

# WRITING A NEW CHAPTER FOR GLANWORTH'S COMMUNITY LIBRARY

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**Presented by the Delegates of Glanworth  
London Public Library Board Meeting  
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## OUR LIBRARY MATTERS

*"...having a local branch 100 yards from your front door can change your life." ~  
Zadie Smith*

By now it must be abundantly clear that the entire community of Glanworth is as deeply attached to its tiny library building as it is to its library service. There are those among you who may still not grasp the attachment we have to our little building. Outsiders look at our minuscule library and see a down-at-heel structure that has seen better days, too small and too insignificant to matter or mean anything to anyone. We see a gem. We see history. We see a community's passion and values. We see potential. We want you to be able to see what we see.

So we thank you for this opportunity to first explain our position and then to offer some concrete ideas that will greatly reduce the capital costs associated with the proposed repairs and renovations, which clearly pose the biggest threat to our library's continued existence. We have one goal, however, and that is to see our library restored, and renovated where necessary, so that it may continue to operate in our midst for years to come.

We are very excited at the prospect of collaboration and cooperation with the London Public Library. We look forward to a long-term relationship based on mutual respect and goodwill. We are presenting a case that expresses our community's passion and values, and our willingness to explore creative options. We know that we are presenting options that will benefit both the LPL and the community of Glanworth. We are offering a truly win-win scenario: Glanworth will be able to keep its beloved library and the LPL will have a much-improved asset.

But first some history.

## OUR CONNECTION TO THE PAST

*"A public library is the most enduring of memories; the trustiest monument of an event or a name or an affection; for it, and it only, is respected by wars and revolutions and survives them." ~ Mark Twain, 1894.*

There has been a library in the hamlet of Glanworth since the summer of 1912. The first books, however, were not dispensed from the present building but from

some of the shelves at the back of Tremaine's General Store, which was located on the southeast corner of the main intersection. And in true community spirit, so typical of rural and small town residents, Mr. Tremaine agreed to keep track of the books.

The citizens of Glanworth were an enterprising, dedicated and energetic group. By 1920 they had raised the monies needed in order to buy the property and build their community library where it stands today. The first Board meeting was held in the new premises on January 8, 1924.

Our little Glanworth library may very well be one of the oldest, smallest continually operating libraries in Ontario, possibly Canada. It is certainly the smallest and the oldest library building, to the best of our knowledge, in London's library system. For that reason alone, it deserves a heritage plaque, not the bulldozer.

On his website, Mayor Joe Fontana states that "London is a city rich in natural heritage and history...and we value both...our historical neighbourhoods dot the landscape with architecture from times past."

This tiny library building is a living example of just that. It is an example of Glanworth's proud pioneer spirit, a building that stands as a testament to the hard work, enthusiasm and dedication of our forefathers and foremothers, who had vision and were keen to ensure that books and learning be an integral part of our community. And we believe, as a community, that we cannot be cavalier with our heritage.

And what does the library mean to Glanworth at the present time, an area whose boundaries stretch well beyond the hamlet itself and into the rural areas whose roads bore the rural route address of Glanworth prior to annexation?

Our belief in community institutions, like the library, is stronger than any less earthy faith. Our library is a gateway to better, improved lives, especially for our youth.

But it's difficult to explain to people from sprawling urban areas what it is like to have so little at one's disposal, so little for our children. Only one tiny library! So it has become a local community hub, where families, many of whom are busy farm families with time constraints, can easily bring their children so that they may discover books and literature or do their homework. It is an accessible

library service for our seniors, who are reluctant to drive on city streets in order to reach other branches. For our young people, many of whom can walk, skip or jump 100 yards from their front door, it is a safe and well-known spot. This tiny library changes their lives!

Our library, has endured for 99 years. It has been the cornerstone of our community. It is landmark. It is unique. It is quaint, a delightful reminder of another time. But it is still used and loved. Because it is ours. This is our heritage, and it deserves to survive.

## **OUR LIBRARY IN CONTEXT**

### **London's Rural Library**

Unlike the other 15 libraries in the LPL system, Glanworth is not only the smallest and the oldest, it's rural. *It has always been a rural library.* So we suggest that a very different measuring stick be applied when considering the Glanworth Branch. We don't aspire to be the size of the Central library or Stoney Creek. We don't need to be. Our branch serves the *immediate needs of the community.* And that is good enough.

To give you an example, country library systems, such as Huron County's, use a tiered system approach. They acknowledge that all libraries are not created equal, yet each branch has a specific, recognized function and a place within the whole.

Branch I libraries are the main full-services branches and are located in the larger municipalities. Branch III libraries are those libraries located in the smallest, outlying communities of the county and are focused on serving the *immediate community's needs.*

This tiered system could serve as a model with which to approach the dilemma that the Glanworth branch seems to have created for the LPL. If indeed the LPL does not take a "one-size fits all" approach to its 16 branches, then we suggest that together we find a workable solution that will (a) acknowledge the kind of service this branch provides (b) acknowledge the valued place it has in the community's heart, both past and present, and (c) maintain it, adopting a different set of guidelines befitting its unique rural (and historical) status.

Surely within the context of the LPL, there is a niche for this unique and cherished library, this little rural “depot” branch with the long history. Let’s use our imagination and save this gem.

## **London’s Community Hub Strategy**

*“Children everywhere are like the seeds of the future of our world.”*

*Raffi Cavoukian, Singer & Founder of Child Honouring*

London’s Child & Youth Network stress the importance of community hubs in their document, *The Best for Our Children, Youth and Families: London’s Five Year Community Hub Implementation Plan, February 2010.*

What are community hubs? When you read their description, you can’t help but think of the Glanworth library branch: A “community hub is not just a safe place for you and your family to visit; it is also the heart of your community.”

London is planning to implement hubs that will create safe, family-centred neighbourhoods across the city. They do not need to implement one in Glanworth. No added expenditure necessary for the City of London, because we have one already. Indeed many of our reasons for keeping the library open fall well within many of the city’s programs and service philosophies around a civic commitment to our children and our youth, chief among them:

- Literacy, reading and education.
- Community Wellness: the creation of stronger communities, for the health and well-being of our children.

Glanworth’s children deserve an equal opportunity. Indeed, with so few services at their disposal in the village, they really only have the library. So in a very real sense, our kids are in a deficit situation when it comes to the availability to activities that children in other neighbourhoods enjoy as basics and staples of their daily lives.

Our kids love to read. They love books. They love this library. We are passionate about our library’s longstanding history in the community, but we are also deeply concerned about the negative impact the loss of the library will have on our youth and children. For this reason, we are determined to find options and to

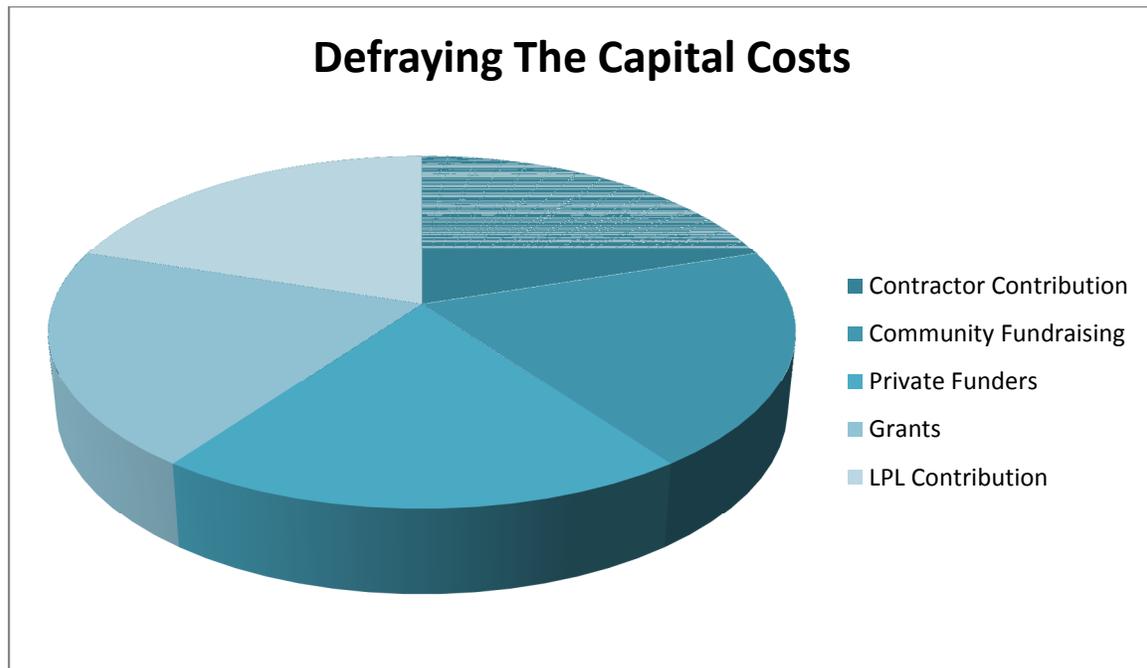
work in tandem with the LPL to keep this tiny bastion of literacy and learning alive and well in Glanworth.

## DEFRAYING COSTS: SOME OPTIONS

We set out to identify any potential funding sources that could be available to assist with the capital costs of the repairs and renovations, or to substantially reduce them. We found several ways that we can accomplish this:

1. Community enhancement/heritage grants & programs through governments and/or community foundations are available for projects like this one.
2. Community Contribution: through fundraising efforts.
3. Community Contractor Contribution: labour and materials on offer.
4. Private Funding: companies have expressed an interest to help.

The chart below by no means indicates the actual level of contribution of each of these options. This simply illustrates the four ways we could help alleviate the financial burden of the capital costs.



## Grants

The Friends of the Library Association donates funds to LPL for specific programs and services not covered by the Library's operating budget. We intend to form our own Association that will fulfill a similar role but one that raises and holds funds specifically to support Glanworth Branch needs.

In other words, by forming such an association, we are also planning for the future not just reacting to our library's current crisis, by ensuring that funds would be available to cover unforeseen needs that may arise in the future.

To avail ourselves of some of the government and/or private foundation grants that address projects such as ours, we must have not-for-profit status. This is a process that takes some time. For this reason, we are first applying for membership with the Urban League. This step will allow us to apply for available grants sooner than later. We are not ruling out the possibility of establishing a full not-for-profit organization for the library eventually.

Of course, the grant application process takes time as well. Trillium Foundation's fall deadline is almost upon us, to cite one example, but given time we could focus on developing a grant application for the spring 2012 deadline. Time will allow us to investigate other funding bodies as well. Already we are encouraged to continue from what we have learned. We simply need the time in order to accomplish all that we can achieve.

## The Community Contribution: Fundraising

Community fundraising is a solution that can be launched immediately. Glanworth residents have no shortage of ideas when it comes to fundraising, and many of our residents already have experience in event planning. We are a community, and there is nothing that can stop a community with a vision and a plan. We have already started to think about potential fundraising events that we can tailor to the upcoming holidays, right through the winter and well into spring.

- Pledge Drives
- Donations
- Events (garage sales, book sales, street fests, etc.)

Again, all we need is time. And that is what we are asking you for this evening. There is a world of possibilities opening up to us out there, but we are only just discovering what we can do and what we can achieve as a community. We have done remarkably well to date, considering that only a few short weeks ago we learned of the vote to close our branch. A mere five weeks later and already we have spoken to so many people, gathered so many ideas and have viable options that we are presenting tonight. So just imagine what the community of Glanworth is capable of if given more time.

We are finding enthusiastic and committed people willing to get on board to help, support and guide our initiatives, both within the community and beyond. With a little goodwill from within the ranks of the LPL to meet us halfway, there is no limit to what we can achieve.

### **Community Contribution: Offers of Labour and Materials**

While we realize that LPL building and maintenance work is carried out by city employers/contractors, we must mention that members of the community have come forward to generously offer their skills and their labour to repair and renovate the library building. Contractors and tradespeople of all skill sets have stepped forward. We are so proud of their generosity and of their keen desire to repair and restore this structure for the benefit of the entire community.

If there is any way that the community can assist the LPL with construction and/or maintenance tasks, we have the people and the manpower at the ready. Names have been collected, with their corresponding skill sets, and these details can be provided.

And building materials have also been generously offered!

### **Private Funding**

Another funding source that should not be overlooked is the private sector. Corporate funding is an important component of many community development projects. We have received some expressions of interest from the private sector. We look forward to being able to provide you with more information as it becomes available, and we assure you that we will continue to investigate potential funding opportunities that may arise from the corporate/private sector.

## WORKING TOGETHER

*“We acknowledge the many partnerships and collaborative projects that integrate the library into the fabric of our community and we thank the city of London for the support that ensures the lives of Londoners are enriched by having libraries in their neighbourhoods.”*

*2010 Report to the Community, Our Message London Public Library*

We agree: libraries enrich communities! Certainly our little library enriches ours. It is part of the fabric of our community. Which is why we want to save it. To that end, we are offering not only ideas but our funds and our hard work.

“Partnerships and collaborative projects”? Then please, partner and collaborate with the community of Glanworth. Our community, our neighbourhood is no less worthy than any other neighbourhood in the city. Perhaps, being so isolated and so neglected, we need that library even more than other neighbourhoods.

We only ask that the LPL will stand by its commitment to community engagement and cooperation. If we can all come to the table now, with the clear resolve to make this work, we can then take the next step together, to develop a solid, strategic plan to save this library.

For more information or to discuss in detail any aspect of this case we have put forth, please do not hesitate to contact us. We welcome the dialogue!

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