

Cllr Vaughan Moody and Cllr Andrew Polson
East Dunbartonshire Council
12 Strathkelvin Place
Kirkintilloch G66 1TJ

21 November 2018

Dear Council Leaders,

Protect East Dunbartonshire Library Services

My name is Peggy Hughes and I am the Chair of Literature Alliance Scotland (LAS), which is Scotland's largest literary membership network, representing the principal literature and languages organisations in Scotland. I write with great concern in response to an article in the Kirkintilloch Herald (*Jobs at risk as libraries in East Dunbartonshire face axe in cost-cutting plans*, 1 November 2018) and the vote of the Board of East Dunbartonshire Leisure and Culture Trust to shut three of the area's public libraries.

We understand this recommendation, if approved, would effectively close almost 40% of the public libraries that serve your constituents. I do appreciate that East Dunbartonshire Council is under pressure to make financial savings and difficult decisions have to be made, however, the argument for 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. Importantly, libraries are vital to improving literacy in Scotland, and they provide equal opportunities for everyone in a safe, warm space.

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

On behalf of our members, the community and the young people in your area, we urge you to think of the big picture and to please protect East Dunbartonshire's Library Service.

Yours sincerely,



Peggy Hughes, Chair

Chair: Peggy Hughes | **Vice-Chair:** Dr Donald Smith | **Treasurer:** Rosemary Ward
Communications Officer: Jenny Kumar (admin@literaturealliancescotland.co.uk / 07989 557198)
Literature Alliance Scotland is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation. Registration Number: SC046387

Literature Alliance Scotland

Membership at November 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 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
- Cove Park
- Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society
- 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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