

LIBRARY SERVICE UPDATE FEBRUARY 2011

for LJC19 AREA (Bishop's Castle, Chirbury & Worthen, Clun)

Officers have just begun work on changes to the mobile library routes using the criteria agreed by Cabinet. As yet there is no firm information on any stops, but this will be given out as soon as the decisions are made. It is intended to have a draft route schedule completed by 1st February after which Shropshire Council will be consulting local members to get their views on the proposed stops. The new schedules will be published from mid to late February with an operational start date of early April.

As per the Cabinet paper the main criteria are:

- Stops will not normally be within two miles of a library (factors such as access to public transport, local geography and capacity of the vehicles will be taken into account)
- Stops should be normally in the village centre and not within a mile of each other (again geography and capacity will be factors)
- The maximum duration of a stop should not normally be more than an hour (usage will be taken into account when setting stop lengths)

Stops which meet these criteria will remain although the time, location and duration may change.

The mobile library service offered by Shropshire Council uses eight vans throughout the county and was set up to offer a library service for those residents who are unable to get to libraries. The service is very generous, and the area covered is extensive. However, routes have been getting quieter every year for many years. A review of the service has been going on for a year, and following consultation and a lot of research, changes to the service have been agreed as follows:

- In March the lease for three of the vans comes to an end and it has been decided not to renew it. The remaining five vans will operate, covering a larger area than beforehand (but in some instances, identical to the routes they originally covered in the 1980s).
- All weekly services will now be fortnightly. For the LJC19 area this affects Clun only. In Clun there are currently two stops weekly (1 hour and 30 minutes) which will be replaced by one 50 minute stop fortnightly in the public car park by the river, plus one stop by the school.

Many years ago volunteers used to collect books from the nearest library for their housebound neighbours, and a 'Housebound Service' has just been launched in Bridgnorth. The Library Service has the facilities to do the required CRB checks for volunteers should anyone wish to do this. There are lots of residents already who help in the libraries filling shelves and in some the Friends of the Library work to make events happen in their local library. It is hoped that volunteers will be encouraged to do a 'Housebound Service' in all parts of the county for individual householders and residential care homes. The mobile library service would like to link to local events in order to be available for more customer – for instance if there is a local coffee morning, it would be advantageous for the mobile library to be parked outside the venue

In the autumn of 2011 a countywide check will be conducted to see how the new service is operating.