

## **Mayor's Column February 2016**

**By the time you read this, the National Library Day February 6<sup>th</sup> 2016 will be upon us, and why is this significant?** Well, as you no doubt know, Cornwall Council have been faced with trying to save £1.8 million from their Libraries budget.

During 2015 Cornwall Council carried out a consultation with the community, about how to save money and asked for expressions of interest from any group, Town Council, or organisations that would be interested in taking over the library service in their area. The results of the consultation have been reviewed and Cornwall Council has said that while further work will be needed to be carried out before a final decision is made on the future delivery of Libraries, one option they are looking at is to 'devolve' the operation of individual Libraries/One Stop Shops to Town/Parish Councils or community organisations. Cornwall Council would retain responsibility for the Face to Face service and would provide support to the local council/group (including book stock control, I.T. provision, training etc), such **groups would assume responsibility for running the local service including the day to day staffing and property costs.**

**12<sup>th</sup> January 2016, Fowey Town Council met with Cornwall Council Library/One Stop Shop team** to discuss the viability of Fowey Town Council taking over Fowey Library. The team had prepared an impressive pack of data on Fowey Library and the One Stop Shop Fowey Library has had declining numbers over recent years, however the decline in library usage is a national issue with the development of technology. In the 2011 census there were 1523 householders in Fowey, with 28.7% being classed as "empty" it is little wonder that the number of borrowers from Fowey Library is only 529.

**Can I say at this point, we have a committed team of librarians in Fowey Library who have battled over the years to increase visitor numbers to the Library and the many services they offer. I have spoken personally to the Library staff in Fowey to take account of their views and reassure them of the Town Council's support.**

So the costs of Fowey Library are as follows, the building's annual costs are £32,888.75, this includes rent, electricity, Gas, rates, water etc. (I have the complete breakdown if anyone wishes to see this). The building is leased under a complex leasing arrangement that expires on 22/1/2102, which means rent would have to be paid. The staffing costs as £27,960.06 which makes an annual total of £60,848.84 with the only income from some fines and photocopying which total £990.64. On top of this sum there would also be some admin costs dealing with staffing, bills etc.

The costs of taking on Fowey Library by Fowey Town Council would in effect double our precept. As a town we have already seen an increase in our precept over the last four years as we have taken over devolved assets such as the Town Hal, Town Quay, toilets and soon Squires Field. Unfortunately these returning assets (which is happening nationally) have brought very little income with them and need to be paid for one way or another.

Libraries however are a different case in that Cornwall Council "has a statutory duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service which meets the general and specific needs of all those wishing to use it.

**Councillor Berryman** stated **“Fowey Town Council would prefer Cornwall Council to maintain the Library service in Fowey as they have the specialist staff and greater resources than a small Town Council has”**. The manager of Fowey Library asked if Cornwall Council could help by returning a car park in Fowey which would give us revenue to ease the financial burden on our small town.

This is a major decision for the town and the Town Council would welcome your views or if you wish to contact Cornwall Council direct their email is [libraries@cornwall.gov.uk](mailto:libraries@cornwall.gov.uk)

**And finally on another matter**, Fowey Town Council is monitoring the concerns residents in Windmill from large delivery vehicles driving to the industrial estate. There has been damage to parked cars which is obviously concerning in this area which has a primary and a secondary school,, residential housing as well as elderly accommodation. There will be a meeting at the end of January between myself, Councillor David Hughes, PCSL Lloyd Paynter and businesses in the Industrial Estate to try and come to a reasonable accommodation.

You can contact the Town Council through our Clerk Sally Vincent, or myself as Mayor. Where we have Councillors who are at work, in Town, please respect their business priorities.

**The Council welcomes comments from residents and you are always welcome to come to Council meetings and raise any concerns you may have during “Public Questions”**.

**The February Council meeting in the Town Hall is on February 17<sup>th</sup> starting at 7.00pm.**

Also contact us by:

[www.facebook.com/Fowey-Town-Council/408736029293341](https://www.facebook.com/Fowey-Town-Council/408736029293341)

[www.foweytowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.foweytowncouncil.gov.uk)

[www.foweyfuture.co.uk](http://www.foweyfuture.co.uk) (Neighbourhood Plan)

Ruth Finlay, Mayor  
[ruthfinlay@live.co.uk](mailto:ruthfinlay@live.co.uk)  
01726 832762