

Iver Community Libraries – Press release



South Bucks District Council presents £10,000 to Community libraries.

On Saturday 23rd June at a sponsored walk event raising money for a number of local charities including Iver Community Libraries Cllr. Maureen Royston vice chairman of South Bucks District Council presented a cheque for £10,000 to Iver Community Libraries. The money was promised by South Bucks when the first community library opened in Richings Park. It is hoped that a location for a second library in Iver Village will be agreed in the near future and this money will help equip and run both libraries for a number of years.

Bucks County Council closed the county libraries in both Iver and Richings Park at the end of November 2006 and replaced them with an infrequent mobile library service. Iver Community Libraries – a registered charity - was formed with the aim of providing library services and other information resources in both Richings Park and Iver in permanent buildings, for longer hours. Iver Community Libraries are run by volunteers and have a better choice of books, most of which have been donated, and are completely separate from the libraries previously provided by Bucks County Council.

The picture shows from left to right Caron Beary (Honorary Librarian), Alan Oxley (Chairman ICLL), Cllr. Maureen Royston (Vice Chairman SBDC) and Graham Young (Finance Director ICLL) outside the Iver Community Libraries Limited (ICLL) stall at the sponsored walk on Iver recreation ground on Saturday 23rd June 2007. The sponsored walk raised over £500 that will be split between 4 local organisations. It was organised by Jackie Griffiths who manages Cornerstone in Richings Park where the community library shares the premises in Wellesley Avenue.

This first library in Richings Park was opened in February 2007 and has opened 6 days a week, 34 hours a week, manned by volunteers and has a stock of over 2,000 books including some reference, non fiction and also large print. The service is free but most users support us with donations towards our operating costs, these and other donations together with a grant of £3,000 from Iver Parish Council and the grant from South Bucks should ensure at least 2 years operation of 2 libraries. It is hoped that fund raising events like the sponsored walk will enable us to extend the libraries operation for as long as there is a demand for library and information services in the area.

For further information contact
Cllr Alan Oxley 01753 651032 or 07759 215878
Graham or Joyce Young 01753 654010

Background to the Project

The local community has been recently faced with the closure of the local library in Richings Park, a focus for elderly residents in a mainly ageing community.

The replacement mobile library parks nearly half a mile from the previous library which was sited amongst local shops and near to transport links. This makes it difficult for older people to access and, as it will be open for fewer hours, will be less of a place to meet. It also has no computer access as there was at the old library.

A group of local volunteer residents with a variety of skills and experience set up a charitable organization to keep library facilities in the centre of the community. Iver Community Libraries is a newly established company limited by guarantee, with the charitable objective of making information, books and community support available to the people of Iver Parish.

The aim is to incorporate a new community resource centre in a local shop in the vicinity of the old library. This shop is well used by the older residents as a social centre as it offers refreshments and a welcome sit down near to the bus stop and train station. A room has been provided for the community resource centre in which we hope to include internet access as well as library facilities.

The facility will be managed by a paid organizer already employed by our link organization, Iver Educational Trust, and will be run by volunteers. A chartered librarian will offer professional advice and support.

Whilst having already raised some funding to start the community library, we need support and advice regarding more dynamic projects, such as self-advocacy, self-help and the offering of short courses in areas that will alleviate the effects of social exclusion, such as IT. It is planned to include large print books, audio books and accessible computer systems.

Our Community

The Social Inclusion Statement 2002 published by the Government Office for the South East, reveals that Iver village falls within the top 10% nationally in terms of local deprivation in the Education Domain. The Richings Park District of Iver claims an equally unwelcome high ranking in the Access Domain. The result of this is people without their own transport feeling isolated from the relative prosperity around them.

Iver Educational Trust is attached to the Churches of St Peter and St Leonard, and therefore its spiritual values are Christian. However the service and support offered to the whole community is regardless of religion or ethnicity and offers access to everyone in the village and the surrounding areas.

A survey in Richings Park was conducted and funded by Richings Park Residents' Association. This was a blanket survey across the whole community. Importantly, 68 people indicated they would be willing to provide support by way of volunteering to help this project. Of these volunteers, 13 are in age range 56-65 and 12 over 65. In Richings Park 35% of the residents who responded are over 56 years, and 22% are over 65.

Our Aims

In the short term we will provide a facility for the community to find information, borrow books and meet, the funding for this is already in place.

In the medium term the service will be extended to offer IT courses, reading groups, book clubs and other social events that the community requests, to minimize the effects of social exclusion. The area has no public internet facility and we would not only wish to provide one but also assist people with managing their accounts and searching for information. Training would be provided by volunteers.

In the long term we would hope to empower both our volunteers and our users to discuss issues with National and local government and NGO's. We would do this by providing support advice and an opportunity and venue for these discussions.

Iver Community Libraries Ltd (Registered charity number 1116882) has the following officers:

- Chairman Alan Oxley
Previously Head of Marketing for Scottish and Southern Energy.
Current occupation: District and County Councillor.
- Finance Director Graham Young
Occupation: Teacher of IT
- Company Secretary Joyce Young
Previously a Head Teacher
- Honorary Librarian and member Caron Beary Dip Lib ALA
Occupation: Chartered Librarian/teacher working in secondary schools.
- Members
Maureen Worrall
Occupation: Teacher particularly in special schools. Acting head, and deputy head.

Sylvia Lidgate
Occupation: Personnel manager, Company Secretary.

Kate Wilson
Professional experience: Senior manager NHS; ordained minister.

Derek Jones
District Councillor

**Partner organization
Iver Educational Trust, following officers;**

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| Director | Kate Wilson |
| Trustees | Vicar and the Church Wardens of the Churches of St. Peter and St Leonard. |
| Treasurer | Church Treasurer |
| Independent examiner | Nigel Gooch of Hard Dowdy |