

PROTEST GROWS AGAINST LIBRARY CUTS

Opposition to cuts to library services is growing after more than 100 people attended a public meeting in Beeston.

Protesters will gather at 11am on Saturday 5th February at Beeston Library to oppose Conservative-run Nottinghamshire County Council's plans to reduce opening hours and to slash the new book fund by 75%.

Under the proposals, Beeston Library's opening hours would be cut from 57 hours a week to 52, while at Inham Nook Library in Chilwell the opening hours would be cut from 20 hours to eight.

Public opposition to these plans is escalating. On Saturday 15th January more than 500 people signed a petition against the cuts during just two hours of leafleting in Beeston town centre.

More than 100 people attended a public meeting organised by the newly-formed Beeston and Chilwell Defend Library Services group (part of the wider Notts Save Our Services campaign) at College House Junior School on Thursday 20th January.

Ross Bradshaw, Director of Nottingham publisher Five Leaves, told the meeting that when libraries and other services were facing cuts major companies that avoid paying taxes should be challenged.

Speakers also included Gail Flack, a Unison librarians rep, and Mike Scott, Unison Regional Officer, who urged library-users to join a mass demonstration outside County Hall on 24th February, when Nottinghamshire County Council sets its budget.

Greg Marshall, of Beeston and Chilwell Defend Library Services and Notts SOS, said: "It was highly-paid bankers who created the financial crisis and yet it is ordinary people who are being asked to bail them out by accepting devastating cuts to public services, while the bankers pick up their latest round of bonuses.

"If the Conservatives think ordinary people are not wise to this then they can think again. Every day more and more people are standing up and saying they value their public services and will not stand idly by while they are cut to ribbons because of a crisis not of their making."

Anyone who opposes Nottinghamshire County Council's plans for library cuts should assemble at Beeston Library, Foster Avenue, at 11am on Saturday 5th February. For further details visit <http://nottssos.org.uk/> .

