

Clackmannanshire Council
Via customerservice@clacks.gov.uk

2 February 2018

To Whom It May Concern,

Clackmannanshire Council Budget Consultation 2018/19 - Protect Your Library Services

My name is Peggy Hughes and I am the Chair of Literature Alliance Scotland (LAS), which represents the principal literature and languages organisations in Scotland.

I write with great concern in response to the proposed changes to Clackmannanshire Council's library services.

The changes put forward include the proposed closure of six out of eight Community Access Points, providing public library facilities in Sauchie, Clackmannan, Dollar, Tullibody, Alva and Menstrie.

Shutting down 75% of the public library facilities in Clackmannanshire and leaving only two library services operating in Alloa and Tillicoultry for the area's 51,000 residents would result in Clackmannanshire Council being the Scottish local authority with the lowest library provision per head of population.

While I do of course appreciate that Clackmannanshire Council is under pressure to make financial savings and there are difficult and important decisions to be taken, the argument for investment in public libraries is strong.

Indeed, for your own budget consultation, you direct residents to their local library for assistance in filling in the online consultation, which speaks volumes about the importance of library facilities in everyday life.

Libraries are crucial in providing access to literature, assisting digital literacy, and improving people's chances in life. Reading is Scotland's favourite cultural activity, which brings with it important health benefits. In fact, a 2013 study conducted by the Scottish Government shows clear and significant links between cultural participation and improved health and wellbeing. Public libraries provide meeting places where people have access to culture, knowledge and the chance to learn. In fact, successful countries, such as the Nordic countries and The Netherlands, are actively strengthening and building upon their existing networks of public libraries. They see them as the principal way for their societies to provide local democratic access to knowledge and culture in the digital age. Libraries provide equal opportunities for everyone, and everyone in our society has a right to choose their own path.

Scotland has long been known for its strong support for public libraries, and for the excellent network of libraries that has already been created. We would encourage you to maintain a strong viable network of libraries in your local communities, so that people who live in Clackmannanshire can have a library nearby, which is easy for them to travel to and to use.

Chair: Peggy Hughes | **Vice-Chair:** Dr Donald Smith | **Treasurer:** Rosemary Ward

Communications Officer: Jenny Kumar (admin@literaturealliancescotland.co.uk / 07989 557198)

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On behalf of our members, the community and the young people in your area, we urge you to please protect Clackmannanshire's Library Service in the forthcoming budget.

Yours sincerely



Peggy Hughes, Chair

Literature Alliance Scotland Membership at February 2018

MEMBERS

- Association for Scottish Literary Studies (ASLS)
- Association of Scottish Literary Agents (ASLA)
- Bookdonors CIC
- CILIPS (Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals in Scotland)
- Edinburgh International Book Festival
- Edinburgh UNESCO City of Literature Trust
- The Gaelic Books Council
- Moniack Mhor
- National Library of Scotland
- Peter Pan Moat Brae Trust
- Playwrights' Studio Scotland
- Publishing Scotland
- The Saltire Society
- Scottish Book Trust
- Scottish Language Dictionaries
- Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC)
- SLAM (Scottish Literary and Arts Magazines)
- Scottish Society of Playwrights
- Scottish PEN
- Scottish Poetry Library
- Scottish Storytelling Forum
- Scottish Writers Centre
- Society of Authors in Scotland
- Universities Committee for Scottish Literature
- Wigtown Festival Company
- Writers' Guild of Great Britain (Scottish Region)

NETWORK ASSOCIATES

- Ayton Publishing
- Emergents CIC
- Florida State Universities Library
- Indie Authors World
- Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh
- Stirling Centre for International Publishing and Communication @ Stirling University
- The Poetry Association of Scotland

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