



# PLUM

**Puddletown Library, Upkeep and Maintenance**

## For library lovers, there's good news – and there's some less than good news

NOW THAT Easter's safely over, the days are longer and spring is in the air, it really looks as though things are moving at long last in our campaign to put our library on a firm footing.

The Dorset Library Service has invited three representatives of the Puddletown friends group to a meeting on 21 April to hear its proposals for training the volunteers from the village and surrounding areas. These are the people who are to help make up for the cuts the county council has imposed on our branch's opening hours — and to help with the maintenance of that part of the Puddletown Village Hall that houses our library. We will let you know as soon as we can when training is to begin.

At the same time the county council confirmed that the hours it will pay for a professional librarian to be here will be cut from their present ten and a half hours a week to a mere six. As we forecast, our library will be 'officially' open as follows:

- 3.30-5.30pm on Mondays
- 2.30-4.30pm on Wednesdays
- and 10am-noon on Saturdays.

We have every hope, however,

that, after proper training, our members will be able to extend those hours — and perhaps even widen the choice of services the branch can offer (*see Page Two for Rosie Wyndham's ideas for a starting a readers' club here*).

But, in the view of your committee, it isn't **all** good news. Just when the county council is having to cut our opening hours because it needs to save money, it is investing £1.33m on new technology. It says it hopes the investment will help it, at some unstated time in the future, to reverse the cuts. But when I went to see this technology in action in Salisbury I was told that Wiltshire's library service had been able to save almost nothing through using it.

We are not against progress: it's just that we think that the county's library service should be concentrating on the vital job of training our volunteers **before** it starts experimenting with diversions like new technology that costs so much.

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### *Lively meeting launches friends group*

PUDDLETOWN'S very own organisation dedicated to helping to improve the service provided by the library in the Village Hall came officially into being in January.

At an entertaining meeting, in the Church Room, Puddletown, members voted for a £5 a year subscription. They also elected a committee (*see Page Two*) to oversee the task of recruiting and training a team of volunteers to work alongside our popular librarian, Marilyn Wheeler — and where possible to build on her work to extend the service the branch can provide.

But it wasn't just a business meeting. Members took part in a couple of book-related quizzes — and revealed a dazzling knowledge of writers, their characters and literary matters in general.

***Turn over for tips on getting the best out of being a member — and on how to pay your subs (which are due now!)***

# Book recognition technology is coming to our library

Dorset County Council has decided to invest £1.33m on book recognition technology — and Puddletown will be among the first villages where the new system will be installed.

## There's more to joining than just borrowing books

Committee member Rosie Wyndham (15 High Street, Puddletown; 849277) asks:

How do you choose what to read next? Do you read reviews, browse bookshops or even watch Richard and Judy? Have you read a book that you found so special that you'd like to share the experience with others?

Starting a book club of our own here would give us the opportunity to discuss, argue and laugh (hopefully) about the books we love. We could meet once a month and take it in turns to introduce a book — not just novels but anything that has inspired you. Refreshments would no doubt figure in our activities so the monthly cost would need to cover that and the cost of somewhere to meet — but we may, in time, be able to use the library itself. If you're interested, let me know.

## Catching them early

The county library service has revealed that it is supporting young people's reading groups in Bridport, Beaminster, Lyme Regis and Swanage libraries. The sessions are in addition to the normal opening hours. They are closed to adults and run by a professional librarian and someone from the youth service.

The manager of the library service says: 'We wish to extend this type of session as we need to attract more young readers. Feedback tells us that they value having the library for their exclusive use.'

We'd like to attract such sessions here and will be investigating how much support there would be for them.

It is called RFID (*Radio Frequency Identification*), and will, the council claims, liberate library staff from 'routine counter transactions' and give them more time to help readers find the books they want. Your chairman, Mike Chaney, went with representatives of other Dorset friends groups to see a similar system in operation in Salisbury and says it was amazingly efficient — but points out that the Wiltshire system couldn't collect either fees or fines: he hopes that when ours is installed it will be able to do so.

The Dorset Library Service say they are working to get the new technology in place by September, when the new shortened opening hours come into effect. They say they also hope that volunteers, like those from the Puddletown friends group, can be trained to use it by the same time. You can rely on your committee to keep after them to ensure that they do not put the needs of their technology before our need for training.

## ... but there's a price to pay

THE AGM voted to set the annual subscription fee for membership at £5 for single members and £8 for couples at the same address. If we are to press on with the work that needs to be done to protect our library and extend its services, we need to get some money into our account as soon as possible. You are therefore **now** invited to send your subs to, or drop them in on, our treasurer, Stephen Buck, at 3 High Street, Puddletown, Dorchester DT2 8RT (848575).

**Cheques should be made payable to The Friends of Puddletown Library. Don't forget to let us know your name and address.**

The AGM re-elected the acting committee: besides the chairman, secretary and treasurer, its members are Peter Bishop (848086), Chris Leonard (848484), Bill Maunder (849073) and Rosie Wyndham (849277) — any of whom would pass on your subs for you.

## It's worth while being a friend...

AT OUR first annual general meeting, our secretary, Sheila Lovell, revealed some of the immediate practical benefits of being a member of the friends of Puddletown library. The county library service, for example, will forego some of the fees it charges for its services when you produce your membership card.

You can reserve up to five books every year without paying the usual reservation fee — and you can get one DVD, video or CD free for every three you borrow each year.

We hope to arrange for other benefits and attractions just for Puddletown's friends: your suggestions are invited.

Please send any ideas, requests or problems to either Mike (address on page one) or Sheila, at 17 Greenacres, Puddletown, Dorchester DT2 8GF (848540). Her e-mail address is: [sheila@lovellsheila.wanado.co.uk](mailto:sheila@lovellsheila.wanado.co.uk).

If you can receive this newsletter via e-mail, please let either Mike or Sheila know: it would save our legs — or the postage



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