

**NOTES FROM PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON SHERBURN-IN-ELMET
LIBRARY PROPOSALS. HELD IN THE EVERSLEY PARK CENTRE ON THURSDAY
JANUARY 15TH 2015 @ 7.30pm**

Present; County Councillor Bob Packham (acting Chairman), Parish Councillors S. Haskell (Chairman), M. Hobson, Mrs J. Prescott, Mrs J. Brown, Mrs B Thwaite, Mrs M. Hunt and Mrs M. Gibson (Clerk to the Parish Council)

Julie Bleasdale. Asst. Director of Library Services. Neil Irving, Policy & Partnership Officer for NYCC. Tom Jenkinson, Stronger Communities Director based at Selby District Council.

Also present 60 members of the public.

Councillor Packham opened the meeting by thanking all for their attendance on such a nasty Evening. Councillor Packham explained that this meeting was to find out what the villagers wanted from the library and how much they were willing to help make this possible. He introduced Neil Irving to give some background to the proposals.

Mr Irving reported that National Govt was cutting back funds to all Councils and this had been cut by 34% in the last 5 years and more cuts were in the pipeline . £94m been saved so far by County Council and a further £74m of savings are still to come. County have cut back on office staff, wage freezes for staff for the last 4 years and also back office savings have been made. County cannot carry on providing services and cuts will have to be made. The County want to work with Communities to save some services with the help of Parish Councils, and volunteers from the Community. Library services are one of the services they are looking to do this with. They envisage a partnership, co-production rather the County Council providing all the services. They would give some support, buildings and some finance maybe available from the Stronger Communities funding.

Mr. Jenkinson state that his role with the Stronger Communities Group is to act as Mediator between the Communities and work with Parish Council/District Council/County Council etc to help retain services and perhaps even better provision of services. Youth Provision is one area which they are working on and exploring what can be done to retain youth services. Volunteer Bus Services which help the elderly. Also Library services which can help keep older people getting out into the community and staying involved. This consultation is asking Communities what they want and support them and link them with services which can help.

Julie Bleasdale then made her presentation. The Consultation runs until the 8th February and urged all present to fill out this consultation with what they want to see from this proposal. Julie stressed that at present these are just "proposals" of the way forward, other ideas may come forward from this Consultation. Library services in 2010 budget was £7.8m now it is £5.8m and in 2019/20 it will be £4.2m. They have cut all mobile libraries and now the main services need to be looked at. County Council have a Statutory obligation to provide Library services so they will still be providing help to all libraries and also books/internet etc will be still provided. The proposals are for 3 types of Library :

Core- which will be one in every District of North Yorkshire fully staffed as at present.

Hybrid - there will be 5 across the County which will still have 1 full time staff member and the rest will be volunteers.

Community Managed which will be run entirely by volunteers. Sherburn-in-Elmet will fall into this category. There will be 21 of these libraries.

The decision on which group the library falls into was made on the Population of the area, business usage and distance from other libraries.

It is envisaged that Sherburn-in-Elmet will have a Community Group responsible for the building/developing range of events/activities delivered from the premises etc. North Yorkshire will NOT just hand over the key and leave the Community to get on with it. This will be still backed by NYCC. There will be Services level agreement with the Community stating what County will provide and what the volunteers will be expected to do to make stronger services. County will still help to make sure this service is sustainable with strings attached. Community Group will have to provide access for all users as at present, also dealing with Bus Pass requests as well as books/resources/ etc. Training will be given by Paid Staff from the main Library which will be situated at Selby and also support for the Volunteers but they will not be doing day to day services. Full discussions will take place with Partners/Parish Councils/District Councils and also County Councils when the final decision has been made. The consultation runs until 8th February, then analyses of responses will take place, full results will go to County Council in June/July for final decisions to be made. Work will then start with groups. It is envisaged this will come into force in February 2017. Julie encouraged everyone who had anything to say to fill in the Consultation and if they want help or paper copies please get in touch.

Councillor Packham then asked for questions from the floor:

1. Why was there no MP present if this is a National Govt policy?

Councillor Packham answered that MP knew of the meeting but was not specifically invited.

2. What was the point of turning out on a bad evening like this when NYCC will not take any notice and do just as they like?

Julie Bleasdale answered that people did make a difference when the last cuts were proposed.

3. Do the County/District Council realise how much is done by volunteers already in this village for older people-Visiting Scheme etc. people only have so much free time and volunteers can only do so much. Have any Council employees lost their jobs in these cut backs?

Councillor Packham reports that yes there have been staff cuts and wage freezes as already mentioned. He appreciates that the Visitor Scheme do an excellent job and the County Council are continuing support for the scheme into the future. Councillor Packham stressed that the Community Library doesn't mean anything yet, this has not been decided and negotiations are ongoing. Although it was thought that this would be the best option ultimately for Sherburn-in-Elmet.

4. Lady moved from Harrogate recently which had an excellent Volunteer library in an old vicarage which was a lovely building and then it was moved to another building a long way off and people could not get to it.

Julie Bleasdale stated that this was moved to an entirely purpose built building which is being well used.

5. Resident felt that the staff at this library did an excellent job and have made it a lively hub for the community. It was voted best Library in NYCC and we are the biggest village in the County so why are they trying to close this? She has no quarrel with volunteers in libraries but who will be responsible for the Finance and spending, maintenance of the building/insurance/upkeep of IT equipment etc?

Neil Irving stated that paid Professional Staff based at Selby would cover Sherburn/Tadcaster and Barlby providing help. NYCC would still provide books. Van to deliver the books, Management of IT and the internet services will still be paid for by NYCC. The building belongs to NYCC so it is envisaged that this will be rent free, heating, lighting rates etc may be funded by the Stronger Communities fund via grants etc. Rents and any

monies earned will belong to the Community Group. This could be raised through events and longer usage hours.

6. This presentation is different to the one at the Library last week. Generating more money from events like a Evening Cinemas, Open Mike evenings when local groups could use the building, even a Coffee shop. Book racks need to be movable to accommodate other events which could be hired out at a Commercial rate to make money to keep the library open longer hours providing a better community service. Who will be responsible for organising Volunteers it has been reported that 60 volunteers would be needed to run this, this would be a mammoth job just organising these volunteers? We do need as much as possible in this village as transport is now non-existent.

Councillor Packham replied that it is envisaged that this be a "hub" for the village, more groups renting space in the Library, the Police are interested in moving to the garage area and it is envisaged that the Parish Council would move up there so that all services are in this "hub" area. A Management Committee will be set up to run this "hub" who will be in charge of running the area and all the money. Councillor Haskell states that this would be like the Eversley Park Centre which is owned by the Parish Council but is run independently by a Management Committee who do an excellent job of making it pay. They pay all expenses on the building and also manage to make a profit. The Library came top of list of what the Community wanted to protect and this is what the Parish Council are trying to put in place.

7. Will this building belong to the Parish Council or will it belong to the Community Group? How can volunteers be liable for costs of repairs on this building?

Councillor Packham reports that this would probably be made a Charitable Trust so that would be responsible for getting funds, liability would have to be looked at. All the legal issues would have to be carefully looked at.

8. If not enough Volunteers come forward will this drop through?

Julie Bleasdale is confident that they can get volunteers, they are not complacent about this and need to get creative about getting volunteers. They intend to go to Schools and try and get young people involved. A lot of people use volunteering to get back into full time employment. At present the Library has 20 volunteers. Councillor Packham reports we have a lot of time to sort this out.

9. We are losing lots of services will people still be able to get Bus Passes and other Selby District Council services at the library?

Councillor Packham states that the hub will mean that Selby may make even more use of the area and if not people will be trained to deal with these issues. The Parish Council wants all the present services to still be available at this building.

10. How much does it cost to run this building at the present time?

Julie Bleasdale reports that 2013/14 figure for the building was £32,963 including the rates.

11. As we want to get youths involved has any provision for engaging the youths been made?

Julie Bleasdale reports they are covering Youth Councils to try and get youths engaged in this scheme.

12. Will the forthcoming election change any of these cuts?

Neil Irving reports that a change of Govt would not change anything if you listen to all the parties we need to face these issues.

Councillor Packham thanked public for all their questions. It is clear we are going to lose grants from Govt for services Library/Youth services/Bus services/Elderly provisions.

We already have groups in this village trying to alleviate these problems all of which are popular with the Social Services. The Parish Council think that the way forward is for the Parish Council to take the lead with the Voluntary services. The aim is to try and get a "Library Hub" set up as a main centre for services in this village which will be funded by rents from users. Councillor Haskell states that the Parish Council are totally committed to keeping the library open and expanding the services, whoever is in power these cuts are going to come along. The Parish Council talk to people in the village and Parish Councillors are actively involved in Sherburn people and services. We know that Grass cutting is going this year and also cuts on Youth services the Parish Council is committed to keeping what we have and maybe improving it also. At present the library has underused large spaces upstairs which could be used by start up business's . This needs to be kept going long term but this will not happen without volunteers.

Grass cutting is being cut this year and this Parish Council are working with other local Parishes Church Fenton, South Milford, Barkston Ash and local schools to get a bulk price which would benefit all concerned. All these councils and also some of the smaller local Parishes want the Library to stay.

13. Why cut the grass plant wildflowers so grass will look good and not need cutting?

Councillor Packham states this could well be worth looking into.

14. Will the library take away usage from other building in the village?

Councillor Packham reports that it is not envisaged it will take much from other areas.

15. Will the road be repaired as this is deathtrap and needs work doing?

Councillor Packham reports there is a problem with ownership as it appears to belong to 5 different owners and some areas no one know who owns them. This would have to be repaired before the Charity took this over.

16. What libraries will still be fully staffed in the County?

Julie Bleasdale reports that none will be fully staffed all staff will be reduced by 40%.

Councillor Packham asked everyone who was present to fill in the clipboard and also any suggestions they have. Resident stated he had suggested a vegetable growing scheme for certain grass areas in the village but had a negative response from the Parish Council. Councillor Packham suggested he tried again.

Councillor Packham thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 9.30pm