

## **Statement to Bath Council for meeting on 14/9/17**

I am writing (speaking) to you today as a local author and illustrator of children's books who finds the council's persistently wrong headed approach to the proposed down sizing of the Podium Library and move to Lewis House profoundly upsetting as well as incomprehensible. In spite of the thousands of signatures, countless demonstrations, by people like myself not normally given to shouting in the street or sitting down in the middle of Milsom Street and opposition by people vastly more worthy than myself (Neil Gaiman, the ex children's laureate Chris Riddell, Ian Hislop of Private Eye, Ken Loach, David Almond and Bel Mooney) – the Council seem to be deaf to reason.

I recently completed the Banes so-called consultation, which wasn't anything of the sort and was chiefly interested in my age (not relevant) and ethnicity (also not relevant) among other equally stupid questions – while persisting in only offering the move Lewis House as the only option. I would therefore like to some answers to the following questions.

1. Why are the council so committed to the plan in the face of such massive opposition? Is there something we haven't been told?
2. How can removing the browsing facility in favour of a click and collect service improve literacy and a love of books in our children?
4. Where are the elderly, the homeless, school students and families on low incomes expected to access books in the future? Not in the multi storeyed Lewis House which has been proved inaccessible to the disabled and difficult to navigate for the elderly.
3. How can a move rumoured to be costing upwards of £6,000,000 wherein the staff of Lewis House will change places with the Library (!) possibly see a proposed saving of £800,000 per annum. By my calculations it would take 8 and a half years to even start to break even.
4. The Widcombe one way system? How many libraries could have been saved (or even built) if that expensive and misguided project had never taken place?

The council needs to know that the feeling behind the Save Bath Library campaign is stronger than it realises and that none of us is going to give up until either you agree to keeping the library where it is or better options are found which will improve our library services rather than devaluing them.

Angie Morgan September 11<sup>th</sup> 2017

