

THE EXISTENCE VALUE TO THE HALLBANKGATE COMMUNITY OF THE CUMBRIA COUNTY COUNCIL LIBRARY LINK SERVICE

INTRODUCTION

Evaluation of cultural projects, organisations and services has been focussed around measurable indicators incorporated in value for money exercises, economic impact, and, participation/users numbers. Surveys of user perception and, quality of service are also employed. This is coupled with demographic analysis and deprivation indices to provide the measurable data to assist policy makers in making informed decisions concerned with the allocation of resources and delivery of strategic policy goals to meet community needs. Whilst this is important and useful, it is limited in scope and depth.

However, every community and organisation incorporates and relies on networks and it is this which forms the basis of measuring existence value. There is however an existence value history associated with the environment and Nelson in his paper, *Does Existence value exist?* (Independent Review, vol11, no.4, 1997) explains:

*“However, in a famous 1967 article in the American Economic Review, John Krutilla (1967) proposed a reconciliation. Krutilla suggested that the scope of economics should be expanded to include a new concept, which has come to be known as “existence value.” The enjoyment of life need not have as its limit things that can be seen and touched. Consumption, even as economists think about it, should extend to **include the simple fact of knowing that a wilderness, endangered species, or other object in nature exists.** Formally, the variables in a person’s “utility function” would not only comprise the amounts of food, clothing, and other ordinary goods and services consumed but also the **various states of knowledge each person has of the existence of social and physical characteristics in the world.** Implicitly at least, consumers would be willing to pay something for this form of consumption; hence the efforts by economists to estimate existence values in dollar terms (Mitchell and Carson 1989; Portney 1994).”¹*

This is, however, primarily an economic argument concerned with reinterpreting the concepts of consumption; however it does touch on the notion of willingness to pay for the existence value of the environment. It is perhaps more important in signalling the recognition of the concept of existence. In terms of this study we are providing an assessment of the economic, social and cultural existence value to the community by evaluating, spend, networks, community relationships and cultural embodiment.

Little attention is paid to networks within cultural contexts as a means of understanding organisations, communication, personal, stakeholder interaction and their relationships with others.

The visualising and analysis of the personal interaction networks within and between organisations can provide valuable insights into how the organisation(s) actually function and who holds critical positions (stakeholders) within that network. Critical positions can be influenced by a wide variety of factors including a person’s or organisation’s formal role, geographical location, reputation and image projected to

¹ Nelson. 1997 *Does existence value exist?* Independent Review, vol11, no.4, 1997

others. As a result, it is often unpredictable as to whom or what organisation(s) will occupy key positions in any network. By mapping and visualising the networks it is possible to measure the levels of penetration and extent of interactions an organisation through its staff has achieved with stakeholders and the community.

Social network analysis [SNA] is the mapping and measuring of relationships and flows between people, groups, organizations, computers or other information/knowledge processing entities. The nodes in the network are the people and groups while the links show relationships or flows between the nodes. SNA provides both a visual and a mathematical analysis of human relationships. For example two nodes are connected if they regularly talk to each other, or interact in some way².

For researchers who aim to measure the value of social networks through analysing the interaction between the network members, this interaction is measured and recorded based on the number of direct connections a node has. A member of the network that singularly connects a group of nodes to another group of nodes usually has high network metric significance as they are in a position to act as a gatekeeper who is capable of combining information, knowledge and ideas found in different places throughout the organisation. In many instances, when analysing social networks within a given organisation, peripheral nodes are often identified during the surveying stage of the process. This is a result of network members exchanging information outside the original stated network, with other people that are not currently mapped.

Individual network centralities provide an insight into the individual's location in the network. The relationship between the centralities of all nodes can reveal much about the overall network structure. A very centralized network is dominated by one or a few very central nodes. If these nodes are removed or damaged, the network quickly fragments into unconnected sub-networks. A highly central node can become a single point of failure. A network centralized around a well connected hub can fail abruptly if that hub is disabled or removed. Hubs are nodes with a high degree of betweenness centrality. A less centralized network has no single points of failure. It is resilient in the face of many intentional attacks or random failures -- many nodes or links can fail while allowing the remaining nodes to still reach each other through other network paths. Networks of low centralization fail gracefully.

It is the combination of understanding networks, their reach, complexity and interactions with other forms of conventional data such as user surveys, provides the basis to assess the existence value of a cultural organisation in this case a library service to their communities

This paper identifies and examines this alternative model; the evaluation of the social economic and cultural existence value of a cultural facility to its community including networks by first explaining the history of library links.

AN ANCESTRY OF LIBRARY LINKS

What follows is a short history of how one largely rural County Council addressed the difficulties of maintaining a library service on limited budgets for diverse communities.³ The background for library closures in Cambridgeshire is a familiar

² Krebs V. *Introduction to Social Network Analysis*, Sourced 2003

³ Derived from an article provided to Cumbria County Council Library staff by colleagues in Cambridgeshire County Council Library service

one for rural public libraries. They inherited a pattern of libraries, which was uneven and illogical. Libraries were densely located in the south of the county, but extremely sparse in the north. Of the 41 static libraries, the 7 largest attracted over 60% of the business, while the 10 smallest accounted for just 5%. Maintaining these small libraries required a disproportionate amount of bookstock, and as a result busy libraries were deprived of resources.

This has to be read in the context of a county, which, despite being one of the most affluent and fastest growing areas in the country, also is one of the lowest funded county councils. Consequently all services struggle with exceptionally low levels of funding and libraries are no exception.

The service has made real progress in areas that did not rely on Council core funding with developments in ICT, learning centres, new buildings and partnerships. But it has been hampered by low levels of funding for the basics, and in 2002 there was a budget gap which left the Council no position to cover the cost of running the 41 static libraries.

This crisis generated careful scrutiny; from councillors; two sets of consultants; as well Audit Commission inspectors. They all reached a similar conclusion: that the combination of cuts and under-funding, together with the pattern of numerous and unevenly spread libraries, had led to a decline in the core service. By the summer of 2002 the County Council's Cabinet came to the conclusion that more funding needed to be given to the service, but the uneven pattern of libraries required addressing, and spreading resources too thinly was to be avoided which inevitably led to the possibility of small libraries closures.

The political process had rumbled on throughout 2002, but became fully public in November, with the announcement of the proposals to close 10 libraries. This was an extremely difficult time for councillors. They knew just how emotive and unpopular a move this would be, but they were also convinced that the case for closure was compelling. Nothing emerged through this process to challenge the decision to close, nor to change the selection of the particular libraries. A major area of the consultation, however, was on the nature of the alternative library services to be provided to the 10 communities.

It was planned to offer a new, spacious mobile library to replace the libraries that were closing. Nevertheless it was made clear the mobile service was not going to be fully accepted by the active, vocal and well-informed groups who campaigned to save their local libraries. There was however an interest in one model running in Cambridgeshire at Little Downham. The Council worked with Little Downham, to retain an element of the static library in the village: first a collection of books in the post-office (similar to projects first pioneered in Norfolk and later Suffolk), which foundered when the shop changed hands. Later a collection of books were located in the village hall, provided by the library service and managed by volunteers, with the added attraction of tea and cakes which became known as the "Little Downham BookCafe". Internet access was added at a later date via the library service's Beacon Learning project.

While Little Downham offered a simple model, the 10 threatened communities were keen to develop the idea further, especially when it came to ICT and requests. The scheme, which has subsequently been developed, is a capsule service with key links into the main library service. The library service's part of the partnership is to provide:-

- 1000 new and popular books, largely paperback fiction with some large print and children's books. The collection is regularly exchanged, and can be topped up if numbers on the shelves fall below a certain level.
- Broadband ICT connection (part of the County's modernisation agenda), with PCs for public use and management of the service.
- Access to our Cambook library system to manage collections and loans, including the ability to add donated stock.
- Access to the request system.
- A regular link with the mobile service to enable requests to be delivered.

The Community undertakes to:

- Have a properly constituted organisation to run the scheme. Parish Councils have been extremely important partners in this respect, encouraging their local groups and often acting as umbrella for the organising group. Library Friends groups have also figured strongly – in some cases setting up in response to the threat of closure.
- Put together a 3 year business plan for the project.
- House the project and bear the running costs of accommodation.
- Staff it with volunteers (or paid staff if they prefer), and cover all related costs.
- Provide an organiser to ensure that day to day running is carried out, and be a single point of contact for the library service.
- Ensure that training is cascaded and that people working with the public are CRB checked.
- Conform to standard library rules, regulations and charges (any income from these is ploughed back into the projects).
- Provide Public Liability Insurance.

This basic scheme can then sit alongside other community facilities to suit local circumstances and ambitions. The café idea has been adopted by two of the schemes, while a number have retained or developed links with a school library.

Location was all-important and the Council helped in a number of cases. A few of the earmarked for closure static library buildings represented realisable assets to the County Council as many were in schools for example. If the various partners agreed and there was no revenue loss to the Council, the voluntary group could remain in the old library building. As a result 7 have stayed in their old library building, 2 have moved to other community locations, and the final 1 (not yet opened) is planned to be part of a new Parish Council building. In addition, to help with the development and set up, the library service provided each community with:-

- £3,000 pump priming funding
- Shelving and furniture, if it could be accommodated from the closing libraries
- Training on Cambook and general setting up routines
- Reference and local studies collections from the closing library.

The communities themselves often had to constitute and organise themselves to undertake what was very much an unknown quantity. They had to fundraise, enlist volunteers, publicise their cause, take responsibility for buildings, and negotiate agreements as well as ensure continuity of cover from their teams of volunteers.

These became known as Library Access Points (LAPs). Ten buildings were emptied of furniture (all that was not required by the LAPs), and over 70,000 books moved, sorted and re-allocated; bringing a much-needed boost to the larger libraries, where popular stock was in poor condition. At the same time, ICT technicalities were being

addressed including identifying the parts of our library computer system, which could be made accessible to the LAPs; and devising a training programme for the volunteers. Training sessions on Cambook and on more general routines were delivered to around 100 volunteers. The stock team compiled collections of 1000 new books for each LAP. They also devised an exchange system to give a regular movement of fresh titles. This required the LAPs to be grouped with exchange partners who wanted a similar profile of stock.

A mobile library service was also provided, although the stop time was shorter than if there had been no LAP. This enabled requests and new books to be delivered to the LAP, and provided the community with direct access to library services, staff and stock. The cost to the library service of setting up and contributing to the running of the LAPs and providing a mobile service was incorporated into the £2m library investment programme.

A standard Service Level Agreement, setting out respective rights and responsibilities was developed. This has proved problematic; as it was discovered that wording acceptable to one group could be totally unacceptable to another. The SLA included performance monitoring arrangements, with a key target being the turnover of the library service's stock.

The LAP organisers have developed their own support network, with regular meetings, book-swaps, and shared ideas for fund-raising and marketing.

There are additional benefits such as more intensive use of the buildings, whether old libraries or a new location. They have also proved to be a real focus for community spirit. The model is also one, which could be used elsewhere in the future; in substantial sized communities, which currently do not have a static library service. However it is difficult to know whether the enthusiasm and drive which these communities have shown, could be fostered without the spur of a library closure.

It is worth noting that an early model was established by Suffolk County Council⁴ and is generally recognised as the pioneer of the Library Link concept. The scheme is known as Bookends comprises 6 Library links, which are part of Suffolk CC efforts to improve library services in rural areas and support existing local services. Locations for the links are varied including Post Offices, local stores and a coffee shop. Each Library link has:

- A collection of books, paperback only, which is exchanged frequently – once a week – exchange minimum of 30 titles weekly.
- A computer link is installed at all links giving access to circulation systems – issue and renewal , personal borrowing information, the library catalogue and local database search.
- Stock from any library in Suffolk can be returned to a library link.
- Self reservation facility and free reservations for all county stock collected from a library link
- Longer opening hours than most branches to make facilities more available to the community
- Access to a selection of good quality reading
- Most have parking facilities close by

In addition Somerset County Council is developing an e- solution, based in a variety of hosts which more closely reflects the Cumbria County Council approach. Each of

⁴ Sourced from Liz Bowe Head of Libraries, Cumbria County Council based on a study visit

the collections will comprise a self-service RFID centre (except West Camel – see below) and new book stock bought specifically for the project, following a survey of potential users. In the initial stages, the collection will consist solely of books; the provision of AV may be considered at a later stage in the project if issues around security and collection of charges can be overcome. A brief description of the locations for the small library with e-connection follows:

Kings of Wessex Leisure Centre

<i>Opening hours:</i>	Office hours:	40 hours per week
	Out of office hours:	59.5 hours per week

Cheddar is a village with a population of about 4,600. There is a small traditional library in the village that has limited opening hours (25 per week). The Leisure centre is a building less than 10 years old on the local secondary school site, which is well used not only by the locals, but also by people from the surrounding area – the swimming lessons attracting folk from a wide area.

The library collection is to be placed in the swimming pool viewing area. It is hoped that this will be used by families waiting for their child's swimming lesson to conclude as well as by people using the centre's other facilities (gym, sports hall etc). The security system will only be activated if people attempt to leave the building without issuing the books so that the books will be available to be used around the building (e.g., to read to a younger child during the older sibling's swimming lesson or while using an exercise bike).

Ilchester Town Hall

<i>Opening hours:</i>	Office hours:	8.5 hours per week
	Out of office hours:	16.5 hours per week

Ilchester is a town with a population of about 1600 with the nearest static library being in Yeovil that is about 5 miles away. A mobile library visits the town once every 3 weeks. The town hall is in the centre of the town and already has a collection of books that have been donated by the residents, and were available for anyone to borrow. However, due to the retirement of the volunteer who manned the library 1 morning a week there was some doubt about the continuation of this service. These donated books will be replaced by the stock specifically bought for the project. The stock will now be available whenever the town hall is in use (e.g. for Brownies etc).

West Camel Village Hall (the Davis Hall)

<i>Opening hours:</i>	Office hours:	14.5 hours per week
	Out of office hours:	25.5 hours per week

West Camel is a village with a population of about 400 with the nearest static library being in Yeovil that is about 9 ½ miles away. A mobile library visits the town once every 3 weeks. This location differs from the other 2 in that it is being run as a control project. That is, a small collection of about 300 new books (there is limited space available) will be provided but no RFID system. The loans of books will be recorded manually using pen & paper.

These examples of small scale computer/book library services placed in social as well as economic locations central to community life often run voluntarily has enabled

the Cumbria Library Link to learn from others and take the concept to another level. In all cases there is evidence of active community engagement and support.

THE CUMBRIA CONCEPT

The Library Link project stems from the Best Value Review of the Archive and Library Services undertaken in the autumn of 2002. Following further development work in 2003 and an inspection of the review and of the Services themselves in 2004 by the Audit Commission, an Improvement Plan was drawn up and approved by Cumbria County Council in February 2004. This contains a number of discrete projects of which Library Links is one.

Subsequently, the Cumbria County Council's library service launched a "Library Link" scheme on the 15th June 2005 in the Penrith Cooperative Food Store, Halbankgate, based on the successful introduction of a similar project in Lazonby. This has been followed up with a further project in Brampton.

Library Links is intended to bring services closer to home for people living in rural parts of the county. Computers are installed in local shops and sub-post offices alongside a store of books that are updated weekly. The computers provide a direct link to the library service and its full catalogue. Local people can loan books in the shop, order books from the main catalogue and renew existing loans. The Links have the advantage of longer opening hours to make the facilities more available to the community. Staff are available to give help and instruction where needed.

Users of Links are expected to find:

- a selection of good quality readily available reading
- the full library catalogue
- self-service reservation of books
- self-service check out with assistance if required
- self-service renewal
- personal borrowing information
- internet access

What makes the Cumbria County Council scheme of particular interest is the partnership with the Penrith Cooperative Society to provide joint economic, cultural and social services to small rural communities. This approach places less emphasis on volunteers, a key component of the Cambridgeshire County Council scheme as shop staff double up as library assistants. In most other ways it is similar to the Cambridgeshire and emerging Somerset County Council models. In particular, working with a commercial host enables record keeping to be managed as well as delivery of books ordered through the computer terminal, In other words a normal small library service with computer access and friendly extended access which mirror shop opening times. It seems to have developed a blended model of the Somerset and Cambridge experiences. However, the host is a critical success factor in the Cumbria model.

THE IMPORTANCE OF HOSTS

The host for Hallbankgate, Penrith Co-operative Society, is a small but successful co-operative society which serves the needs of village and town communities in the heart of the Lake District and Weardale Valley, areas traditionally known for farming and tourism. The Society operates within a 50 mile radius from the main department store in Penrith. It operates 2 out of the 3 chosen venue sites for the Library Link project. The first Library Link opened in Lazonby Co-op. Lazonby is situated in the Eden valley just north east of Penrith. It is a sizable village which also serves other large villages in the surrounding area. Lazonby and District Co-operative Society was founded in 1887 and only merged with Penrith in 1990, moving into new premises incorporating a Post Office in 2004, it is the largest of the Library link hosts.

At the heart of this scheme is a Service Level agreement, (SLA), between the County Council library service and the host which includes, the following obligations;

The Council undertakes to:

- A clear understanding of mutual obligations effective for 12 months.
- One month prior to the expiry of the agreement the parties may agree to renew or terminate the SLA.
- A supply of books, equipment, including computer access / lines to be provided by the library service.
- Payment of a sum per annum to the host for a 6 month period payable in advance
- Insurance to cover PC equipment
- Public liability insurance for damage caused by council equipment
- Delivery and collection every week - 51 weeks a year
- A visit from a member of library management staff at least once every two months to help with queries / problems related to the link.
- Council will provide training in the operation of the link and associated information.
- Provision of a library telephone contact for problems

The host and operator undertakes to:

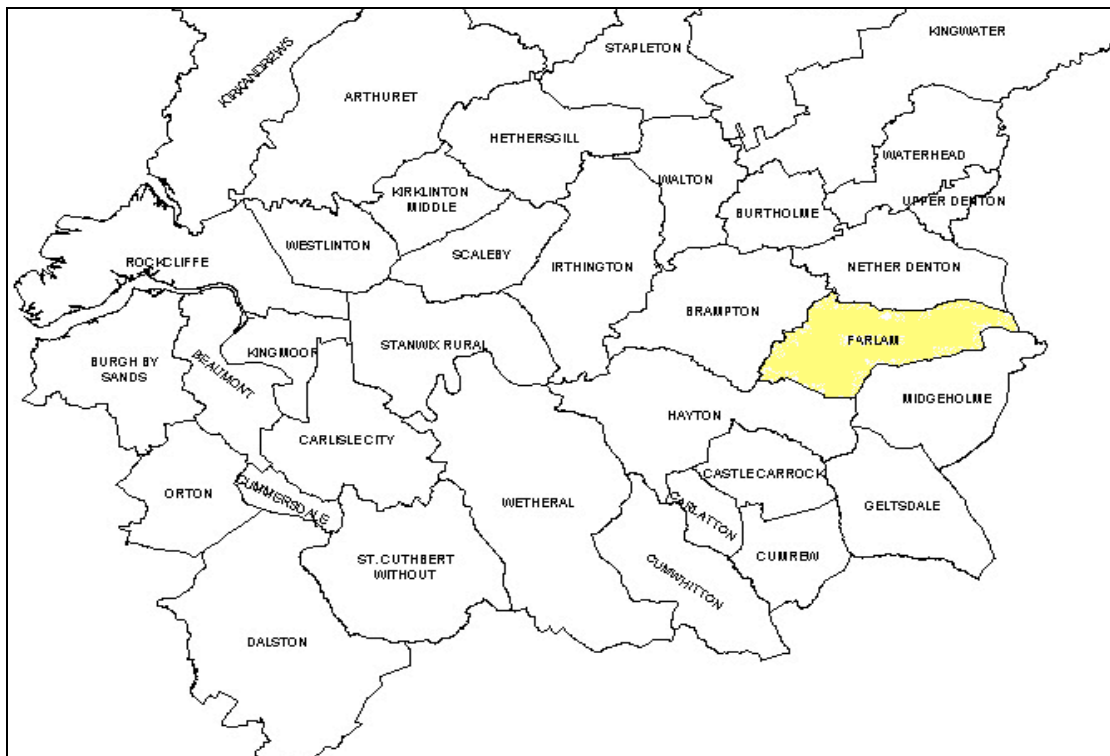
- Provision of space
- Welcome library link users and assist them with any resources provided.
- Ensure link facilities are available to actual and potential users during all operating times, ensuring computers are switched on.
- Ensure that the area surrounding the books and Pc is free of obstructions.
- Ensure that computer faults are reported to the provided contact no within 24 hours of fault being identified.
- Ensure that messages are checked and dealt with twice a week.
- Ensure the stock is changed regularly.
- Publicity by the host at the venue and associated advertising related to their business
- Evidence of adequate general building and public indemnity insurance

The monitoring and evaluation of agreement obligation delivery on both sides is critical to the success of this model and although trust is essential in any contractual engagement it is equally important that the obligations are being honoured by both parties. There are a number of limitations and boundaries to the model and consequently the existence value evaluative process.

UNDERSTANDING THE COMMUNITY

Hallbankgate, a former mining village is located in the parish of Farlam with a population of 613⁵ which falls within the Carlisle and District, District Council one of six in the County. The nearest relatively large centre is Brampton with a population of 4328 in 1995⁶ which is 4.5 miles away. Carlisle on the other hand is 12.8 miles east of Hallbankgate and has a population of 103,000.⁷ Within the parish there is a parish church, an old Victorian Hall, Farlam Hall, now a hotel two shops one of which is closing down, two pubs and Wesleyan Chapel as well as a primary school and village hall.

Figure 1 - Parish Boundaries with Farlam in which Hallbankgate resides highlighted



Source: Cumbria County Council, 2005

It should be noted that this community has only ever been served by the mobile Library until the introduction of the Library Link. It has never benefited from a static library and consequently this represents a significant change in cultural service provision for this parish.

⁵ This is for 1995 derived from Cumbria County Council.

⁶ These are the most reliable figures to date derived from Cumbria County Council.

⁷ This is for 2004 and derived from Cumbria County Council.

LIMITATIONS, DEFINITIONS AND PARAMETERS

Hallbankgate was chosen because it is the third development of the Library Link model derived from the earlier experiments by Suffolk and Cambridgeshire County Council. It is also a typical Cumbrian rural parish of around 600 people which the County Council Library Service is expected to serve.

Limitations

The Hallbankgate Library Link has only been operating for eight months. This may not necessarily have enabled the staff to establish and develop extensive and detailed networks. It is important to recognise this limitation when considering the results of this existence value exercise.

The analysis of networks, and survey of users for both the Library Link and the mobile library were snapshots of activity over a restricted period of time and do not pretend to represent the breadth of activity which may occur over a longer period.

In addition it is noted that the focus of this model is on users and active stakeholders. There has not been an attempt to quantify the number or attitude of non users nor has any assessment of the type of books chosen to be borrowed been undertaken.

It has not been possible given resource constraints to quantify the extent of the Library Link computer use and what has been accessed through the link.

Definitions

There are three possible definitional categories for assessing the existence value of the Library Link as follows:

- Economic (monetary and stakeholder) value
- Social (community and stakeholder) value
- Cultural (way of life)Value

In the case of culture the model refers to the Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) definition as the sponsoring department at national level for this type of activity. This is explained as having:

*“both a material and a value dimension and includes a wide range of activities including arts, media, sports, parks, museums, **libraries**, the built heritage, the countryside, playgrounds and tourism”.*⁸

This definition is echoed in other North West regional local authority descriptors such as Bolton:

“The definition of culture used in this strategy falls into two dimensions;

- 1. Culture as an essential part of everyone's life, the cultural activities, the making, doing and enjoying.*
- 2. The culture of the borough, the way of life is in Bolton and what influences at.*

⁸Local Cultural Strategies, Draft Guidance for Local Authorities in England, DCMS, 1999

This then enables the borough to represent its cultural activities as a spectrum comprising;

- *Visual, performing, broadcasting and media arts e.g. Theatre national, regional and local, dance cinema music and painting*
- *Sports e.g. watching and participating.*
- *Museums*
- *Arts e.g. art Galleries art workshops creative industries*
- *Play e.g. play for solicitors, parks and playgrounds and informal play opportunities*
- *Parks and open spaces*
- *Libraries*
- *Heritage e.g. Bottoms industrial background and cotton mills the Mass observation photography project of the thirties and nineties Bolton this multicultural dimension*
- *Built environment e.g. the town hall, Victoria Square, Le Mans Crescent, and Reebok stadium.*
- *Countryside e.g. the West Pennine moors.*
- *Identity and image e.g. Bolton as a mill town, Mass observation photography project, Bolton Wanderers Football Club.*
- *Shared memories e.g. local disasters and major events*
- *Relationships e.g. family, schools clubs*
- *Beliefs e.g. religious, political.*⁹

The community as mentioned earlier is Hallbankgate as defined by the parish boundary however, when considering users as stakeholders it includes all users surveyed wherever geographically located.

For the purposes of this model, stakeholders are organisations and individuals with a direct interest in Library Link. These include users, the host, shop staff, Councils, schools, village amenities and voluntary groups.

Parameters

A significant factor in assessing the Library Link in Hallbankgate is the mobile library service which regularly visits the parish. As described earlier the Council provides the Carlisle Rural Mobile Library to service the Hallbankgate area on a three-weekly cycle. As a consequence a survey of mobile service users during November 2005 on random days was undertaken to quantify the mobile library service users and relationship /impact on the total number of people using the Library Link facility.

The survey samples were intended to include users of the mobile library service from Halbankgate and physically close locations including;

- Milton
- Talkin
- Forest Head

The questionnaire was designed to meet the needs of the survey. This consisted of several closed multiple choice questions, providing the respondent with the opportunity to choose "other" where appropriate, and provided space for additional comments. The questions were constructed to elicit information from the respondent in the following key areas;

⁹Bolton's Consultation Cultural Strategy 2001/2 Summary Document

- Demographic details of users, including age, gender, employment status and ITC literacy
- Frequency of use of all directly accessible library services, including Mobile Library, Library Link and Central Library services

The survey carried out on the day in the three week cycle when the mobile service visited Halbankgate where it stops for 1.20 hours resulted in no users of the service. However the survey on the same day also tracked users in related areas which resulted in 9 users broken down into locality in table 1;

Table 1 - Location of users

LOCATION	NUMBER OF MOBILE LIBRARY USERS
Hallbankgate	0
Milton	4
Talkin	2
Forest Head	2

Roodhouse & Johnstone 2005

It should be noted that one user did not provide their exact address, and therefore cannot be allocated to one of the stops in the Farlam parish. However, the mobile library staff confirmed that this user was not located at the Hallbankgate stopping point. Of the total number of users there are a greater proportion of male users, over 66% compared with females 33%.

The service attracted a cross section of ages as illustrated in table 2;

Table 2 – Age ranges of mobile library users

AGE RANGE	NUMBER OF TOTAL VISITORS
0-4	0
5-9	0
10-14	0
15-19	0
20-24	0
25-29	0
30-34	2
35-39	0
40-44	1
45-49	2
50-54	0
55-59	2
60-64	1
65-69	0
70-74	0
75-79	0
80-84	1
85-89	0
90 +	0

The occupations represented by the respondents were notable in that it did not include any long term unemployed or students. Above all it does not conform to the accepted age profile for mobile libraries with 7 out of the 9 under statutory retirement age.

Table 3 - Employment status of mobile library users

OCCUPATIONAL STATUS	NUMBER IN OCCUPATION
Under 18	0
Employed	2
Unemployed	2
Long-term Unemployed	0
Looking after family	1
Permanently sick/disabled	1
Student	0
Retired	2
Other	1

Roodhouse & Johnstone 2005

A key question in the survey was the respondents' level of computer literacy as a computer link is at the heart of the Library Link system. 8 out of the 9 respondents are computer literate and Table 4 illustrates the length of time the respondents have been using computers;

Table 4 – Length of time computer literate

LENGTH OF TIME AS A REGULAR COMPUTER USER	TOTAL NUMBER
0-1 year	0
1-5 years	1
5-10 years	5
10 years+	2

Roodhouse & Johnstone 2005

It is clear from this that computer literacy is high with 7 of the 8 computer user respondents operating for more than 5 years.

Based on a snapshot survey of the mobile Library service and Library Link users carried out on the 9th, 7 to the 13th November 2005 there is evidence to suggest that over 88% of all the mobile library users are regular users of the service, visiting the mobile library on a three weekly basis, which is consistent with a three weekly visiting cycle.

Table 5- Regularity of use of mobile library services

HOW OFTEN MOBILE LIBRARY IS USED	NUMBER OF USERS
Never before/New member	0
3 weekly	8
6 weekly	1
9 weekly	0
12 weekly	0

Roodhouse & Johnstone 2005

When asked whether or not they were aware of the Library Link service available at Hallbankgate Co-operative store over 55% confirmed that they were not.

Perhaps more significantly 100% of all users of the mobile library service confirmed that they have never used the Library Link service available at Hallbankgate Co-operative. However over 33% of respondents stated they also used the Main Central Library on a monthly basis and around 11% on a six monthly basis¹⁰.

AN ECONOMIC VALUE

This section attempts to quantify the expenditure and resultant benefits from establishing the Library Link. The most noticeable feature of this project is the location of the Library Link inside the Penrith Cooperative Amenity shop in Hallbankgate. In economic terms the Council is purchasing a service valued at £1200 per annum from the Cooperative to deliver Library Link through the shop.¹¹ This incidentally is a significant contribution to the staff and running costs of the shop and a guaranteed annual income of £1,200 (SLA annual cost to the County Council) to the Cooperative as well as attracting customers. It has not been possible to place a value on the existence of the shop to the community, nor the impact of Library Link as a means of attracting customers to the shop who would not otherwise use the facility. However the evidence derived from the two week survey supports the view that there is a synergy between the shop and the service as explained in table 7. This is confirmed by the Chief Executive of the Penrith Cooperative who confirms that their involvement in this project is economic, increasing “footfall” in the shop, as well as social and ethical.

Table 6 – Total number of Library Link customers also using co-operative facilities

¹⁰ See the section on study limitations definitions and parameters for more details of the survey.

¹¹ The terms of this exchange are described on page 17

Library Link Customers using the Co-operative services	Library Link Customers not using the Co-operative services
26	0

Roodhouse & Johnstone 2005

The total number of co-operative customers not using the in-store library link facility is 29 over the period of the survey which seems to suggest that there are an equal number of Cooperative shop customers who do not yet value the Library Link service. Of those 29, 10 are members of the Library Link but chose on this occasion not to use the service. 12 of the remaining 19 confirmed that they were likely to become members. Consequently there are 7 customers who are either undecided or not willing to take advantage of the service. This supports the view that there is an increasingly value being placed on the facility.

Nevertheless all library link users that were surveyed also used the co-operative facilities. However it should be noted that users do not pay for the service, it is free at the point of access to the individual although they are expected to hold a library card. In addition there are no fiscal penalties for the late return of books. In these circumstances the project cannot be assessed on the basis of willingness to pay. It can, however, be considered in terms of contribution to the local economy.

In addition, 9 suppliers benefited from the establishment of the Library Link by providing shop fittings, books, computer equipment and telephones. The full list can be found in appendix 1. Out of the 9 suppliers 4 are located within the Cumbria County Council boundaries thus benefiting local businesses. The one off fitting out costs including book purchase amounted to £4000; however the book stock is renewed annually at a cost of £800. In addition there is the SLA with the Penrith Cooperative, of £1200 per annum, and annual communications operational cost of £560.

A new post of Library Link Coordinator has been established by the County Council amounting to a gross cost of £12,266 including travel and subsistence expenses to service three Library Links. Cover has to be provided for the Coordinator and this is assumed to be £268.60 per annum. The Hallbankgate salary cost is £4178.20. This coupled with a proportion of senior management time (a contribution of the Head of Libraries and Head of Cultural Services £1050 per annum¹²) and annual communications operational support service amounts to a total employment value to the County economy of **£5,788.20** per annum.

Consequently the one Library Link in Hallbankgate can be valued in total as £7,788.20¹³ annual revenue contribution and one off capital of £4000 with an estimated project annual user number of 750¹⁴ (just under 10% of the parish population when averaged over 50 weeks) which amounts to an annual cost per user

¹² This has been calculated on the equivalent of 120 hours work over the year 1 April 2005 to 31 March 2006 for the Head of Libraries gives a gross annual cost of £2,502 (one hour @ £20.85 gross). In the case of the Head of Cultural services, it is calculated at 16 hours contribution over the same period, giving an annual gross cost of £650 (one hour @ £40.63 gross). The figure in the text has then been divided by 3 to arrive at a Hallbankgate contribution.

¹³ This includes the salary, communication operations, book renewal and SLA costs.

¹⁴ This is based on the average number of users, 15, established in the two user surveys multiplied by 50 weeks

head of **£10.38 (£0.076** per person per week) to provide this service to an immediate community of 613¹⁵ people in the Farlam parish. Assuming the capital contribution is written off over three years the cost per head is **£9.49¹⁶(£0.190** per person per week). Comparisons with other forms of Library service delivery cost per head such as a mobile or small static library or cultural facility has not been possible.

A SOCIAL VALUE

This section of the study addresses the value of the Library Link to the community by measuring the levels of usage, a conventional approach to assessing the value of a public service and stakeholder relationships so that an assessment can be made of the effectiveness and reach of the networks. So for example one may expect a library service to have developed connections with voluntary groups such as the local historical society or the local school or the parish councillors. It is the extent of this network which provides a measure of the existence value of the service to those in the community. The following tables explain the levels of usage based on a two week survey of Library Link users.

Table 7 –The impact of the Mobile Library on visits to the Library Link

Number of users of the Library Link when Mobile Library visits Hallbankgate	Number of users of the Library Link on week when Mobile Library doesn't visit Hallbankgate
10	16

Roodhouse & Johnstone 2005

The mobile Library attracted 9 visitors within the parish and no users from Hallbankgate; however the Library Link attracted 10 during a mobile Library visit and 16 without. This coupled with the increase in use when the mobile Library is not visiting the parish suggests that after a short period of existence (6 months) the Library Link is making a noticeable impact on the community.

Table 8 - The gender of library link and cooperative users

Total number of Male Visitors	Total number of Female Visitors
11	44

Roodhouse & Johnstone 2005

These results are contrary to the Mobile Library where there were more males than females. However, there is an overwhelming number of women using the Library Link service and largely in their fifties and sixties. This may in the case of Hallbankgate be associated with shopping as over 48% of respondents are employed or self employed and consequently one can assume are likely to be working during

¹⁵ These are 1995 figures drawn from the County Council.

¹⁶ This is calculated on a total annual cost of £7,121.53

the day. It is possible that there is a pattern of calling into the shop to buy goods at the beginning or end of the working day and taking advantage of the Library Link and post office at the same time. This requires further work to confirm and is at present beyond the scope of this study.

Figure 2 – Comparative gender percentages of the total number of library link users

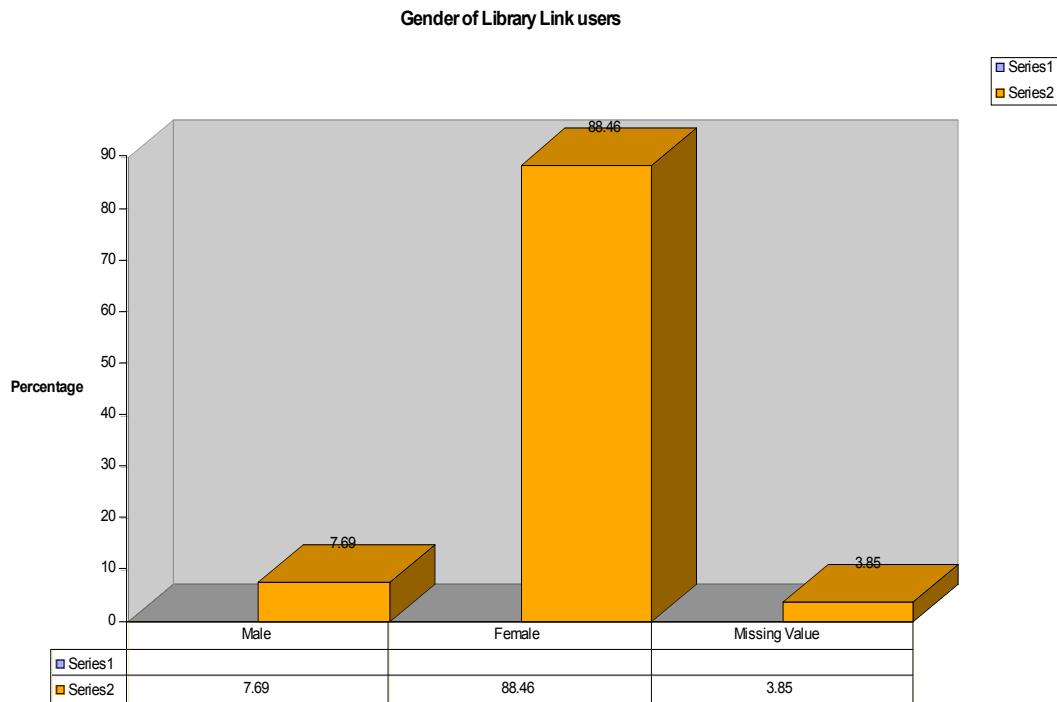
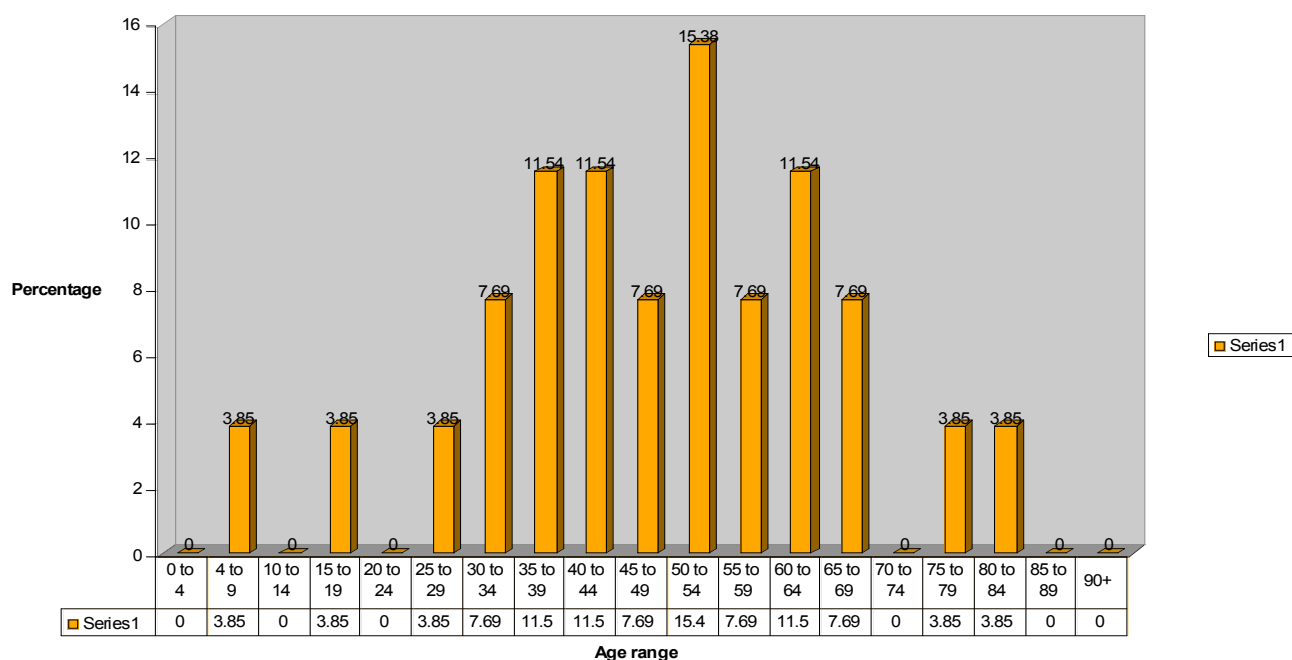


Figure 3 - Age range of co-operative and library link users

Age ranges of Library Link users



Three of the total number of respondents refused to provide details of age. Nevertheless those between 50 and 54 years dominated followed by the 30 to 49 years and 55 to 69 year olds. However there are no young people between the ages of 10 to 14 years and 20 to 24 year olds. This highlights the need to consider why there are nil returns and what action may be taken. This may be due a lack of information about the service and what it can do, other provision or a lack of interest in book reading. Overall the majority of users are from 30 to 69 years representing around 80% of all user respondents.

Table 9 - Occupational status of users

Occupational Status	Number in occupation	Percentage in occupation
Under 18	1	1.79
Employed	24	42.86
Self employed	3	5.36
Unemployed	1	1.79
Long-term Unemployed	0	0
Looking after family	5	8.93
Permanently sick/disabled	1	1.79
Student	2	3.57
Retired	18	32.14
Other	0	0
Missing value	1	1.79

Roodhouse & Johnstone 2005

It is encouraging to see so many employed and self employed, over 48%, using the service compared to those who are retired, 32%; however it is disappointing to find only two students. This seems in part to echo the age profile with no users in several

of the young adult and youth age categories, see table10 for the details. Further attention is needed to develop networks and connections with the appropriate organisations to address this.

Turning to the number of regular IT users there is clear evidence that the majority of users are IT literate. However when compared with the pattern in the mobile library users surveyed those using the Library Link service are slightly less literate. This may be associated with the dominance of males in the Mobile Library survey and further work is needed to prove this.

Table 10 - Number of regular ITC users

Number of Regular Users of a computer	
Yes	No
33	23

Roodhouse & Johnstone 2005

In one sense it is to be expected that there are reasonable levels of computer literacy as Library Link requires the use of a computer with over 78% of the 33 computer user respondents regularly using the technology for between 1 and 10 years and over 54% regularly using computers for more than 5 years.

The number and length of use is important as it suggests that access to computers is reasonably high and consequently the ability to access the County Library Service catalogue to order books if a Library card holder and choose a point of delivery such as the Library Link should be relatively easy. Further work is needed here and additional statistical data to facilitate comparisons. It is also important in the context of rural settings and home working, for example do the 3 self employed workers in the survey work from home?

Table 11 – Length of time computer literate, of those who are computer literate

Length of time as a regular computer user	Total number	Total Percentage
0-1 year	3	9.09
1-5 years	12	36.36
5-10 years	14	42.42
10 years+	4	12.12

Roodhouse & Johnstone 2005

Table 12 – Reasons to visit the library link

Total percentage using library link for each service			
Browsing	Borrowing	Becoming a member	Returning books
46.15	61.54	15.38	3.85

Roodhouse & Johnstone 2005

It is encouraging that there are a significant number of individuals seeking to become members, over 15% which suggests that the service is continuing to embed itself in the community and increasing community penetration that is social value.

The other stakeholder apart from the users of the service is the host the Penrith Cooperative Society. The Chief Executive has stated that the Society can enter into this type of project because it is compatible with the social and ethical goals of the society as the Cooperative is “more than a shop”¹⁷ and is committed to working in the community particularly with children. Consequently there is a willingness to explore new joint projects based on the current model.

A CULTURAL (WAY OF LIFE) VALUE

A definition of culture and the place of libraries in it can be found earlier in this paper. Given the breadth of the DCMS definition which is employed here an attempt at scoping the cultural activity has been included in the following paragraphs. It should be noted that this is incomplete and unsystematic as there is no reliable primary baseline data available for Hallbankgate cultural activity.

Artists live and work in and around the Hallbankgate area such as;

- John Hall craftsman, box maker lives in Hallbankgate.
- Donald Wilkinson painter in Banks
- John Murray writer in Brampton

Lanercost Priory which is nearby runs some musical activity and supports the craftsmen at the priory annually. In addition it supports a small arts festival annually, the North Pennines Storytelling Festival running from 14 -16 October - not actually in Halbankgate but near and around the area. There is a gallery in Brampton which sells made in Cumbria products. As a result when coupled with facilities such as Library Link there is a traceable cultural life in the area conforming to the Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) cultural descriptors included in the earlier definitional section.

Given this, it is a reasonable expectation that the Library Link is a contributor to the cultural life of the parish not only through access to books but also information. As a consequence the paper information flow was measured on 2 November 2005. It is worth noting that in the Hallbankgate Co-operative store there are two points where information is displayed. In addition the Library Link is positioned immediately to the right of the Post Office facility within the shop.

Displayed immediately around the Library Link facility are the following leaflets,

- Instructions for use of the Library Link computer terminal leaflet and poster
- Introductory leaflet to Library Link at Hallbankgate Co-op
- Library membership leaflet
- Eden street map
- Cumbria County Council – Children’s information service leaflet from Cumbria early years development and childcare partnership

In the case of the second display area immediately around the Post Office facility there are the following leaflets,

¹⁷ Quote from John Mills Chief Executive Penrith Cooperative Society, December 2005

- Post Office Equity Bond application pack
- Short break travel insurance leaflet
- Cashing high street banks cheques facility leaflet
- Mobile phone top-up leaflet
- Gift vouchers information and directory
- Vodafone leaflet
- Orange leaflet
- Virgin leaflet
- T-mobile leaflet
- Lanercost festival – music and art for midsummer leaflet, June 2005
- Post office home insurance leaflet
- Banking services leaflet
- Foreign currency leaflet
- Personal loan leaflet
- Car insurance leaflet

There is only 1 leaflet associated with cultural activities with 2 concerned with Library Link and 2 from the County Council, covering library services generally and child care. However the dominant number of leaflets, 5, describes mobile phone services followed by insurance, 3. There do not seem to be leaflets or notices about local upcoming events in the parish or the wider community such as Brampton, (4.5 miles distant) the nearest “large” population centre.

It should be noted that it is possible to access County Council services information through the Library Link via the County Council website.

However in cultural infrastructure and service terms, the introduction of the Library Link adds significantly to the provision available to the parishioners when as already been highlighted the community has relied on a three weekly mobile service. In terms of adding value to the Hallbankgate way of life, the introduction of a permanent cultural facility in the community combined with a shop has yet to prove itself in terms of levels of community integration although there is evidence that this is growing and use is increasing.

Given the introduction of this cultural facility in a small rural community which previously did not benefit consideration needs to be given to developing it as a cultural hub both physically and virtually by developing networks and connections. It has yet to integrate itself in the community as the natural source of information on cultural matters.

NETWORK VALUE

The following figures illustrate the network interaction between the key individuals who operate or are responsible for Library Link at Hallbankgate. As stated earlier the intention behind this analysis is to understand the structure of the network interactions, levels of frequency and dependability. The core network measured included all the Cooperative shop staff, the key managers and politicians from the County Council and the Chief Executive of the Penrith Cooperative Society. The focus of the network analysis in this case includes in all cases frequency and strength of interaction as well as:

- Information exchange and resource gathering
- Advice and discussion of developments
- Advice and opinions to aid decision making
- New products
- Customer needs
- Community stakeholders

In all cases the group size is 11 and the figures include an assessment of the number of potential ties compared with the actual including a measurement of the density of the network. It is noted however that the core group of 11 individuals surveyed have identified people who are important to them who have not been surveyed and in addition representatives of the village amenities have also been excluded from the survey due to the resource limitations of the study. This results in a lack of reciprocation in the network representation. The job roles of the named individuals whom provide peripheral representation to the network are as follows

Area Library Manager
Business Release Manager
Principal Library Assistant

Library Support Officer
Library Services Manager
ITC Client Team
All of the village amenities

In the following network maps Cumbria County Council staff and all councillors are represented by red nodes, Hallbankgate Cooperative staff blue nodes and Hallbankgate amenities yellow nodes; however job roles and gender descriptions are included within the node labels.

Figure 4 describes the network concerned with information flow and the node (people) interactions along with the strength of ties (connections). The network lacks reciprocity so for example the Library Link Co-ordinator receives information from the Head of Culture and the Library Operations Manager, however they do not receive information from her. The Library Link Co-ordinator is the key information provider to the staff in the shop and it is noticeable that the Chief Executive Officer of Hallbankgate Co-operative receives his information from her too with no connections to any other staff in the shop or within the Council. It is particularly noticeable that the Principle Library Assistant, a peripheral member of the network relies on the Library Link Co-ordinator, as she exchanges information, documents, schedules and resources with him, despite that he is not an original member of the given network. Two of the shop assistants that work in the shop are important as they connect not only with the Shop Manager, but also, directly with the Library Link Co-ordinator. The potential ties within the network are 210, however only 21 actual ties are evident, realising a density of 10%.

Figure 4: The exchange of information, documents, schedules and resources within the Hallbankgate Library Link network

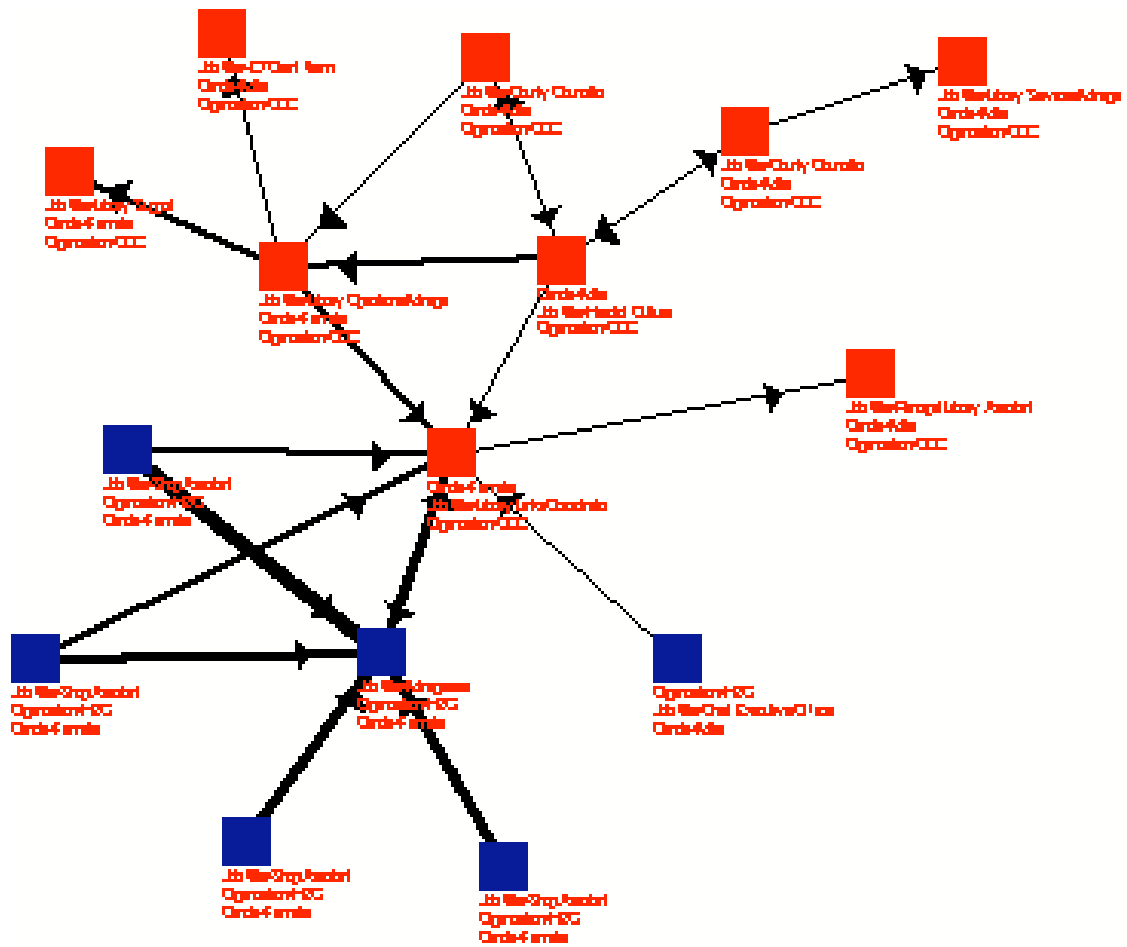


Figure 8: Customer needs, requests and feedback

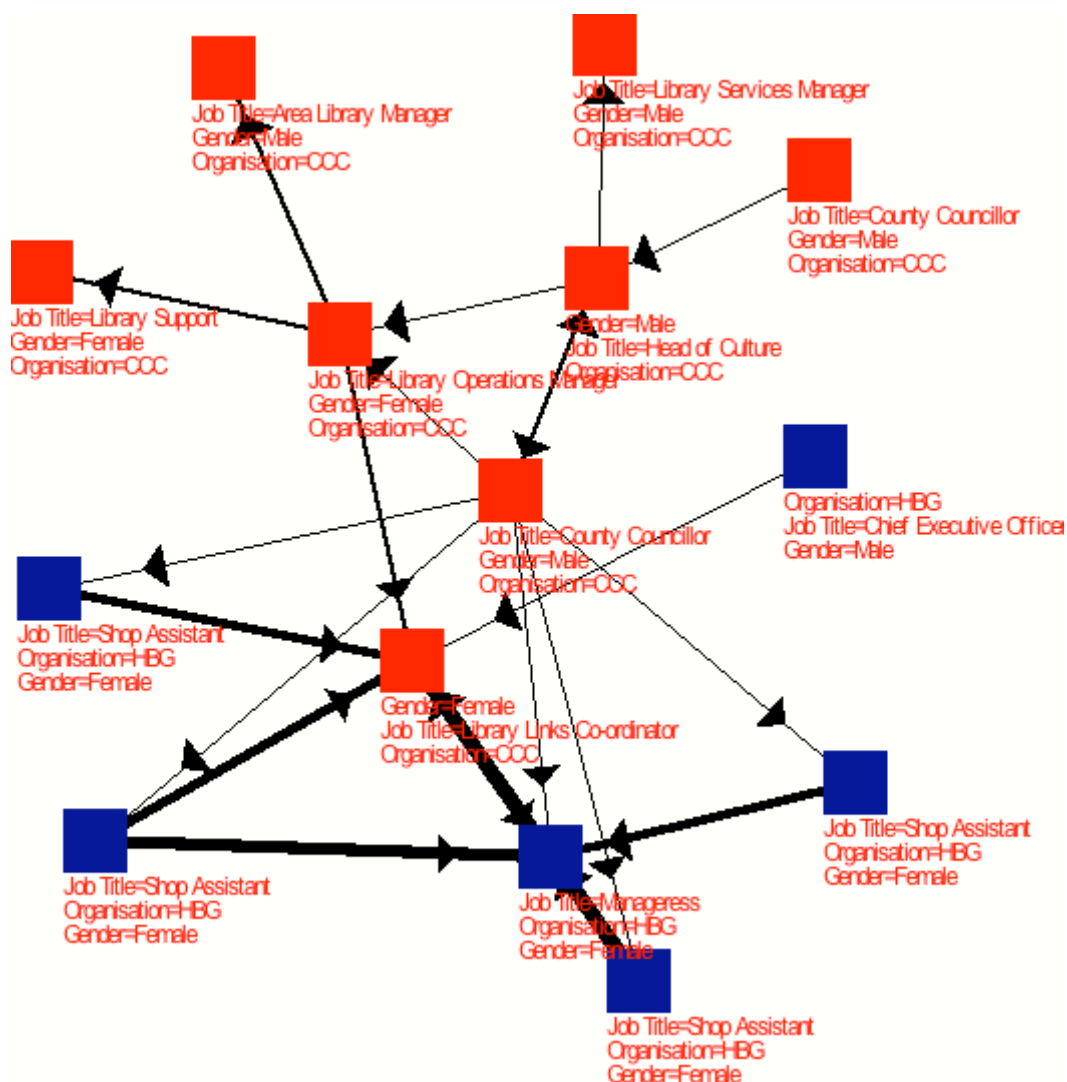


Figure 8 provides a different pattern of interaction when considering who communicates with whom and how frequently to establish customer needs, requests and feedback. As expected the Library Link Co-ordinator is central to this and communicates regularly with the shop manager who is well networked with her staff including the two shop assistants that have proved unconnected in previous networks. The link between the Library Link Co-ordinator and the Library operations Manager is singular. However one particular shop assistant appears to communicate directly with the Library Link Co-ordinator but not with the shop manager. The Chief Executive seeks advice from the Library Link Co-ordinator, and the Library Operations Manager.

One particular councillor, who in previous networks has relied on the Head of Culture and the Library Operations Manager for information and advice, becomes a significant player in this network. He is seeking advice and information directly from all shop staff with the exception of the Chief Executive, which he then passes on directly to the Library Operations Manager and the Head of Culture. In addition another councillor is also feeding in seeking advice from the Head of Culture. The Head of Culture is a key figure in connecting with numerous Council staff. The potential ties are 182, and actual ties 22, with a density of 12%.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There is tangible value in the existence of the Library Link to the Hallbankgate community and the parishioners of Farlam are explained in detail in the previous sections.

This evidence suggests that the model is viable economically and to a lesser extent socially and culturally. It is early days for the project, however it is penetrating the community, establishing networks and attracting a significant number, around 10% (in 6 months) of parishioners cost effectively whilst supporting the shop. In cultural existence value terms, a strictly limited cultural service (the mobile library) has been added to and expanded to benefit the Hallbankgate community at no direct cost to them. The cost per head to deliver this service cannot be directly compared with other County Services; nevertheless it is by any standards cost effective with £9.49 per head per annum including the capital cost spread over three years.

Not enough use is being made by the County of this cultural facility to advertise services to small rural communities at little expense by improving the County website available through the Library Link; specifically interlinking cultural services to support the local cultural activity including resident artists and craftspeople (a hub). In addition the connection between the Library Link and the school, where library services are available as well as the periodic information provided for school children on the central Library website could be coordinated and related to provide a cohesive comprehensible framework which is user friendly. Finally a connection between the education service and the Library Link could be exploited in terms of advertising local computer training or providing the training virtually using the local school.

Connecting the Library Link service to the virtual book ordering service currently available to any library card holder through their home PC and advertising this across the County would strengthen the existence value of the Library Link to the local community. Network communication should be recognised and built on to support the local community.

Access is important and when the Library Link model is compared with comparable provision such as the small static and mobile Library services (see sections 6 and 8) it is startlingly obvious that the Library Link provides excellent access for the community it serves.

Stakeholder networks are important in strengthening the value of the service to the community. Here it is essential to understand who the stakeholders are in the community and build strong connections with them, so this may be the local school staff, or the parish councillors or the local hotel owner, in order to ensure that they know about the service and their needs are met over time thus deepening the existence value.

Networks are equally important in understanding the Library Link operation and identifying key personnel who are instrumental in delivering a successful service. In this case it is obvious that the service relies on one key member of staff which makes the operation particularly vulnerable. The densities of network connections are low which points to the need to improve reciprocity between staff in the shop the Council and within the Council itself. The relation with community stakeholders is weak and substantially more work is required to improve the penetration. The existence value in these terms has yet to be achieved.

Users of the service are across all age ranges with fewer younger people, dominated by females, however, there are high levels of employed people and 78% of users surveyed computer literate from 1 – 10 years. It is also the case that the users take advantage of the shop and Library Link when they are there; however do not actively use the library link unless they are using the shop. Thus it can be gathered that the concept of Library Link functions successfully as part of the village amenity. Individuals are in addition seeking membership of the Library Service through the Link.

The importance existence value evaluation is that it provides a “cellar” analysis of stakeholders and networks from a social, economic and cultural perspective which can then be extrapolated to inform county policy.

It is then, even at this early stage in development, a model worth expanding to other rural communities in the County assuming the right commercial host can be found and there is an economic, social and cultural value in providing the service. In this respect the Penrith Cooperative Society with its ethical and social responsibilities is an excellent host and has confirmed that it is willing to discuss further projects with the County Council.

31 May 2006, Professor Simon Roodhouse and Isla Johnstone