

Library saved – but fight goes on

CAMPAIGNERS working to save a threatened library have given a cautious welcome to proposals that could see the facility saved, but with reduced opening hours.

The Friends of Cockerton Library thanked Darlington Borough Council for the “constructive and positive” meeting where the proposals to save Cockerton Library were worked out – but urged local residents to continue to support their fight.

Council leader Bill Dixon announced on Thursday that the authority’s cabinet will be asked to consider keeping the library open, with reduced hours, for at least a year.

It was previously earmarked for closure as the council looks to trim 20 per cent from its annual budget.

Darlington MP Jenny Chapman has praised local residents for the strength of their campaign and thanked the council for working with the group.

By Vicki Henderson

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A statement from the Friends said: “After our meeting with Bill Dixon, local councillors and our MP, as a group we would like to re-emphasise our thanks for a constructive and positive meeting. However, the discussions about the library continue as a final decision will be made until March 1.

“Thank you to everyone who has supported the campaign.”

The group is formulating a plan to keep the library viable in the face of reduced hours, which they will formally present at the cabinet meeting on February 22.

Despite the expected reprimand, a petition of 3,000 signatures against the closure will also be handed in at the town hall on Tuesday to remind councillors of the strength of feeling about the facility’s future.

Mrs Chapman, who chaired the meeting between the Friends and the council, said: “I would like to congratulate the residents who have put the case for keeping the library open and who have worked with local people to demonstrate the strength of the local community.

“I am pleased that the council has listened to what people want and have come up with a way to allow things to go forward.

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**Darlington MP
Jenny Chapman**