

Community Libraries in Iver Village and Richings Park:

Library Task Forces plan to maintain and improve the service

The decision by Bucks County Council to announce close of libraries in Iver Village and Richings Park was met with concern and dismay by residents. Earlier this year, the Council conducted a survey of views on its budgetary cuts and out of 3,204 completed questionnaires received, 42% of respondents felt that library closures were among the top five least acceptable reductions – an even greater percentage than those objecting to cutbacks in bus services.

However, the community in Iver rose to the challenge by forming two separate task forces to draw up plans to keep the libraries open.

The plans that have been developed are each designed to meet the individual needs of the separate areas.

In the Village, the emphasis is on children, particularly those without home access to computers who have difficulty in developing their IT skills. The plan is that the library will remain on its existing site next to Iver Infant School and initially, it will open for four half days a week. As The number of volunteers increases, the aim is to open it everyday.

In Richings Park, the Library will move to share premises with the Charity Shop, Cornerstone. The focus of the library here will be on supporting elderly residents who can often feel isolated due to lack of transport.

As the project developed, the task forces joined partnership with Iver Educational Trust, the charity which aims to support the local community and enable local people to fulfil their potential.

Iver Educational Trust will employ a qualified Community Outreach Librarian who will maintain stock in both libraries and also organise activities such as after-school homework clubs, film shows, speakers etc. Cornerstone Project Manager, Jackie Griffiths, will recruit and train the volunteers who will be needed to ensure consistent opening hours. A management team is being assembled to oversee the running of both libraries.

Funding will be sought from a new Big Lottery Grant Community Libraries scheme, but there's also an opportunity for local businesses and individuals to support this new community venture.

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