

Report of the Strategic Director of Place to the meeting of Bradford South Area Committee to be held on 15th February 2018.

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Subject:

Libraries in Bradford South - update

Summary statement:

Wibsey and Wyke Libraries remain under direct Council management.

Great Horton, Holme Wood and Queensbury Library remain part of the public libraries network and are community managed

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Overview & Scrutiny Area:
Regeneration and Economy

1. SUMMARY

This report gives an update on progress from April 2017 onwards of the five libraries in Bradford South – Great Horton, Holme Wood, Queensbury, Wibsey and Wyke.

2. BACKGROUND

The Council in their budget decisions for 2016/2017 and 2017/2018 agreed to withdraw from directly managing Great Horton, Holme Wood and Queensbury Libraries and to continue to Council manage Wibsey and Wyke.

Uptake for the community managed libraries in Bradford South was initially varied compared to other potential community managed libraries in the district. With support from Ward Councillors and considerable assistance from colleagues in Neighbourhoods we were able to engage and work with accountable bodies for the three libraries, enabling us to move forward.

A signed service level agreement (SLA) is in place for each of the three community managed libraries. The SLA between the accountable body and Bradford Libraries sets out the responsibilities of each party. Broadly this includes the continued payment of associated running costs, including rates, by Bradford Council. There is also continued indirect staff support, stock purchase and inclusion in national library initiatives.

The three community managed libraries received support for the appointment of volunteers, initial training sessions delivered by library staff, and staff cover to initially support the opening and establishment of the library was offered.

3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Impact of the budget proposal 2016 -18

During a time of major change and impact on communities, customers and staff it should be noted that since February 2016 when the budget proposals were agreed, 12 diverse communities across the district took up the offer of managing their libraries rather than see them close. This is in addition to the established six community managed libraries(CMLs).

Core events

Bradford Libraries have a calendar of core events (Appendix 1) which all libraries, including CMLs are expected to support throughout the year. These events link in to the National Library Offers of reading, learning, digital, information, health, culture and the overarching children's promise. However it is recognised that the community managed libraries need time to 'bed' in before a full and active core events programme can be delivered. Each must also consider other local community priorities to be delivered from the sites, so a degree of flexibility is necessary.

Volunteers

One of the key messages in the Council plan 2016 – 2020 is “to support individuals and groups who want to make a positive difference through our ‘People Can make a difference’ campaign in volunteering, being neighbourly, fundraising and taking community action.” This is visibly demonstrated with the three cohorts of volunteers at Great Horton, Holme Wood and Queensbury, the majority from non-library backgrounds. That people give their free time not only to continue to provide a library facility but also to develop other initiatives that benefit the local community is a great credit to them.

Wyke Library

Wyke Library continues to operate from the Appleton Academy site, where the relationship with the Academy continues to be cordial. It remains open for 45 hours a week.

The library holds Learnmyway sessions for people who have little or no computer skills on Monday afternoons and evenings, Rhymetimes on Tuesday afternoons, storytimes on Friday mornings, a Knit and Knatter session on Friday mornings, a monthly book group, and class and nursery visits on request. There is also a jigsaw swap and an ongoing library jigsaw for anyone to do.

There is a Police contact point on Tuesday and Saturday mornings. Recently a ‘Harry Potter’ night took place with activities for children.

In conjunction with Appleton Academy, a reading group for boys who are reluctant readers started on 9th February and will take place monthly.

Future initiatives include a self managed coffee morning for parents of autistic children, a collection of sensory toys and a chess club.

Key statistics from April 2017 to date:

Book issues	19,873
Visitors	31,833
PC use (sessions)	2,939
New members (adult)	93
New members (children)	136

Wibsey Library

Wibsey Library has undergone a refurbishment which includes a new roof, new carpet and internal decoration. This includes provision of a small meeting room for community use. It remains open for 45 hours per week.

Wibsey has lots of exciting things happening on a regular basis - a Knit and Natter group, Benefits adviser on Monday mornings, Jobcentre advisor on Tuesday mornings, Health advisor on Thursday evenings, monthly book group, Wibsey local history displays, story time, rhyme time challenge and Councillor surgeries. A dominoes club is also about to be set up.

Key statistics from April 2017 to date:

Book issues	41,199
Visitors	25,211
PC use (sessions)	5,430
New members (adult)	238
New members (children)	195

Queensbury Community Library

Queensbury Library, located in Victoria Hall on 29th March and re-opened as Queensbury Community Library on 18th September 2017.

Key statistics from 18th September to date:

Book issues	824
Visitors	N/A
PC use (sessions)	N/A
New members (adult)	33
New members (children)	26

Report from Queensbury Community Programme (the Accountable body)

"We held the Official Open Day on Wednesday 28th October. The Deputy Lord Mayor attended to officially open the Library. Prior to her arrival we held a Storytime session with the World-Famous author of children's books, Christina Gabbitas. This was extremely well supported with over 20 children attending. The Creative Writers group provided us with some of their very own poetry and local stories which was very amusing. There were over 100 people in attendance over the 5 hours. The Telegraph and Argus wrote an article about the Library, so we had plenty of press coverage.

Our Chair, Cllr Paul Cromie kindly made curry for the event which went down a treat. The young people enjoyed hot dogs and pizza. After lunch we offered Halloween themed craft sessions and a Family History taster session was on offer for adults and their families. We used the Libraries resources 'Find my Past' and 'Ancestry'. Both sessions were well attended.

Since the open day we have changed the opening hours slightly, closing on Monday afternoons and opening on Thursday afternoons, this is working better. Numbers have been low on certain days we feel the inclement weather has had a massive effect on this. We are currently getting quite a few people accessing the computers for job search when the Job Club is closed.

During the week leading up to Christmas we offered 2 craft sessions which were well attended; we had a post box, so children could post their letters to Santa who visited on the Wednesday to give out selection boxes to the young people.

We have had one young volunteer who has completed part of her Duke of Edinburgh Award with us. On Wednesday 24th January we are holding a volunteer meeting to discuss developing activities when the Library is open to draw more service users in and increase

foot fall. We are also going to start a publicity drive lead by the volunteers.

We have arranged for BCB radio to come to QCP on Tuesday 6th February to broadcast from the centre on their 'About Bradford' programme."

Holme Wood Connect

Holme Wood Library closed on 1st April and reopened as Holme Wood Connect on 5th May 2017. Star Entertainment are the accountable body and have made great strides with the offer from the building,

Key statistics from 5th May to date:

Book issues	2257
Visitors	N/A
PC use (sessions)	1657
New members (adult)	78
New members (children)	75

Information from All Star Entertainment (the Accountable body)

"Services currently available:

- *Beauty and Nails NVQ L3*
- *Walking group*
- *Employability programmes with local employers resulting in employed work placements*
- *Incommunities STEP programme partnership providing work placements at Library*
- *Awards for All Volunteer training programme*
- *Functional ICT Course (provision for English and Maths once we have enough attendees)*
- *Silver Surfers ICT programme including Ipad sessions*
- *Young people's engagement, advice and support services run by Bradford Youth Service*
- *CHAS advice service for adults*
- *Benefits advice session from Bradford council Housing Benefit Department*
- *Nursery stay and play*
- *Hosting meetings for local organisations and providers*
- *Primary school visits*
- *Community cohesion events e.g. Christmas party, big lunch, family fun day,*
- *Cook and eat with local community group*
- *Sit and knit*
- *Bingo*
- *Library book start and reading challenges*
- *Library Children's events*
- *Library borrowing services*

Overview

The library project has made a lot of progress since re-opening in May 2017 with support from local Councillors, Bradford Libraries, Bradford Youth service and of course the Friends of Holme Wood Group. All have been integral to keeping the space open and working for the community it serves.

The wide range of activities and services provided at Holme Wood Connect is helping to increase footfall and get resident buy in. Local organisations are beginning to utilise the facilities for meetings and workshops which provides a revenue stream to aid sustainability.

We have renewed the relationship with Local schools who got involved in various themed projects over the Christmas period. This will continue with a focus on working with primary schools in the first instance to encourage children to use the library and introduce families to the variety of activities on offer in the space.

We continue to work with a number of different partners who have a foothold on the estate to help provide meaningful advice and activities for residents with the ultimate aim of creating a hub that serves all the needs of the local community. These include CHAS advice services, Incommunities who are running job search and functional skills courses and the Youth Service and Early help who are providing services in the space for parents and young people.

We have had more interest in the volunteering programme which is giving us a much-needed boost in staffing of the space as well as developing links with the University of Bradford and TalentMatch to help offer work placements and training opportunities to those who need it.

Highlights of 2017

Some recent highlights of the project include the Friends of Holme Wood Group receiving the Community Stars Award in December 2017. This was a well-deserved recognition of the hard work, dedication and support they give their local library and community as a whole since their inception.

The Christmas writing project with local primary schools illustrated the creativity and determination to succeed that young children in Holme Wood have and resulted in a Christmas Tea party for families to enjoy.

St Columbus school also got involved over Christmas with every class key stage getting involved to create a Christmas Nativity Advent Calendar display for the windows.

The Friends of Holme Wood finished off a fantastic year with a Christmas party for local residents that epitomised the community spirit that exists in Holme Wood and it was great to see parents getting involved in games too.

Overcoming barriers

Initially we struggled with some anti-social behaviour, however I am pleased to say that by involving partners and working together these have subsided. Regular PSCO and

community warden visits are helping residents to feel safe in the space and support from the youth service in the evening is helping to keep any disruption to evening classes at bay too. This has led to an increase in numbers and an increase in volunteers too.

The Future

At the moment, Holme Wood Connect is thriving. By working together and involving the local community at every possible step, we are creating a space that really works for the community in Holme Wood.

We are continually looking at what funding we can attract to help sustain the space and the activities currently on offer, provide more services to residents that increase aspiration and opportunity to succeed. These range from smaller pots of funding for bespoke projects such as the City Challenge funding, and larger pots such as Urban Development and Arts Council funding.

We would also like to develop links with local employers this year to develop skills specific training courses at the Library that recruit and train local residents for local jobs.

This year we will be working in partnership with local residents and partner organisations to set up a community magazine to promote all of the positive activity that takes place in the library space and around the rest of the estate. We will also be running events aimed at showcasing the facilities and the services on offer to residents of Holme Wood as well as supporting our partners with their projects.”

Great Horton Library

Great Horton Library closed on 1st April and reopened on 13th May 2017. The library continues to be sited in Great Horton Village Hall from which other initiatives which support the community are offered. The Village Hall is subject to a Community Asset Transfer with the Red Letter Project, the Accountable body for the Library.

Key statistics from 13th May to date:

Book issues	1707
Visitors	N/A
PC use (sessions)	782
New members (adult)	39
New members (children)	40

Report from the Red Letter Project: Craig Garbutt, June Hill and Adam Dickson

“Great Horton Library and Village Hall is currently being coordinated under the auspices of the Red Letter Project, a registered charity of St. John's Church in Great Horton. Up to the present, responsibility for the Library and Village Hall – as well as its use for community groups and activities – is shared between June Hill and Craig Garbutt, both employees of the Red Letter Project, together with Rev'd John Bavington, the Vicar of St. John's Great Horton. As of January 2018, however, John is handing over his particular responsibilities of oversight and support for the Village Hall and Library to Rev'd Adam Dickson, the newly-

appointed Associate Vicar of St. John's. We continue to received particular support from local Ward Officer Mohammed Taj and Councillor Joanne Dodds.

Since April 2017, the Library is open for five days of the week from 10am till 4pm Monday to Friday, and is linked with the 28 libraries across the Bradford district. The library is well used, equipped for the services of ordering and borrowing books, computer use, and printing. We are also pleased to offer some books and resources in large print and different languages, to reflect the needs and diversity of our local area. Intensive training and support on the new library computer system has been made available through Bradford Libraries.

The library also offers a free wi-fi service which is proving invaluable as customers often bring their own devices, laptops, phones and tablets for work and leisure. There is more scope for developing this during the summer months in the community centre garden.

At present we have four volunteers, to be increased with new recruits via library services.

We have had some minor difficulties with language barriers – special needs, other languages; which have mostly been overcome with patience and understanding. Library Services offer various activities throughout the year, and for us this has proven both an opportunity and a challenge, in terms of how to effectively relate these provisions to the diverse community of Great Horton, and within the relatively small space at the library. This has largely been overcome by opening the library on community event days. Ongoing challenges include volunteer recruitment, covering holidays/absenteeism, and publicity surrounding both the library and its activities.

While mindful of present challenges, staff and volunteers feel that the Library is providing an invaluable service to the community. Current successes include

- Community summer reading challenge*
- Christmas Community Event with cafe, stalls, consultation with Street Wardens, Hope for Justice, Neighbourhood Police, Mohammed Taj, and Joanne Dodds.*
- A new mural painted in the entrance hall*

Current plans and possibilities for development of the centre involve:

- A launch Event in June with storytelling for children and adults, with activities and cafe space*

- *The Village Hall and Library as a space for the “Welcome to Great Horton” Project, focusing on building a local culture of welcome for migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees*
- *Springtime launch for landscaping of the community garden*
- *Building a volunteer base*
- *Applying for ILM placement to support the Library*
- *Working to enhance Village Hall and build other activities, promoting footfall to Library*
- *Clean Up day with NCS and Street Clean Team co-ordinated by Ward Officer*
- *Introduction of Friday Drop -In Cafe in partnership with CHAS (Catholic Housing Aid Society)*
- *Possible development of a Stay and Play Group, and a regular drop-in for elderly residents”*

Lessons Learned

The period of transition to community managed libraries has been a steep learning curve for Bradford Libraries and local communities. The scope of the project was district wide to transfer 12 libraries over to community management or face closure. This presented a range of challenges for many communities, particularly for the three community managed libraries in Bradford South where the absence of a Parish or Town Council meant developing infrastructure and partnerships from ground zero.

There have been some ‘glitches’ which in an ideal world Bradford Libraries would have got right from the start of the project. Most are linked to external IT systems and data protection issues we are working hard to resolve and we are continuing to support the CMLs when issues occur.

Similarly the stock needs to be right both in quantity and content and we are working with the three libraries to address this as a matter of priority.

4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

Currently it is agreed that the Council will continue to resource all 17 CMLs in line with SLAs that are currently in place to March 31st 2020.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

The libraries budget savings of £100k for 2018/2019 are on target to be achieved with minimum impact on existing service provision. However the significant budget saving of £950k in 2019/20 will impact greatly on service provision. Work has started to identify a service that can be delivered with proposed budgets, and includes embedding CMLs beyond 2020 and further investigation into the potential for alternative delivery models.

6. LEGAL APPRAISAL

Local Authorities have a statutory requirement to provide a comprehensive and efficient service through the provision of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

N/A

7.1 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

An initial Equalities Impact Assessment was produced prior to the budget setting process which led to the decisions.

7.2 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The establishment of 3 of the 5 libraries in Bradford South as CMLs, continues to provide a library service to customers as well as other beneficial community services.

7.3 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS

No issues anticipated

7.4 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

No issues anticipated.

7.5 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

No issues anticipated.

7.6 TRADE UNION

N/A

7.7 WARD IMPLICATIONS

Great Horton, Tong, Queensbury, Wibsey and Wyke

7.8 AREA COMMITTEE ACTION PLAN IMPLICATIONS (for reports to Area Committees only)

Great Horton, Holme Wood and Queensbury ward plans have met their priority to engage with residents to explore options to maintain library provision in those wards.

8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

None

9. OPTIONS

That the library service continues to work alongside Neighbourhood teams and Ward Members to facilitate the continued development and sustainability of the Bradford South Library provision of three community managed libraries and the two Council managed.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Bradford South Area Committee note, and consider the content of this report.

11. APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Bradford Libraries core events programme

12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None