

Minutes of the Library Flex Working Group meeting held on 2nd September 2024 at 6pm in the Council Chamber.

Present: Cllr. M. Cole
Cllr. F. Davies
Cllr. J. Harvey
Cllr. A. Schaefer
Cllr. R. Stuchbury
Cllr. M. Try

Also present: Ms. C. Molyneux Town Clerk
Ms. Z. Taylor Deputy Town Clerk
Ms. P. Cahill Committee Clerk

1. Election of Chair

Cllr. Stuchbury Proposed, Cllr. Try Seconded and Members unanimously **AGREED** to elect Cllr. Schaefer as Chair.

2. Scope of the group

Members noted that the group has been established to write the Town Council's formal response to the Library Flex consultation.

3. Town Clerk report

1.1. It is recommended that Members read this report and the report to Buckinghamshire Council Cabinet on Library Flex.

[Report for Buckinghamshire Libraries - service development.pdf \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](https://modern.gov.co.uk).

1.2. It is recommended that Members read the letter to the Friends of Buckingham Library and a letter from Buckinghamshire Council to the Friends of Buckingham Library attached to the end of this report.

Cllr. Schaefer asked if the savings (just over half a million-pound savings on staffing) will be made over 3 years or 5 years? The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that it is 3 years.

Cllr. Schaefer pointed out that the saving is county wide, not specific to Buckingham. Cllr. Stuchbury noted that there is no mention of library services in villages.

4. Agreed responses

Members **AGREED** that we respond in the 'reasons for your answers box' recommending that the current Buckingham Library opening hours are retained and that further detail will be forwarded in a letter.

5. Additional response

Members **AGREED** to write a letter to include the following points:

- Economic impact on Buckingham businesses.
- Buckingham Library is the main Buckinghamshire Council contact point for the whole of North Buckinghamshire.
- Buckingham Library is used by some vulnerable and older residents; they will not feel confident using Library Flex and rely on the staff for assistance.
- Where will responders come from if alarms are activated?
- There should be no changes to hours and staffing.
- Security? Who is expected to deal with issues that may occur in unmanned space?
- Unforeseen risks may be a major cost.
- Librarians do not just give out books; their role is much more complex.
- There is no prior agreement with volunteers.
- The Town Council will charge the Shire Council for time spent dealing with any issues resulting from the changes.
- Do they have insurance?
- Registrar and other services – what impact will this have?

Cllr. Schaefer Proposed that we task the Town Clerk to write the letter. Cllr. Harvey Seconded and Members unanimously **AGREED**. A copy will be sent to the MP.

Cllr. Stuchbury Proposed a press release. Seconded by Cllr. Harvey and unanimously **AGREED** by Members. **ACTION TOWN CLERK**