

Councillor Stephen McCabe  
Council Leader of Inverclyde Council  
Via [Stephen.mccabe@inverclyde.gov.uk](mailto:Stephen.mccabe@inverclyde.gov.uk)

9 February 2018

Dear Mr McCabe,

**Inverclyde Council Budget Consultation – Please 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 changes under consideration at Inverclyde Council's library services, which include the proposed closure of South West library in Greenock, the reduction of opening times at Central Library and the transfer of Inverkip and Kilmacolm libraries to community groups.

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

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.

Importantly, libraries run by trained librarians offer professional support to all ages of library users and the myriad ways they engage with the service - and have the latest knowledge of issues such as copyright legislation and data protection.

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 the Inverclyde are can have access to a library, which is easy for them to travel to and whose facilities are available to them outside office hours.

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

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

Literature Alliance Scotland is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation. Registration Number: SC046387

On behalf of our members, we call on Councillors to please protect Inverclyde's Library Service in the forthcoming budget as we believe these proposals would have a detrimental impact on the communities of Inverclyde.

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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