobile	31,313	214	2,717
Aldbourne	4,336	563	2,650
Box (<i>closed 2 weeks for lift installation</i>)	2,745	497	1,226
Durrington	6,752	1,101	6,016
Ludgershall	1,992	578	2,036
Lyneham	4,089	794	3,415
Market Lavington	3,189	380	2,454
Netheravon	2,007	299	1,806
Purton	5,854	874	3,456
Ramsbury	2,825	491	1,998
Tisbury	9,008	1,056	8,758
Cricklade	11,822	1,306	4,960
Downton	11,735	1,590	6,887
Mere	13,201	1,822	16,481
Pewsey	22,067	2,199	15,905
Tidworth	21,722	4,552	27,672
Wilton	13,002	1,514	9,029
Amesbury	39,736	6,144	30,269
Malmesbury	43,127	5,472	32,538
Marlborough	35,696	6,099	33,199
Westbury	32,607	6,131	31,629
Bradford-On-Avon	72,743	8,526	60,840
Calne (<i>closed 2 weeks for refurbishment</i>)	64,106	9,634	56,108
Corsham	85,518	8,360	85,210
Melksham	63,925	9,402	45,243
Royal Wootton Bassett	69,839	7,978	56,161
Devizes	96,688	13,859	92,244
Warminster	78,815	11,453	91,614
Chippenham	126,221	17,953	104,583
Salisbury	203,723	34,171	291,125
Trowbridge	172,395	21,990	134,638
Erlestoke Prison	16,312	475	N/A
Performing Arts	10,246	669	N/A
eBook downloads	26,849	N/A	N/A
WSHC Local History Library	N/A	3,386	6,740
Interlending	992	204	N/A
Library HQ & Children's County Store	890	8	N/A
Grand Total	1,457,454	196,364	1,285,431
Callpoint renewals	2,842		
Web renewals (<i>web branch - staff</i>)	839		
Web renewals (<i>borrower's home branch</i>)	165,970		
Total web renewals	166,809		