

**Minutes of:** **RAMSBOTTOM, TOTTINGTON AND NORTH MANOR TOWNSHIP FORUM**

**Date of Meeting:** 20 March 2017

**Present:** Councillor D Gunther (in the Chair)  
Councillors I Bevan, J Daly, I Gartside, R Hodgkinson,  
G Keeley, Schofield and Y Wright

**Public Attendance:** 68 members of the public were present at the meeting.

**Apologies for Absence:** Councillor K Hussain  
Alistair Waddell – Greenmount Village Community  
Group.

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#### **RTNM.620 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations made at the meeting.

#### **RTNM.621 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**It was agreed:**

That the Minutes of the last meeting be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

#### **RTNM.622 MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising from the Minutes of the last meeting

#### **RTNM.623 LIBRARY REVIEW UPDATE**

Klare Rufo Assistant Director of Learning, Children, Young People and Culture attended the meeting to report on the second stage of the libraries consultation which was running until 27 April 2017.

It was explained that the first part of the consultation had been held from June 2016 and had concentrated on the principles that a library service should provide. The consultation asked for residents' input on the principles to ensure that they were in line with service requirements.

Principle 1 – To provide a Library Service across the borough which provides all residents with access to libraries and electronic services sufficient in number, range and quality to support reading for pleasure, lifelong learning, the development of new skills and the effective use of information.

Principle 2 – To ensure that the needs of more vulnerable residents and groups protected by Equalities legislation are taken fully into account in the provision of these services.

Principle 3 – To ensure that the resources committed to the library service are used as efficiently as possible by exploring options to reduce running and maintenance costs and to share premises with other Council services.

Principle 4 – To explore options for investing in technology to improve access to the library service for example, by extending opening hours , increasing digital services and enhancing provision for those with sensory impairments.

Principle 5 – To welcome the contribution that members of the community can make to the borough’s library service as volunteers, supporting both traditional and digital services, including training to promote digital inclusion.

Principle 6 - To meet local aspirations for a network of community spaces across the borough in which the council and local communities can work together as partners in meeting local needs.

4000 submissions had been received for the first part of the consultation and had agreed with the core principles as set out.

Klare explained that the Council had had its budget cut by £65m to date with a further £32m of cuts up to 2020 at which point the Council will have to be self sufficient. The libraries budget was reduced by £870,000 in 2013/2014 with a further reduction of £1m up to 2018/2019.

Following the initial consultation a number of options were developed for the future delivery of a library service in the borough consistent with the Council’s statutory duties.

The current consultation is asking residents to consider 2 options:

Option 1: Retain Bury, Ramsbottom and Prestwich Libraries plus a service wide team.

Option 2: Retain Bury, Ramsbottom, Prestwich and Radcliffe Libraries plus a smaller service wide team.

Those present were given the opportunity to ask questions and make comments and the following points were raised:-

- A member of the public stated that the reduction in the library service is indicative of what will happen across all services and stated that volunteer forums should be established to pick up what can’t be provided by the Council anymore.

Klare explained that a new neighbourhood working model was being developed that would hopefully be similar to what was being described.

Klare also explained that as part of the ongoing work in relation to the libraries, all community groups and assets were being mapped. It was hoped that this exercise would identify other locations where services could be delivered. The high cost of maintaining the current library sites may make them difficult for community and voluntary organisations to take over.

- A member of the public asked whether there were any projections in relation to library use once the closures had happened.

It was explained that this was unknown but would be something that could be monitored.

- A member of the public stated that there was no public transport to Ramsbottom from Tottington or Greenmount. It was also stated that there was very limited parking near the Central Library in Bury.

Klare explained that the travelling times were based on an assumption that all library users would use public transport to get to their nearest library. This showed that 98% of residents were 30 minutes away from a library when using public transport. It was acknowledged that it wouldn't be a perfect solution but access was the main priority whilst having to make the savings required.

- Councillor Gartside reported that the Friends of Tottington Library had recently been founded as a constituted group. They were working on a business plan which would set out how the library could be run as a community asset by volunteers. The Library is located in the old Tottington Town Hall which is a much loved building and community facility. Volunteers were welcome to join the group. Councillor Gartside explained that he had met with Klare to discuss a business plan and asked that the meetings continue so that a solution could be found.

Klare stated that her and her team would be more than happy to help support the group with the production of their business plan and any other way that they could as long as it was cost neutral to the Council.

- A member of the public asked whether the library being run by volunteers was a viable option.

Klare explained that the issue would be the level of maintenance required to the current building. If the building was taken on by a voluntary organisation then responsibility for this would pass to them. It had been estimated that the cost of this would be around £100,000.

- Councillor Gunther stated that she thought that the building would still need to be maintained even if it was closed.
- A member of the public asked how many volunteers would be required to help run the 3 or 4 libraries that would be remaining.

It was explained that the remaining libraries will continue to be staffed by Council staff. Volunteers may still continue to help out with services such as IT buddies or reading groups.

- A member of the public stated that the Library was a lifeline for some people. It was somewhere that they could go to and meet other people. Without this community facility they may not leave the house for weeks on end.

- Councillor Wright stated that she was aware that this was a difficult presentation to give. She went on to explain that although the building would need maintenance of up to £100,000 over the next few years, grants could be applied for to assist with this. Councillor Wright stated that the Friends of Tottington Library would be more than happy to apply for grants to help. Councillor Wright asked that the Friends of Tottington Library be given a 12 month trial period to run the Library with a small amount of training from library staff.
- A member of the public asked what would happen to the building if the library closes.

Klare explained that the consultation had not yet finished and nothing had been decided as to what would happen to the buildings.

- A member of the public stated that the Council was concerning itself about finances when it should be concentrating on communities.

Klare explained that the consultation had engaged with as many community groups as possible in the library locations that they used. The council unfortunately was in a position where it could not provide the services that it currently offered as this was not financially viable.

- Councillor Daly referred to capital monies that the Council had in reserve and stated that this could be used for infrastructure and capital spends. He suggested that £100,000 is used to help maintain the building and volunteers take over the running of the services with the assistance of a Library Manager for 1 year (paid by the Council). The Friends of Tottington Library would then be able to take over completely after 1 year.

Klare explained that the reduction in funding was wholly from the libraries budget and had nothing to do with the reserve funds. It would not be possible to help retain one library and refuse to do the same with the others.

- Councillor Daly stated that no other library had the number of volunteers willing to help out to ensure that all services remained; he stated that this was prejudicing Tottington Library users for being supportive and proactive.
- A member of the public asked what would happen to the books that were left once the libraries were closed.

Klare explained that each of the remaining libraries would be offered the books to ensure that they had a full collection. Any remaining books would be used by the mobile libraries and the delivery service and then community groups and community centres would be offered anything that was left.

- A representative of the Friends of Bury Folk referred to the fact that the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework was proposing the development of 15,000 new houses just a short distance from Tottington. The Library would be a much needed resource for the residents of the proposed properties.

**It was agreed:**

That Klare be thanked for her presentation.

**RTNM.624 POLICE UPDATE**

Inspector Russell Magnall attended the meeting to update those present on the work of the Police in Ramsbottom, Tottington and North Manor.

Inspector Magnall reported that there had been a spike in burglaries recently and officers had worked very hard to identify and catch those responsible. 9 offenders had been recently been jailed in connection with the offences and one remaining suspect had been arrested two weeks ago.

Inspector Magnall asked that with the weather starting to improve residents be vigilant and make sure that they lock their tools away after carrying out DIY and gardening as thieves will use anything available to break into properties. He also reported that although residents had house alarms fitted, many didn't use them and asked that they get into the habit of setting their alarms.

Inspector Magnall explained that cyber crime was currently one of the biggest threats to residents. Bury Police were bringing together an 'Active Citizen's' group to help train communities and groups about cyber crime, how to spot it and how to avoid it. Santander Bank are also involved with the initiative. Inspector Magnall asked that if anybody wished to take part as a volunteer they contact him.

Inspector Magnall also reported that Bury is the safest borough to live in in Greater Manchester.

**It was agreed:**

That Inspector Magnall be thanked for his update.

**RTNM.625 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

The Chair invited questions from those present.

- Mr Graham explained that two posts had been erected on the pavement on Tottington Road near to Scobell Street. Mr Graham had written to the Council to ask why the posts had been installed only to receive a reply stating that the question would not be answered.

Mr Graham asked if somebody could explain what the posts were for and why they had been installed.

- Anne Booker representing Friends of Hunt Fold explained that the Council were currently consulting on selling three parcels of land on the Huntfold Estate in Greenmount. The Friends of Huntfold had been established to raise awareness of this issue and ask as many people as possible to object to it. The Friends were hoping that the land could be managed by the residents of the estate which would save the Council the money for

maintaining it. Mrs Booker explained that the 3 areas were designated as protected recreational purposes. Those present were asked to have a look at the website that had been set up and sign up for e-mail updates. The website also has information on how to support the campaign.

- A member of the public explained that she had witnessed two burglaries in Ramsbottom that were being carried out in the early hours. She had telephoned the police and they had responded quickly but had not been in time to catch the perpetrators. The lady asked that businesses be advised to take in their signs before closing as this was what the burglars had used to gain entry. She also stated that it had taken the Police 5 days to carry out a follow up after the incident.

Inspector Magnall stated that sometimes the Police do get things wrong and that if the service isn't up to expectations then it should be reported.

- Mr Nally explained that since the parking review had been undertaken in Ramsbottom he had noticed that a lot more cars were parking on the pavements. This was causing issues for pedestrians and people with pushchairs and wheelchairs.
- Mr Nally also asked whether something could be done with regards to the bus service through Ramsbottom. The timetables had been changed which now meant that there was a bus at 9pm and then nothing until 9.45pm
- A member of the public asked whether the yellow lines opposite St Andrew's School could be re-instated. Parents dropping off children at the school were regularly parking on the pavements obstructing access to the pavement for other parents.
- Mr Schwartz stated that the Toby Carvery (Bulls Head) at Greenmount was now charging for parking. The first fifteen minutes of parking were free but this wasn't advertised anywhere. Mr Schwartz asked whether the pub should be advertising this.
- A representative of Friends of Bury Folk explained that an e-petition had been submitted which has been signed by 2700 people asking why Bury had been allocated such a high figure for residential properties in the GMSF. He stated that the Council had refused to ask the question.
- Councillor Bevan explained that this was the last meeting of the Township Forum for the Municipal Year and thanked Councillor Gunther for her role as Chair to the Forum. He also reported that Councillor Gunther would be the Mayor of Bury for the 2017/2018 Municipal Year and asked that congratulations of the Forum be recorded.

**It was agreed:**

1. That Councillor Gunther be thanked for her hard work as Chair to the Ramsbottom, Tottington and North Manor Township Forum for 2017/2018.

2. That Councillor Gunther be congratulated on her appointment as Mayor of Bury for 2017/2018.

**RTNM.626 TOWNSHIP FORUM FUNDING REPORT**

The Township Forum Funding Report was submitted for information.

**COUNCILLOR D GUNTHER**  
Chair

**(Note: The meeting started at 7.00 pm and ended at 8.45 pm)**