



## Church Stretton Library proving its worth!

We have analysed Shropshire Library Services data for the year 2025/26 to show how Church Stretton Library compares to other libraries in Shropshire. Church Stretton Library is ranked sixth out of 21 libraries for the number of people visiting the library, number of active users, number of loans and number of hours of computer time used. They come behind Shrewsbury, Oswestry, Ludlow, Bridgnorth and Market Drayton, all of which have much larger populations.

**Table 1**

| Order by Visits        |               | Order by Active Users  |              | Order by Loans         |               | Order by Computer Time |                    |
|------------------------|---------------|------------------------|--------------|------------------------|---------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| Library                | Visits        | Library                | Active users | Library                | Loans         | Library                | Computer Time used |
| Shrewsbury             | 134,222       | Shrewsbury             | 9,439        | Shrewsbury             | 109,385       | Shrewsbury             | 552,574            |
| Oswestry               | 90,244        | Oswestry               | 4,201        | Oswestry               | 67,540        | Oswestry               | 249,232            |
| Ludlow                 | 74,072        | Ludlow                 | 3,010        | Ludlow                 | 53,495        | Ludlow                 | 158,062            |
| Bridgnorth             | 51,099        | Market Drayton         | 2,361        | Market Drayton         | 36,898        | Bridgnorth             | 100,786            |
| Market Drayton         | 47,193        | Bridgnorth             | 2,276        | Bridgnorth             | 32,248        | Market Drayton         | 84,536             |
| <b>Church Stretton</b> | <b>36,885</b> | <b>Church Stretton</b> | <b>1,321</b> | <b>Church Stretton</b> | <b>29,835</b> | <b>Church Stretton</b> | <b>76,037</b>      |
| Wem                    | 28,369        | Whitchurch             | 1,107        | The Lantern            | 24,000        | Albrighton             | 33,411             |
| Broseley               | 20,407        | Wem                    | 1,068        | Bayston Hill           | 23,985        | Wem                    | 33,031             |
| Bishops Castle         | 16,841        | Bayston Hill           | 865          | Wem                    | 19,299        | The Lantern            | 30,680             |
| The Lantern            | 16,254        | The Lantern            | 801          | Whitchurch             | 17,613        | Bishops Castle         | 25,087             |
| Albrighton             | 13,963        | Albrighton             | 760          | Bishops Castle         | 15,831        | Bayston Hill           | 24,798             |
| Bayston Hill           | 13,514        | Bishops Castle         | 715          | Ellesmere              | 13,572        | Shifnal                | 23,054             |
| Whitchurch             | 12,586        | Ellesmere              | 698          | Pontesbury             | 12,897        | Ellesmere              | 16,760             |
| Highley                | 11,847        | Shifnal                | 695          | Shifnal                | 12,565        | Broseley               | 13,589             |
| Pontesbury             | 11,612        | Pontesbury             | 621          | Albrighton             | 10,990        | Gobowen                | 13,037             |
| Cleobury Mortimer      | 10,400        | Broseley               | 602          | Broseley               | 9,481         | Much Wenlock           | 9,536              |
| Shifnal                | 9,041         | Much Wenlock           | 578          | Much Wenlock           | 8,810         | Pontesbury             | 4,663              |
| Ellesmere              | 7,683         | Cleobury Mortimer      | 391          | Craven Arms            | 6,906         | Highley                | 1,327              |
| Much Wenlock           | 6,732         | Craven Arms            | 343          | Gobowen                | 6,062         | Whitchurch             |                    |
| Gobowen                | 4,134         | Gobowen                | 262          | Cleobury Mortimer      | 3,871         | Craven Arms            |                    |
| Craven Arms            | 3,624         | Highley                | 169          | Highley                | 2,135         | Cleobury Mortimer      |                    |

## Enquiries/Events/Volunteers

Church Stretton also ranks sixth for the number of enquiries handled by library staff and the number of people attending activities/event, again coming behind Shrewsbury, Oswestry, Ludlow, Bridgnorth and Market Drayton, all of which have much larger populations.

However, Church Stretton Library has the greatest number of volunteers of any library in Shropshire!!!.

**Table 2**

| Order by Enquiries     |               | Order by Event Attendees |                  | Order by Volunteers    |            |
|------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|------------------|------------------------|------------|
| Library                | Enquiries     | Library                  | Events attendees | Library                | Volunteers |
| Shrewsbury             | 50,484        | Oswestry                 | 16,364           | <b>Church Stretton</b> | <b>251</b> |
| Ludlow                 | 28,704        | Market Drayton           | 12,377           | Market Drayton         | 230        |
| Oswestry               | 22,824        | Ludlow                   | 11,075           | Bridgnorth             | 222        |
| Market Drayton         | 19,236        | Shrewsbury               | 10,591           | Shrewsbury             | 124        |
| Bridgnorth             | 15,648        | Bridgnorth               | 10,058           | Oswestry               | 123        |
| <b>Church Stretton</b> | <b>11,880</b> | <b>Church Stretton</b>   | <b>4,334</b>     | Gobowen                | 118        |
| Bishops Castle         | 8,679         | Albrighton               | 2,587            | Broseley               | 36         |
| Albrighton             | 6,756         | Wem                      | 2,473            | Ludlow                 | 28         |
| Wem                    | 6,708         | The Lantern              | 2,015            | Ellesmere              | 20         |
| Ellesmere              | 6,504         | Ellesmere                | 1,864            | Wem                    | 18         |
| Whitchurch             | 6,300         | Broseley                 | 1,810            | Pontesbury             | 18         |
| Gobowen                | 6,000         | Pontesbury               | 1,404            | Bishops Castle         | 11         |
| Broseley               | 4,572         | Whitchurch               | 1,153            | Much Wenlock           | 6          |
| Much Wenlock           | 3,324         | Gobowen                  | 1,004            | The Lantern            | 5          |
| Pontesbury             | 3,276         | Much Wenlock             | 954              | Whitchurch             | 4          |
| The Lantern            | 3,012         | Shifnal                  | 832              | Bayston Hill           | 2          |
| Shifnal                | 2,431         | Cleobury Mortimer        | 709              | Shifnal                | 1          |
| Bayston Hill           | 1,812         | Bayston Hill             | 595              | Cleobury Mortimer      | 1          |
| Cleobury Mortimer      | 1,140         | Bishops Castle           | 44               | Highley                | 1          |
| Craven Arms            | 996           | Craven Arms              | 33               | Albrighton             | 0          |
| Highley                | 0             | Highley                  | 25               | Craven Arms            | 0          |

**Volunteers:** Volunteers help in a number of ways at Church Stretton Library, including

- Visitor Information Centre - opening Mondays and Wednesdays, when the library is closed
- Housebound service - taking and collecting library books for people who are housebound
- Local history advice service
- Running groups which meet in the library e.g. Knit & Natter, reading, creative writing, local history etc.
- Library tasks - general tidying, returning books to shelves, creating artwork for posters/display, helping put up displays
- Helping run the various activities and events that take place in the library

**Enquiries:** The library is a place for community connection. A trusted space where everyone is welcome. There's no expectation to spend money and everyone has access to information, education, and a friendly face!

As a trusted, neutral, safe space Church Stretton library handles all sorts of enquiries such as

- Information about the local area for visitors (local walks, lists of eateries, etc)
- How do I get in touch with e.g. Citizens Advice, the police, the registrars? Particularly important for those without internet access
- How do I renew my bus pass, blue badge, garden waste subscription, etc?
- What groups are there in the area for artists, writers, musicians, etc?
- IT help, e.g. How do I print this document? Could this be a scam? Can you help me fill this form in? How do I use the eBooks service?
- Local and family history information

And much more!

**Activities /events:** Almost all libraries offer educational activities for children and young people such as Rhyme Time and Story Time for the very young, Summer Reading Challenge, arts and craft workshops and Lego clubs. They can also host advice sessions, e.g. Citizens Advice, Shropshire Local (helps residents access Shropshire Council Services such as bus passes), advice on claiming benefits. Many libraries run memory cafes and sessions providing advice from dementia nurses. Church Stretton Library offers almost all of these and provides a Warm Hub in the cold weather.



*Children's Craft event*

Finally, we compared the percentage of local residents who borrow books in their local library, calculated using Shropshire Library numbers of active users for each library divided by census population figures.

This places Church Stretton as equal second with Ludlow, suggesting approximately 29% of the local population are active users of the library.

**A huge thank you is owed to the library staff** - whose welcoming approach, creativity, motivation and hard work makes the library so successful.

| Library              | % Population active users |
|----------------------|---------------------------|
| Bishops Castle       | 39                        |
| Ludlow               | 29                        |
| Church Stretton      | 29                        |
| Pontesbury           | 25                        |
| Oswestry             | 22                        |
| Much Wenlock         | 20                        |
| Bridgnorth           | 19                        |
| Market Drayton       | 17                        |
| Albrighton           | 17                        |
| Bayston Hill         | 17                        |
| Wem                  | 16                        |
| Ellesmere            | 16                        |
| Craven Arms          | 13                        |
| Shrewsbury + Lantern | 13                        |
| Cleobury Mortimer    | 12                        |
| Broseley             | 12                        |
| Whitchurch           | 11                        |
| Shifnal              | 7                         |
| Gobowen              | 7                         |
| Highley              | 5                         |