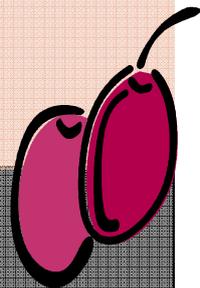


We get the green light at long last



THE STAGE is now set for the Friends of Puddletown Library to take over from the Dorset Library Service and run our library for ourselves.

Although there are many details to be ironed out about exactly when and what help we will get from County Hall, at a meeting earlier this month the county council's cabinet accepted our plans for running the library. At the same time it approved a package of aid for us which is guaranteed for at least three years.

The FOPL business plan was drawn up by our treasurer, Stephen Buck.

'We know it's going to be a struggle to pay all the bills for running the library,' says Stephen, 'but we are greatly encouraged by the package of support that the county council is promising to give us. It calculates that it will be worth more than £5,000 a year.

'We haven't yet been told how that is worked out but we know that it will cover the continued supply of regularly changing books.

'We don't know how many books will be changed every month but in all our talks we have insisted that our readers need to find something new and interesting whenever they come in.

'We also know that the county council will continue to supply computers for visitors to the library to use, as well as a few hours of help every week from a professional librarian.'

Stephen points out that despite our request for start-up funding to help us through the first three years of our life on our own, the council has said only that it will look into our request.

'We asked for what the council now pays in rent to the village hall. If Dorchester can't help us the Friends will have to raise around £3,500 every year to meet the rent

and the other costs – like public liability insurance and heating and lighting the building.'

Getting down to brass tacks:

Friends representatives will soon be talking detailed terms with the county council's library bosses, both on their own and also together with campaigners from the six other small communities in Dorset which have been given the go-ahead to run their own libraries.

PLUM

The Newsletter of the Friends of Puddletown Library

March 2012

If you were at our annual meeting in January you may remember that we agreed to hold a special general meeting next month, mainly to get our financial affairs all hunky-dory. It is with great pleasure then that I invite you to come along to Puddletown's Church Room, not only to approve our accounts but also to hear the very latest on the progress of our efforts to keep the library open.

We hope you'll be able to join us there on

Monday 16 April at 7pm

when we are confident you will agree that taking on the library and running it ourselves is both a realistic and a very worthwhile undertaking.

Mike Chaney, *chairman*

– all we need now is money, books and lots of hard work

If you are on-line, send address to chaneatley@tiscali.co.uk. An electronic newsletter is much easier to deliver

We plan to make our library a real community asset

ALTHOUGH WE hope that the library will continue to do its main job of supplying books that people want to read, the Friends intend to extend its use so that it becomes a truly community asset.

Committee member Roy Bennett, who is determined to widen the scope of its work, says that if the hours of opening can be extended, many other village activities can find a home there.

'We plan to open every afternoon,' he says, 'and always at the same time so that we can welcome the kids after school but can also give a warm welcome to anyone who wants to drop in out of the rain for a chat.'

He points out that as the project gets help from community funds paid for by everyone, including people who don't borrow books, the Friends must ensure that as many people as possible can use the valuable space it offers at the heart of the

village. 'We haven't begun to think of all the activities which can find a home in the library,' says Roy, 'so if you have any bright ideas let me have them, either call me on 849144 or drop me a note at 21 High Street.'

Roy points out that since the Friends began to work in the library in 2008 its use has been widened in many ways.

'The library is often used every day save Sundays,' he says. 'We teach computing on Tuesdays, the reading group is in there on Wednesdays and on Thursdays the village's youngest children use it.'

The Friends will have to decide whether to go on paying for the broadband link they installed for the computer classes. As the demand for these is ending, should we retain our own broadband or rely on the link paid for by the county council? We can use ours whenever we like, but can we afford the fees?

'We need your ideas to make the best use of the place'

IF YOU WANT A JOB DONE WELL, ASK A BUSY WOMAN

ONE OF the best outcomes of our AGM in January was that the Friends elected a secretary for the first time in their four year history. You made a wise choice: in just a couple of months



Lizzie Peckover has transformed the way the group works: nowadays we even keep minutes of our meetings. Most library users will know Liz as among her many busy jobs she has been working there since 2008.



Going round with the hat – and saving for a rainy day

AS OUR treasurer, Stephen Buck has explained in our lead story (*overleaf*) we will need to raise a lot of money to be able to keep the library open. So far we have been very lucky with the support the area served by the library has given the project. The parish council has promised us a grant of £500 a year and the Carnival Committee has been giving us vital support for the past four years. In January Puddletown Society raised £188 for us. We



Volunteer Bill Maunder (l) hands over the Puddletown Society's cheque to our chairman

have also received a grant from the district council from money raised by its weekly carboot sale. Chairman Mike Chaney is also applying for help from any body that might help us put some much-needed reserves into our piggy bank. And to help ourselves we've set up a 200 club with monthly prizes and there'll be a race night in the village hall on 21 April. Tickets (including a ploughman's) only £5. First race 7pm. Bar and raffle. For tickets call either 848712 or 849073.

So now you know how important money is to the success of our efforts to save our library, please send your fiver for 2012 to our treasurer at 3 High St., Puddletown DT2 8RT