

Notes of Emersons Green Library User Group, 14 June 2016

Present: Ruth Cooper, Maureen Lindsay, Ralph Morris, Phil Todd (Town Council), John Abraham (Operations manager), Jeanette Ayres, Ron Ayres, Jane Connelly, Ann Smith, Gill Clayton (Librarian)

Welcome Gill welcomed the new members of the group.

Update from last meeting

- Library Service Review. The first phase of consultation on the Library Service review closed on May 13th. There were over 3,000 responses and this data is still being inputted ready for a report that is due to be presented to the Environment and Community Services Committee at 2pm on Wednesday 7th September. Proposed venue: The Armstrong Hall and members of the public are welcome. The report should be published at the end of August and will be circulated to User Group members. After the Committee meeting in September there will be another 3 month public consultation and a final decision will be made in January with plans in place by April 2017, and implementation on 1st October 2017. Martin Burton, Community Cultural Services Manager, is exploring expressions of interest from bodies who have ideas for future provision of library services. Phil was asked whether the Town Council were likely to raise the precept to enable them to financially support the library. He replied that they would await information from the next phase of consultation ie end of 2016.
- Gill recounted some of the things the library has done recently – a big book weekend, teenage volunteers working with small children, Science Week project working with Mangotsfield Secondary, IT support with Badminton Gardens, helping people use internet for new things, Mangotsfield Festival.
- The new software for managing the libraries as now been introduced, following training for every single member of staff. This has been a huge project and glitches and adjustments will continue to be dealt with over the next few months.

National library news

In 2014 the Government published William Sieghart's "Independent Library Report for England" which called for clear local decision making and a national strategy to secure the future of public libraries in England. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/388989/Independent_Library_Report-18_December.pdf). To this end, a consultation has just finished to map out this strategy "Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016-2021". This sets out a vision of the value and impact of libraries with a national network that delivers transformation and progress for people, communities and the nation. Each library having seven main purposes: culture and creativity, reading and literacy, digital literacy, economic growth, community role, learning, health and wellbeing. South Gloucestershire Libraries will reflect this in the work we do and it will inform our local planning and how we relay information about our work to both local and national government <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/libraries-deliver-ambition-for-public-libraries-in-england-2016-2021>). The final strategy document is due in the summer. At the same time "Universal Offers" have been drawn up by the Society of Chief Librarians (SCL) and partners. The five key areas of service they have identified as essential to a 21st century library service are: Reading Offer, Information offer, Digital offer, Health offer and Learning offer. (See <http://goscl.com/universal-offers/>) These define a common core standard of delivery that can be expected across all library authorities and again will be reflected in the work we do locally.

Future planning

What would the Group like to see in this year's plan? Members wanted to continue the Summer engagement with children, use the plasma screen to better effect and suggested working closer with Downend Voice and facebook to promote the library. It was commented that it is powerful to reach parents through their children.

Annual report

A report is currently being written for each library that refers to the seven main purposes noted above and a copy of this report will be available for the Library Users' Group at the same time it is sent to local councillors and other interested parties.

Forthcoming

Summer holidays are the libraries' busiest period so preparations in well in hand for this. Every primary school child is spoken to by library staff at school assemblies to generate enthusiasm for continued reading and love of books. The library is once again participating with several events in the Autumn Discover Festival. Watch out for a Technology Week, plus Community Quiz, thriller writer appearance etc etc.

Date of next User Group meeting: Tues 18 October 7pm