



FACING THE CHALLENGE

Community Library or Community-run Library Services Business Case Frequently Asked Questions

This document attempts to answer a few commonly asked questions regarding the set-up and management of community libraries. This is not an exhaustive list, and should you or your group think of additional questions we will be happy to answer these. We will update these FAQs as we become aware of further common issues:

1. Is there going to be any WCC funding to help us run the libraries which are no longer sustainable in their current form?

Warwickshire County Council (WCC) is setting aside a total one-off capital fund of £100,000 to support all communities in setting up their community library. This fund is available immediately. If your group is interested in making a bid please include details within your Business Case submission.

WCC is not able to provide any ongoing funding for the libraries which have been identified in the consultation as not sustainable in their current form.

2. Where else can we apply for funding to help run the Library?

Information about different funding sources is available at www.wcava.org.uk

3. Will we have to pay rent for the building?

- Where WCC accepts a community library business case, and the library building is owned by the Council, it is prepared in principle to lease the premises to a community group at a peppercorn rent for an initial period of one year.
- After that, subject to annual review of the services being provided, the lease may continue at an appropriately discounted rental, for a period of up to 5 years in total.
- The 'appropriately discounted rental' referred to above would be negotiated with the community group based on the community/social benefits which they were providing. The starting point for WCC would be market value, which WCC would then discount appropriately. In some circumstances this could be nil i.e. a peppercorn.
- At the end of the 5 year period, a full market rent will be payable
- Where WCC is currently a tenant of a building and paying rent, if a community group is to take over the building, they will, subject to the terms of the lease, need to become responsible for the rent which WCC is currently having to pay.

4. Who will maintain the building?

The building is taken on in its current condition and the tenant will be responsible for all repairs from the outset. Maintenance costs will need to be factored into any financial plans for a community group to run a library.

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5. On what terms will a building transfer to a community group take place?

If the Community group's Business Case includes a request for transfer of a building, WCC's Cabinet will decide whether to support this and on what terms. This would generally be through either (a) full transfer of ownership, or (b) short-term lease with a view to full transfer of ownership, although in certain circumstances a long lease may be more appropriate.

The cost to the Community group will depend on the market value of the building and the social benefit which the transfer of the building will provide to the community.

Where a short-term lease is agreed with a view to full transfer of ownership, the terms of this will be clearly set out (the rental being determined as set out above) and a long-term proposal will be brought back to Cabinet within five years

For further information please refer to the WCC policy on Asset Transfer.

6. Will the Council provide any support for Community Libraries?

Where Community Libraries want support WCC will:

- Publicise the service on the WCC web pages
- Provide one public access PC to include access to the "virtual" library on-line resources
- Provide current level of book stock
- Provide use of existing Library fixtures and fittings, i.e. shelving, tables, chairs, counters etc.
- Provide the Library Management System (LMS) – if required, (for computerised issue and return of books) including one LMS pc within the existing library premises
- Provide initial set up training and support

WCC will provide 'off the shelf' specialist advice and training packages with an associated cost of £80.00 an hour or £250.00 per day (exclusive of V.A.T.).

Additional IT equipment can be purchased – cost to be confirmed.

7. Can you give us a breakdown of the utility costs incurred in running the Library?

The annual revenue budgets are available at www.warwickshire.gov/facingthechallenge. These include where applicable; rates, utility bills (gas, electric, water), refuse collection, window cleaning, cleaning materials, contract cleaning, security systems, hygiene services. They do not include property maintenance or repairs.

WCC can provide a condition survey if required for each building together with details of previous year's expenditure on buildings, if required.

8. Can we keep any income we make?

Yes, however, please bear in mind there may be associated costs such as, running costs of a photocopier e.g. paper. Income from sources such as a separate business incorporated within the venture e.g. Tea room or rent from space can be retained within the venture.

Please seek separate tax advice.

9. Can we keep the book stock?

If the community group wishes to use the book stock in the library, it will continue to be part of the Warwickshire Library and Information Service collection, owned by WCC, and will be exchanged with other stock in the county in accordance with arrangements agreed with the community group.

10. Can we keep the Library personal computers?

Warwickshire County Council will retain ownership of all personal computers provided.

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11. Will we need self-service machines?

No, however, if a community group would like to introduce self service machines into a library, the group need to include this in their business case so it can be discussed further.

Associated costs of Self-Service equipment are a one off cost to supply a kiosk of approximately £11,000 and ongoing support costs are approximately £1300 p.a. (exclusive of V.A.T.).

12. Who will recruit the volunteers?

The community group will be responsible for recruiting volunteers and ensuring that they are appropriately vetted, trained and supervised. If the library is using the LMS volunteers must be competent in the use of the system which is business critical to the Warwickshire Library and Information Service.

13. Can you help provide training for volunteers working in the library?

The Library and Information Service can provide initial set up training for volunteers, however any further requirements will be provided at a cost (£80.00 an hour or £250.00 per day - exclusive of V.A.T.). Training will be a requirement if volunteers have access to the Library Management System.

14. Will there be any ongoing monitoring of community libraries?

Business case proposals which are implemented will be subject to an annual review by WCC to determine if the venture continues to be sustainable and is meeting the needs of the community.