

Save Headington Library Group vision and position statement

Vision

Headington is a thriving District Centre promoting employment, education, retail, business, leisure and recreation. The Library fulfils an important role as a community hub and is well loved and well used by people across the NE area of the City for educational, recreational, information-seeking and cultural purposes. We want to maintain, supplement and promote library services that meet the needs of our community. We also recognise that all communities in Oxfordshire value their libraries as we do.

Position statement

The Library Group understands the financial situation in which the County Council finds itself and recognises that the County has accepted a budget in which the cost of the library service across Oxfordshire has been reduced to 77% of its current level. We note that this decision has been made at a time when the budgets of county libraries have already been cut by 27% since 2008-09.

We consider that it is imperative that the present network of libraries is retained so that when the financial position improves, the network can also be improved. This will not be possible if the proposed programme of closures proceeds as libraries will be lost to their communities forever. We therefore propose that our library, like all Oxfordshire libraries, should remain open. To achieve this, we accept that our library takes its fair share of the cuts, i.e. a 23% reduction in County funding, until our finances can be restored in the future. In return, our community will work hard to identify ways in which we can reduce costs and supplement the funding of Bury Knowle Library to reduce the net cost of the Bury Knowle Library by at least 23%.

We suggest that this solution which will allow the County to keep all its libraries open is much more equitable than the present proposal. Our solution is based on partnership working between the County Council and the local community to further the aims of the Big Society. We will campaign with others including the Save Oxfordshire Libraries Group to keep all 43 Oxfordshire libraries open as we think this is a better alternative than the County's proposal to discontinue funding from 20 libraries.

Representation

We seek confirmation from the following bodies that they support our claim to represent the whole of Headington as endorsed at the North East Area Committee meeting on 18 January 2011. We wish to make it clear that this is an apolitical group and the inclusion of councillors is to aid our negotiating position and provide useful contacts and information.

Headington Action
Co-ordinating Committee of Headington Residents' Associations
Former Save Headington Library Group
County Council: Cllr Roy Darke
City Councillor: Cllr Ruth Wilkinson

In addition we are calling on the services of Fiona Mackenzie, our accountant. Currently the representatives from the community groups are Tanya Field, Tony Joyce and Sarah Eddie and we wish to acknowledge the continuing support of Patrick Coulter and Richard Bradley

We are grateful to, and acknowledge the campaigning efforts made by the former Save Headington Library Group; members of the original group have expressed the wish that the project is continued by the group named above which will retain the name, associated funds and mailing list.

We have written to all the above named bodies to request that they endorse this group as the representative body for negotiations with the Oxfordshire County Council and Oxford City Council on their behalf.

Offers of help

We wish to set up an email address to which offers of help can be made as soon as our group has been legitimised by the above parties. We look forward to welcoming new supporters with relevant skills.

We intend to contact all those who have expressed support for Bury Knowle Library giving updated information concerning the Group, our contact details, future events and ways in which they can offer help

Working Groups

We intend to set up working groups as appropriate in the near future and will report progress at the North East Area Committee on Tuesday 15 March