

## Statement from the Friends of the Library Committee

The Friends of the Library committee are committed to maintaining a viable library in Moretonhampstead. There are two choices before us: the two that are presented to us both have limiting factors, either in cost or space.

The Friends committee have visited the proposed site at Green Hill, currently the Youth Club club room, to discuss the possible layout of the library within the space. Basic plans of this layout can be viewed in the library. To summarise our conclusions:

### Positives

- The proposed longer opening hours are a big benefit and will help to make the library more accessible.
- Access into the East Wing of Green Hill is suitable for all.
- The library would benefit from the ground floor toilet and tea-making facilities.

### Negatives

- The location of Green Hill is not as central as the Bowring Building and will require a large number of costly modifications.
- Shelf capacity for book stock will be lost.
- Sharing the space will impose other limitations on opening hours and furniture.
- The Youth Club will lose valuable dedicated space if the move goes ahead. While this would not directly affect the library, it does represent a loss to a service that is hugely important to our community.

To recap, a move to Green Hill would have a considerable impact on the Youth Club in terms of curtailment of current activities. It would allow for longer library opening hours and improved library facilities, although the overall library space would be reduced. The Friends committee have also considered the options of staying in the Bowring Building:

### Positives

- More central location and dedicated building
- Rooms are airier and benefit from natural light
- Library users have access to space for other activities
- The Bowring Building has room for expansion, adaptation and flexibility, if it is returned to the community
- Not relocating would mean no interruption in service or moving cost
- The current space has considerable potential for refurbishment
- If a self-service machine is made available, there is a potential for extending opening hours as at Green Hill

### Negatives

- Whilst the building remains in ownership of Devon County Council, the community are unable to reduce costs because of existing contracts that DCC has with various service providers or implement any beneficial changes
- No level access to kitchen and toilet facilities currently available.

The Working Group have concluded that, if the necessary funding was available, the Bowring Library is a viable public building. An option would be to rent the upper floors, to enable the building become self financing and allowing the library to remain. The Working Group have already received offers amounting to £35,000 for work on the building which opens the possibility for match funding with a national organisation.