

First Meeting of the Save Deddington Library Working Group on Tuesday 22 February at 7:30pm at the Town Hall, Deddington

Present: Alan Collins (Chair), Helen Oldfield, Heather Ward, Bryn Williams, Don Anderson, Jill Cheeseman, Susan Fuller (minutes), James Privett, Mary Robinson, Kristin Thompson and Geoff Todd (FODL)

Apologies Cath Rose

Strategy

DA informed the meeting of a test case in the Wirral in which the legality of closing libraries was brought into question. However, the closure of the libraries was overruled before a final decision could be made with regard to its legality.

It was suggested that OCC has a statutory right to provide a “comprehensive and efficient library service” under the 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act. DA recommended that the group contact (as individuals) a number of people (from the attached contact list) asking if they are discharging their obligation under the 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act by withdrawing funding to deliver a comprehensive and efficient service.

GT informed the group of the background of the 1998 proposed closures. It was seen as a money saving exercise but had not gone to lengths that the current closures have. It was the first time that OCC had been addressed directly.

Actions:

- DA to find out how many and which libraries were under threat in OCC during the 1998 closure proposals.
- GT to collate a breakdown of members of Deddington library by village and age group.
- AC to chase County Cllr Jelf on the weighting given to the closure criteria.

Successful campaigns?

Until the process for the formal consultation is unveiled the group are unable to advise interested parties on its requirements. However, it was felt that a staged process would help start action and keep all keen to get involved with saving the library up-to-date with the process.

AC suggested that a successful approach that he had been involved with was to “campaign and engage”. He suggested that those wishing to make their feeling known send, to appropriate contact official parties (see contact list attached), Save Deddington Library postcards posing their question on the back. He showed the group some he had made up which the group agreed to use.

Actions:

- AC to give the Clerk a release sheet for using the children’s images.
- The postcards will be made downloadable for use via Deddington on line.
- HW to request approval for a photo of the children on way to library on Monday.
- BW to take shot once approved.

Key Facts relating to Deddington Library

The group worked together to complete the salient issues relating to Deddington Library that need to be put back to council. It was suggested that residents might like to pick a few of the issues/facts to query the council on their decision.

The document released by the council to explain why Deddington Library had been proposed to close used statistics used to best highlight their point rather than give an accurate, full

picture. Such as the library is only responsible for 0.6% of issues, what is not mentioned is that the parish only accounts for 0.35% of OCC's population. So, in fact, the issues are proportionally higher than the population it covers.

GT said that all recommendation should look into ecological and social deprivation factors.

DA also mentioned that there are Public Library Service Standards, which are responsible for a variety of assessments. One assessment is the proportion of households within a two-mile radius of a static library which should be 85% and 72% in sparse locations.

It was called into question the methodology the council had used for counting: issues, borrowers and visits to a library.

Cherwell District has a population of 133,000 people. Kidlington has 17,000, Bicester 30,000 and Banbury 45,000 the remaining 41,000 live in villages.

BW said that if planning permission, for the development behind Gaveston Gardens, was granted then the village may increase by 10% and put further emphasis on the need for a library and for a development plan for the school. The school already has to turn away local children, as it does not have the space.

Actions:

- AC to amend the document with the figures HW has found from County Cllr Judith Heathcoat's own documentation and send onto the working group (http://portal.oxfordshire.gov.uk/content/public/corporate/About_us/closer_to_communitie/s/banbury/Banbury.pdf).
- HW to investigate deprivation in Deddington.
- Clerk to be contact regarding the documentation relating to the Health Centre remaining a dispensary due to its rural location and the proximity of the nearest alternatives (Sainsburys and Bloxham).

Consultation process comprehension

It was unclear how the process would run but felt that mentoring people would probably be a good idea. AC suggested each person taking responsibility for 50 people in the parish when the consultation period begins (possibly early March).

HW informed the group that from 28 March 2011 the primary school will be utilising the library more under the request of the new Head. On Mondays the F1's would continue to go. On every Wednesday there will be one of three year groups going in a tri-weekly rotation with the same happening again on Thursdays. Thus ensuring that every year group will go to the library at least once every three weeks. There will be three class visits per week.

HW also informed the group that it was her understanding that the census for the library is taken over the October half term during which time many people would have been away and therefore not an atypical week in terms of usage.

DA stated that statistics can be used for stating any point. Given the data on the document from OCC it could be surmised that as 695 households use the library and almost 1000 households live within 5 minutes drive of the library that there is a usage of 69.5%. It was also questioned if every child took their own library card when taking out books in school time or is the school counted as one lender?

BW showed the group a flyer made up by his children (Don't R.I.P. the heart out of our community). It was very good and decided to be made the cover of the Flyer for inclusion in the Deddington News.

HW has spoken with a former librarian who voiced her concerns regarding the proposal to cut manpower to one member of staff on the mobile libraries. She raised concern regarding safety as most likely to be single women travelling in isolated areas, with money. There was also concern regarding disabled access and not being able to help other users when operating the lift to and from the vehicle. The mobile libraries run to a strict and full timetable and so are not able to extend the times at stops.

There was a brief discussion regarding whether to support save all Oxfordshire Libraries and a save Deddington. DA said that there was an online petition to noted your support of saving all libraries <http://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/mgEPetitionDisplay.aspx?ID=11> and if they receive 15,000 signatories the matter would be debated in full council.

Actions:

- HW to confirm whether the census did take place in October 2009/10 half term.
- HW to investigate if the school is registered as one borrower.
- HW to write bullet points and contact details and liaise with MR regarding the content of the flyer
- MR & JC Flyers for delivery with the Deddington News.
- MR to arrange flyer printing and pass extra copies to HW for sending home in the local schools bags.
- BW to source board for displaying documentation at the Farmers Market.
- Stall at Deddington Market manned by Cllrs Collins and Oldfield. With details on timeline, postcards, key facts/key questions.
- MR to see if the flyers can be available in time for the market.
- GT and KT to liaise to draw up list of surrounding villages that use the village library (including Northamptonshire villages such as Aynho) and the local magazine contact details.
- GT and SF to liaise to consolidate contact details of interested parties via FODL and the Parish Office.
- HO to liaise with DCE to see if they would cover the hire costs of Town Hall.
- GT to liaise with Nick Fennell regarding the SaveOxLib.

Next Meeting.

Next meeting provisionally set for Tuesday 8 March 2011 provided details of the consultation process have been given.