



SAVE OUR LIBRARY

1. In recent interviews with the *South London Press* the Leader of Lambeth Council, Councillor Steve Reed, announced that he had not been able to get the council's ruling Labour Group to agree over closing any libraries in the financial year starting on 1st April 2011.
2. Said that he expects "some" libraries will nevertheless be closed and implied that this will be done shortly after the end of that financial year in March 2012.
3. Said that he is looking for a decision by June 2011 on which libraries will be closed.
4. Confirmed that the Carnegie is one of the candidates for closure.

Your committee view the current situation as very serious but not hopeless and we are determined to stay open. By the time you read this we will have already taken important preliminary steps in this respect.

The briefing on the next page gives some details of what is probably afoot. Please do as many as possible of the following:

- **Join our email list** so that we can keep you up-to-date on what is happening and what help is needed. To do this send an email to me, foclchair@gmail.com, with the heading "Updates."
- **Carry on** with the cake baking and all the other voluntary work which shows Lambeth how much we love our library.
- **Come to "Mulch and Munch" on Saturday 5th March**, even if you can only manage an hour or two, and encourage as many other people to take part as well. A big turnout will show there is strong support for the library.
- **Come to the Friends' AGM** on Thursday 18th March, 6.30 for 7pm, and take part in the discussion of how to carry forward the campaign to stay open.
- **Renew your membership promptly**, either at the AGM or as indicated on the enclosed renewal form and encourage others to join the Friends as well. A form for joining as a new member is also enclosed and there are more in our tray in the library.

Briefing

Some simple sums

Lambeth disclose very few details of their finances and there are major inconsistencies in the figures they do supply.

A recent report to a committee that should be scrutinising the council's finances mentions that there will continue to be an Assistant Divisional Director of Universal Services employed in the Children and Young People's Department at a cost of £200,000 a year. However, in future he or she will be paid out of the new schools' budget, presumably because Lambeth is not building or planning to build any new schools and there is therefore spare money in this particular budget. The cost of running our library is unlikely to be more than £200,000.

We can be pretty sure that the council is not taking on a politically embarrassing fight with library lovers just to save the running costs of the libraries threatened with closure.

After implementing the cuts in the council's expenditure already agreed by the Labour Group, Lambeth estimate that they will need to find a further £28 million over the next three years and they are selling property to fill this hole in the council's finances. The main financial reason for closing the library would be to sell it, including the back garden, for conversion to flats. As some of us recall, sale of the Carnegie for redevelopment was proposed in the council's Property Performance Report to the Audit Commission published in 2009.

On the understanding that Lambeth would pay the cost of running the library, Andrew Carnegie donated the cost of the building to provide a library for the people of Herne Hill. There is now an attempt to sell the Carnegie to raise money for a purpose which has little to do with the local community and nothing whatsoever to do with libraries.

Other Libraries

There are ten public libraries left in Lambeth following a round of closures a decade ago. Until recently, there were plans to reopen two of the closed libraries but these appear to have been quietly dropped.

Brixton Library seems likely to be retained in its existing form for the foreseeable future. Clapham Library is due to be replaced by a multi-purpose building in November and there are vague proposals to do something similar with Streatham Library.

Upper Norwood Joint Library is co-owned by Lambeth and Croydon and the two boroughs continue to fund it while pursuing plans to close their own libraries.

West Norwood Library is housed in a persistently neglected 1960s local authority building. Decades of rainwater penetration through the flat roof and into the reinforced concrete walls appear to have rendered it beyond economic repair and it may soon be in danger of collapsing. There might be a possibility of creating a library in part of the adjacent Nettlefold Halls.

Cllr Reed has confirmed that the **Durning Library**, which is at Kennington Cross, **Minet Library**, which is near Myatt's Fields, and **Waterloo Library** are all candidates for closure. It is not clear whether he was asked about **Tate South Lambeth Library**.

With the exception of the Joint Library, all of Lambeth's libraries are housed either in buildings donated by benefactors or in buildings provided by the council in substitution for donated library buildings, when the council took donated buildings for other purposes.

Until late in the life of the last government there was a national standard that councils should provide sufficient libraries for everyone to be within one mile of a library. Lambeth achieved this except in the South of the borough. There now seem to be attempts to argue that the library network in the rest of the borough should be thinned out to match the South. Applying this reasoning would eventually mean closing all the borough's libraries and there have already been suggestions that Lambeth residents should travel to Westminster, Southwark or Wandsworth libraries.

The Friends' groups of Lambeth's libraries clearly need to work together to avoid their libraries being picked off one by one. I am encouraging them to do this.

Not all gloom

The case for keeping the Carnegie and the other Lambeth libraries open is strong. We do have supporters in the council's Labour Group and this includes some members of Lambeth's Cabinet.

A key argument is that libraries provide computers and internet access locally, as well as books and a wide range of learning activities, for people who could not otherwise afford these. A list of the regular activities at the Carnegie is on the reverse of the accompanying flyer. A ten minute video presenting many of the arguments for libraries is on the right-hand page at www.welovelibraries.co.uk.

We Love Libraries

Your committee continue to work on getting improvements to the library, including a first class area for teenagers and Wi-Fi internet access for library users own laptops.

Annual General Meeting

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the Friends of Carnegie Library will be held at the Carnegie Library, 188 Herne Hill Road, London SE24 0AG on 18th March 2011. The doors will be open from 6.30pm and the formal business of the meeting will commence at 7pm or shortly afterwards.

The quorum for the meeting is ten members.

A detailed agenda will be provided at the meeting.

Nomination forms for election as an officer or committee member will be available at the meeting or can be collected before then from the Friends' tray in the library.

Please do come to the AGM. There will be comprehensive reports about what is happening. The AGM decides the policies to follow in the coming year and it really does make a difference. For example, last year's meeting decided that we should do our best to get Wi-Fi installed as a way of attracting new users to the library, especially younger ones. This year's AGM will be especially important because we will be planning the campaign to save the library. Moreover, there will be free refreshments including, as we are meeting on St Patrick's Day, Guinness.



The committee also hope that the meeting will agree changes to the constitution. This document was drawn up in 1999 and needs updating to reflect the way the Friends works now. In addition, your committee are keen to dispense with renewing memberships each year, which is not a productive use of our time. If you want to see the details in advance, please let me know.

We are still looking for a few more committee members, to provide the benefit of their wisdom and advice at committee meetings, which are usually on the first Monday evening of each month. If you are willing to take this on, please let me know at the AGM or before then. The committee meetings are friendly and we always seem to reach a consensus.

Stephen Carlill, Chair
020 7274 7008

EVENTS

Sunday February 20th 11am-3pm: **Dig the Park** – walled garden entrance of Brockwell Park. www.brockwellpark.com

Thursday March 3rd: **World Book Day**,
Saturday March 5th: **World Book Night**
www.worldbookday.com

Saturday March 5th: **"Mulch and Munch"** – Carnegie Reading & Wildlife Garden. See flyer.

Wednesday March 9th 7.30pm: **Herne Hill Society AGM and Lambeth's Edwardian Splendours** – Herne Hill United Church Hall
www.hernehillsociety.org.uk

Thursday March 17th 6.30pm: **Friends of Carnegie Library AGM**. Free St Patrick's Day refreshments. See article.

First Saturday of the month 2.30 – 3.30pm: **Councillor Carol Boucher's Surgery** – Carnegie Library. Tel 07814 567914 Email cboucher@lambeth.gov.uk

First Saturday of the month 2.30-4.30pm: **Teatime** – Carnegie Library. Tea, coffee, soft drinks and delicious home-made cakes.

First Saturday of the month 2-4pm: **G&T! (Gardening and Tea)** – Carnegie Library. Tidy the garden and get free tea and cake.

First Monday of the month 7-8.30pm: **Book Group** - Carnegie Library. Ask the librarians for the current book.

Third Wednesday of the month 10am-12pm: **Silver Surfers** – Carnegie Library. Come to this 50+ group and learn how to use the Internet with free tea, coffee and chat too.

Every Friday 10.30am-noon: **Storytime for under 5s**, rhymes, stories and crafts – Carnegie Children's Library.

Every Saturday 2.45-5pm: **Chess Club** – Carnegie Library Gallery. For experienced or novice players of any age. Free entry and tuition.

VISIT THE LIBRARY!!

Don't forget 'Use it or Lose it'.



OPENING HOURS:

Mon 1-8pm
Wed 10am-6pm
Fri 10am-6pm
Sat 9am-5pm
188 Herne Hill Road, Tel . 7926 6050
carnegielibrary@lambeth.gov.uk

BOOK ORDERING SERVICE

If the book you want is not on the shelf, use the ordering service in the library or via <http://libraries.lambeth.gov.uk/TalisPrism/>

DVDs and CDs

There is a good selection of DVDs for adults and children to rent. The Carnegie stocks a good range of talking books, language courses etc.

INTERNET

Don't forget that the Carnegie has free internet access for all! First fifteen minutes without booking but see librarian for longer.

INFORMATION AND EVENTS

Browse through the comprehensive selection of leaflets in the entrance hall and look out for useful information on the notice boards.

THE GALLERY SPACE

'Openings' - exhibition of photographs by Izzi Ramsay. Come to meet the artist on Mon 7th March from 5 to 7pm.
www.izziramsay.com
To book the space see library staff.

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors or quoted sources and not necessarily those of the Friends' Committee. Contributions to the Newsletter are always welcome. Please send letters, articles or information to 139 Herne Hill Road, SE24 OAD or email elizocha@hotmail.co.uk

