

# Talking about... Solihull

Four times a year we consult with a representative group of residents from across the borough about Council services and priorities.

The results are then used to help us make decisions and improve our services.

**'Your Solihull'  
- Solihull Council's  
residents' magazine**



**Solihull libraries**

**This newsletter covers the findings from our January 2009 survey.**

**In that survey we asked about:**

- **'Your Solihull'  
- Solihull Council's  
residents' magazine**
- **Use of library  
services in Solihull**

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# 'Your Solihull' - residents' magazine

We produce a residents' magazine four times a year that is distributed to all homes in Solihull. The magazine is called 'Your Solihull'.

The purpose of the magazine is to:

- Explain how the Council works
- Inform residents about Council objectives and priorities
- Publicise new initiatives
- Raise the profile of the Council
- Promote the Council as transparent and accountable
- Present Council views on different issues

'Your Solihull' is important to us as many areas of Solihull, particularly north Solihull, do not receive the local newspaper and therefore have limited ways of finding out about the work of the Council.



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# 'Your Solihull' - residents' magazine

## Delivery

Over half of those asked remembered a copy of 'Your Solihull' being delivered to their home.

'Your Solihull' is produced four times a year – Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter editions.

As well as delivering 'Your Solihull' to every home in the borough, copies are also available from all of our libraries, customer walk-in centres and on the Council's website.

## Reading the magazine

Of those who remembered receiving 'Your Solihull'

- 6 out of 10 people always or usually read it
- 3 out of 10 people sometimes or occasionally read it

The main reason for people not reading the magazine was that they were not interested in Council business or lack of time to read it.

## People's understanding

When people were asked if 'Your Solihull' helped them understand more about the Council and what it does – the answers were very positive. After reading the magazine:

- 6 out of 10 said they know more about what the Council does.
- 6 out of 10 said they know how the Council spends its budget.
- 6 out of 10 said they know what the Council plans to do in the future.
- 5 out of 10 feel more positive about the Council.

## Content

The main reason people read 'Your Solihull' was to find out what the Council is doing.

Other reasons for reading the magazine included finding out about events, how to access Council services and how Council Tax is being spent.

People found articles about what's currently happening in Solihull the most interesting to read. Other articles of interest included the Council's future plans, recycling and redevelopment.

- 9 out of 10 people agreed that the magazine should include information about Council services and what the Council is doing; also feedback from surveys, Council decisions and news about other relevant organisations.
- 8 out of 10 were happy with what was in 'Your Solihull'. There were a few suggestions people thought might be useful such as councillors' details, useful telephone numbers and public transport information.



**'Your Solihull' online**

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# The library service in Solihull

Our libraries across the borough offer a wide range of services, activities, computers and information for everyone who lives, works and visits Solihull. These include:

- Book, DVD and CD loan
- Free computer use (Internet, email and word processing)
- Readers' circles
- Community displays
- Learndirect courses
- Guest speakers
- Coffee mornings
- Children's story time sessions
- Neighbourhood and Police surgeries (not all libraries)

To offer a more efficient library service, self-service kiosks have been installed in libraries so library members can take out, return and renew books, CDs and DVDs themselves simply by using their library card. Customers can also pay for CDs and DVDs and overdue charges at the kiosks.

**There are 13 libraries across the borough.**

Solihull Central Library  
Balsall Common Library  
Castle Bromwich Library  
Chelmsley Wood Library  
Dickens Heath Library  
Hampton in Arden Library  
Hobs Moat Library  
Kingshurst Library  
Knowle Library  
Marston Green Library  
Meriden Library  
Olton Library  
Shirley Library

## **Mobile library**

You can view the **timetable** of where and when the mobile library stops, or pick up a leaflet from branch libraries, central library or by phoning 0121 704 6947.

## **Home Library Service**

Provides a home visit from a member of the mobile library team for people who are confined to their homes and have no one to visit the library for them.



**Survey results over the page**

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## Library usage

Asked how often they used the libraries in Solihull, those surveyed said:

- 2 out of 10 visit a library at least once a month
- 3 out of 10 visit a library at least once a year

Those who used libraries at least once a month tended to be those that did not have Internet access or who were not in work.

- 5 out of 10 people said they never go to libraries

Most of those who did not use the libraries said they did not feel a need to go and could not think of anything that would encourage them to go.

Just over half of everyone said they prefer to use the Internet rather than go to a library. Others simply said they did not have the time.

## Library opening hours

People were asked what time of the day they would prefer to use the library:

- 4 out of 10 said 9am to 12 noon
- 4 out of 10 said 12 noon to 5pm
- 3 out of 10 said 5pm to 8pm

Interest for opening times before 9am, after 8pm and weekends was very low.

## Library services

When asked to think what services they thought were available in libraries, the top two answers were:

- 7 out of 10 people saying book loans
- 5 out of 10 people saying computer facilities

People were least aware of the advice available in libraries about learning, work and volunteering opportunities.



# Talking about...

## Solihull

All research was carried out  
by Brahm Research on behalf  
of Solihull Council.

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