

## Iver Community Libraries – Press release



### Iver Village Community Library opens – 10am Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> Nov 2007.

On Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> November a community library in Iver village was opened by Julian Wilson Chairman of Iver Parish Council. In opening the library he thanked all the volunteers and those organisations who had contributed to this new venture. This is the second community library, adding to the library opened in Richings Park in February. This library has been made possible by St Peter's Church, who made the Old Schoolroom in the St Peter's centre available to be used as a library.

Bucks County Council closed the county libraries in both Iver and Richings Park at the end of November 2006 and replaced them with a 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.

Financial aid has been provided 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 Iver library will initially be open Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10am to 2pm and on Saturdays from 10am to 12noon. In addition you can buy Fair Trade items and many other products and enjoy a cup of coffee or more in the St Peter's café. With the library service now operational St Peter's centre will become an even busier contact point within the community.

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  
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   |