

New Malden Library User Forum Saturday 17th May 2008 10am – 12 noon

The meeting was attended by 1 user of New Malden Library who met with the Library Manager, the Library Operations Manager and Reading Resources Manager, below are the main questions and answers that were raised.

1. Why are mobile telephones allowed to be used in the library as often people using them speak very loudly and disturb others?

Answer: This is a point that is often raised and discussed. The use of mobile telephones is allowed in order that we do not discourage the younger groups of the community from coming into libraries, which they may perceive as boring places where they have to be quiet and not talk to their friends. We do put up posters asking people to use their mobile telephones discreetly so as not to disturb others. The possibility of having mobile telephone-free zones will be investigated.

2. There always used to be library committees which included members of the public who helped decide which books to have in the library stock. Is it possible to have something similar nowadays?

Answer. This forum (the Library User Forum) has been set up so as members of the public can give their views on what they would like to see in the library. Readers can also make suggestions via customer comment cards and there is also a book for suggested titles at each library counter.

3. What happens to discarded books?

Answer: Books are withdrawn by library staff with the final say being given to the librarian responsible for the branch. The criteria for withdrawing an item is based on the number of times it has been issued and its condition. Although books may be withdrawn at one branch they maybe sent to another branch if it felt that there is a need for it there, and library staff also endeavour to ensure that best use is made of stock. Once an item is withdrawn from all stock then it is put on sale which helps to make income for the library service. The strength of the library service is that we often hold back lists of books that may be out of print which would not be available from a bookshop which only has new editions.

4. Would it be possible to have regular lists of new items added to stock?

Answer: This will be looked into and discussed with staff so that regular quarterly lists could be produced to go on the website and included in branch newsletters.

5. Would it be possible to hold public consultation meetings more frequently to give the public the opportunity to put their views?

Answer. This is something to be considered but we will also put the Questions and Answers from each meeting on the Internet with a link for people to add their thoughts and comments and so have an on-line forum.

6. The new version of the catalogue is rather difficult to understand would it be possible to have instructions by the pc's to help people look up items?

Answer: Instructions tend to be complicated and difficult to follow. Staff are trained and willing to help people with their queries. We will also look into the possibility of having sessions to help people to use the catalogue.

Other point discussed:-

When choosing books are the display stands helpful or do users tend to go straight to the shelves. It was felt on the whole people tend to go straight to the shelves or sometimes the return book section. Access to the bottom shelves is always a problem.