



SURVEY OF LOCAL USAGE OF THE SERVICES IN CAMBUSLANG GATE

INTRODUCTION

At the start of the pandemic, Cambuslang Gate was closed in common with other public and commercial services. This affected Cambuslang Library and access to other services notably the Money Matters free and confidential advice service.

Cambuslang Gate re-opened partially after the worst of the pandemic, but the re-opening of Cambuslang Library was delayed – much longer than other local libraries - for reasons that remain unclear. When the Library did finally open again on 3 May 2022, the opening hours (9.45 am – 3.45 pm) have been much more limited than prior to the pandemic, again for reasons that are unexplained. This contrasts with other local libraries: for example, Rutherglen Library is open 9.15 am – 6pm, with late night opening to 8pm on Thursdays and all-day Saturday (9.15 am – 5pm).

The Money Matters service has also not been fully re-established, and is only available by phone and online, rather than through face-to-face consultation, as previously.

In response to this situation, Cambuslang Community Council undertook a survey in May/June 2022 to assess community views on the services in Cambuslang Gate. Because of the continuing effects of the pandemic, the survey was conducted wholly online via SurveyMonkey which will have excluded a significant minority of local residents who are not digitally literate.

A summary of the responses is as follows.

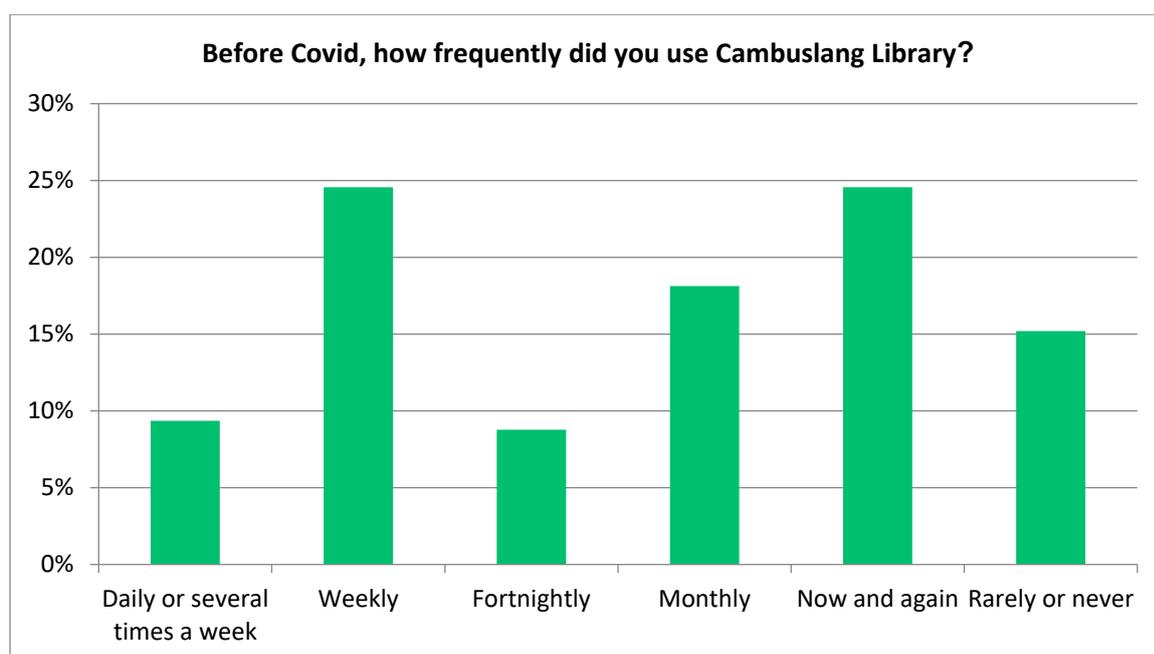
- **Cambuslang Library:** The survey indicates that current opening hours are inadequate. There is significant, regular demand among local residents for Library use, with local residents relying on the Library for a wide range of services, not just for adult and children's books, but for computing/copying facilities and community information services as well. However, the current Library opening hours are overwhelmingly regarded as insufficient.
- **Money Matters.** The financial advice service needs to resume face-to-face services. The Money Matter advice service has been a lifeline service for a minority of residents. Respondents feel strongly that the Money Matters service needs to be available via face-to-face consultation.

The following sections provide more detail on the results of the survey.

1. LIBRARY USE

The survey indicates significant and regular demand among local residents for Library use.

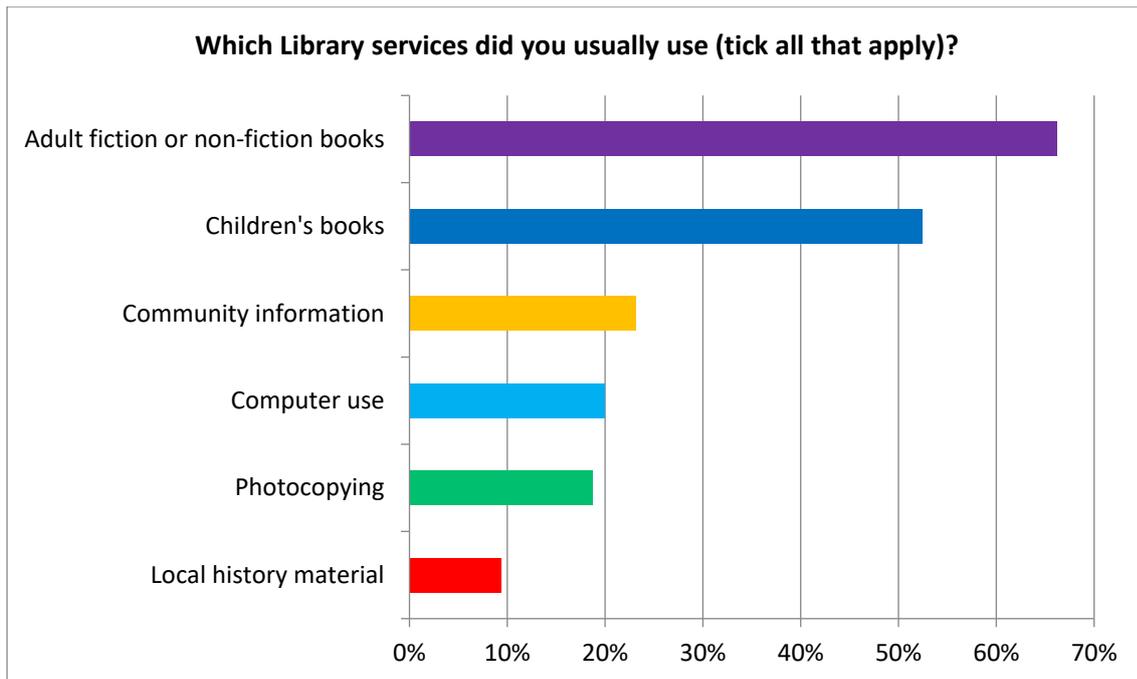
Respondents were asked how frequently they used Cambuslang Library before the pandemic. Over 85% stated that they used the Library periodically, 61% on a regular basis. Some 43% of respondents used the Library fortnightly, over a third on a daily or weekly basis



2. LIBRARY SERVICES

Local residents rely on the Library for a wide range of services, not just adult and children's books, but facilities and information services as well.

Respondents were asked to identify the different services provided by the Library. The majority used the book-lending service – two-thirds for adult fiction and non-fiction books, just over a half for children's books. Some 20% of local residents also rely on the Library for its facilities – computing and photocopying – and almost a quarter of respondents also access community information via the Library.



3. CURRENT OPENING HOURS

The current Library opening hours are overwhelmingly regarded as insufficient.

Respondents were asked whether the opening hours of 9.45 am to 3.15 pm offer sufficient access to the services. 70% replied 'No' to this question.

The survey also asked respondents to recommend the hours that would suit them. Many felt strongly that there is a need for later opening in the afternoon (with some late-evening opening) and weekend opening, primarily on Saturdays. The following are indicative of the comments made.

"I feel really disappointed that the library will close at 1545, my children love to use the library and can not get there until after school 4pm onwards. The library being open until 6pm would make huge difference to my son using the computer for online school work and my younger son likes to use this time after school to access the books he likes to read. I also use the library for photocopying but can't do so before 4pm due to work commitments."

"Later in the afternoon so I can take my grandchildren after school, 3.45 does not leave me much time."

"Late afternoon. Those hours don't allow workers to use the service."

"As children don't get out of school till 3pm at the earliest, they are unable to walk to the library with enough time to browse and select books before the 3.45 closure. They are also prevented from attending at the weekend, by the Saturday closures."

Please allow time for children's after school attendance and activities by opening it till 5pm and on Saturdays also."

"I think it should be open late a couple of nights a week, the majority of people work until 5pm so does not suit a lot of people."

"Weekend - as work Mon- Friday & children are at school / after care."

"Should be open late one night and a Saturday morning for those who work during the week."

"It would be ideal if the Library could be open from 9.15, like Rutherglen Library, as this would provide additional time to access services or even host an adult literacy and numeracy class using the computers, as our service has done in the past."

"9.00-5.30 like everywhere else! What a nonsense that the working people who pay taxes cannot have access to this service! It's disgraceful. When I am supposed to visit with my school aged children? My parents used the library twice a week and at their age it was a much needed lifeline of support. Come on SLC provide your services that we pay for!"

"Shutting at 5pm or later. My kids are now too old for the kids activities-bookbug or jolly tots. But closing at 3.45 doesn't really leave enough time to get from school to library and pick new books - it would be too rushed."

"I used to take my kids after school or on a Saturday. Would need to be open until 5 or 6pm so I can take them after work. Saturday is great too, especially in winter."

"I work 9-5 so I liked to take my children to the Library on Tuesday evenings. Even if I didn't work, there would be barely time to get from school to the Library (finishing at 3pm). No weekend hours at all means I can't take the children which is a real shame."

4. MONEY MATTERS SERVICE

The Money Matter advice service has been a very important service for a minority of residents.

Respondents were asked whether they used the Money Matters service: 18% of respondents said they had used the service. The comments provided on this question indicated that Money Matters is a highly valued and importance service; many respondents used terms like "critical", "essential" and "vital" to describe the service. The following are indicative of the responses from Money Matters users.

"Money matters is a fantastic service and offers me a lot of support with managing my debt."

"I work with adult literacy and numeracy learners and the Money Matters service is absolutely invaluable in terms of its experienced staff. Many of my learners struggle

with their finances as they are on low incomes and Money Matters have always been really helpful.”

“It’s really important, they have guided me out of horrendous debt, just keeping in touch with face to face interaction is very important to me for my mental well-being

“Extremely important especially with rising costs, food poverty etc”

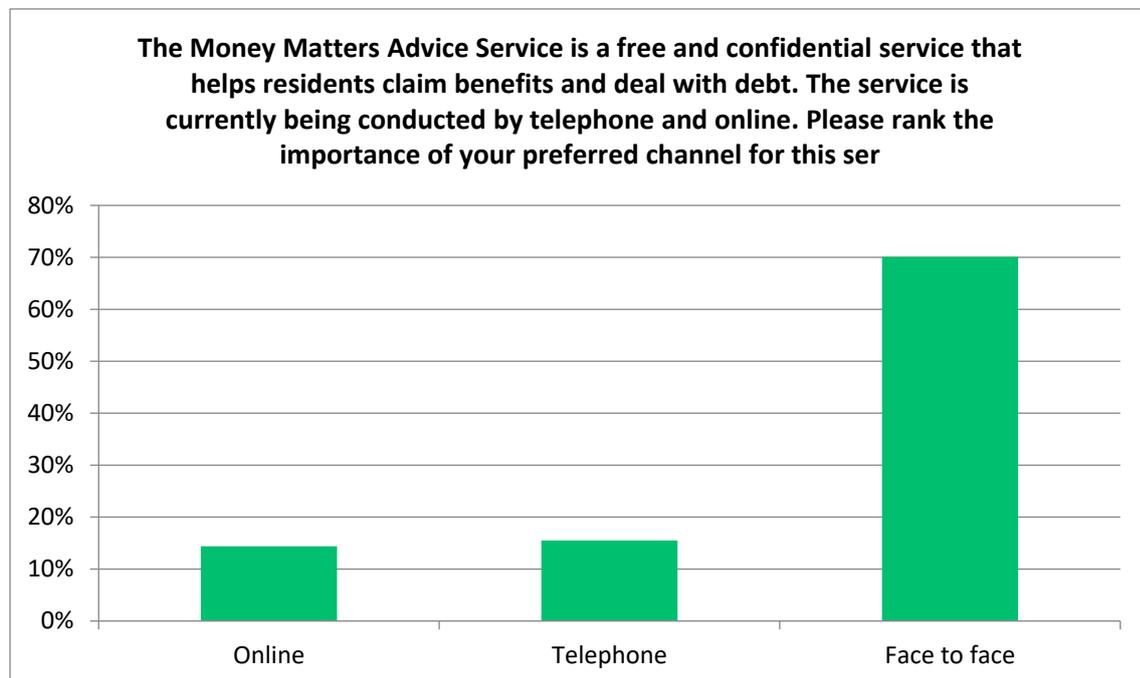
“Very useful to me when I was struggling with rent and council tax arrears.”

“Really important to be able to meet with someone at a very distressing and worrying time for my family. I could have lost my home without the support of this service and all the help I got dealing with my debt.”

5. MONEY MATTERS SERVICE – ACCESSIBILITY

Respondents feel strongly that the Money Matters service needs to be available via face-to-face consultation.

Respondents were asked whether the current provision of Money Matters advice by phone and online is sufficient. The results indicate a very strong demand for face-to-face consultations; over 70% of respondents preferred face-to-face over online and phone advice.



Respondents were asked to explain why they preferred face-to-face interaction. This question attracted a large number of comments indicating how local residents struggle with phone or online engagement with Money Matters in dealing with stressful and complicated issues, especially where people have impairments of different kinds.

“Easier to ask questions and take time to understand.”

“Couldn’t manage all the forms and financial stuff myself.”

“Not good over phone and need paperwork looked at

“My elderly mother has used this service previously and struggled to take the information in during an online session.”

“I prefer working with human beings face to face as I have partial hearing. I am also dyslexic so need face to face interactions. I rely heavily on human contact and social connection.”

“Easier to get advice and understanding of benefits if face to face.”

“Got 2 hearing aids can't hear very well on the phone.”

“Don't like to discuss personal matters on the phone - prefer face to face.”

“I have had financial issues in the past and when I sought help I found it more beneficial and reassuring to see someone in person.”

“My learners struggle with online services as they lack digital literacy skills.”

“Face to face is much better for your well-being and you feel like there is an empathy with face to face.”

“I’ve used this service in the past and it’s so much better to speak to someone in person rather than over the phone it’s more personal and professional.”

“As someone with a hearing impairment, telephone contact is an increasingly problematic issue for me and penalises anyone with this disability. In addition, it may be older people who need this service most and they are likely to have other issues such as a visual impairment, or no computer skills or access. On issues like financial advice, it's more 'personal' for advice to be given face-to-face. Just because service delivery is 'easier' to be delivered this way, it doesn't mean it's more effective. The local Bank Hub is a case in point of an innovative approach to service delivery of a combined facility.”

“Used the phone but it's harder to get information to the person you’re talking to. It's not the same provision of service.”

“There is so much paperwork to deal with. I was overwhelmed and needed to see someone in person who could actually fill out paperwork and organise all the documents and do all the financial statements. I could not face doing this over the phone and couldn’t have managed this online. I really needed the help and support of the staff there.”

6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Cambuslang Library

The survey indicates that current opening hours are inadequate. There is significant, regular demand among local residents for Library use, with local residents relying on the Library for a wide range of services, not just for adult and children's books, but for computing/copying facilities and community information services as well. However, the current Library opening hours are overwhelmingly regarded as insufficient.

Children's education and adult and child wellbeing were negatively affected during the pandemic in many households, and Cambuslang Library provides important services in these regards. The fourth largest town in South Lanarkshire needs to have a full library service comparable with other local libraries.

6.2 Money Matters advice service

The financial advice service needs to resume face-to-face services. The Money Matter advice service has been a lifeline service for a minority of residents. Respondents feel strongly that the Money Matters service needs to be available via face-to-face consultation.

The UK is in the worst cost-of-living crisis in living memory, which is expected to get worse as a result of inflation, wages not keeping pace with price increases, and rapidly rising energy prices. Significant numbers of financially vulnerable people will experience poverty and indebtedness. More than ever, face-to-face advice services are needed.