

London Borough of Bexley

News Release

For Immediate Release

01 July 2016 / PR 8340

NEW ERA FOR TWO BEXLEY COMMUNITY LIBRARIES

An exciting new chapter for Bexley Village and Slade Green libraries will begin shortly. Both libraries are currently managed by Greener Bexley, a local charity, but from mid-July they will transfer to new management.

Greener Bexley, chaired by Jonathan Rooks, stepped forward to deliver Bexley's first Community Library in Bexley Village in 2012, expanding to operate Slade Green Library in 2014. In early 2016, Jonathan indicated that, with both libraries on a secure footing and well-embedded in the community, it was now time to work with the Council on a plan for Greener Bexley to exit these libraries, while securing their future.

This work has now been completed and the Council is excited to announce that from July 2016, Bexley Community Library will be managed by the Bostall Library Community Group, who recently took on the community management of Bostall Library. The group is passionate about delivering great library services and providing a hub in the community.

Slade Green Library will transfer to the management of Eco Communities, who already operate the Slade Green and Howbury Community Centre, where the library is located. They have a wealth of library management experience as they also operate Northumberland Heath and Upper Belvedere libraries in Bexley, as well as pioneering community libraries in Lewisham.

Both groups are fully committed to minimising any impact on the day-to-day delivery of services during the transfer, with existing members being able to access the same services and activities that they currently enjoy.

Over time, both groups also want to put their own stamp on the current

operations, by offering an expanded range of services, events, activities and opportunities, shaped by local customers.

Cabinet member Cllr Peter Craske said: “Community management of libraries is another example of the brilliant community spirit we have here in Bexley.

“We are grateful to Jonathan Rooks and Greener Bexley for working with the Council to pioneer the development of community managed libraries in the borough. Bexley now has six successful community managed libraries, working alongside the six Council libraries to give residents a great service.

“Jonathan has worked closely with us in planning for the transition to the new arrangements proving that, in Bexley, community-run libraries can be popular and sustainable. I would like to express my sincere thanks to him for his dedication, commitment and enthusiasm for libraries in Bexley.

“I would also like to welcome Bostall Library Community Group and Eco Communities to Bexley Village and Slade Green libraries. Both organisations have already hit the ground running with the libraries they already manage, bringing new ideas and innovation and showing the way in how to serve the communities in which their libraries are based. We are looking forward to working with them.”

‘ENDS’

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