

**QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR**



**Question submitted by: Councillor Coker**

**To Cabinet Member:** Cllr Pat Patel, Cabinet Member for Customer Services, Culture, Leisure and Sport

**Question:**

When can we expect Devonport library to return to normal opening hours, with the onset of winter people will require warm spaces to be able to use this, at present it is open on Mondays and Wednesdays can we have some commitment to open more hours?

**Response:** ( for completion by City Council officers and Cabinet Members)

**Opening hours**

During a meeting with a St Aubyn church representative in February this year, one of the points of concern raised was about the opening hours at Devonport. At the time, the library opened on Mondays and Wednesdays, from 11am to 5pm. From mid-March the library Service was able to tweak the opening hours, adding a net increase of four hours, from then opening from 9am to 5pm on both days. Together with staffing across the 11-library estate, this is the maximum hours that the library can open with current resources.

The Library Service is currently investigating extending opening hours across all libraries through volunteer / community engagement.

**Job Club**

Also at the meeting in February, the church representative raised a concern about the Job Club at Devonport not being able to re-open on Wednesday mornings, as was the case prior to the pandemic. As we were able to extend the opening hours to include Wednesday mornings, this is no longer a concern for the church. The Job Club is run by Routeways, who see clients on the church's mezzanine floor in the library. They use their own laptops (which they didn't have before the pandemic), which means they don't use library PCs as they used to, although we still keep them available for the Job Club should the need arise.

**Social café / Food club**

The church representative raised in February that the library opening on Wednesday mornings would help Devonport Churches run a Devon Live Social Café, using the meeting room at that time. This, too, was achieved when opening hours were increased, and staff at the library reopened the kitchen for church staff to store and prepare food. From a Library Service point of view, although not involved directly in the initiative, the café / food club is operating successfully.

**Rent / operating costs**

Although the library is leased from the Exeter Diocese, the rent is just £1 per year, and charged or not at the discretion of the Bishop (in effect, no charge). The Council sub-lets (no charge) the mezzanine floor back to the Diocese for use by St Aubyn Church.

The operating costs to run Devonport Library include staffing costs, facilities management costs (including non-domestic rates, utilities, inspections and maintenance, and utilities), and other costs that include, for example, contributions to new library stock and the library van.



**Signed:**

**Dated:** 10<sup>th</sup> October 2022