



PRESS RELEASE

Kenilworth & Southam Liberal Democrats

Issued by: John Whitehouse

Date of Issue: 8th September 2009

Contacts:

Cllr. John Whitehouse 01926 512130 07866 568333 cllrwhitehouse@warwickshire.gov.uk

EMBARGO: Immediate

Library Computer Usage Down by Nearly 40%

The Conservatives running the County Council have admitted that public use of the computers at Warwickshire Libraries is down by nearly 40% since charges were introduced on 1st July for the first time.

The shock revelation came in answer to a question raised by Councillor John Whitehouse (Liberal Democrat, Kenilworth Abbey) at today's meeting of Warwickshire County Council.

It also emerged that the new charging policy has only raised a revenue to the Council of £8,353 in its first two months of operation.

Speaking after the meeting, Cllr Whitehouse said:

"The press reports over recent weeks of library computers standing idle have been validated by today's figures.

The Conservatives' new policy of charging for computer use at libraries was pushed through the County budget in the face of Liberal Democrat opposition. We said it was an unfair imposition of charges on some of our citizens least able to afford it, and not the area where big savings should be looked for.

Already it seems that the revenue raised is going to fall far short of the £200,000 a year savings target which the Tories built into their budget."

ENDS

Notes to the Editor:

1. The figures reported to the Council today cover the months of July and August, the first two months of the new charging regime. Figures for the same two months last year are shown in brackets, followed by the year-on-year reduction percentages:

• Total user hours	25,000	(41,000)	- 39.0%
• Total number of users	65,487	(69,198)	- 5.4%

2. The introduction of charges for using library computers, for the first time in Warwickshire, was a contentious item in the County budget for 2009/10 pushed through by the Conservative administration on 5th February 2009 with Labour support. The Liberal Democrat group voted against the proposal.