

In attendance usual representatives from Market Towns including Cllrs Martin Eager & Bob Barnes.

Speakers were Natalia Silver – Herefordshire Council Library Service.
Marc Willimont – Herefordshire Council HMO Officer.

Natalia Silver gave those present an indication as to future Library Services in the Market Towns and the need to integrate current and future counter services with the Libraries if they are to remain open, as is already happening in Ledbury. Local residents increasing use of on-line services for council tax, bills, and enforcement notice payments, serious review of all front counter services and library provision.

Current Budget for across county Library Service £1.897m

Savings to be made over next two years £39,473k

Some figures for Ledbury.....

110,450 library user per year

57,545 Loans (books, CDs etc)

Equating to an average use of 65 users per hour over a 32.5 hours week opening.

Running Costs £38,473K with £14,730k income (unverified), consultations in progress re future provision and use of buildings and amalgamation of various service providers, more use of volunteers to increase or maintain current opening hours.

Budget still to finalised.

Marc Willimont gave an interesting talk on Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMO) and the Herefordshire Council's desire to have greater regulation (imposing article 4) on what is becoming a problem in some areas of Hereford and a couple of Market Towns. Been suggested that separate NDP's are set up to control future HMO and a licensing arrangement is undertaken to discourage rogue landlords and give tenants greater protection.

HMO = Dwelling with 3 or more people unrelated in separate bedrooms with shared washing and cooking facilities.

Dwellings with up to 7 people do not require planning permission but come under building regs.

Some 570 known HMO in county with some 360 known in Hereford, Ledbury has 17.

The meeting concluded with further discussion on the imminent CAB closure, again on what if any contribution(s) the Market Towns could make, and what sustainable service is possible. To be discussed again at the next meeting.

The meeting closed at 21.10 hrs.

Next Meeting Wednesday 28th September 2016

Cllr M D Eager