

## COUNCIL MEETING 15<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2022

### PUBLIC STATEMENTS & QUESTIONS

#### Public statements (item 7)

- Paul Stansall  
Re: Bath Library (*statement attached*)
- Mary English  
Re: Bath Library (*statement attached*)
- David Redgewell  
Re: Transport budget issues
- Andy Halliday  
Re: Bath Library (*statement attached*)

## **Paul Stansall statement**

### **On the unlawful introduction of office services - to date blue badge and parking permits processing, into the Podium Library**

I am a retired chartered architect and former government adviser on building development.

Some Council office services including blue badge and parking permits were recently relocated from the OSS in Lewis House into the Podium Library.

I understand this has been carried out outside the normal process of planning approval. No consultation with the public has been sought. I also understand no permission from the Council planning department has been obtained. Under planning law the Council's defacto changes, namely introducing 'office' services into the Podium Library space, are not allowed.

The Town & Country Planning Use Classes, September 2020 places office services under Class E and public libraries under Class F1. The OSS that until recently included the purchase of blue badges and parking permits, remains located within Lewis House and falls under the Use Class for offices.

When challenged by the Friends of Bath Podium Library on the introduction of blue badge and parking permits into the Podium library my local councillor answered that blue badge and parking permits are ancillary to the library services as per Keynsham library.

However, Keynsham was a new development in which the said services were included at the time planning permission was sought. Moreover, the Podium development was specifically for a library and no ancillary services attached to the library use were ever included.

Two incompatible use classes cannot be forced together. Further, the ancillary use argument is invalid. This was made clear in a letter dated October 19th 2018 and signed by Dionne Pemberton on behalf of Save Bath Library, to Chris Gomm, BANES Planning Department. The campaign at the time had sought legal counsel on this matter. Copies of this letter have recently been recirculated via e-mail to Council members involved.

Will the council please refrain from deliberately and wilfully misleading the public by using the term "ancillary services" e.g. "*..the relocation of a small number of ancillary information services from Lewis House to another location..*" This has nothing to do with the use of the term "ancillary to the primary use class" within planning law.

The previous council administration halted their plans to integrate OSS services within the Podium library when it was shown it would not be lawful.

Thank you

Paul Stansall RIBA  
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10/02/22

## **Statement from Mary English**

Dear Councillors

My name is Mary English and I am a local author and resident. When my son was small and I was a single parent, the library was our sanctuary to borrow books and escape the harsh realities of low income.

I am part of the Save Bath Library campaign and Friends of Bath library that secured the Asset of Community Value that Bath Central Library now enjoys.

I am bitterly disappointed to learn that in the latest Budget proposals, there are 'plans' to once again put council services into the library

As you may, or may not know, Save Bath Library protested vigorously to prevent this from happening while the council was being led by the Conservatives.

ANY changes to library services MUST be discussed with library users FIRST so I was even more dismayed that none of us were even told this was a proposal.

Cllr Samuels & Romero have now assured us that it's 'only' certain council services that would be put into the library but ANY council service is one council service too many.

Libraries are places to do learning, reading & research.

There are plenty of other places in Bath where residents can apply for blue badges or pay parking fines.

Once these council services are slipped into the library, it won't be long before we cease to have libraries and librarians and instead have 'customer services pods' and 'customer services staff' which are not the same at all.

And even though we've been assured this this is 'all' that would be added into the library, what's to stop a future council under a different political party from adding even more services and watering down the wonderful provision we already have?

I am here to add my voice to the groundswell of residents that *do not* agree that this would be a good idea.

### **Statement from Andy Halliday**

With a sense of "Deja Vue", I want to express my sincere disappointment at plans I recently became aware of to make further cuts in library spending. These are again attacking this vital community service at a time when public well-being and investing in education is much on the government's agenda. It is in my view crucial to maintain our Podium library by serious investment in new library stock in various formats, the marketing of quality income generating rooms for diverse opportunities, but key to the service is a commitment to recruit dedicated library only orientated staff who will be highly trained to deliver the unique quality services expected by our variety of visitors who daily flood into the purpose-built prestigious city centre library. Diluting the services offered already should not I feel feature on anyone's agenda; by contrast a serious commitment to ensure specific library facilities remain at a top standard is in my view of paramount importance. Please reconsider your present proposals to again decimate our wonderful library provision, I genuinely believe failure to do so will have catastrophic long term consequences on the lives of many many people.

Thank you

Andy Halliday, Former Manager Bath Central Library