

Higham Ferrers Town Council

Notes of Library Working Party – Tuesday 3rd April 2018 – 1.30pm at the Town Hall

Present: Cllr B Prigmore (Chairman), Cllr Mrs A Gardner (Vice-Chairman), Cllr H L Jackson, Cllr R Gell, Cllr Mrs A Sauntson, Mrs S J Mitcham (Town Clerk)

1. APOLOGIES

None

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None

3. APPROVE NOTES OF LAST MEETING

The notes of the meeting on 13th March 2018 were agreed.

4. FEEDBACK ON ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING.

Draft plans of possible alterations to the Library building had been received from Jon Sidey. These provide for an extra room in the roof area, more toilets, a lift and town council offices. Members agreed that this showed that it was feasible to alter the accommodation to make it more flexible. Indicative costs were needed.

Cllr Anna Sauntson queried feedback on the wellbeing services. Queries were unlikely to be answered now that there was an on-going consultation on the future of the Children Centres. Closing date for the consultation was 15th June 2018. Council to agree a formal response,

5. UPDATE AND REVIEW OF LATEST SITUATION RE THE LIBRARY.

NCC had emailed with the latest update and timetable.

To clarify the only service on offer was the books and not the wellbeing or Children's Centre services.

Timetable: -

- **16th April** - Submit Stage 1 registration to run an Independent Library
- **Post 16th April** – Expression of Interest form will be received with indicative heads of terms for freehold sale or lease.
- **31st May 2018** – Submit stage 2 Expression of Interest.
- **Late June 2018 onwards** - Once Expression of Interest accepted, NCC will meet with organisations to agree a project plan with milestone dates.
- **31st August 2018** – Proposed Library Closure.
- **1st – 30th September** – Where an independent Library is agreed these libraries will continue to be staffed. It is expected transfer of buildings will have taken place by this date.

An invite had been received to the inaugural meeting of the 21 Group. This group of libraries (affected by the proposed closures) were looking to form a consortium to work together on issues such as buying books. It was agreed that we would send a representative to gather information on what was happening elsewhere.

6. **DISCUSSION AND AGREEMENT OF FUTURE ACTIONS**

Members were concerned that there seems to be little appetite from residents to come forward and form a community group to run the library, as was happening in other communities.

A decision would soon have to be taken on whether the council or another group was going to run an Independent Managed Library. It was agreed that there was a need to look at this separately from the building. It was noted that should the actual book side close there would be an option at a later date to purchase the building should the Council so desire.

Clerk to ask that Jon Sidey to provide a budget figure for the alterations as per the drawing he has produced.

A drop-in session was agreed for 19th April during library open hours. Members of the working party would be available on a rota. The purpose of the session was to recruit volunteers to manage a run an Independent Library. Clerk to promote with a poster and contact those who have volunteered during the consultation.

Clerk to attend the inaugural meeting of the 21 Group on 18th April.

7. **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

8th May 2018 at 1.30pm.