

# **North Somerset Libraries consultation**

## **Information pack for Portishead Library**



### **Portishead Library**

#### Location and premises

Site address: Portishead Library, Horatio House, 24 Harbour Road, Portishead, BS20 7AL

- Public library room
- Children's library
- Public computers and WiFi
- Staff offices
- Meeting room with separate external entrance (available for hire)
- Accessible public WC
- Extended access
- Staff kitchenette, with access for users of adjacent public meeting room
- Server room, safe room and other walk in storage space

There is no public parking but short stay parking for shoppers is available nearby. On road disabled parking for Blue Badge holders is available nearby. Staff parking is available at the rear.

Portishead Library is located in retail units which were built as an element of the Portishead Marina area development. It relocated to its current premises in April 2011. It enjoys good footfall being situated on the walkway to Waitrose supermarket, in a building located under residential flats. The units are leased on a 999-year lease, which includes two adjacent retail units currently let to Evolve Dentistry dental practice and a Sue Ryder charity shop. The rental income for these units comes to the library service.

The library is on one floor and is fully accessible with public toilets. It was the first library in North Somerset to trial Extended Access (automated self-service access) in 2018 and has been very successful.

Among nearby libraries Pill Library is the closest to Portishead after its own (4.7 miles away).

### Transport links

The First Bus X4 route connects Portishead with Bristol, Pill and Clevedon. Stops are within walking distance of the library. Residents can also use WESTlink an on-demand minibus service that covers Portishead and surrounding areas. This can be booked via app, website or phone.

Portishead is connected to the National Cycle Network Route 26, cycle parking is available near the library.

The library is centrally located near the marina and town centre, easily reachable by foot for local residents.

### Ward Councillors:

Gordano Valley, Nigel Ashton  
Portishead East, Caritas Charles & Roger Whitfield  
Portishead North, Timothy Snaden  
Portishead South, Peter Burden  
Portishead West, Nicola Holland & Sue Mason

### Opening hours

The library is staffed for 33.5 hours a week. Extended Access is available to registered users for a further 49.25 hours a week during unstaffed hours.

Day	Staffed	Staffed hrs	Extended Access	Extended Access hrs
Monday	N/A	N/A	8am-8pm	12
Tuesday	9.30am-5pm	7.5	8-9.30am 5.15-8pm	4.25
Wednesday	9.30am-5pm	7.5	8-9.30am 5.15-8pm	4.25
Thursday	9.30am-5pm	7.5	8-9.30am 5.15-8pm	4.25
Friday	9.30am-5pm	7.5	8-9.30am 5.15-8pm	4.25
Saturday	9.30am-1pm	3.5	8-9.30am 1.15-8pm	8.25
Sunday	N/A	N/A	8am-8pm	12
		<b>33.5</b>		<b>49.25</b>

### Visits

In 2024-25, there were a total of 66,394 visits to Portishead Library. Of these, 60,742 (91.5%) occurred during staffed hours, with a further 5,652 (8.5%) during unstaffed Extended Access hours.

Portishead Library ranked second out of the 11 council-run libraries in North Somerset in terms of overall visits during 2024-25.

Visits by day:

Visits during staffed hours in 2024-25 were distributed throughout the week as below:

Rank	Day	Visits	Visits per staffed hour open
1	Tuesdays	14,182	38.6
2	Thursdays	13,564	36.9
3	Wednesdays	12,520	33.4
4	Fridays	12,238	34.7
5	Saturdays	8,238	47.1

Visits during unstaffed hours in 2024-25 were distributed throughout the week as below:

Rank	Day	Visits	Visits per unstaffed hour open
1	Mondays	1,657	2.9
2	Sundays	1,167	2.1
3	Saturdays	985	2.7
4	Tuesdays	500	2.4
5	Fridays	497	2.5
6	Wednesdays	438	2.2
7	Thursdays	408	2.1

Visits by time of day:

Staff have been recording visitor footfall numbers during the initial half hour of opening and on an hourly basis thereafter since week commencing 27 January 2025. The table below shows the percentage of visits taking place during the monitored period (to week ending 29 June) by time of day (i.e. between 27 January and 29 June, 10.51 percent of the total number of recorded visits at Portishead Library took place on between 9.30 and 10am).

Time	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	% of visits
9.30 - 10am	2.66	2.03	1.55	2.19	2.08	10.5
10 - 11am	5.14	3.18	3.14	3.24	3.94	18.6
11am - noon	3.83	3.23	2.79	3.18	4.46	17.5
noon - 1pm	2.60	2.41	2.84	3.10	3.45	14.4
1 - 2pm	2.49	2.26	2.16	2.63		9.5
2 - 3pm	2.58	2.33	2.20	2.22		9.3
3 - 4pm	2.61	2.92	2.71	2.49		10.7
4 - 5pm	2.51	2.38	2.34	2.16		9.4
	24.4	20.7	19.7	21.2	13.9	

## Services and activities

Portishead Library is the second busiest library in terms of items issued or renewed. It is well used in both staffed and self-service opening hours.

- In 2024-5 the library lent or renewed 96,120 items
- Portishead Library has 8,090 registered users
- 786 events were hosted at the library in 2024-25 with a total of 7,635 attendances recorded, (representing instances of participation rather than unique individuals)
- There were 2,815 hours of public computer use and 14,360 printouts in 2024-25

Services offered at the library include:

- Self-service borrowing
- Books, DVDs, audio books to borrow
- Thermal image cameras for loan
- Children's library
- Study space, including nook
- Computers, printing, wi-fi, photocopying and scanning facilities
- Access to subscription databases and e-Resources
- Newspapers (local, 4 x weekly)
- Extended access (self-service library access)
- Bookable meeting room
- Designated warm space; charging for devices, hot drinks, warm, friendly space, access to support and information

Regular activities, supported by partners and volunteers, include:

- Story time and rhymetime sessions for pre-school children
- Councillor surgeries
- Computer support sessions
- Reading & writing groups
- Craft activities for all ages
- Family history advice sessions
- Lego Club
- Code Club
- Waste & recycling drop-ins
- Employment & skills hub
- Social prescribing
- English conversation café

No other services are co-located with the library and there are no separate lettings.

Face-to-face service

North Somerset residents who are unable to access council services online or by phone can receive in-person support and signposting from library staff at Portishead Library.

For more complex enquiries—such as those related to Housing or Council Tax—where an immediate answer may not be available, staff will direct residents to a dedicated council services phone located within the library, ensuring access to the appropriate specialist support.

Recent customer feedback includes:

- Even though I don't participate in the scheduled events like the monthly book club, I always enjoy browsing the latest books and checking them out when I'm desperate to read something new to update my Storygraph or Goodreads. I also appreciate being able to come to the library to apply for jobs or read in peace and quiet.
- The staff in this library are 100% helpful. Assisted with printing and some logistical problems of failing to have my card with me (note - you do need a card to borrow a

book but to use a PC there is a workaround as long as you can prove who you are!).

I do love this library. 😊

- An amazing library which makes such a difference to lives in our community. I teach a student who arrived in the UK part way through his GCSE year. He has no Wi-Fi at home or place to study. This library allows him that study space, internet and book access which literally has allowed him the resources to work towards his GCSEs and he already is achieving the highest grades. The staff helped him access the extended opening hours and helped him set up all his accounts. It acts as a lifeline to so many people of all ages. Well done Portishead library you may not realise it but what you offer does transform lives.
- Quite library with amazing staff. Only problem is getting in on Monday. You have to register for extended hours before you can gain access which I think is a little rubbish.
- Used the library for many years but only recently did I discover the reservation service. It's easy to use and works really well. I now tend to read my favourite authors' books in the sequence they were written, watching their characters grow with each one and with growing appreciation of authors' skills.

#### Suggestions:

- Request for quiet/silent study space
- Request for reliable, cheaper printing
- Request for the layout of desks and seating to be reviewed
- Request for a cafe not a coffee machine.
- Request for more foreign language resources and newspapers
- Develop the library as a hub for people who may be lonely or isolated: in a great location in the town for this.
- Request for longer extended access hours: open from 6am, longer weekend opening hours.
- Request for public toilets to be open during extended access, use of lockers

#### Staff and volunteers

Eight members of staff work from the building, on a part time basis. This comprises two Community Services Supervisors (Level 6) and six Community Services Officers (Level 4)

There are 32 volunteers actively engaged in supporting Portishead Library throughout the year. These volunteers are involved in digital help, local and family history support, children's activities, code club, supporting school class visits and library services volunteering (e.g. helping to shelve returned items).

A further 24 volunteers support the library in short-term roles (such as helping with the annual Summer Reading Challenge).

#### Direct costs

Total direct costs 2025/26		Includes lease/rent, minor repairs, water, cleaning, grounds maintenance, fixtures, fittings, pay, NI and superannuation for all
Property and accommodation	£ 67,032	

Supplies & services	£9,720	staff including relief staff; also includes any training costs.
Staffing*	£ 179,017	
Income **	(£67,169)  (includes £53,560k from income from sub-lets)	All income from sales, fees and charges
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£ 188,600</b>	

\* Staffing for Pill Library is included in this figure

\*\* Includes rental income for 2 shop units adjacent to the library