

# BEESTON & CHILWELL

## DEFEND LIBRARY SERVICES



### Report of Public Meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> Jan 11

On a cold January night, more than 100 souls braved the elements to hear of the devastating cuts being proposed by the Tory controlled Notts County Council for adoption on 24<sup>th</sup> February Council meeting.

They received no warmth from what they heard from Librarian and Publishing representatives. Libraries facing 50% cut back in opening times, loss of skilled jobs, 75% reduction in new purchases, mobile libraries cut by 70% and increased charges. Currently library services account for £12.5 M (about 2%) of the NCC total budget but the 25% cuts proposed will reduce this budget to £9.3M. In doing this the council puts the remaining library services budget in a financial position of inward collapse, thus leading to more closures and or cuts.

This spurred a battery of questions and comment. Why were punitive actions being taken against social provision, culture and self learning? At a time of increasing unemployment, social facilities are needed. Where other educational institutions are being restricted or made inaccessible because of increased charges, when young people see their EMA withdrawn and employment opportunities removed - libraries have been axed or face being closed. People with hearing and vision disabilities will find their forward provision greatly reduced and families with young children will have their introduction to reading removed if we let these proposed cuts take place.

Then came examples of how people were concerned that the 'help' from librarians giving professional advice, unlikely to be available by volunteers, would be removed. Plus their help at schools, community events and exhibitions, etc.

Other questions were posed ; Can government legally carry out these cuts ? Are they supposed to provide effective provision ? Can the cuts be reversed ?

This provoked further debate about the morality of government and its concern for law, when hiding behind the deficit crisis. The government have transferred the repair of the nation's finances to the public, when the real villains are the uncontrolled and greedy finance sector. - where the banks and finance industry cocks a snoot at government and pays unlimited bonuses.

Challenges to government are normally done by exercising our voting rights at the ballot box and though government initiated these cuts on behalf of the finance sector, they are hoping that the public will wait to remove them in 4 years time. However history has shown (through movements such as the poll tax demonstrations) that direct action can reverse unfair policies. As for repairing the states finances there are means to raise revenue. A tax system with loop holes removed, implementation of the Tobin tax, complete cancellation of Trident.

The meeting called for immediate direct action. A large majority supported this action when it was reported that several council authorities up and down the country were supporting a reading/sit in at libraries on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> Feb.

After hearing how the County Council were unconcerned about their workforce representation and not interested in considering alternative solutions the audience supported the Unison Officer. He proposed that the public should show solidarity with council workers and support their demonstration on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> Feb at County Hall at 10am.

Then it was proposed that we use the ballot box to oust political representatives of the government in local authorities, with a strong message being made to the replacement councillors not to implement cuts which did not protect and improve library services.

A request was made that people write to MP Anna Soubry, the current councillors in Notts County Council and Broxtowe Borough Council. Whilst networking our concerns talk to your neighbours, blog, not only locally but throughout Nottinghamshire and adjoining shires.

So this is what we would like you to do :-

- **Participate in the Read in/ sit in at Beeston Library Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> Feb at 11am**
- **Support the Council workers demonstration on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> Feb at 10am at County Hall, West Bridgford.**
- **Write to :-**

#### **Anna Soubry MP**

Anna Soubry's Office  
Barton House  
61, High Road,  
Chilwell,  
Nottingham  
NG9 4AJ

#### **County Cllrs**

##### **Steve Carr**

5 Tracy Close  
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NG9 3HW

##### **Eric Kerry**

208 Long Lane  
Attenborough  
Nottingham  
NG9 6DB

##### **Richard Jackson**

20 Margarets Court  
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##### **Tom Pettengell**

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**Broxtowe**  
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**Councillors**

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**END**

**Greg Marshall**

**Beeston &  
Chilwell Defend  
Library Services**