
Report To:	Education & Communities Committee	Date:	25 January 2022
Report By:	Steven McNab, Head of Organisational Development, Policy and Communications	Report No:	EDCOM/08/22/SMcN/KB
Contact Officer:	Karen Barclay, Corporate Policy and Performance Officer	Contact No:	01475 712065
Subject:	Results from the Citizens' Panel Autumn 2021 Survey		

1.0 PURPOSE

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee of the headline results from the Citizens' Panel Autumn 2021 Survey. More information is provided in the Appendix.

2.0 SUMMARY

2.1 The Survey focused on the following topics:

- historic links to slavery in Inverclyde; and
- Inverclyde's libraries.

2.2 The response rate to the Survey was approximately 59%. Throughout the report, commentaries on the results are included from the Culture, Communities and Educational Resources Service.

2.3 A number of significant points emerged from the Autumn 2021 Survey, including:

- just over half (51%) of Panel members thought artistic interpretation (film, media, plays, poetry etc) was the best way to tell the history of the Inverclyde area and its relationship to the transatlantic slave trade;
- the library visited most often by respondents was Greenock Central (28%); and
- the most popular reasons for visiting Inverclyde libraries were to borrow books (60%), browse for books (38%) and collect books (27%).

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- a. notes the main findings from the Citizens' Panel Autumn 2021 Survey; and
- b. takes account of the results when reviewing service delivery, as appropriate.

Ruth Binks

Corporate Director – Education, Communities and Organisational Development

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Citizens' Panel was established in 2007 to enable the Council to regularly consult with Inverclyde residents on a wide range of issues and to obtain feedback to improve and develop services to meet the needs of local people. The Panel comprises 1,000 residents, with membership refreshed annually by one third.
- 4.2 Overall, 591 people, approximately 59% of Panel members, responded to the Autumn 2021 Survey. While this response rate is around 3% lower than we usually receive, a variation in the response rates to Surveys is perhaps to be expected given that Panel members are now required, in line with the General Data Protection Regulation, to sign a form to provide the Council with their consent to process their information in response to the questionnaires. It is hoped that, in future, as Panel members become more familiar with providing their consent in this way, response rates will return to historical levels.
- 4.3 All sample Surveys are subject to a degree of random error. Based on the return rate for the Autumn 2021 questionnaire, the margin of error is +/- 5%. It is important to bear this in mind when considering the results.

5.0 SURVEY TOPICS, FINDINGS AND COMMENTARIES

5.1 HISTORIC LINKS TO SLAVERY IN INVERCLYDE

We provided background information to the first part of the Survey by advising that, while slavery has existed, and continues to exist, in most societies, the Atlantic slave trade of the 16th to 19th centuries was unique in its scale and long-term consequences. Slavery in mainland America and in the Caribbean was introduced and practised by Europeans who had established plantations and wanted cheap labour. Men, women and children were taken from their own countries and communities in West Africa to be used as forced labour to create the wealth of the plantations. Children born to the enslaved were automatically enslaved themselves and could be sold whenever their owner wished. The enslaved were beaten, branded and abused, without access to the law.

We then informed Panel Members that London, Liverpool and Bristol were the main UK ports for the beginning and end of slaving voyages, while other smaller ports such as Greenock and Port Glasgow also had their involvement. The wealth and opportunities that slavery brought permeated across the whole of the British Isles, and can still be seen in local street names such as Jamaica Street, Virginia Street and Antigua Street. The social and economic development of Greenock and Port Glasgow rested on colonial tropical produce and that depended on slavery.

We advised respondents that the Council is currently examining the historical connections between Inverclyde and the transatlantic slave trade. As part of this work, we would like to find out what they think about the best way to tell the story of that relationship. We concluded by saying that, while living individuals are in no way implicated in the abuses inflicted by their ancestors, it is important for us to consider how historical figures are understood and remembered.

- 5.2 Panel members were firstly asked for their views - choosing a maximum of three answers - on the best way to tell the history of the Inverclyde area and its relationship to the transatlantic slave trade; the responses were:

	%
• Artistic interpretation (film, media, plays, poetry etc)	51
• History walks	50
• Plaques/information boards	37
• Exhibition(s)	31
• Web pages	20

• Articles in the local news	16
• Leaflets	13
• Inclusion in the schools' curriculum	12.

Comments included in response to the *Other* option at this question were:

- Audio/video presentation in the McLean Museum.
- Don't do it. Passing phase. Tell of the benefit to the world of Great Britain.
- Don't rewrite history - the time in which this happened and the setting should never be changed. Honesty of life and time is important. How else do we learn and move forward?
- History is history. We cannot undo the past. In case you are not aware, the Danes used to raid the West of Scotland for their slave markets in Ireland.
- New local heritage museum.

5.3 We introduced the next question by informing Panel Members that the Council intends to conduct an audit of features within the Inverclyde area that may have links to the slave trade, adding that this may include statues, monuments, memorials, gravestones, street names, buildings, private residencies etc. The Panel was asked that, if they were aware of any such features within the area, they would assist us with our research by identifying them; the responses are listed in the Appendix.

5.4 Lastly, we advised Panel Members that the Council intended to hold one (or more, depending on level of interest) on-line focus groups/listening events on this subject matter, to allow us to discuss it in greater depth with interested individuals. Fifty-nine Panel members indicated that they would like to take part in these meetings (which were later arranged for 23 November 2021).

Historic links to slavery in Inverclyde – Service commentary

Questions on the public views of Inverclyde's historical links to slavery were included in the Autumn 2021 Citizens' Panel Survey because Inverclyde's Historical Links to Slavery Working Group was running a public consultation at around the same time (August-September 2021) and it was therefore an additional route to consult with local residents on this subject.

The Citizens' Panel findings were similar to the responses gathered as part of the public consultation, with 50% and 37% respectively of those polled believing that history walks and plaques/information boards in relevant places are the best way to tell the story of Inverclyde's relationship to slavery. In contrast, the most popular option in the Citizens' Panel – artistic interpretation – was the least popular option in the public consultation. Many excellent suggestions were received for features within the Inverclyde area that could potentially be added to an audit of such features' historical link to slavery.

In addition to a general public consultation and the Citizens' Panel Survey, the Working Group also held two listening events - which 59 Panel members expressed an interest in attending - and ran a further consultation specifically on the subject of the Gourock Burgh coat of arms.

Officers are currently preparing the Working Group's Final Report and Recommendations for presentation to the Education and Communities Committee in the near future.

6.0 INVERCLYDE'S LIBRARIES

6.1 The second section of the Survey comprised questions about library provision in the local area.

We advised the Panel that Inverclyde libraries offer a range of services to people who live

and work in the area. These include book and audio book lending for all age groups in both physical and e-format; a programme of activities and events for all ages, both online and in person; learning opportunities; PC use; free Wi-Fi; book groups; clubs for children and adults. We aim to provide all services in a friendly and safe environment.

- 6.2 We began by asking respondents if they have used a public library service in Inverclyde in the last 12 months. Thirty-two per cent of Panel members said they had used the service in person in the last year, while a quarter (25%) did so on-line, with Panel members indicating that they used the service as indicated in the following table:

	Once %	Weekly %	Monthly %	Once every few months %
In person	9	6	5	12
On-line	3	6	9	7.

Just over two thirds (68%) of respondents said they have not used a library in person in the past 12 months, while three quarters (75%) of respondents indicated that they had not accessed libraries services on-line in the last year.

- 6.3 The most popular day for Panel members' last physical visit to a library was Thursday (24%), followed by Tuesday and Friday (both 19%), while the least popular day was Wednesday (9%).
- 6.4 The most common time of day for physical visits to libraries was 10-11 am (28%), followed by 2-3 pm (18%), while the least common time was 9-10 am (1%). No respondents said they visited libraries between 5 and 6 pm or 6 and 7 pm.
- 6.5 We introduced the next part of the Survey by advising Panel members that libraries had to adapt and change during the Coronavirus pandemic, adding that, initially, due to Covid-19 restrictions, branches were closed and the Council moved as much service delivery on-line as possible. We invested in our e-book stock and offered e-mail and telephone support to customers. When the restrictions eased, the book delivery service was reinstated and expanded. Additionally, from June 2020, access to libraries for PC use was allowed and the book collection (Connect and Collect) service began, while browsing in branches was reinstated in May this year.

When Panel members were asked about the purpose of their visit(s) to Inverclyde libraries, whether in person or on-line, the responses were:

	Every visit %	Some visits %	Never %
Attend a children's <i>Bookbug</i> session or activity (either on-line or in person)	0	27	73
Attend a local on-line group, for example, book group, <i>Chatty Café</i>	0	10	90
Attend an on-line author event	0	0	100
Attend an on-line IT class	0	6	94
Borrow audio books	0	8	92
Borrow books	60	20	20
Borrow e-audio books	16	24	59
Borrow e-books	13	29	58
Browse for books	38	45	16
Collect books (Connect and Collect service)	27	31	42
Maintain a Universal Credit Account on the internet	2	13	85
Print/photocopy	6	35	58
Search for jobs on the internet	2	19	80

Use the library PCs for other reason	15	27	58.
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Other reasons why people visited a library were as follows:

- For studying and reference work. I would have been using the library more often as I often visited 4/5 times per week before Covid-19. I found the library was an essential tool for the above.
- I took my granddaughter to get her involved but most of the time the library was closed. It really does need to be moved. It is in the wrong place (next to the Oak Mall entrance, another white elephant) and I am sure the attendance figures will confirm this.
- Look at the leaflets on noticeboards about volunteering and groups and events.
- Research.

6.6 When asked, prior to the introduction of the Covid-19 restrictions in March 2020, which Inverclyde library they visited most often, the responses were:

	%
Greenock Central	29
Greenock South West	11
Port Glasgow	11
Gourock	10
Inverkip and Wemyss Bay	7
Kilmacolm	5.

Just over a quarter (27%) of Panel members said they do not visit libraries in Inverclyde.

6.7 Panel members were then asked how they travelled to the library and the two most common modes of transport were car (46%) and taxi (39%); these were followed by walking (8%) and bus (6%). No respondents said they travelled to libraries by bicycle, on a motorbike or scooter or by train.

6.8 The next question included a list of words that could describe Inverclyde libraries, with Panel members invited to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each one:

	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Neither/nor %	Disagree %	Strongly disagree %
Accessible	39	44	12	4	0
Adaptable	23	42	32	2	1
Approachable staff	50	43	7	0	0
Boring	2	7	20	43	28
Community focused	15	44	38	3	0
Educational	37	53	8	2	0
Essential for society	65	32	3	0	0
Happy	27	43	27	4	0
Helpful	43	48	8	1	0
Inspiring	23	38	34	5	0
Knowledgeable staff	43	42	12	2	0
Light and airy	27	44	27	3	0
Modern	22	40	33	6	0
Open	24	44	28	5	0
Quiet	22	58	11	8	0
Relaxing	22	50	25	2	1
Safe places to be	34	54	11	1	0
Social	21	41	30	8	0
Welcoming	34	47	14	5	0.

Other comments which were made in response to this question are listed in the Appendix.

6.9 We then invited respondents to indicate what would encourage them to use a local library more often and the results were:

	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Neither/nor %	Disagree %	Strongly disagree %
Book events/meet the author signings	16	41	35	6	1
Covid-19 safe procedures and environment	19	40	31	9	1
Exhibitions/music recitals/cultural events	1	47	25	7	0
To attend an interest group or course (e.g. art class, computers, local history)	26	50	16	7	0
To get more information and resources related to health (e.g. books; clubs about health; to collect hearing aid batteries and walking stick ferrules)	14	40	37	8	1
For help to set up an interest group (e.g. on local history, craft, Chatty Cafés)	17	38	41	3	1
More children's activities	12	34	49	4	1
Proximity to home or workplace	23	34	33	6	3
Relaxing space	19	35	42	4	1.

The responses to the option entitled *Different opening hours* are outlined in the Appendix.

6.10 When asked where they would go to find out information about the services and resources provided in Inverclyde libraries, the most popular responses were:

- the Council's website - 49%;
- local press (e.g. *Greenock Telegraph*, *Inverclyde Now*) - 33%; and
- in libraries - posters and leaflets - 33%.

In contrast, very small numbers of Panel members used the following sources of information:

- public information screens in Council buildings including libraries (5%);
- community centres (4%); and
- W-Pac (the library catalogue) (3%).

- 6.11 The final question in the Citizens' Panel Autumn 2021 Survey invited respondents to make any other comments they may have about libraries in Inverclyde, all of which are outlined in the Appendix.

Inverclyde Council's libraries – Service Commentary

The library service welcomes the many positive comments about Inverclyde's libraries in response to the Autumn 2021 Citizens' Panel Survey.

Despite a very difficult year for libraries with closures, disruption, reduced hours and reduced access brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic, the service is pleased to see that just under a third (32%) of Panel members have used library services in person and quarter (25%) of respondents have used the libraries online; however, it is clear from the figures and comments that service use is by no means back to normal.

The service will conduct further research into why this may be and take action, where possible. The results shows that book borrowing is still the most popular activity to take place in libraries and we have invested more in our eBooks and eAudiobooks service in the last year in order to continue meeting this need, even while closed during the lockdowns.

Finally, the data on preferred days and times for library use by the public is helpful and will inform future service planning.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Finance

Financial implications:

One-off costs:

Cost centre	Budget heading	Budget year	Proposed spend this report	Virement from	Other comments
n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Annually recurring costs/(savings):

Cost centre	Budget heading	With effect from	Annual net impact	Virement from	Other comments
n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

7.2 Legal

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

7.3 Human Resources

There are no direct human resources implications arising from this report.

7.4 Equalities

(a) Has an Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) been carried out?

	Yes.
X	No. This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, no EIA is required.

(b) Fairer Scotland Duty

If this report affects or proposes any major strategic decision:

Has there been active consideration of how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome?

	Yes.
X	No.

(c) Data Protection

Has a Data Protection Assessment been carried out?

	Yes. This report involves data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.
X	No.

7.5 Repopulation: Provision of Council Services which are subject to close scrutiny with the aim of delivering continuous improvement for current and potential citizens of Inverclyde support the Council's aim of retaining and enhancing the area's population.

8.0 CONSULTATION

8.1 The Culture, Communities and Educational Resources Service was consulted on the development of the Autumn 2021 Citizens' Panel Survey. Commentaries on the results of Survey from the Service are included in this report.

9.0 CONCLUSION

9.1 The results of the Citizens' Panel Autumn 2021 questionnaire are presented for the Committee's consideration, with the recommendation that they are taken into account when reviewing service delivery, as appropriate.

10.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 Citizens' Panel Autumn 2021 Survey Results.

Q2**Features within the Inverclyde area that may have links to the slave trade.**

- Cross Shore Street area, Custom House Quay area, Bank Street area
- Street names (2 responses)
- Street names – Tobago, Trinidad etc
- Greenock street names and buildings on them
- Sugar Sheds
- Jamaica Lane
- Shipyards
- Street names – Jamaica Street, Virginia Street, Tobago Street
- Street names – Jamaica, Antigua and Virginia
- Lyle Fountain
- Street names – Jamaica and Tobago
- James Watt statue. Street names – Jamaica, Madeira.
- Captain Kidd
- Sugar history
- Sugar Sheds, street names, James Watt
- Antigua Street, Clarence Street, Jamaica Street, Madeira Street, Nicolson Street, Tobago Street
- Virginia Street, Tobago Street, Jamaica Street
- Darroch (made a fortune in the West Indies)
- Greenock Cemetery and Museum
- Greenock Esplanade, homes of the sugar traders. Barrhill Road in Gourrock originally had traders who influenced the slave trade. James Watt's father was a prominent slave trader with plantations in the West Indies. Street names in Greenock all show that slavery was a big part of the Greenock, Gourrock and Port Glasgow past.
- I am aware of the various street names, but not much else
- I am aware some street names and buildings are there but not exactly which ones
- I have no particular suggestions to make
- I'm unaware of links however the Inverclyde Heritage Network will have more information.
- Just drop the whole idea
- Municipal Buildings, Inverclyde Council, Greenock. North elevation, statues of slavery.
- Municipal Buildings Greenock. Statues North elevation, slavery.
- Municipal Buildings, Greenock - sculptures of slaves on the North elevation
- Not aware other than the obvious street names of Tobago, Virginia, Jamaica
- Street names – as mentioned in your introduction. The Custom House Building?
- Street names mentioned
- Sugar and tobacco warehouses and street names
- Sugar owners, houses on the Esplanade were owned by slave traders
- The Sugar Sheds are perhaps the most visible example
- The Esplanade houses were owned by slave traders; the sugar refineries were slave trader-owned
- Yes, as a member of the Inverclyde Heritage Network and as a keen local historian and photographer for over the last 30 years documenting the many changes in the Greenock area, I am very well aware of our local areas history over the last 150 years or so and working with various others on these sort of projects over the years
- Yes, I am aware but feel strongly about taking away historical references such as those mentioned
- War Memorial

Q8

Here are a number of words that could describe Inverclyde libraries. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each one.

Other. *Please state.*

- Before Covid-19, I attended an astronomy group in the South West Library. Staff were very helpful and welcoming. The Library is an asset to the area.
- Essential to the community
- Handy too!
- I LOVE Kilmacolm Library, as does my daughter. We used frequently prior to Covid-19. Loved the staff too. Very helpful.
- It wasn't welcome when it was announced we could only browse for 15 minutes. That felt too pressuring for me and I need to sit down and rest often and can't stand for too long due to long Covid-19.
- More information on local history is required
- The best buildings to be in Inverclyde. They need to be used more - the young need to be told about them and encouraged.
- The old Greenock Library was much better, and was far more relaxing, airy, quiet, spaced out, had more resources including study rooms, research areas, reference sections, music library, larger children's library and, of course, the wonderful spiral staircase! I realise the current one is the original one but the one I knew best was more suitable I think.
- Too warm, lacking natural ventilation

Q9

Which of the following would encourage you to use a local library more often? Please tick all that apply.

Different opening hours. *Please provide more details.*

- Evening opening hours and Saturday afternoon
- I probably would not attend regardless of anything introduced
- It used to be hard to get to the library to pick up reserved books as it closed at 6 pm and the most popular Glasgow to Gourock train arrived at Gourock just after 6 pm so it felt like a missed opportunity that all those commuters couldn't make any use of the library except on Saturday mornings. However, now I am working from home I can visit at weekday lunchtimes and on Saturday mornings which is fine for the Gourock Library.
- I think you really need to change the system where your library card expires every year and needs to be manually reopened by library staff - that puts people off using the online reservation App. During the pandemic, I had to email the library and ask them to open my card as it had expired and I wanted to access the family history subscription websites.
- Late openings for those studying or working during the day
- Longer opening hours would be great but probably not financially viable
- Open all day and every day
-
- The reason I have said *Strongly agree* to the first of these is that libraries have always been for the middle classes and quite frankly the middle classes want to keep it that way. (As a retired university lecturer, I would consider myself middle class). However, libraries should be at the centre of a town, next door to *McDonald's*, cafés and restaurants and not in isolated situations.
- Thursday till 8 pm
- Saturday 9 am opening

Q11

Do you have any other comments about libraries in Inverclyde? (Please state.)

- A vital resource being developed to meet community needs. We need our libraries. I've been a library user for nearly 60 years.
- Applying for City status - most cities have shops!
- Don't use libraries, and don't know anyone who does when you have access to all information online

- Excellent for children to develop reading skills
- Greenock Central Library is in the wrong building in the wrong place
- Haven't used a library for many years
- I am not a big reader, and have not been to a library for about four years. The last time I was at the Central Library was on a computer course about four years ago.
- I don't seek information about libraries. I wish I knew more about them but haven't had the need to use them.
- I don't look for this type of information
- I have not used a library for about 40 years
- Libraries deserve more care than they get, they are a vital resource for those continuing to be crippled by capitalism
- Not spacious enough
- Please do not close any
- The libraries provide an essential service that has been cut back a lot prior to Covid-19. I am lucky as I am able to visit two libraries and find that reading from a page (or even online) and taking notes in a public environment is better for learning. I tend to concentrate more when I am in a library and also have access to Glasgow libraries as well, however the travelling is not ideal and Inverclyde libraries are my preference.
- The online e-book library service locally was my LIFELINE during lockdown
- The *Spydus* App is really useful to reserve books online from other libraries and renew my books online. I didn't start using the library facilities again after the pandemic until the App was working again to let me reserve the books I wanted.
- The *Facebook* page was interesting too and I participated in posts asking what I was reading and recommending.
- I find it hard to remember the opening times and have to look them up regularly but I am happy with Gourock opening times. I would borrow more books if there was a better paperback selection including historical fiction and more books from the top ten best-selling books but as I can order them in from other libraries it is still a pretty useful place. The online access to family history resources was great during the pandemic but I am not sure if it is still available to home users as not much is communicated about it. It would be great if the library had a subscription to www.findmypast.co.uk that users with a library card could use at home too.
- Some more soft chairs in Gourock would be nice too so I could rest after standing too long. I would be interested in a book group on weekday lunchtimes at Gourock or Saturday mornings so I could fit it in around work.
- These are essential services as much as cleansing or planning. They must be protected for the next generations.
- They are a fabulous service which I think play a huge part in society
- Throughout the Covid-19 lockdown, staff continued to provide history research articles for funded projects I was managing
- We loved *Bookbug* when our children were younger. It would be fabulous to have new ways to encourage young readers into the library.
- Yes, move the library into the old *Marks and Spencer* space in the town centre. Put on more events to encourage people to go and this might increase the footfall for other shops in The Oak Mall.