

Appendix 2

Shropshire Archives

**Results of the Public Consultation on options for reduced opening hours,
February – March 2014**

Summary of results

A total of 550 responses were received with the following results:

Option A

Sunday- Tuesday	Closed
Wednesday	10.00 - 4.00
Thursday	10.00 – 4.00
Friday	10.00 – 4.00
Saturday (1 in 2)	10.00 – 2.00
Saturday (2 in 2)	Closed
TOTAL	20 hours limited library service from 2.00pm

57.45% in favour

Option B

Saturday- Tuesday	Closed
Wednesday	10.00 - 4.00
Thursday	10.00 – 6.00
Friday	10.00 – 4.00
TOTAL	20 hours limited library service from 2pm

14.36% in favour

Option C

Service closed one week a month with access to archive material during opening hours. Opening hours pattern either following Option A or Option B.

15.09% in favour

Within this group, 77.12% in favour of opening following the Option A pattern and 22.88% in favour of opening following the Option B pattern.

Option D

The public were asked to give their own suggestions under Option D.

13.09% in favour

Analysis of responses received under Option D.

A variety of responses were received. There was no clear consensus on a particular additional option, though a majority of respondents were in favour of retaining an element of Saturday opening. This will be achieved if the recommended option is accepted.

Of those in favour of option D the majority (65.38%) provided comments that were variants on option A, 0.19% suggested variants on option B. 13% suggested more shorter days and 17% suggested fewer longer days.

Analysis of general comments received about the service

Overall 220 respondents gave additional comments about the service. Many of the comments stressed the importance of keeping some Saturday opening for those who work during the work, these included:

- I think you need to maintain a Saturday opening for people who cannot visit on weekdays.
- For people who are working, the only opportunity to visit the archives would either be on the late finish or Saturdays. Therefore, with the late finish being 6pm and most people work until 5pm which doesn't give time to get there, so Sat mornings are more valuable. Especially if other members of the family go into town shopping, etc, there is opportunity for those who wish to visit the archives to do so. I think Saturday morning openings therefore are very valuable. Otherwise the service just ends up as another one for the retired or non-working members of the population.
- Two of us work and can therefore only get to the library on Saturdays. Currently when we go we spend about 6 hours.
- I do not believe it is a good idea to close one week a month. Whilst I realise the need for economic measures to be put in place it is essential that a regular opening regime is one that is easily understood. I do not like the idea of alternate Saturday closing but appreciate that if 20 hours has to be achieved then this is the better alternative.
- Many archives open 3 days during the week with one or two Saturdays open each month. I think option A is the most viable.
- From a personal perspective (though I expect I am not alone) access on Saturdays is important as I live away, and work, and therefore tend to visit at the weekend. A solution which eliminates weekend use, and without evening opening, would seem to limit use for a range of users and potential users - including school project work.
- I do not think there should be any reduction of hours. If there are to be reductions please have the Archives open at sometime on Saturdays for people who work Monday to Friday.

Concerns were also expressed about the proposed restrictions on the level of service during opening days.

- I am already appalled at the present low number of Opening Hours e.g. not opening on Mondays and Tuesdays. This is a Public Service and should concentrate on being open EVERY day if possible to meet users' requirements. If the Opening Hours have to be cut from 30 to 20 then there should certainly not be any restriction to users' access to material on the days that the Archives ARE open.
- I have made 37 visits to Shropshire Archives in the last two years in the furtherance of academic research. It seems that with a 33% reduction in hours that delivery of original documents to researchers will in addition be slower due to demand during the periods when the facility is open. The adverse impact upon academic research will therefore represent a double hit.
- The continued cuts to the Archives Service public access are most unwelcome. Much of the material in the Archives collections has been donated or placed there with the expectation that this material is freely and readily accessible to the public. The restriction of the availability of

non-library documents to weekday morning periods (Options A and B) would discriminate against anyone who has to travel any distance to use the service - i.e. rural Shropshire residents - and those who work.

Many other comments were supportive of the service in general, these included:

- It is a huge pity that this invaluable facility will have reduced opening hours
- I greatly value our Archives Service, and any of these options will represent a significant reduction in my opportunities to access it in person, as I work full time. It is such a shame when the Archives have a really good, purpose built centre to work from, and have over recent years done so much to attract both new users and volunteers and to increase access both online and through the Local History Centres. This reduction in opening hours risks undermining much of what has been achieved in recent years. Care must be taken to ensure that it does not trigger a vicious spiral of decline.
- I realise that cuts will have to be made, but I do hope that the invaluable service provided by Shropshire Archives will be able to continue, as far as possible.
- I am very sad to hear that further closures are necessary. I think that to accommodate researchers and students as well as the general public that Saturdays are important, as are later hours during the week.
- The staff are VERY helpful and I could not have done my work without them. The catalogue needs improving.
- It is important to retain as much access to the archival material as possible - this material is only available here (only a little is available digitally) whereas much of the secondary source material is available elsewhere (other local libraries).

Several also stressed the need for opening hours to be as simple and consistent as possible.

- I think it is important to keep the opening hours as simple as possible. If the late opening on Thursdays is not well used perhaps it would be best to cancel it altogether.
- How on earth would people remember which week closed!! You have a beautiful building which attracts tourism - are you going to waste all the money spent on it by keeping it empty and unused?

Analysis of respondents

Use of Shropshire Archives in person

- 15.07% use the service weekly
- 44.3% use the service monthly
- 32.17% use the service once a year
- 8.46% haven't used the service yet

Use of Shropshire Archives remotely via phone, email, website etc

- 11.24% use the service weekly
- 40.68% use the service monthly
- 28.99% use the service once a year
- 19.10% haven't used the service yet

Volunteers and Friends

- 13.36% were volunteers with Shropshire Archives
- 16.24% were member of the Friends of Shropshire Archives

Gender of respondents

- 42.48% Male
- 55.05% Female
- 0 % Transgender
- 2.48 % Prefer not to say

Age of respondents

0% 0-14	3.74% 30-39	16.82% 60-64
0.19% 15-19	7.48% 40-49	36.82% 65-74
2.62% 20-29	17.57% 50-59	11.79% 75 or over
2.99% Prefer not to say		

Ethnicity of respondents

- 91.49 % White British
- 0.57 % White Irish
- 0.19% White - Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- 1.51 % Any other White background
- 0.19% Any other Mixed/multiple ethnic background
- 0.19% Any other Asian background
- 0.19% Black/African/Caribbean/Black British – African
- 5.67 % Prefer not to say

Respondents whose day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability

2.12% limited a lot	12.31% limited a little
80.96% not limited	4.72% Prefer not to say

Respondents' sexuality

77.3% Heterosexual/straight	0.8% Gay/lesbian
0.8% Bisexual	0.6% Other
20.08% Prefer not to say	

Postcode analysis

43.19% Shropshire
15.95% Telford and Wrekin
7.97% Rest of West Midlands
38.71% Rest of UK
0% Europe
2.14% Rest of the world