

DIGGING DEEP TO TRANSFORM CHURCH STREET LIBRARY PROJECT UPDATE

1 February 2008

Messages from the community

"It's excellent news that Church Street Library has won Big Lottery funding to improve its building. There are so many activities hosted by the Library that could be expanded and new ones initiated. I hope all residents get involved in thinking about what they would like to see happen in the new spaces that are opened up. This funding will enable the Library Service to work in new ways to meet community aspirations."

Councillor Barbara Grahame – Church Street Ward Councillor

"This award gives us a fantastic opportunity to carry out the much needed transformation of our library into a modern amenity for the benefit of the whole of our diverse community. I'm really looking forward to hearing the views of local people on what they want from this refurbished space. It's going to be an exciting project for the neighbourhood."

Don McKenzie - Church Street Local Resident Representative on the Project Steering Group

Benefits of Church Street Library across the community

The transformed Church Street Library will offer users a large range of new and exciting services. **The school child** will be able to drop into a homework club after school to get help completing their homework. They will be able to research, link to the school systems to work on projects, download the results to a memory device, and chat safely on-line with friends from school. **Young people** will come to the library with WiFi enabled laptops. They will be able to discuss their favourites on-line with e-friends across the world and have an opportunity to help the stock team choose new books. **The young family** will join family learning sessions where parents and children will work together using the online learning resources to improve their English, Maths and basic IT. **The Chair of a local community group** will be able to book free meeting space to host the group's annual general meeting. **The older person** who cannot afford ICT equipment of their own, will call into the library to check their email with support from the learning team and view pictures sent from overseas. **The commuter** will dash into the library to pick up a selection of quick choice books and issue the books themselves through self service machines. These changes will be made possible through the transformation of Church Street Library.

Church Street Learning Centre

The Church Street Library UK Online Learning Centre provides community based learning in an informal safe setting. The Learning Centre promotes and extends access and participation in lifelong learning and cultural activities in line with local needs. A variety of courses are offered to meet the needs of the diverse Church Street population. These courses include; Homework Clubs, Employment drop in sessions, CV writing workshops, school visit programs, IT Courses and Touch Typing courses. The centre currently has 8 workstations. Plans are in place to incorporate a state of the art learning centre with 15 workstations as part of the transformation of Church Street Library.



IT training at Church Street Learning Centre

Bengali Outreach Project

Westminster's Bengali Outreach Project was introduced into Westminster Libraries in December 2003 to engage the Bangladeshi community living in Westminster, and reverse their recognised low take up of library and other council services. This successful project is managed by a Bengali Outreach Worker and delivered from Church Street Library.

To date the project has introduced a wide range of Bengali resources extending beyond simply books, to newspapers, magazines, films and music, all selected in consultation with the community. In addition to the popular stock, a number of activities have been developed in

partnership with local providers these include: A Bengali Women's Reading & Writing Group, English as a second language (ESOL) training in partnership with Working Men's College, basic IT and computer training, CV and Employment Surgeries in partnership with Paddington First and regular cultural and Family Learning Events in partnership with WAES, attracting audiences up to 250 people (shown in picture above).



The Bengali Outreach Project has increased the confidence of the community, enhanced the opportunities and skills of many individuals, and plays a key role in community engagement and cohesiveness of Church Street.

The delivery of services from the transformed Church Street Library will help to build on the Bengali outreach work and develop similar outreach programmes for other hard to reach groups including the Arabic community.

What do you want from the refurbished Church Street Library?

This question will be asked dozens, if not hundreds, of times over the coming weeks in Church Street. Church Street Neighbourhood Management is co-ordinating consultation with local residents and organisations in order to ensure the refurbished library meets the needs of the neighbourhood and is a vibrant local resource.

The Paddington Development Trust [PDT] Community Researchers will be carrying out interviews with existing library users and doing street interviews during February. At half-term the neighbourhood's Young Advisors will be finding out the views of children and young people: there'll be trips to another London library to find out what is possible and sessions at children's and youth centres to carrying out a survey. In addition, the Neighbourhood Management Team are using the Advisory Group structure of the Neighbourhood Management Board to ask key questions from organisations working in the neighbourhood. 'What would attract your client group to use the library?' 'How do you envisage using the new Community Space?' And 'What will make the new Learning Centre a success?'

If you or your colleagues have answers to these questions or other ideas about what will make the refurbishment a success, contact Julie Mallett at Church Street Neighbourhood Management on 020 7641 6633 or jmallett@westminster.gov.uk



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