

Iver Community Libraries – Press release



Richings Park Community Library opens - Saturday 10th Feb 2007.

On Saturday 10th February the Richings Park community library was opened by Peter Hardy the Leader of South Bucks District Council. In opening the library he thanked all the volunteers and those organisations who had contributed to this new venture.

Bucks County Council closed the county libraries in both Iver and Richings Park at the end of November 2006 and replaced them with an infrequent mobile library service. Iver Community Libraries – a registered charity - was formed with the aim of providing library services and other information resources in both Richings Park and Iver in permanent buildings, for longer hours, completely separate from the County Council library service.

This has been made possible because Iver Educational Trust (which runs Cornerstone) has made space available within Cornerstone for a library on very reasonable terms. In addition Jackie Griffiths, the manager of Cornerstone, will co-ordinate the volunteers who will be manning the library. Financial aid has been provided or promised from South Bucks District Council, Iver Parish Council and Iver and Langley Rotary as well as a number of gifts from local supporters. The library depends totally on volunteer help. We have set up a traditional library service assisted by these many volunteers who have spent hours referencing books, writing labels and tickets and sticking these into the books.

All our books have been donated and are of very high quality and are very up to date. The library will be open Monday to Friday from 10am to 4pm and on Saturdays from 10am to 12noon. In addition you can buy Fair Trade items and many other products from Cornerstone, enjoy a cup of coffee and in the future, if we get a computer, will be able to access the internet. With the library service now operational Cornerstone will become an even more important contact point within the community. It aims to provide a meeting point for all age groups but especially those living alone.

Iver Community Libraries intend to open another community library in Iver when appropriate premise are found. The original aim was to open both libraries at the same time but it was decided that given the availability of space at Cornerstone it was important to demonstrate our ability to get a volunteer manned library working as soon as possible to assist in applications for further funding.

For further information contact
Cllr Alan Oxley 01753 651032 or 07759 215878
Graham or Joyce Young 01753 654010

Background to the Project

The local community has been recently faced with the closure of the local library in Richings Park, a focus for elderly residents in a mainly ageing community.

The replacement mobile library parks nearly half a mile from the previous library which was sited amongst local shops and near to transport links. This makes it difficult for older people to access and, as it will be open for fewer hours, will be less of a place to meet. It also has no computer access as there was at the old library.

A group of local volunteer residents with a variety of skills and experience set up a charitable organization to keep library facilities in the centre of the community. Iver Community Libraries is a newly established company limited by guarantee, with the charitable objective of making information, books and community support available to the people of Iver Parish.

The aim is to incorporate a new community resource centre in a local shop in the vicinity of the old library. This shop is well used by the older residents as a social centre as it offers refreshments and a welcome sit down near to the bus stop and train station. A room has been provided for the community resource centre in which we hope to include internet access as well as library facilities.

The facility will be managed by a paid organizer already employed by our link organization, Iver Educational Trust, and will be run by volunteers. A chartered librarian will offer professional advice and support.

Whilst having already raised some funding to start the community library, we need support and advice regarding more dynamic projects, such as self-advocacy, self-help and the offering of short courses in areas that will alleviate the effects of social exclusion, such as IT. It is planned to include large print books, audio books and accessible computer systems.

Our Community

The Social Inclusion Statement 2002 published by the Government Office for the South East, reveals that Iver village falls within the top 10% nationally in terms of local deprivation in the Education Domain. The Richings Park District of Iver claims an equally unwelcome high ranking in the Access Domain. The result of this is people without their own transport feeling isolated from the relative prosperity around them.

Iver Educational Trust is attached to the Churches of St Peter and St Leonard, and therefore its spiritual values are Christian. However the service and support offered to the whole community is regardless of religion or ethnicity and offers access to everyone in the village and the surrounding areas.

A survey in Richings Park was conducted and funded by Richings Park Residents' Association. This was a blanket survey across the whole community. Importantly, 68 people indicated they would be willing to provide support by way of volunteering to help this project. Of these volunteers, 13 are in age range 56-65 and 12 over 65. In Richings Park 35% of the residents who responded are over 56 years, and 22% are over 65.

Our Aims

In the short term we will provide a facility for the community to find information, borrow books and meet, the funding for this is already in place.

In the medium term the service will be extended to offer IT courses, reading groups, book clubs and other social events that the community requests, to minimize the effects of social exclusion. The area has no public internet facility and we would not only wish to provide one but also assist people with managing their accounts and searching for information. Training would be provided by volunteers.

In the long term we would hope to empower both our volunteers and our users to discuss issues with National and local government and NGO's. We would do this by providing support advice and an opportunity and venue for these discussions.

Iver Community Libraries Ltd (Registered charity number 1116882) has the following officers:

- Chairman Alan Oxley
Previously Head of Marketing for Scottish and Southern Energy.
Current occupation: District and County Councillor.
- Finance Director Graham Young
Occupation: Teacher of IT
- Company Secretary Joyce Young
Previously a Head Teacher
- Honorary Librarian and member Caron Beary Dip Lib ALA
Occupation: Chartered Librarian/teacher working in secondary schools.
- Members
Maureen Worrall
Occupation: Teacher particularly in special schools. Acting head, and deputy head.

Sylvia Lidgate
Occupation: Personnel manager, Company Secretary.

Kate Wilson
Professional experience: Senior manager NHS; ordained minister.

Derek Jones
Formerly Parish and District Councillor

Partner organization

Iver Educational Trust, following officers;

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| Director | Kate Wilson |
| Trustees | Vicar and the Church Wardens of the Churches of St. Peter and St Leonard. |
| Treasurer | Church Treasurer |
| Independent examiner | Nigel Gooch of Hard Dowdy |