

HALE END (HIGHAMS PARK) LIBRARY SURVEY

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

April 2017

HOW WERE RESIDENTS INFORMED ABOUT THE SURVEY?

Residents in the Highams Park area were alerted to the survey in a variety of ways:

- homes in all the HP area streets (and some further afield) were leafleted
- those residents who are on the Highams Park Planning Group (HPPG) mailing list were emailed
- posters were displayed in the library and around the town
- information about the survey was placed on the HPPG website
- information was posted on various Facebook pages

Residents could complete the survey online or on a hard copy version obtainable from the library or V&A bookshop in The Avenue. The survey was open from 10 February 2017 to 17 March 2017.

LIMITATIONS OF RESULTS

As with all surveys, analysis must take into account not only the type and wording of the questions but also the demographics of those responding: for example, the proportions for age and gender. Additionally, not all respondents answered all the questions and some gave contradictory answers in places: for example, indicating they never visit the library but elsewhere ticking the library services they use. It is also important to remember that the results come only from those people who are willing to complete surveys and that some of us are not always accurate about our habits or intentions!

THE RESULTS

(Percentages are rounded and do not always total 100 because not all respondents answered all questions)

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS: **667**

Gender proportions: Female 64%, Male 35%

Age proportions:

| | |
|--------------|-------------------|
| 30 and under | 5% of respondents |
| 31 – 49 | 45% |
| 50 – 64 | 25% |
| 65 – 74 | 15% |
| 75+ | 8% |

Daily Life:

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| School, College or University student | 2% of respondents |
| Working in easy walking distance of library | 14% |
| Working but not in easy walking distance of library | 43% |
| Not working because looking after home/children | 8% |
| Unemployed and available for work | 2% |
| Not working because disabled, housebound or a carer | 1% |
| Retired | 26% |

Children?:

| | |
|---|-----|
| A child or children at secondary school | 11% |
| A child or children at primary school | 21% |
| A child under school age | 18% |

Respondents live at addresses all over the HP area and some from streets just beyond

CURRENT USE OF THE LIBRARY

77% of respondents are a member of the library (have a ticket), with 5% not sure

| | | |
|--|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Visits to the library in the last 12 months: | Once a week or more | 21% of respondents |
| | Once or twice a month | 37% |
| | Occasionally | 32% |
| | Never | 9% |

| | | |
|--------------------------------|--|--------------------|
| Knowledge of Library services: | Website and app | 50% of respondents |
| | Free PC use | 84% |
| | Free Wifi use | 48% |
| | Printer/Photocopier available | 84% |
| | Books can be reserved | 90% |
| | Audio books available | 77% |
| | Large print books available | 64% |
| | Ticket can be used in other libraries | 75% |
| | Community rooms for hire | 50% |
| | Events, clubs and activities run | 57% |
| | Daily newspapers available to read | 60% |
| | Community toilets in the library | 52% |
| | Disabled access to both floors | 52% |
| | Home delivery service for the housebound | 10% |

The proportions in red might be considered rather low.

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|--------------------|
| The services the respondent uses: | Website and/or app | 23% of respondents |
| | Library PCs | 19% |
| | Free Wifi | 17% |
| | Printer and/or photocopier | 34% |
| | Read or study at library tables | 33% |
| | Borrow books, large print or audio books | 62% |
| | Look at window displays/wall exhibitions | 47% |
| | Hired a community room | 4% |
| | Been to an event or club | 45% |
| | Visit the library to browse or read papers | 26% |
| | Use home delivery for the housebound | 0.3% |
| | Do not use the library or services at all | 12% |

Having read the list of services, 74% of respondents said they would use more of them, with 20% not sure.

14% currently attend an activity or club (including children's clubs) at the library.

COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

77% of respondents feel the Council does not keep them well informed about library services, 80% feel they are not well informed about library events.

56% of respondents said they would make use of additional Council facilities in the library such as are available at Library Plus buildings

BARRIERS TO LIBRARY USE

Significant percentage answers are:

- 30% said they do not have enough up to date information about library events and services
- 21% said there is a limited range of adult books they want to borrow
- Only 6 people (0.9%) mentioned the location of the library as a barrier
- Several people mentioned the slow Wifi or out of date PCs (these weren't one of the categories to tick)

45% said the opening hours were inconvenient. This rose to 54% for those who do not work in easy walking distance of the library.

PREFERENCE FOR WHEN THE LIBRARY IS OPEN

32% said the existing hours suit them but a good proportion of these also ticked that they would like the library to be open at other times as well, such as weekday evenings.

(This result also means that 68% do not think the current hours suit them best)

37% said they would like **weekday evening** opening, rising to 51% of those who work away from Highams Park.

29% said they would like **Sunday morning** opening, rising to 39% of those working away from HP

26% said they would like **Sunday afternoon** opening, rising to 35% of those working away from HP

A good number of people mentioned in comment boxes that they want the library to be open every day.

These last few sets of figures seem to indicate that the current opening hours are not serving large sections of the community well, particularly commuters.

BOOK STOCK AND BORROWING

| | | |
|--|-----------|--------------------|
| Frequency of borrowing books in the last 12 months: | Often | 31% of respondents |
| | Sometimes | 24% |
| | Rarely | 17% |
| | Never | 30% |

Title Preferences:

| | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Adult Fiction | Thrillers | 47% of respondents |
| | Crime | 45% |
| | Historical Fiction | 42% |
| | Classical Novels | 40% |
| | Science Fiction | 24% |
| | Westerns | 2% |
| | Other general fiction | 55% |
| | Poetry and Drama | 15% |

Adult Non-Fiction

The five highest percentages were:

| | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| History and local history | 52% of respondents |
| Biography and Autobiography | 48% |
| Travel, maps and geography | 46% |
| Cookery | 37% |
| Gardening | 33% |

The figures would indicate that more volumes in these non-fiction sections would be welcome (see also, respondents' comments below).

| | | |
|--------------|-------------|-----|
| Child | Fiction | 91% |
| | Non-Fiction | 67% |
| | Poetry | 31% |
| | Teenage | 27% |

COMMENTS REGARDING ADDITIONS TO THE BOOKS STOCK RESPONDENTS WOULD LIKE TO SEE OR MORE OF PARTICULAR AUTHORS/GENRES

CHILDREN

- More board books for toddlers
- More early readers books (not just levelled reading books)
- More levelled reading books
- More teenager books
- Julia Donaldson
- Gill Lewis
- Robert Muchamore
- Children's DVDs

Several parents feel the children's books are not well laid out. It is difficult to find what you are looking for, particularly if you are a child! Child friendly markers are needed and more books placed face on. One suggestion is to organise by book types, e.g. animal stories, fairy tales, etc.; low level boxes for picture books

ADULT NON-FICTION

- Much more history (not World Wars)
- Wider range of reference books
- Books relevant to the secondary school curriculum for homework or revision study
- More biographies of women and political figures (not the world wars)
- Modern Travel books
- Books on London
- The Repton Red book about Higham House
- Black history
- Modern art
- History of Art
- Philosophy
- Photography
- More music
- Graphic design/furniture design/interior design – both books and magazines
- Antique reference books
- Wade pottery books (Pat Murray)
- Cross stitch
- Meditation
- Cars and motor maintenance
- Transport and railway history
- Stamp and Coin Catalogues
- Books to support people with disabilities – eg on lip reading or deafness
- Child development and parenting
- Feminism
- More Languages (Albanian)
- Up to date maps
- Short introduction books to non-fiction subjects (OUP)

ADULT FICTION

- More classical novels (mentioned by lots of people)
- More newly released novels
- Manga and graphic novels
- Historical novels about Africa, India and South America
- More books by black authors (BAME)
- Irish literature
- More American literature
- More audio books
- More books from various literary prizes short and longlists
- Recommendations, reviews, etc. shown in the library (not just online)
- Larger displays of new books
- Varying displays eg cookery one week, a particular author another, seasonal book displays
- Scandi noir
- Foreign Novels in translation

The following authors were requested to be well stocked with as many of their works as possible. Borrowers are frustrated if they enjoy an author but only a few of their books are available:

| | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie | Nawal El-Saadawi | Julie Myerson |
| LLaila Afrika | Katie Fforde | Patrick O'Brien |
| Brian Aldiss | Ian Fleming | John O'Farrell |
| Ra Un Nefer Amen | Frederick Forsyth | George Orwell |
| Kingsley Amis | Elizabeth Gaskell | Helen Oyeyemi |
| Martin Amis | Donald Goines | Terry Pratchett |
| Maya Angelou | John Grisham | Lesley Pearse |
| Isaac Asimov | Thomas Hardy | Tasmina Perry |
| Jane Austen | E Lynn Harris | Max Porter |
| Alain Badiou | Robert Heinlein | Anthony Quinn |
| J F Ballard | Frank Herbert | Jacques Ranciere |
| Michael Baisden | Hermann Hesse | Kathy Reichs |
| James Baldwin | Anthoy Horowitz | Tom Robbins |
| Sebastian Barry | Zora Neale Hurston | Howard Roughan |
| Greg Baxter | Conn Iggulden | Craig Russell |
| M C Beaton | Greg Iles | Dora Saint |
| David Beaty | Hammond Innes | C J Sansom |
| Samuel Beckett | Christopher Isherwood | Jean Paul Sartre |
| Arnold Bennett | P D James | Dorothy L Sayers |
| Chris Binchy | W E Johns | Simon Scarrow |
| John Braine | James Joyce | Peter Shaffer |
| Bertolt Brecht | Stephen King | Harry Sidebottom |
| William Brodrick | Philip Kerr | Alan Sillitoe |
| Bill Bryson | Sue Monk Kidd | Charles R Smith |
| Anthony Burgess | Paul Kingsnorth | Dava Sobell |
| Octavia Butler | Bernard Knight | Neal Stephenson |
| Albert Camus | Arthur Koestler | Graham Swift |
| Andrew Casey (local author/poet) | Marie Kondo | Shaun Tan |
| Raymond Chandler | Donna Leon | Kate Tempest |
| Agatha Christie | Elmore Leonard | William Thackeray |
| Arthur C Clark | Alastair Maclean | Colm Tobin |
| Mary Higgins Clark | Thomas Mann | Anthony Trollope |
| Tom Connery | Hilary Mantel | William Trevor |
| Bernard Cornwell | Carole Matthews | Jules Verne |
| Robert Crais | Peter May | Sally Vickers |
| Clive Cussler | S D McClean | Vonnegut |
| Jeffery Deaver | Carson McCullers | Alice Walker |
| Shelagh Delaney | Tamara McKinle | Lyall Watson |
| Jacques Derrida | Herman Melville | Frances Cress Welsing |
| David Donachie | Joyce Meyer | Ellen G White |
| W E Dubois | Toni Morrison | Jack White |
| George Eliot | Walter Mosely | Robert Wilson |
| T S Eliot | Jojo Moyes | Virginia Woolf |
| | Alice Munro | John Wyndham |
| | Iris Murdoch | |

**ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS FOR HIGHAMS PARK LIBRARY'S COMMUNAL ROOMS
TAKEN FROM THE LIBRARY SURVEY MARCH 2017**

**A club or activity would need someone willing to run it and would need to be viable
in terms of the space and facilities available, health and safety considerations, noise levels, etc.
Most clubs would attract a charge for the use of the space.**

LITERARY ACTIVITIES

- Book Clubs
- Writing Clubs
- Poetry readings
- Author events
- Drama groups
- Book Themed supper clubs
- Literature festivals
- English as a second language class

ARTISTIC, CRAFT AND HANDIWORK ACTIVITIES

- Arts and craft clubs
- Life drawing
- Flower arranging
- Sewing & knitting classes or groups
- Woodwork/upholstery classes
- DIY instruction
- Craft sales

TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT

- Silver surfers
- Programming and Coding
- Software instruction eg photoshop, Skype
- Touch Typing

PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

- Yoga/Pilates/Aerobics
- Dance/Tap dancing
- Slimming world/Weight watchers
- Pool or table tennis
- Therapeutic massage
- Tai Chi

CHILDREN'S GROUPS

- Mother and toddler groups
- Ante/post natal classes
- Breast feeding support
- Baby massage and reflexology
- Half term and holiday activities
- Creative activities – making masks, puppets, writing book reviews
- Story teller/puppet shows
- Lego group
- Children's language classes
- Study/homework club
- Toy/game library
- Scout/guides/brownies, etc. meets
- Something for teenagers!

CULTURAL GROUPS, TALKS AND LECTURES

- Adult education classes of various sorts
- Historical/local history talks
- Language classes
- Genealogy
- Current affairs talks and discussion
- Variety of talks by experts
- Science club
- University of the 3rd Age classes

SUPPORT GROUPS

- Special needs groups
- Pensioners groups – drop in
- Age UK/Alzheimer's groups
- Dementia awareness
- Carer support groups
- First aid instruction
- Health/nutrition/exercise advice
- Domestic violence support
- Bereavement counselling

OTHER ACTIVITIES

- Choir – adult or child
- Instrumental lessons
- Careers advice, writing CVs, interview techniques
- Legal advice
- Citizen Advice Bureau
- Business meet ups or showcasing their wares
- Upskilling classes
- Advice for the self-employed
- Money and Debt management advice
- MP surgery
- Film clubs
- Chess/Bridge/board games clubs
- Photography club
- Astronomy club
- Musical groups
- Wine tasting
- Culinary tasting/demonstrations/cookery recipes – perhaps from local restaurants
- Gardening
- A place for residents to exchange services and expertise
- Charity fundraising activities
- Hot desk workspace
- Regular boot sale in the car park
- CAFÉ!

OFFERS OF TALKS, ACTIVITIES, SERVICES

(However, some respondents seemed to be answering what they would like to see available in the library rather than an activity they were prepared to run themselves!)

LITERARY ACTIVITIES

- Book Club
- Book/poetry/play readings
- Adult literature group
- Poetry appreciation, Shakespeare, improving grammar
- English as a foreign language

ARTISTIC, CRAFT AND HANDIWORK ACTIVITIES

- Life drawing or art classes for kids
- Drawing
- HP Pins and Needles – knitting, crochet, Macrame and other crafts
- Interior Design exhibition or talk involving fabrics. Upholstery demonstration and classes. Curtains and blinds
- Craft meet – bring your own project

TECHNOLOGY, SCIENCE AND MATHS

- Social media or IT workshop
- STEM workshop
- Maths – any age/level or for maths phobics
- Graphic design and variety of software
- Science talk

CHILDREN'S GROUPS

- Antenatal/breast feeding support
- Baby massage
- Baby sensory class
- Children's craft club
- Children's story telling
- Children's Arabic classes
- Italian parent/child group
- Teaching and supporting parents of struggling readers in how to support their children with at home daily reading in a successful, failure free way

BUSINESS, EMPLOYMENT AND CAREER GROUPS

- Seminars or workshops for local businesses
- Starting self-employment
- CV writing, interview techniques
- Marketing
- Accounting and finances
- Sustainable business planning
- Youth career event, asking local businesses to contribute
- Various careers advice

PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

- Kickboxing
- Table tennis
- Youth table tennis
- 'Dry side' swimming assistance

CULTURAL GROUPS

- Palaeography training
- Talk on a variety of law issues
- Presentation on Magistracy
- Black history event to celebrate African or Caribbean culture
- Local history talks
- Talk on Homer's Odyssey
- Talk on Olympic Park
- Women's group (guest speakers, harness skills and knowledge)
- Women's well-being
- Working in partnership with the library and its users for simple ideas that will inform, educate and entertain library users and beyond

SUPPORT GROUPS

- Advice on welfare benefits
- Occupational therapy information
- First Aid course
- Nutrition talks
- Palliative care and end of life talk
- Advice to foster carers and young people in care on developing independent living skills

OTHER ACTIVITIES

- Talk on fraud awareness
- Board games club
- Ramblers/map reading group
- Choir
- Gardening Club
- Cooking of various sorts

OFFERS TO HELP (AS OPPOSE TO RUN ALONE)

- Help with adult literacy
- Help with maths or technology clubs
- Help with Dementia support workshop for family carers
- Help with Family History
- Help with DIY repair day
- Help with table top games

ADDITIONAL OFFERS OF HELP

- 85 people said they could run a club or an event in the library
- 71 people offered to be part of a User Group
- 63 people offered to give a talk or workshop about their area of expertise or interest
- 36 people offered to work one-to-one with someone in their area of expertise
- 86 people offered to help run a club as opposed to being the main organiser
- 159 people offered to be a general helper when hands are needed

Quite a number of these people gave further details about the specifics of what they could offer and a contact address although others gave neither.

PROVIDING WORKSPACE

84 people said they are interested in a chargeable workspace upstairs and a further 151 might be.

FINAL COMMENTS MADE

Most significant points written are:

- The library is an essential part of the community and there can be no substitute. Lots of people (150) said that moving it and to smaller premises would be a 'disaster'. Lots of people mentioned having used the library and loved its atmosphere over decades. A great space for developing children's reading experience is mentioned by many parents. The building is a unique asset to Highams Park, should be funded properly and used imaginatively.
- Only one person mentioned he/she would prefer it to be more central for him/her.
- The library needs to open on at least one evening. A secure, drop off box for books out of hours would also be good
- It needs to open every day; very difficult to remember which days it is closed
- Library services and events have not been well advertised. Much better publicity needed.
- Lots of respondents said they wanted far more books in the library.
- Children's playgroups would be a good use of the community rooms. More playgroups are needed in the area.
- Activities for 3-4 year old and for 8-18 year old children needed
- More appropriate storage for children's picture books, such as low level boxes. Ask schools that visit for their feedback and utilise their expertise.
- Child friendly displays and information in the children's library needed. Children's artwork from schools?
- More story time/poetry reading for children
- Lots more creative events for adults would be welcome
- Use the library as a polling station
- Cannot always tell when the library is open because the big window is always blocked with 'stuff'

- Some more small tables and chairs in the book section would be welcome along with more comfy seating in the children's area for them to read and a more interesting area for toddlers
- The signs on the front doors could be more welcoming and friendly. The 'no entry' sign is the most prominent thing you see!
- Air quality in the library could be improved
- Using the library as a venue for evening entertainments would be a boost to the area
- More attractive flowerbeds outside. Perhaps local children to create a mosaic on the walls. Community garden in the car park area.
- Level of helpfulness of staff varies. Some people find them helpful and friendly, others far less so. Children can find them intimidating.
- Library needs to be more teenager friendly
- The library isn't always accessible for disabled people as the lift doesn't work and the disabled access door is always locked and staff don't respond to the buzzer. How about a ramp for the internal stairs for buggies?
- It would be good if the children's area could be sectioned off more, eg with a glass partition so parents are not stressed trying to keep toddlers quiet
- Several people mentioned that the library should be kept quiet for people reading, studying, etc. Staff and customers should respect this.
- The library needs to have a qualified librarian directing it
- Library managers should develop notions of community resource, responsiveness, technical understanding and assistance, flexibility and a general reaching out to the local community.
- Having some investment in this part of the borough would be a good sign that the focus is not always on the other centres like Walthamstow etc. Without the library as one of the anchor points the Highams Park high street will continue to degenerate. Handled correctly the site can maintain its current services, hopefully expand them and start to play a role in building a business base for the borough's future.
- More books to reflect ethnic diversity, especially for children.
- Educational programs on the PCs for children. Information for them about digital safety
- Library should have its own Facebook page and a mailing list for members
- **The library is one of the best places in Highams Park to hang out!**

Highams Park Planning Group

April 2017