



21<sup>st</sup> January 2012

Dear All

**BRAMLEY LIBRARY – update**

Those amongst you that were unable to come to the volunteer meeting last December will have now received an invitation to a second meeting to be held on 4 February in Bramley Village Hall.

Since that meeting, an action group - Surrey Libraries Action Movement (SLAM) - formed to fight against Surrey County Council's decision to cut funding to the 10 smallest libraries, has taken legal action in the High Court.

A letter was sent by SLAM's lawyers before Christmas advising SCC that a Writ would be issued seeking judicial review of the PVR, unless they responded to the letter and entered into further negotiations which would leave all Surrey's libraries within County Council control and funding.

SCC did not respond and papers were therefore lodged in the High Court on 17 January.

In yesterday's Surrey Advertiser it is stated that Bramley Parish Council declined to contribute to the costs of this action. You may ask why we took this decision if it could help to save our library.

Over the last 18 months or so, various local authorities across England have closed or attempted to close libraries: action groups similar to SLAM have initiated proceedings leading to judicial reviews in an attempt to have these decisions overturned. In each case they have been unsuccessful.

The cost of the initial letter and Writ against SCC is around £12,000. This money has come from individual donations to SLAM: none of the other Parish or Town councils involved has contributed. Indeed it is only as low as £12,000 because a supporter of SLAM has successfully applied for legal aid, and been named in the action.

Were SLAM to win the judicial review, then possibly SCC's decision would be quashed (probably only because correct procedure was not followed, not as to substance of scheme). There is no certainty that SCC would not then start the process again. Were SLAM to lose then even with legal aid they may find that costs are awarded against them, and need to raise more funds to cover what could be a very large sum.

Bramley did not wish to commit to spend tax payers' money without any guarantee of a successful outcome. SCC has already spent large amounts on the PVR, even more on all the meetings held over the last year, and now additional funds will be required to defend this action. This money has



all been raised through council tax contributions made by Surrey residents, so in effect we have all paid a contribution already.

We are currently awaiting a response from SCC to the comments we made on the proposed lease of the premises, as it is vital that any agreement signed protects our requirements in order for us to go forward with confidence.

Bramley does not want to see its library closed and we are grateful to everyone involved in helping to keep our library at the centre of the community for present and future generations.

## **STOP PRESS**

The High Court of Justice has issued an injunction against SCC in relation to Community Partnered Libraries. SCC must not now make any further steps towards setting up CPL's until the issue of a further Court Order.

Further information will follow as and when we receive more news.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sue O'Connell". The signature is written in black ink and has a horizontal line underneath the name.

Sue O'Connell  
Chairman – Bramley Parish Council