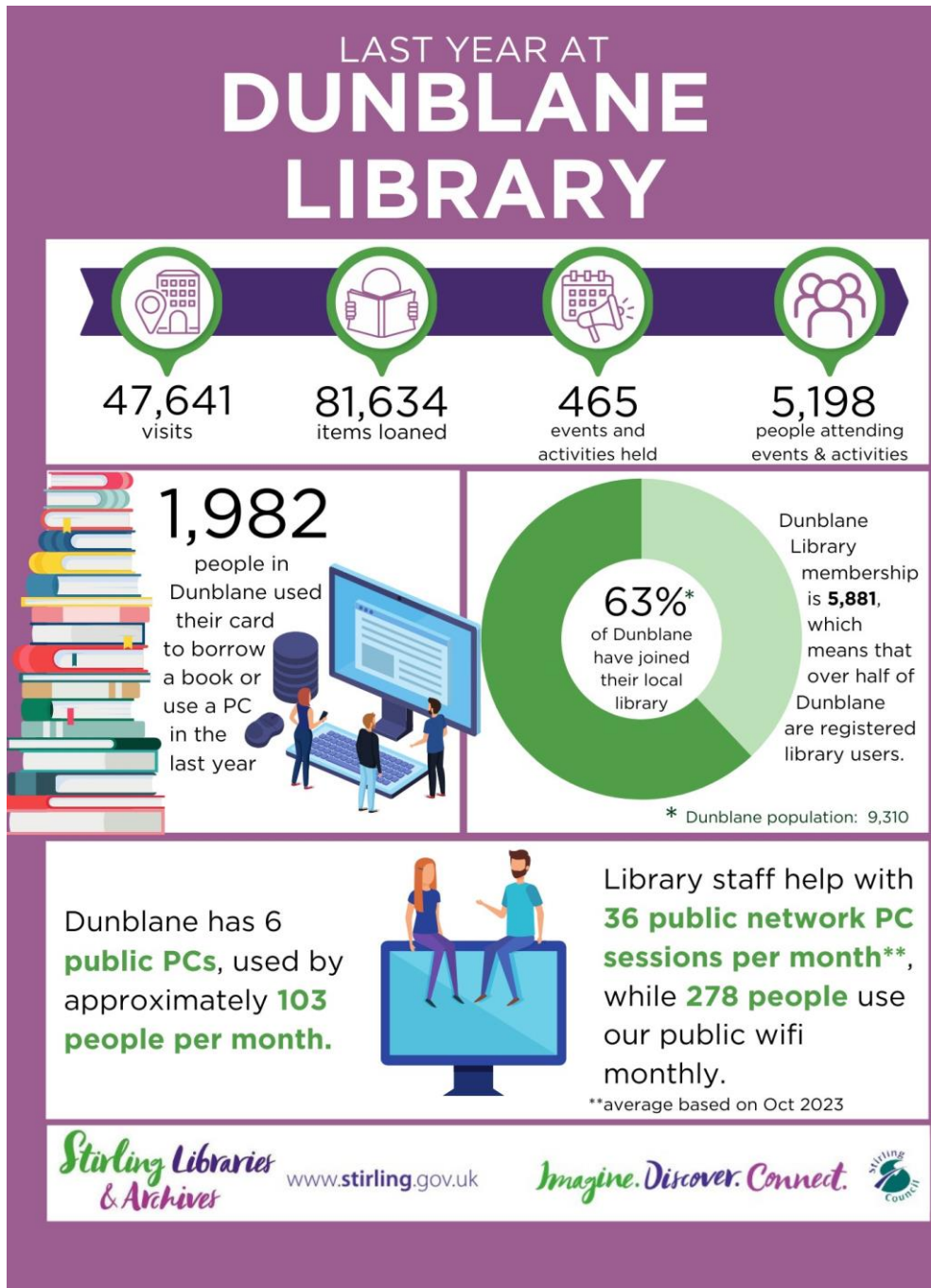


Dunblane Library Development Plan 2023-2024



“Dear Library, You are important to me because.... ‘I like your books. My family like to visit and read there. We like to borrow books too!’

Taken from Dear Library – a collection of stories and drawings from the community of Dunblane. February 2024.

Introduction

Stirling Libraries are lifelines in their communities, connecting people to each other, to public services, and to opportunities for social, economic, cultural and educational wellbeing.

Our libraries support lifelong learning, culture, community pride, active citizenship and health literacy. We aid employability for jobseekers and offer quality volunteer opportunities. We encourage numeracy and literacy from early years and have a unique role in making resources accessible to the community and helping people navigate and evaluate information.

Stirling Council Libraries are creating Development Plans for all their libraries. These plans will link to key strategic documents and use information from local surveys to complement existing work. The Dunblane Library Development Plan sets out how Dunblane Library will support social, cultural, educational and economic wellbeing in the area and how we will develop our service to meet community needs.

Dunblane Library

The Library is situated in The Institute, High Street, Dunblane, and the library in some form has been in this building since 1905.

Dunblane Library is open six days a week with two evenings open until 7pm. It is a well-used building with 47,641 visitors to the library in the year March 2023 to March 2024. Dunblane Library loaned 81,634 books during this period, and had 1,982 active library members (have used their card at least once in the last 12 months).

The Library is split across four large rooms with tables, chairs, coffee machine and art gallery space. There is a computer suite with eight public use PCs and space for study. A junior library with Lego table, toys, crafts and PlayStation. Visitors to our library can spend time reading our newspapers and access our free Wi-Fi with their own device.

Dunblane Library has one full-time member of staff and four part-time staff. The Library has a stock of approx. 13,000 books. Other items available for lending include audiobooks on CD, DVDs and coding kits. We provide library members with free access to digital newspapers and magazines via our Press Reader e-resource platform and app, and e-books and audiobooks via e-resource platform and apps Libby and Borrowbox. The Library is centrally situated on the High Street but has no parking other than street parking. The building faces many challenges associated with its age.

Library Opening Times

Monday, 9am to 1pm, 2pm to 5pm

Tuesday, 9am to 1pm, 2pm to 7pm

Wednesday, 9am to 12pm

Thursday, 9am to 1pm, 2pm to 7pm

Friday, 9am to 1pm, 2pm to 5pm

Saturday, 9.30am to 12.30pm

Activities and Events

Dunblane Library provides a variety of activities and events for the community across the year. This includes monthly groups like book groups, knitting and crafts, a memory group, and a creative writing

group for adults. Our digital team support volunteers to run IT and Me sessions for digital inclusion. Citizen's Advice Bureau held fortnightly sessions throughout 2023-2024, this has been withdrawn since April 2024 due to a lack of funding. For children an Art and History Club and a Lego Club as well as fortnightly Bookbug sessions. The library has an annual programme of events which this year included visits from award-winning author Sara Sheridan, a poetry event with Scotland's Makar Kathleen Jamie, and a visit and talk from local nature conservationist Tom Bowser from Argaty Red Kites. The library has tried a couple of new activities and clubs this year, in response to community enquiry, a support group for parents/carers of neurodivergent children, and a games club for adults. Dunblane Library is starting a Lego club for home-schooled children (starting March 2024).

In the year March 2023 to March 2024 Dunblane Library has hosted 465 event and activity sessions for adults and children.

Working with Partners

Dunblane Library works with partners such as Stirling Council Learning and Employability Team, and hosts an IT and Me volunteer in the library each week to enable us to provide people with computer support when it's needed. Working with the Clacks & Stirling Health & Social Care Partnership, the library provide free resources about 'Falls' and access to walking aid ferrules, elbow crutches and wheeled zimmer frames (April 2024). The library hosted a chronic pain clinic for members of the community in March 2024.

Frequent visits to the library are organised with all local primary schools and nurseries. Library staff provide activities and story time sessions and engage with schools for annual literacy initiatives like Read Write Count and The Reading Agency's Summer Reading Challenge, and this year they have hosted visits from the local Scouts group.

Dunblane Library staff support community activity days such as the Dunblane Christmas Extravaganza, Summer Fete, Dunblane Fling and hold Bookbug sessions within the Braeport Centre for the twins group.

The Library provides a meeting space for Dunblane Community Council and Dunblane Burns Group.

The Impact of what we do

In October 2023 Stirling Libraries took part in a national public library survey which has set out to measure the impact of library service provision. It looked to explore the impact library services have on people (saving you money), health and wellbeing (improving quality of life), and the value of access to information (helping people make decisions). The survey asked how important the library is to people and whether they found it a welcoming place to visit. To demonstrate the impact of our service in our community we have taken a few examples of answers to the last question on the survey.

'Can you tell us about a time when your library had a positive impact on your life?'

'I feel safe and welcome here'

'It's a great place to visit when feeling lonely and new books can give great pleasure'

'Growing up it broadened my knowledge of this world and relationships. It is a place to meet friends and enjoy fellowship of shared pleasures. Now, it is providing a warm, safe, place to me and my friends to continue our crafting together'

'Bookbug is also a great opportunity for me to meet other mums, socialise, make friends and it gets out of the house with a young baby'

'When recently moved to a new area, at the library I met someone who became a close friend and helped me to feel more settled in the community'

'The library provided a peaceful place enabling me to complete an article I was writing. It gave me access to online resources and I had some good conversations with the librarians which lifted my mood'

'I did the computer skills course at the library for a year. This taught me how to use the internet and gave me confidence to go online'

'When I was very short of money I certainly couldn't afford to buy books, not even charity shop ones'

The Community of Dunblane

Dunblane is a town in the council area of Stirling in central Scotland, and inside the historic boundaries of the county of Perthshire. It is a commuter town, with many residents making use of good transport links to much of the Central Belt, including Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Dunblane has a population of approx. 9,310 (Sept 22). The town has a very successful High School (approx. pupil role 875). Three state Primary Schools; Dunblane PS, Newton PS and St. Mary's Episcopal PS (approx. pupil role 886). There is also the Queen Victoria School in Dunblane (approx. pupil role 265), a boarding school for the children of UK Armed Forces personnel. The town has a mixed population with both young families and retired people.

What are Stirling's Strategic Priorities?

The Stirling Plan is a Local Improvement Plan which sets out how public sector organisations will work together with communities and voluntary groups, to improve people's lives, encourage fairness and making things more equal for everyone in Stirling. The ambition of the plan is to make Stirling a great place to live, work, study and visit and make life better for those who are experiencing the greatest challenges. It explains how the Council and its partners will work together to help people:

- be part of a prosperous economy that promotes inclusive growth opportunities across our communities,
- be skilled and supported to make a positive contribution to our communities
- be part of a safe and caring community within an attractive and sustainable environment.

What are Dunblane Community Priorities?

We will use the results of community consultations, library user surveys, local surveys, and information from Dunblane Library Development Group meetings to help us to understand what the community priorities are. In the Dunblane Development Trust Community Consultation comments from respondents were grouped into the following areas: **environment** (bikes, cycling, transport, climate change, sustainability, recycling, reducing waste, growing projects, gardens, parks and play areas, wild spaces, parks and parking), **events and activities** (community events, classes for children and families, activities for teenagers, older adults, support for other specific groups), **volunteering opportunities**, and **communication**.

Stirling Libraries are consulting Stirlingshire's population in 2024. Our Future Libraries Survey has been available online and in libraries throughout August/September/October 2024. The survey seeks people's

views on the future of Stirling’s Library Service and on what services our communities think we should be providing. Information gained from the survey will inform a new strategy for libraries for the next five years which will help us to adapt, modernise and meet the needs of local communities. The survey takes account of different communities and information gathered will inform future versions of this Dunblane Library Plan.

Strategy or Policy	Date Created	Approved/Last Review Date	Date for Review
Stirling Plan 2017-2027	2017	2017	2020
Libraries and Archives Strategy for Stirling	2018	2021 (mid Term Review)	2023
Stirling Council Community Learning and Development Plan	2021	N/A	2024
Stirling Council Community Engagement Strategy	2021	N/A	2024
Dunblane Development Trust Community Consultation- Results	2022	N/A	
Big Dunblane Survey	2023	N/A	
SLIC Library Survey	2023		
Future Libraries Survey	2024		

Who are our Community Partners?

To support us to develop the Dunblane Library Development Plan, Dunblane Library has created a Library Development Group which will meet a couple of times a year. Information gathered from this group will help the library to develop its service in line with community needs as well as promoting the role of the library within the community.

Meetings will

- provide an opportunity to update on Dunblane Library Service
- explore how Dunblane Library can extend its offer to match community need
- discuss new projects and partnerships
- help us to increase community use of the library space
- help share library and community news more effectively

Dunblane Library will work in partnership with representatives from community organisations and voluntary groups within the area and other interested parties to establish the group.

How have we developed our service in-line with the needs of our local community?

In the year 2023-2024 Dunblane Library held one meeting (Library Development Group). The meeting included representatives from a variety of community organisations, groups and individuals. We have

worked together with local organisations and groups to action some of the suggestions received from the meeting and from people visiting the library, some example of this have been included below.

Example 1. Environment

This year we have taken Environment as a focus for some of our events, activities and partnerships. This has been an area of discussion or interest that we have noted in a couple of the meetings of the library development group. Environment was also one of the areas that people responded to in the Dunblane Development Trust Community Consultation with residents.

You Said

"Promote environmental books"

"Encourage swapping instead of buying, i.e. windfall apples, dressing up costumes, wellies"

"Provide climate emergency resources/display/events/different aspects" (22-23)

"More community events" (22-23)

We Did

Dunblane Library now has a permanent 'green' bookshelf in the non-fiction section of the library. It is kept topped up regularly with environmental, eco and green interest book titles for adults. We have a similar collection available for children and young people to access.

Stirling Libraries applied to the Scottish Library and Information Council for Climate Engagement Funding. This fund, provided by the Scottish Government, was launched with the aim to bring the climate change debate into public libraries and to encourage communities to take action on climate change by demonstrating practical and affordable ways to engage. We ran a recycling art workshop, a local chef demonstration on sustainable cooking, and a poetry yoga event, in libraries across Stirling using this fund. Dunblane Library hosted a talk from Tom Bowser from a local farm/business Argaty Red Kites. The talk centred round the Argaty Beaver project, re-wilding, wild-life, conservation and some of the impacts of climate change on the local environment. It was informative and interesting and provoked a lively audience discussion. It was fully booked with 48 attending and 2 members of staff. These events were designed to take place in public libraries throughout Scotland to help build climate literacy, drive conversation and raise awareness of what Scotland is doing to tackle the climate emergency.

Dunblane Library ran a Halloween costume swap during October and one wee girl picked a costume then her granny altered it for her outfit for Halloween, she came in to show library staff and her granny said "What an amazing idea, has saved us money and so much greener!"

The impact of that has been?

Comments/quotes from attendees of our event on the Argaty Beaver Project

"This talk was absolutely fantastic. It was also a complete revelation on the relations between beavers, biodiversity, farming, and local action on climate change."

"Excellent talk from Tom, plenty of reasons for optimism"

"Excellent talk from knowledgeable, local landowner, encouraged there are such people about, Thanks"

"Beaver talk, this is a great angle on climate change"

“This is the most important aspect of climate change”

“Excellent talk, extremely informative and balanced”

“With all the controversy it’s great to know the beavers have such a knowledgeable and passionate advocate (and gained a few more as a result of this event)”

“Excellent informative event – should be more to help with wider learning”

“Very interesting, learned a lot and thought provoking”

“Excellent and informative talk on the Argaty Beaver Project, dispelling myths on their impact on local ecology. Brilliant!”

“It is fantastic to hear from a local landowner who is taking risks. We also got ideas, advice about bigger picture and enjoying more widely.”

“This event is so important in drawing attention to natural ways of improving biodiversity in the natural landscape.”

Example 2. Increasing community use of the library – and evidencing our impact

Dunblane Library Development Group meetings have been a great way for us to get the word out into the community about the activities and events Dunblane Library provide and increase community use of the library space.

You Said

“More community events”

“Explore community needs”

“You were concerned about the budget cuts proposals”

We did

This year the library has hosted a number of different events, this has included visits from award-winning author Sara Sheridan, a poetry event with local poets and Scotland’s Makar Kathleen Jamie, and a visit and talk from local nature conservationist Tom Bowser from Argaty Red Kites. These events have helped us to bring in new and different audiences into the library.

In response to community enquiries Dunblane Library has tried a couple of new activities and clubs this year, a support group for parents/carers of neurodivergent children, and a games club for adults. These two groups were not well attended, due to there being other support for parents in the Dunblane area, and a lack of regular attendance in the games club. These are on hold currently, but we would reconsider these again if demand locally changed.

Following on from Stirling Council’s budget consultation and a proposal which suggested that Stirling Libraries would be facing a reduction in budget, all of our libraries saw and fielded a great number of enquiries from our population, from both users of library services and some who did not. We have used some of the comments received during this period of consultation as a demonstration of some of the impact that Dunblane Library and Dunblane Library staff have had on the people who walk through our doors. Quotes and pictures taken from ‘Dear Library...’ a collection of stories and drawings from the community of Dunblane. Presented to Dunblane Library, February 2024.

The Impact of that has been?

We hope that by sharing some of the evidence of the impact that we make, we will encourage increased community use of our library space.

Comments/quotes

"Thank you for taking the time to read out community's stories about why the library is important to them" Dunblane Secret Scribblers.

"You provided a place of safety and comfort to my autistic daughter and a place of acceptance to us. As her care-giver, it is surprising how few places do that. You were our first introduction to Dunblane community and you remain at the heart of our lives. You were the first place my daughter showed an interest in books. Your staff became the first adults she interacted with beside her parents, you remain our favorite 'hang out' space – inclusive, cosy, great book selection, lovely, caring, helpful staff."

"As a new mum the library was a destination, a reason to get up and dressed and outside, it was a safe space to let a baby crawl and a sympathetic smile when he cried..."

"You are important to me because I have visited you since the 1970s, first as a tot, then as a teenager, then as a dad. Personally I am indebted to you for looking after my mum in her late years. She had Alzheimers and you took her in when she wasn't dressed for the weather, you gave her a cup of tea and had a blether..."

"As a disabled person there are very few places I am able to access, you are a place where I meet people and have a coffee. There are not many places in Dunblane for disabled people to socialise. Since becoming disabled I have become an avid reader, this is due to my being able to access books, newspapers and reference material at the library"

"...you are not just a library, you are a meeting place, a friendship to lonely people, access to knowledge, learning opportunities, digital and technological resources and a place to read some people don't have that."

