

Narrative by Sue Patterson from Rising Brook Community Library in Staffordshire:

"So, why did Rising Brook Baptist Church decide they want to run the library? They decided that they wanted to ensure that this building, and the services it offered, remained open for the community.

"They realized it was really important for the local people, and we wanted to be able to provide that continued service for them and develop more services if we can. I don't think we realised how valuable it was until we opened and people have come back in and told us how glad they are that we are open.

"I think we've seen a lot of older people coming in to use the library service and the books, and they've really appreciated being able to come to the local library again. A lot of younger people coming in to use the computers and the job clubs, things like that.

"I think our volunteers have found it a really interesting project to get involved in, and got quite a mix of age of volunteers, from sort of 30 up to probably 70, some who are working, some who are retired. For some of them it's about them developing their own skills as well and maybe trying to get back into the work place, I feel that for others it's just wanting to give back to the community.

"In terms of support from the county council we, right from day one, we've been involved with a Community Support Officer who's taken us all through the training and helped us to organise it. We've worked very much as a team with them.

"They've taken our questions and our suggestions and our advice on how to deal with our volunteers, and how much training they could go through. And I think together we worked in the programme that we felt was appropriate for our volunteers, and then through transition.

"They've worked with us, actually here in the building as well, and gave us two weeks of full support, and now they're on telephone support, and we have a good relationship with them.

"I think you need to think clearly about the hours you've got to commit to, think you've got to consider that you get a good pool of volunteers. I think you've got to think long term, that you can sustain it, and just think about all the practicalities of it."

