Thank you for choosing the application by the Parish of Bampton Library Action Group.

Bampton received the status of a town by Royal Charter in 1258, (although the last Royal Visit was 1136 when the castle was besieged by King Stephen). The population in 2014 is approximately 1,800 and growing, with a large influx of visitors in the summer months. Outlying villages and hamlets rely upon Bampton as their urban centre where there is a small Church of England Primary School. In addition to the Spar and Costcutter general stores, there is a wide range of successful independent local businesses represented by the active Bampton Business Group. There is residential and sheltered housing for the elderly and those with Special Needs. A significant elderly demographic has above average income but, equally, there is a significant proportion of disadvantaged with below average incomes.

In sum, we have a disparate community, but one of which its citizens, with their divergent skills and interests, are rightly proud, and who celebrate their cohesiveness in many different community group activities. Our library was founded in 1872 and there’s a precedent for a community-led library when it was run for sixty-odd years by the Women’s Institute.

Bampton’s Library of the Future needs to take account of present and future Parishioner’s differing needs, and we look forward to working together with the Libraries Service and other interested groups in seeking to provide a more wide-ranging and targeted library service which would benefit our Parish.

Our current library is no bigger, and perhaps smaller, than many people’s sitting-room. Sadly, the opening hours have been reduced until currently there are only six hours of opening. This produces the chicken and egg conundrum in that if it were it to be open longer, there would be an increased footfall and vice versa.

Relocation is, therefore, our primary aim as, clearly, the existing premises are not suitable to house our Library of the Future. We have identified a property which affords a large light and airy space within an historic Bampton building, the Old School House, adjacent to a large car park. Negotiations are in progress.
The significantly larger space increases the scope of the activities which can take place within it. Although at this stage we cannot be prescriptive, ideas mooted include:

- reading groups
- toddler’s groups
- a youth club
- schoolchildren’s homework sessions
- an adult literacy programme
- an internet café
- computer courses
- Credit Union /Citizen’s Advice/MP Surgery Pop-Ups
- concerts
- plays
- workshops
- art gallery

...and much more besides!

**Secondarily, we also need to form a Friends’ Group of volunteers,** whose aims, in partnership with Devon Libraries Service, will be to:

- disseminate information including via the electronic media
- engender interest in and community ownership of the project
- support our paid Librarian
- project manage requisite alterations to the building’s fabric
- tap the local resources both physical and fiscal
- extend opening hours
- encourage and support innovative ideas for the use of the space
- host events
- raise funds
- generate in-house income
- maintain records

Our recent summer survey and programme of events demonstrated that there is considerable local interest and support for our library project. Now we will strive to ensure that Bampton is at the forefront of the County, showing how our library can become a community hub that has very exciting possibilities in provision of its services, and how our community can be partners with the Devon County Council Libraries in directing how our Library of the Future evolves.

**Gen Ottaway & Janet M Crabtree**