

DIGGING DEEP TO TRANSFORM CHURCH STREET LIBRARY

PROJECT UPDATE

15 February 2008

Young People and Church Street Library

The transformation of Church Street Library will include a discrete area for young people age 13-19. Young people will help to influence the design and delivery of services from this area to ensure it meets their needs.

Extensive national consultation with young people has established that young people expect the following from their local library:

- Participation in shaping the future of library services
- Volunteering opportunities with younger or older library users
- A place to develop citizenship skills and community engagement
- Free, safe and welcoming spaces in the local community
- Formal and informal learning support for educational attainment
- Inspiring books and reading materials supported by positive activities
- Information on education, training and careers opportunities

There are a number of examples across the country of well designed young people's areas not all in libraries! The pictures below show the newly refurbished Connexions area at the Stowe Club in Westminster and the teenage Zone at Handsworth Library in Birmingham.



**Connexions
Stowe Club - Westminster**



**Teenage Zone
Handsworth Library**

The views of young people will be sought during an extensive period of consultation led by the Church Street Neighbourhood Management Youth Advisors in spring 2008.

To help create a library space that meets the needs of local young people a **Church Street Library Youth Forum** will be established as part of this project for young people aged 11-19. This group will be closely involved in the design of a young people's area in the library. The forum will expand to have ongoing participation in delivering a newly energised service in the transformed library by helping to select stock, act as 'Reading Champions' to encourage wider reading among their peers, running activities, participating in intergenerational projects such as IT support to older people and becoming 'Book Pushers'.

Church Street Knitting Group

Church Street Library knitting group are now in their third week and have already drawn in knitters from their teens to their sixties including experts and beginners. The oldest member of the group is in her 70s, the youngest is 14.

The group was established following consultation with people over 50 held during Age Concern week. Feedback showed people wanted a craft based intergenerational activity that was open to all members of the community.

Volunteer Fariba Mohammadi was recruited to help set up and run the group, which meets on Saturdays 10.30-12pm.

Any donations of unwanted wool or yarn (or needles or patterns) would be greatly appreciated.



Older People Front Line Network

The Older People Front Line Network meets on a regular basis to exchange ideas and information around older people's services in the Church Street area. It is made up of representatives from older people's organisations/projects and workers from front line services who have regular contact with older people. At their January meeting the group were briefed on the Church Street Library refurbishment and discussed how the Library refurbishment could benefit older people locally. The key points raised are outlined below:

The group outlined they would like to see the following activities in the new library:

- English Language courses and reading groups
- Local history projects and information sessions
- Crime prevention information sessions
- Intergenerational projects

The group discussed ideas for use of the proposed community area:

- Self run interest groups
- Meeting space for carers
- Opportunity to have drop in sessions from different services
- Film clubs

General ideas for the library included:

- A reading space with comfortable seating not near the children!
- Café/Coffee bar with magazines and newspapers would be very popular
- Information point for older people

Church Street Library Art Exhibition

Church Street is currently hosting a small art exhibition. Works by Ibn El Nil Soliman, a writer, poet, painter and photographer from Egypt are on display. Mr Soliman's colourful paintings depict words and symbols of peace, love and joy in various languages, a cheerful message of multicultural harmony. A flexible community space will be introduced into the transformed Church Street Library allowing more artists and local organisations to utilise exhibition space.

For further details on the transformation of Church Street Library please contact

Laura Hannan
020 7641 3270

lhannan@westminster.gov.uk



City of Westminster

Supported by
 The National Lottery®
through the Big Lottery Fund

