

Shetland Library 2023 Budget Survey – feedback report

222 people completed our survey in late March/April 2023 and we would like to thank you all for taking the time to do so.

The purpose of the survey was to keep you informed about pressure on our budgets and what we are doing to meet our savings target.

We'd now like to report back on what the survey told us, answer some of the points you made and give you more information about our budget.



Shetland Library

Shetland Islands Council

Our annual budget is around **£990,000**, which is **0.6%** of the total Shetland Islands Council budget.

Councillors have asked for an extra 1% savings in 2023-24, so the Library is now looking for a total of **£58,000**, which is **5.8%** of our budget.

1. Pressreader and Global Newsbank

We announced that to save money we'd discontinue our popular online newspaper service, **Pressreader**, and use **Newsbank** instead.

Over **10%** of respondents said they used Pressreader regularly or occasionally.

We asked what publications you read – here is some feedback on whether you can still access them after the change:

	After we discontinue Pressreader:
Guardian	Image, text or web versions available in Newsbank
Telegraph	Image, text or web versions available in Newsbank
Sunday Post	Available as text only version on Newbank
Scotland on Sunday	Image or text versions available in Newsbank
Herald	Image, text or web versions available in Newsbank
Daily Record	Image, text or web versions available in Newsbank
Press and Journal	Image or text Aberdeen versions available in Newsbank
Scotsman	Image or text versions available in Newsbank
The Times	Good news – this was not on Pressreader, but is now available on Newsbank in image, text or web versions
New Scientist, Radio Times, TV Guide and Woman's Own	More good news – these are part of Libby magazines, not Pressreader, so are all still available along with hundreds of other magazines.

“If it saves money, good idea.”

Respondents said it was reasonable to change if we save money. Newsbank is less than half the price of Pressreader, has a wider range of news sources, and is probably superior for research. The text options for publications should be more manageable for people with slow broadband.

“News is free online anyway so why bother?”

A few people thought we did not need to provide a news service. One function of a library service is to provide free access to broad and reliable information. Newsbank contains full versions, including back issues, of most of the world’s press, in many languages, including pay-to-view. It is a fully searchable, verifiable source.

“Changing to something new is never easy as you get older.”

You will need to do a little more navigating to get to your usual newspaper and you will need your membership number to log in – it is not as intuitive to use as Pressreader. Please don’t hesitate to ask staff for help finding your way around the site. www.shetland.gov.uk/libraries/ebooks

3. Online Comics

We are considering dropping eComics because they are the least used of our eBook resources, and issues have fallen to around 20 a month. Around 3% of respondents said they used eComics regularly or occasionally.

Many graphic novel readers seem to prefer physical copies – these lend really well in our school libraries. Several comments said they did not find the online ones easy to read, but some people were disappointed they would lose the service.

“Shame for people who are into comics, but sounds like a business-led decision (evidence based).”

“Some eComics are quite difficult to read on Libby as there’s no contents page, jump to section etc.”

“It is going to be a shame to not be able to access it.”

3. National Library

We have dropped our excellent Oxford Online reference services, because they are available free to members of the National Library of Scotland. Our job now is to promote the National Library and encourage our members to join. The survey was a first step in that. The National Library carries a huge wealth of online news, books, maps and other resources.

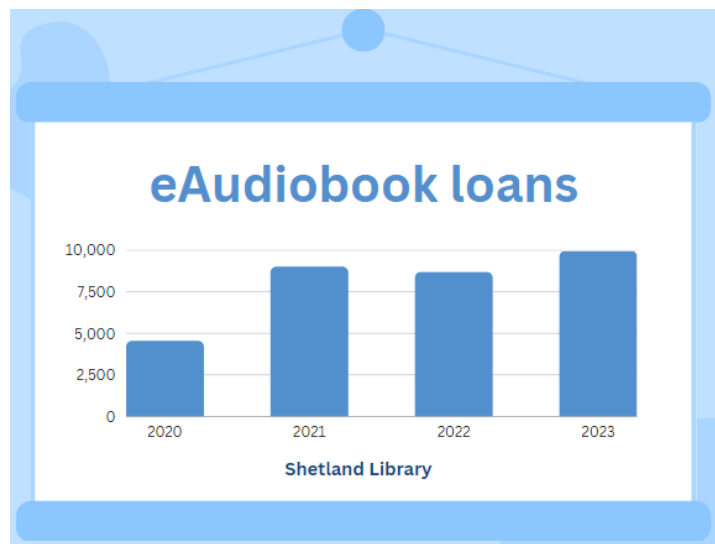
Almost 20% of you said you had already used the site, and comments were very positive. To see the full collection of resources, you can get a National Library of Scotland membership. If you haven’t had a look yet, check the link here. <https://auth.nls.uk/join/>

“Great resource that I don’t think many people know exist.”

“Excellent and easy to use.”

4. eBooks, eAudiobooks and eMagazines

Because we increased our eBook services during the pandemic, we spend more on these services than we used to. We are monitoring usage and popularity to ensure we get value from money. So far, these services are performing well and audiobooks in particular are extremely well used.



Libby audiobooks (29%) and magazines (27%) were the most popular services according to respondents to our survey, but Borrowbox was not far behind. eBooks which are read from the screen are a bit less popular than audio but still perform fairly well. Each eBook supplier only has a limited range of stock, which is why we are maintaining two different platforms at this time.

“eAudio and eMags are excellent. I particularly like the language learning eAudio books. I only use eBooks on holiday but they do save you carrying heavy physical books.”

“Love audiobooks, especially Libby as it lets you defer your reservations. Excellent service.”

“I am disabled and audiobooks have really helped me get back into reading. I use both providers frequently due to the variation in the ranges. I feel audiobooks are essential and would not like to lose either app.”

“They’ve personally saved me a lot of money.”

“Love them! As someone who struggles to focus on reading since developing anxiety but loving books, I love that I can listen to them instead. It enables me to access books in a way which I wouldn’t otherwise be able to do.”

5. Physical books

Whatever the popularity of e-services, physical books are still what the majority of our customers use the library for. Some of our priority services are to children and to our home delivery customers.

Over 95% of respondents said they borrowed books from the library.

Over 57% thought our selection excellent, 39% good, 4% adequate, 1% poor.

Spending on books may have to be cut back this year and in future years.

“Given the scale of your resources I find the selection first rate. There are times I can’t get what I want but I understand your constraints.”

We asked for your comments. Here are a small selection we can feed back on.

Comment	Response
“Maybe you could put out a plea for books the public no longer need. They could then be donated to the library, if the library doesn't have copies?”	We do welcome some donations, for example new bestsellers or travel guides. However we cannot handle many. We work with a supplier who does all the processing, and if we have to do this ourselves the cost in staff time of sorting, checking, getting books in the catalogue and shelf-ready can outweigh the saving of purchase cost. We also have to keep a balanced collection and are always tight for space.
“Paperback books cost less than hardback so if getting new books buy paperback. Less heavy to hold.”	We do favour paperbacks, though hardbacks last longer so can be better value, especially for thick books which soon fall apart if paperback.
“Less people read physical books now so reducing the budget makes sense.”	To some extent that is true, but loans are very healthy and Shetland is among the top lending libraries in the UK. Our budget for physical books is less than half what it was in 2011.
“Sometimes there are multiple copies of the same title. Would fewer copies make a meaningful saving? It might mean a borrower having to wait a bit longer, but would that be much of an issue?”	We generally don't buy multiple copies, unless there is a big queue – it is a bit of a balancing act to keep queueing time reasonable. We do buy multiple copies of Shetland books because they have limited print runs and it is our policy to maintain a local collection.
“I think the council should increase your budget.”	We somehow don't think that will happen! But thank you very much for the sentiment 😊

“Varied and in good condition compared to many libraries south. New layout makes finding books much easier.”

“I like that newly published books are bought - I could not afford to buy them myself.”

“We have a dyslexic child so we keep looking for new Barrington Stoke books which are great to read. Overall we love coming to the library and using resources online.”

The Big Ticket Savings.

86% of our budget is spent on staffing. In the coming year, most of our savings will come from a management restructure and some other staffing cuts to save around £40,000. We will be protecting opening hours and all basic services, but staff time will be at a premium and we will have to prioritise what we do, and how much time we spend on it.

We have 30% less staff than we did in 2012, and are proud of how our staff adapt.

This year we will also be working hard on a new Library Management System, which is the computer system that controls our book catalogue, customer transactions, orders and much more of what we do. This will not save money this year, in fact it will put a lot of pressure on our staff time, but it will save us some money in future years.