

**BOARD MINUTES**

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| **Title of Meeting:** | **Suffolk’s Libraries** |
| **Purpose:** | To further the development of Suffolk Libraries |
| **Date:** | Thursday 25th February 2021 |
| **Place:** | Virtual meeting via Zoom |
| **Time:** | 10am-12pm |
| **Attendees:** | * Tony Brown * Sylvia Knights * Debra Reay * Maureen Garratt-Simpson * Derrick Haley * David Styles * Sheila Fox * Bruce Leeke * Liz Ditton * Alison Leyshon * Kathy Oliver * Rebecca Leek * Georgie Quinn * Kevin Rodger |
| **Standing Invitees:** | * Jayne Austin (SCC) * Gemma Levi (SCC) * Sam Cayford (SCC) * Paul West (SCC) |
| **Invited:** | * Mandy Wilkinson (Head of Finance) * Laura Richardson (Governance Coordinator/Minute Taker) |

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| **No.** | **Agenda Item:** | **Actions:** |
|  | **Welcome and Apologies** *(Information)*  AL, DS, JA & GL  KR, SF |  |
|  | **Declarations of interest** *(Information)*  None. |  |
|  | **Review and Update Action Log** *(Decision)*  Updated, please see attached |  |
|  | **Review and agree Minutes of last meeting 17/12/20** *(Decision)*  Agreed as correct. |  |
|  | **Chief Executives Report**  BL: report gives a summary of work against 4 strategic pillars.  With the recent news announcement, services will slowly reopen from 12th April.  eBook borrowing has been the busiest ever over the last month.  Digital activities coordinator – Andy Wisher in the role now, working to develop and improve digital content and increase access.  Jumpstart January is being continued until the end of February.  Device to your door scheme – launching tomorrow (100 laptops and wireless dongles, colleagues dropping off and picking up devices 48 hours later), legacy programme so when this scheme is no longer needed devices can be loaned out from physical library sites.  Working with SCC to open 5 new/improved libraries by July.  LD: National Literary Trust Hub – national programme, Suffolk Libraries are playing a key role in improving literacy across Suffolk (KV can provide further details)  BL: going forward continue to create blended service of physical and digital content to support people in all areas, with varied needs to access as much as they can.  RL: is there enough outdoor space at library sites? Is there a need to partner with conservation charities etc?  BL: great idea, we will take forward. At least 5 libraries have garden space.  TB: local companies are keen to get involved, e.g., Beccles in Bloom.  DR: how will device to your door be delivered to remote locations?  BL: 5 hubs will host the devices, a main phoneline coordinated by one person who will book the delivery and collection of the devices. Hoping to increase to 10 hubs holding the devices.  TB: marketing of device to your door?  BL: thousands of flyers going out, working with DWP who have filtered contact lists of mobiles and email address of people who may be in more need of this than others, there is one other service like this currently in Somerset.  TB: Gateway to Opportunity ‘pitch’ update?  BL: still waiting for feedback from DWP with taking this forward. |  |
|  | **Finance Report and Management Accounts**  MW: accounts to end of January  Covid grants of £400k+, more coming in last quarter, meaning receiving £730k of support, create a surplus in this year’s accounts. Surplus from this year will be used to cover expected losses at end of 2021-22 financial year.  Still not charging fees and charges for late books etc until end of April, income will not be received until May.  Losing visa application service in Ipswich library due to government restructure, staff have worked very hard to make it work well for the local community, will affect next year’s income too.  Mobile libraries: BL: big investment made to improve existing vehicles, donor has come forward to potentially buy a new vehicle or put towards further work on the mobile libraries. MW: looked at cost of repairing existing ones against buying new ones and was more cost effective to improve the existing ones, looking into adding solar panels etc too. BL: even contacted Volvo about getting an electric vehicle, and it was too costly.  MW: roll out of rebranding still delayed whilst getting back up and running.  NPO and mental health restricted fund have a large surplus as couldn’t carry out most of what they had planned, will let the funders know about this, and is restricted for these services only.  Finance and Audit (SK): significant discussion at F&A about next year’s budget, further to Mandy’s points above - lots of unknowns and projects that haven’t been able to be fully completed, aware income streams next year will be affected by Covid still. F&A content with the proposal. |  |
|  | **Budget 2021-22**  Recommendation from F&A Committee – BL gave presentation.  LR to circulate BLs presentation to group.  Decision to be made by group at the end of presentation.  Plan A: two year budget that was presented to F&A recently, £200k deficit budget  Plan B: (includes developments that have affected the budget in the last week and a half) likely to be a deficit of £300k rather than £200k  BL asked group to think about whether to agree a plan here or take back to F&A to review.  SK: two important things to consider, reserves and retendering process. Happy to propose the £300k defect.  DH: agreed with SK on the £300k deficit, happy to agree at this meeting.  SK proposed that we accept the budget with a £300k deficit  DH: seconded the proposal  The group all raised their hands in agreement, no further queries were raised. | **LR** |
|  | **Business Development and Marketing**  TB: This group was originally created to support Suffolk Libraries marketing and income generation plans, when a new chair took over eventually the group was disbanded, believes would be beneficial to reinstate the committee.  Propose to develop a working group for the next 6 months to support the business development and green agenda/sustainability of Suffolk Libraries. Asked members to put their names forward if they would like to be a part of the working group.  BL supports the creation of the group.  RL/TB/SK/BL: discussion around when other key topics are raised to the board, LR/BL to discuss adding things to the next board meetings agenda(s).  TB: rebranding: suit of branding approved previously, would like to take this forward. BL shared screen with the group, all supportive of the branding.  DR: where are we with roll out of this branding?  BL: rolled out to 5 pilot sites, delays due to Covid logistics, planning to distribute to 10 further sites imminently and the website etc. can update further in the next couple of months. |  |
|  | **Committee Updates:**   * HR (KO) many HR policies were approved after some minor tweaks, LC is looking into creating a performance policy, training has been well attended since it has been offered digitally, new training on offer such as domestic abuse awareness * Health and Safety (MGS) many policies were approved here with only minor tweaks made, TOR were approved, H&S management system has been updated, a query on fire drills was raised ME confirmed they are held regularly, reiterated the high uptake of training now it is offered digitally, managers are being offered training on how to spot if their staff are struggling emotionally, ME retiring end of march. |  |
|  | **Policies** *(Decision)*  None to be approved currently. |  |
|  | **Update from Friends of Suffolk Libraries and Discover More Ltd (Trading Company)**  BL: trading company now set up, BL/TB/MW are directors, LR secretary. MW contacted auditors to get their advice on how to take forward with employees working for Discover More Ltd company, will detail further updates once available to the Board. |  |
|  | **NPO Update** *(Information)*  Discussed at board meeting 17.12.20 to add as a standing agenda item.  DR: attended first meeting for BLOC, one of 6 libraries pioneering this within library services. Big meeting coming up to create 7 year plan, rooted in the four strategic pillars of Suffolk Libraires. BLOC has helped shape the accessibility and diversity board recently. A really strong programme has been established, enriches the Suffolk libraries offer. Hoping to enrol a producer to help support this project. An artist has been sketching in libraries throughout lockdown, book of her artworks is being released in March. Stowmarket garden project: public art/environment project beginning soon. BLOC has been able to purchase equipment for new projects. Hadleigh creative hub is nearly ready for use. |  |
|  | **Suffolk Libraries Day**  Update from Nikki Hulse (Business Development Manager) NH joined the meeting at 11.58am.  NH: Saturday 20th March, and week leading up to that. Usually, a big annual fundraiser for Suffolk Libraries, different this year due to Covid. Newmarket Library have already raised £130 from a sponsored walk, other events include guess the weight of the hawk, companies are also sponsoring clothing for scarecrows in the scarecrow trail, inviting everyone in Suffolk to partake will be a piece in the press week of 8th March, as people register it will generate a map of where they are located so people can go for walks in their local area to look at the scarecrows. A virtual quiz is also running and have sold over 500 tickets for the book festival, discussion around whether to offer this annually. Prettys solicitors are sponsoring the online quiz for £2000. Various other contributions from companies have been received as well. Being well supported so far, really pleased. Marketing: press release went out this Tuesday, will be on all Suffolk Libraries social media, website and in sites, promoting in schools, guide and scout groups, newspaper article went out today and Radio Suffolk will be doing a piece. |  |
|  | **Any other business** *(Information or Decision depending on what needs reviewing)*   * (HMRC) Fit and Proper Person Tests for Board Members – should this be introduced? (BL) RL doesn’t carry out in other roles, TB doesn’t think something we need to do, BL will ask other organisations to see if they carry these out. LD had this done as part of being part of the CIO for the friends group. Bring feedback to the governance group. * Use of volunteers (BL/LD/TB) – bring to HR meeting, group agreed. * End of year award - would like board to select winners in future (TB/BL) – group agreed.   SK gave great thanks to ME who is soon retiring. |  |
|  | **Date of Next Meeting:**   * **Thursday 29th April 10am-12pm (zoom)** |  |

**The meeting closed at: pm**