



Green Heart Partnership



PRESS RELEASE

1 July 2008

South Oxhey Library Book Launch: Free Tea Party!

A free Afternoon Tea Party is being held at South Oxhey Library on Saturday 19 July, from 1.30 to 3.30 pm. The event will celebrate the publication of the South Oxhey Library Book, thank everyone who has been involved in its production, and provide information about the library's redevelopment. Everyone is welcome to the party at the library on Bridlington Road, where there will also be an opportunity to enjoy 'musical baby rhyme time' and stories for children.

The South Oxhey Library Book is the outcome of the work of international artist team Simon Grennan and Chris Sperandio, known as the Kartoon Kings, who worked with local residents in South Oxhey to discover what their ideal library service would be like. This creative engagement project was facilitated by the Green Heart Partnership working in collaboration with Hertfordshire County Council, which was recently successful in securing Big Lottery funding to redevelop the library at South Oxhey.*

Over a period of ten weeks, Grennan talked to people of all ages, including library users, local residents, business people and community groups to capture memories, personal experiences and anecdotes about libraries and discover how best the redevelopment of their local library could provide the activities and services they need. Following their research, the artists developed, edited and designed a high quality, stunning, hardback book presenting the ideas, visions and suggestions of local people for their revamped library.

"Grennan & Sperandio have been delighted to discover the range of ideas and wishes that the people we met in South Oxhey have about libraries. South Oxhey folks are some of the most friendly and welcoming we have ever worked with. Oxhey Library is well used and well loved, by a wide range of local people. Everyone seems to be looking forward to the redevelopment of the Library and we've been really pleased to contribute to that," said Simon Grennan.

800 copies of the book will be distributed to households in the immediate vicinity of the Library, as a gift from the artists and their fellow residents. Copies of the book will also be available for loan in the new Library along with an archive of the project.

"We were very pleased with the response to this highly imaginative consultation organized through the Green Heart Partnership and the Kartoon Kings," said County Councillor Keith Emsall, Executive Member for Education and Culture.

"The consultation was a valuable and enjoyable community event in itself, and the book which has come out of it gives us a vivid picture of what local people want library services in South Oxhey to look like in the future, so that it meets their needs, interests and aspirations."

The library plays an important role in the life of the local community, and we now look forward to upgrading the library building itself and opening up the range of services and activities for local people."

For more information about the Tea Party please contact the library on 01923 471333



Ends

Notes to editors:

- Green Heart Partnership is the Arts Council England, East Arts Generate programme in Hertfordshire.
- GHP Launched in 2004 and is project managed by Landscape+Arts Network Services, from Gunpowder Park.

*Hertfordshire County Council was awarded £1.4 million last year from the Big Lottery Fund for Community Libraries to remodel and expand Oxhey Library.

The South Oxhey Community Libraries Project, running over three years, will extend the public area of the existing building to include a flexible community space, a modernised layout and facilities to improve access, a cleaner, greener building and an architectural focal point in the community.

The new library will provide an upgraded venue for:

- a range of community activities, including an extended homework club
- family learning opportunities
- computer classes
- the development of a community archive
- reading and writing groups
- an access point for agencies such as Connexions and the Centre for Voluntary Service
- a display space for local artists and organisations
- a meeting venue for clubs and societies.

It is anticipated that the new library will open to the public in the summer of 2009.

Advance copies of the book are available from Herts County Council. Please contact Sharon Allen on 01707 281584.

For more information and images about the project please contact Emma Marcello on 01992 762128 or email: emma@gunpowderpark.org