

# Suffolk's Libraries IPS

The Industrial & Provident Society Limited enabling county-wide library services supported by Suffolk County Council

## OPEN BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Title of Meeting	Suffolk Libraries IPS - Board Meeting
Date	22 <sup>nd</sup> January 2015
Place	Castle Hill Community Centre
Time	11.15am – 1.15pm
Attendees	Tony Brown (Chair), Sylvia Knights (Vice Chair), Anne Mallalieu, Alison Wheeler (General Manager), Sue Buck, Jonathan Ogden (Honorary Secretary), Colin Rockall, Peter Callaghan, Stephen Taylor (SCC), Richard Hunt (SCC), Cllr Beccy Hopfensperger (SCC), Charlotte Clark, Marion Harvey
Invited	Nikki Sturmey (Clerk to the Board), Krystal Vittles (Libraries Innovation and Development manager), James Hargrave (IT Manager), Daniel Harvey (Community Team Lead), Mandy Wilkinson (Finance Manager), Paula Cunningham (SLS Manager)

		Action
1.	<p><b><u>Welcome and Apologies</u></b></p> <p>Apologies were received from Charlotte Clark.</p>	
2.	<p><b><u>Declaration of Interest</u></b></p> <p>None were declared.</p>	
3.	<p><b><u>Minutes of Previous Meeting 27<sup>th</sup> November 2015</u></b></p> <p>The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate account of discussions subject to the following amendments:</p> <p>Item 5.3 – this should read: ‘The Chair of the Staffing Committee’.</p> <p>Item 6 – the first line of the second paragraph should read: He stated that the Board were disappointed’.</p> <p>Item 6 – the last line of the 6<sup>th</sup> paragraph should read: Richard will speak with Steven Watts to arrange invitations for Suffolk Libraries staff to be invited to the Working Together Forum.</p> <p>Subsequent to the last meeting the Contract Sum was agreed. This will be added to item 6 for the purpose of recording this in the minutes.</p> <p><b><u>Matters Arising</u></b></p> <p><b><u>IT Update</u></b></p>	

	<p>The IT Manager gave an update. The IT Manager and General Manager met with Chris Bally of SCC yesterday to discuss IT services provided by Suffolk IT from April 2015, going forward. The areas discussed were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replacement of the self service machines in libraries. These machines are running on XP which is obsolete and are not fit for purpose. The intention is to bring the self service contract in-house. A conversation is needed with SCC regarding the capital costs for these.</li> <li>• The out of hours service was also discussed and this will now be brought in-house. The will need to be formalised and a proposal will be worked up.</li> <li>• There is a notional agreement that the IT refund for dual costs will be paid before the end of this financial year. The General Manager will contact Geoff Dobson to follow this up.</li> <li>• The invoice from SCC for IT costs has not been received yet.</li> </ul> <p>The IT Manager also gave a brief update on the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The PC refresh has been affected by the closure of CityLink as the supplier exclusively used this courier. The refresh has been postponed for a few weeks until the new PCs can be delivered to individual sites.</li> <li>• Woodbridge and Stowmarket were both completed last week.</li> <li>• The IT Manager is conscious that some sites are still waiting and a new schedule has been put in place.</li> <li>• Sudbury – the installation had stalled here as there was building work taking place but this can now go ahead as they IT Manager received confirmation yesterday that the builders would cover any damage.</li> </ul> <p>The Chair thanked the IT Manager for the update and agreed that some aspects of this were out of the control of Suffolk Libraries but that communication to branches is vital.</p>	AW
4.	<p><b><u>Decisions</u></b></p> <p><b>1. Inter Library Loans</b></p> <p>The recommendation to the full Board that there are increases in charges for the Inter Library Loan service was agreed. This will now be passed to Suffolk County Council for their agreement and approval.</p> <p><b>2. Change of Hours for Stowmarket, Lavenham and Wickham Market</b></p> <p>The changes to the opening hours for Stowmarket, Lavenham and Wickham Market were approved. Stephen Taylor, SCC, was grateful to Mike Ellwood for putting together a simple formula to ensure an Environmental Impact Assessment was used in this process. The guidelines for this are on the website although as few tweaks need to be made to the process.</p>	
5.	<p><b><u>Update from Committees</u></b></p>	H

## **1. Finance and Audit**

The Chair of the Finance and Audit Committee updated the Board on discussions at the Committee meeting in December:

- IT Rebate/Relationship
- Contract Sum
- Inter Library Loans

All of these have been covered in today's meeting.

Two further areas of discussion were:

- Gift Aid – this was discussed and needs some slight tweaking. The paper will be given to members at the Community Group Meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2015.
- Lowestoft Café – there is a plan to have a meeting with EFMS to discuss how to make this more profitable. The key aim is to get EFMS to take more ownership. The Manager of Lowestoft Library will be included in discussions.

## **2. Governance and Membership**

The Chair of the Governance Committee updated the Board on discussions at the Committee meeting in December:

- Big event
- Community Group meeting
- Glemsford/smaller libraries were discussed re: behavioral issues

## **3. Staffing**

The Chair of the Staffing Committee updated the Board on discussions at the Committee meeting in January:

- Staff advisory group – this has been re launched and the group have requested to have one member per library
- Leadership programme – this has been extremely well received and is now drawing to a close.
- Terms of Reference – this were discussed and revised at the Staffing Committee and the Chair requested that they be reviewed and accepted by the Board. All were in agreement.

## **4. Business Development and Marketing**

The Chair of the Business Development and Marketing Committee updated the Board on discussions at the Committee meeting in January. This was the first meeting of this Committee and the priorities were agreed as follows:

1. Education and Literacy
2. Health and wellbeing
3. Business and economic development
4. Branding and signage

	<p><b><u>Meetings Update</u></b></p> <p>The Chair gave an update on the Suffolk Libraries presentation to full Council on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2014. This meeting was very positive and it was helpful that it coincided with the William Sieghart report on the Today Programme which held Suffolk Libraries up as 'Gold Standard'. There has also been lots of positive media coverage.</p> <p>Deborah Cadman (the Chief Executive) spoke with Suffolk Libraries representatives after the event and stated she understood the aspirations of Suffolk Libraries to work with different sectors across the County Council and her understanding of how difficult it is to tap into these areas. She is happy for Suffolk Libraries to include her involvement with contacting other departments in the County Council.</p> <p>Councilor Hopfensperger stated that this presentation to full council should take place on a yearly basis. She also mentioned that she has recently been approached by Bury Library for funding for equipment for a skills challenge initiative and she was able to give £2k to them. She stressed that communication with the local County Councilor by libraries should be kept open as they are able to help.</p> <p>The General Manager has recently been invited to speak at an All Party Parliamentary Panel at Westminster which was a great success. Some members of the Cabinet, including the Head of Libraries at DCMS, were in attendance and were interested in the innovative practice of Suffolk Libraries. Joanna Trollope was also in attendance and has agreed to be the speaker at the Suffolk Libraries AGM in September 2015.</p>	
8.	<p><b><u>SLS Options Appraisal</u></b></p> <p>The Libraries Innovation and Development Manager referred to the paper she had provided the Board.</p> <p>The Schools Library Service (hereafter referred to as 'SLS') is a traded service to schools in Suffolk that includes provision of expert knowledge, books and artefacts, topic boxes and visits by the SLS mobile library to primary schools. These services are currently offered to schools via a package or 'menu' of choices which schools then choose from with regards to their current needs. The aim of SLS is to be a self-sustaining arm of Suffolk Libraries; wholly part of the wider library offer across the county, but working tangentially within the educational context.</p> <p>The provision of a schools' library service is not a statutory requirement and allows schools to either opt-in or opt-out of the service. The Suffolk SLS has a rich history of being immersed in literacy and library issues across the county's schools and has been able to remain as a service in the face of changes locally and nationally. However, due to a range of factors, SLS is losing money and during the financial year 2013/2014 only reached break-even through support from the wider Suffolk Libraries service and through drawing-down from the SLS reserves. This indicates quite clearly that the SLS is unable to perform one of its major undertakings in</p>	

	<p>being a self-sustaining function of the wider library service.</p> <p>A forensic investigation of SLS finances was prompted when <i>School's Choice</i> showed interested in absorbing the service into their emerging schools offer. This investigation was able to draw out to what extent SLS been supported by Suffolk Libraries over the previous two years.</p> <p>It was agreed by the Suffolk Libraries Board that this is financially unsustainable for the service and it was agreed to conduct an options appraisal that would evaluate the following three options for the future of SLS:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>To undertake a review of the Schools Library Service and offer it for transfer to Schools Choice in one year's time (April 2016)</i></li> <li>2. <i>To undertake a radical review of the Schools Library Service, investigate how it fits Suffolk Libraries' relationships to schools and to consider a more integrated model which is more congruent with the Society's own ambitions around families and literacy</i></li> <li>3. <i>To close the Schools Library Service</i></li> </ol> <p>A task force was formed and, after taking all factors into account, it has been proposed that Option 2 is the best way forward. The outcome for this work is September 2015.</p> <p>The Board agreed to support this recommendation and felt it was entirely appropriate to look at an integrated model around families and literacy.</p> <p>The Board gave their thanks for the work of SLS and colleagues and also for the libraries Innovation and Development Manager who produced a comprehensive review and paper. The SLS Manager, Paul Cunningham, also gave his thanks to the Libraries Innovation and Development Manager as he is grateful for the balanced and constructive outcome.</p> <p>The marketing and communications around this change will be key and challenging. The General Manager confirmed that she will send a message to the SLS team to reassure them that Suffolk Libraries are creating something different and the goal will be to ensure that staff will not be involved in redundancies. Staff will be moved around the Suffolk Libraries service if needed.</p> <p>Richard Hunt suggested that the Libraries Innovation and Development Manager speak with Suffolk Family Focus to highlight the new, improved, SLS offer. The Libraries Innovation and Development Manager has tried and had no joy trying to contact this group. This will be followed up.</p> <p>The Board formally agreed to adopt option 2.</p>	KV/RH
7.	<p><b><u>Management Reports</u></b></p> <p><b>1. Financial</b></p>	

The Finance Manager updated the Board with the Management Accounts as at the end of December 2014. The points highlighted were:

- The year to date figures for the total library service is showing a deficit of 91K with a year to date deficit of 76K. This is a positive variance against budget of 34K.
- The forecast contains the dual SCC IT costs which will be refunded to Suffolk Libraries. It is expected that this refund will be paid soon.
- Employee costs continue to be below budget.
- Direct library costs – there was an overspend of 4K for the month which was due to a large stationary order.
- The reduced relief staff costs continue to be impressive due to the very hard work from staff.
- REDACTED

## **2. General Manager**

The Finance Manager updated the Board with the Management Accounts as at the end of December 2014. The following areas were covered in the report:

1. National profile
2. Contract monitoring
3. Staffing update
4. Community Libraries
5. Stock development and trends
6. Developments and Innovation
7. Safety and Equalities

### **Bookfest**

The draft of the Suffolk Libraries Bookfest programme booklet was shown to the Board and discussed and the General Manager updated the Board on the following:

- Details are now on the website at [www.suffolklibraries.co.uk/bookfest](http://www.suffolklibraries.co.uk/bookfest)
- There are three media partners – EADT, Radio Suffolk and Suffolk Magazine
- The sponsors for the event are BlueStar HR, Birketts Solicitors and Lighthouse who are each giving some money towards the events. Each of the sponsors will attend and event and introduce an author.
- Fred Olsen cruise lines have offered a free weekend cruise to Amsterdam.
- There has been lots of support from writers and Erica James has offered her time at no cost.
- Tickets will cost between £8-£10 and costs will be covered (at a minimum).

The Board agreed that this was a great initiative and the brochure looks very professional.

### **Increase in Staff Absence**

There has been a noticeable increase in staff absence in comparison from Dec 2013 and Peter Callaghan questioned the General Manager on the factors of why this had happened. The General Manager stated that the figures from 2013 were from Suffolk IT and the figures collated now, through our own IT systems were much more reliable. Another factor is that there are a number of long-term



	<p>2. Update and news from Suffolk Libraries (to include the Bookfest)</p> <p>3. How are groups getting on?</p> <p>4. Help and Support (status, gift aid etc.)</p> <p>5. Open session for groups to discuss/query and burning issues</p> <p>6. Update on what groups have raised/spent throughout the year and guidance on what they could spend their funds on</p> <p>It was suggested that 2 flip charts are available for group members to make comments on. The should be headed as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What we have done well</li> <li>• What we need help with</li> </ul> <p>These notes can then be taken away and answered/shared.</p>	
11.	<p><b><u>Any Other Business</u></b></p> <p>There were no other matters for discussion.</p>	
12.	<p><b><u>Date of Next Meeting:</u></b></p> <p>26<sup>th</sup> March 2015, Bury Library</p>	