

## **Brampton and District 50+ Forum**

Report of the meeting held on Tuesday 19 April 2016 in Brampton Community Centre. 10 members took lunch in the community café; 22 members attended the meeting which followed.

Several members having expressed dissatisfaction with quality of the lunch that had been offered, the Forum Chair, Carol Saunders, asked for the general opinion of members and promised to take the matter up with the Nick Kennon after the meeting. She then introduced Catherine Hinson of the Library Service, welcoming her and three of her Library Service colleagues, Carla, Helen and Daniel to the forum.

In her introduction Catherine explained that over recent years reading habits had changed, and austerity measures mean that services in communities have been lost. However, a library is still considered by most people to be a part of the community and it provides more than books. It is and should be a place to find things out. Though computers are very useful they take away face to face contact.

Then, rather than present a formal talk, Catherine divided the members into three groups. This allowed the library staff to cover different topics at the same time and also allowed members to be more involved in discussion. After a certain time the librarians moved to a different group. The original intention was that each session should last about 5-10 minutes, a serious underestimate!

In the different groups we were given information about the different services offered by the Library Service. These included 'Books on Prescription'. All static libraries have collections such as self-help books ('Well read body' and '[Well read mind](#)'), an Alzheimer collection, a Macmillan collection. Dementia resources include memory boxes, picture boxes, jigsaws. In some village halls, remote from a library, there is 'library link'. This will typically have 1000 items in its collection (compared with 4000 in Brampton). There are also 'book drops'. These are also in a community building, which must be more than 4 miles from a library facility and fulfil other criteria such as: the number of users per month, the number of unique users per month, being open for a certain amount of time each month.

Local history is promoted by the Library Service. There have been regular talks at Currock House in Carlisle, for example, with two talks left in [a series by Stephen White](#): on 19th May 'The influenza pandemic of 1918 in Carlisle and the surrounding area', and on 9th June 'History of sport in the City of Carlisle'. There is also a [family history group](#) in Carlisle. The library has a subscription to the computer program 'Ancestry' and library members can have free access on a library computer for two hours. During the monthly sessions (10am-12 noon, 2nd Monday of the month) there is also help on hand. The library also has a collection of old maps and photographs of the area (<http://cumbriaimagebank.org.uk/>), some of which the team had brought along to the forum, and these provoked a good deal of discussion in the groups.

We were also shown how to access the Library Service website (<http://www.cumbria.gov.uk/libraries/>) on tablets the team had brought along. This website has useful links to a range of information including library catalogues and details of where to get the 'Well read' series of books mentioned above.

The Chair thanked our speaker and her team, especially as we had kept them longer than they had anticipated, and the meeting ended with tea.

The next Forum meeting, the **Annual General Meeting** will be on **Tuesday 17 May 2016**.