

**We, the under-signed residents of Bath and North East Somerset, petition the Early Years and Children's Scrutiny Panel to investigate the proposed sale of the Radstock Library building and re-location of the library *because***

- **this is a child-friendly popular facility with holiday programmes to encourage reading**
- **many children in Radstock do not have home computers to help with their learning**
- **children's services and health programmes currently organised there will cease for lack of appropriate accommodation.**
- **The council should not be selling off a valuable community asset.**

**We deplore the total lack of public consultation**

This is the wording on a petition signed by 80 Radstock residents and a 'ballet dad' from Shepton Mallet who uses the library while waiting for his daughter to finish her classes. He is very impressed with what B&NES Council provides and thinks we should keep it! However, I am speaking tonight **not** because I think that the family silver is being sold off in an effort to balance the books after all the expenditure on the Victoria Hall, **nor** because I think it is a daft idea to rent space in a commercial building when you own a property, **nor** because it is outrageous that there has been no public consultation. After all, there could be arguments in favour of demolishing an eyesore sandwiched between two Victorian listed buildings and opposite a Georgian one (Hope House Surgery). No, the point I want to make tonight is that this is a purpose built, recently renovated library used overwhelmingly by children and the elderly, as well as by job and accommodation seeking teenagers who have no access to computers of their own.

It is a friendly building where the Surgery holds clinics for young mums and teenagers at risk, but more importantly, it is where Children's Services have an essential office with two desks, hold events for small children which cannot be fitted into the overflowing Children's Centre/Youth Hub, and even convene district meetings. It seems to me deeply ironic to the point of nonsensical to dispose of a building just when children's services are being remodelled and Radstock is becoming the NE Somerset 'hub', with even more pressure on space. Similarly, as the focus is more and more on 'targetted' clients, a space where troubled teenagers feel comfortable is invaluable. There is no space in the Victoria Hall, the Methodist Church is too daunting, and Leigh House is not DDA compliant nor properly maintained. Therefore this resource should be kept.

Cllr Eleanor Jackson, Radstock Town Council and B&NES Council