

## Surbiton Library User Forum Monday 28th April 2008 5pm – 7pm

The meeting was attended by 5 users of Surbiton Library who met with the Library Manager and the Library Operations Manager, below are the main questions and answers that were raised.

1. Why was this day and time chosen for the meeting which is not very convenient to a lot of users, e.g. people at work etc?

Answer: This is the third Library User Forum and various dates and times have been tried to find the optimum time for most users.

2. Wouldn't it be better to have the meeting at say 8pm in the evening in an area that wouldn't inconvenience other users?

Answer: We will take this on board for next year and perhaps use the library hall for the meeting.

3. Why wasn't the meeting advertised more, particularly at council venues or in the free local newspapers. ?

Answer: The Library User Forum for each branch is meant for users of that particular library. It is therefore advertised locally in branch and on the library website. The advertising budget for the library service is quite limited and it is very expensive to advertise in local newspapers, we try to use free advertising where possible and note that point about using other council venues.

4. What is the purpose of these meetings?

Answer: To allow users of the library to let us know how we could improve services or how we could do things differently. Comments made by users will be passed to relevant colleagues for their information and will also be included in the Annual Library Plan.

5. With regard to access to public computers, why is there a homework club scheduled at Tolworth Library on Wednesday afternoon with no computers available when this is the only one of two libraries open on this day of the week.?

Answer: This is an issue that needs to be pursued with other colleagues as to whether this could be re-scheduled.

6. With regard to library opening hours, why doesn't the library open on Sundays as Sutton library?

Answer: Up until recently Kingston Library opened on Sunday afternoons, unfortunately due to budget restraints this has had to cease but we are aware of the need to open longer hours and this

may be possible with the introduction of self service, as per Hook library which now opens until 10pm on Tuesdays, without library staff being present but with a security presence in the building.

7. There is a good selection of newspapers and magazines available in the library but the amount of up to date and relevant reference books available is limited. Could not more guides such as Tolly's Taxation be made available.

Answer: Many of our reference sources are now available on-line and are accessible free from home computers for members of the library, with the library paying the subscription fees. This ensures that information available is the most up to date and is cheaper than continually updating expensive hard copy reference material.

8. How are the libraries funded and who makes the decision on how much funding the libraries receive?

Answer: It was explained that the branch libraries are the responsibility of each of the four neighbourhoods within the council with Surbiton Town being responsible for Surbiton and Tolworth libraries. The funding comes from the neighbourhood budget and any decisions regarding this are made locally by the neighbourhood committee.

9. It was noted that the library is running IT courses at various times and it was queried whether it would be possible to put on more community events with refreshments etc. perhaps a book club?

Answer: This is something that the library service is keen to do more of particularly the provision of tea, coffee etc which is already being done with the Hook Centre café, and tea and coffee machines at New Malden and Old Malden. A book club is already up and running and is oversubscribed. If anyone would like to run their own book club then the library service could probably help with the provision of space, facilities etc.

10. What is the main use of the public computers and what is the main type of user as there seems to be the same people using them all the time?

Answer: The main use is for e-mailing, compiling CV's accessing the internet, searching for jobs, holidays etc. All types of people use the machines including students, people looking for work, children and overseas visitors. People have the first hour free and subsequently pay and, if paying can use the computers for as long as they wish.

11. Would it be an idea to have sessions for children perhaps with teaching assistants to help children with reading etc?

Answer: This is possibly a good idea which will be put to other colleagues.

12. How are newspapers and magazines sourced and do the library service receive any discount?

Answer: These are bought from a local newsagent and we receive a 10% discount. This helps a local business, in line with council policy, and ensures that any delivery problems can be sorted out easily. Magazines are rotated between Surbiton Kingston and New Malden libraries for maximum benefit

13. What about Friends Groups for the libraries?

Answer: This can sometimes work but is reliant on the goodwill of the community and for people to be willing to give up free time to run them, although the library would support with space, facilities etc.

Other issues discussed were Fines, ID for membership, Digital Which.