

# Community Libraries

## Frequently asked Questions

### **Which Libraries are affected by the new approach to Community Library provision?**

The proposal is that the 5 branch libraries at Saltford, Paulton, Radstock, Weston and Moorland Road become Community Libraries. In addition, the council will look at expressions of interest from other communities that do not currently have a library or have visits from the mobile library. All expressions of interest will be assessed for their sustainability, whether they address a particular local need and whether setting up a community library will improve local services.

### **Will my Branch Library be closing?**

The Council is not planning to close any Libraries at this time.

### **Who is able to apply to run a community library?**

Organisations must be a parish council, unincorporated association, charity, social enterprise or similar. The Council welcomes applications both from existing community organisations with an interest in the areas served by the libraries that are due to become community libraries, and also from new groups formed specifically to take over the running of their local library. Contact [modernlibraries@bathnes.gov.uk](mailto:modernlibraries@bathnes.gov.uk) if you would like to express an interest

### **When will the changes be made?**

To a large extent the timetable will be set locally as we work with prospective groups to deliver the new arrangements. In each of these areas there has been some initial engagement with the community s but we will continue to welcome expressions of interest.

### **Will you be consulting the public on the plans in my area?**

We will be considering all suggestions and ideas and depending on what proposals are put forward. Consultation can be tailored to the particular needs and interests of your community – one size does not fit all. We will ensure that users and residents are kept informed and work with your local ward councillors to ensure that their views are taken in to account.

### **What support will the Council give to Community Libraries?**

There is a planned transition period where we'll provide up to £5000 in start-up funding, provide books on rotation from central stock, assistance with training, ongoing professional advice and support. We will not staff the libraries or fund the building running costs after an agreed transition period.

### **What will happen to the Mobile Library?**

The Mobile Library Service will continue to operate and is not subject to closure. It is anticipated that communities with a new Community Library may not need access to the Mobile Library Service and we could therefore review and alter the mobile route or stop times to better suit the community if appropriate, but this will be consulted on.

We are investigating opportunities to replace the existing vehicle as soon as is practicably possible.

### **Will the Council offer any library services in my community?**

The Council intends to strengthen home and community-based library services such as the Home Library Service for older people and outreach work with our reader development programme and our services for younger people and families (Bookstart, for example). We will target these resources at people with higher needs and build on our relationships with residential homes, voluntary groups such as village agents and Age UK, as well as working with Virgin Care on new models of delivery including social prescribing.

### **What will be in a Community Library?**

The Community Library Model is scalable, and this means that innovative and ambitious groups will not be restricted by the model or any of the current management arrangements in the branch libraries. The community libraries could even be run from alternative spaces such as cafes, a local hall, health centre, or even a local shop, potentially with room for events or space to meet depending on the wishes and needs of your community. Groups will be encouraged to look at innovative ways to ensure that the service is sustainable – for example, partnering with other services like the Post Office, a shop, a café or offering exhibition & event space or room hire.

### **What happens if a Community Library can't support itself after it is established?**

We will work initially with each start-up to ensure that have all they need to manage a community library successfully. However, if in the future the situation changes unpredictably then the options for services in that area will be reviewed by Cabinet to determine what should happen there.

Some useful guides and sources of information are available via the following websites:-

- Voluntary Sector Support: <http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/neighbourhoods-and-community-safety/community-activities/voluntary-and-community-groups>
- Funding Bulletin: <http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/neighbourhoods-and-community-safety/community-grants-and-funding/funding-bulletins>
- Community Libraries Locality - <http://locality.org.uk/projects/community-libraries/>