



BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Title of Meeting:	Suffolk's Libraries
Purpose:	To further the development of Suffolk Libraries
Date:	Thursday 29 th April 2021
Place:	Virtual meeting via Zoom
Time:	10am-12pm
Attendees:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jayne Austin (SCC) • Gemma Levi (SCC) • Sam Cayford (SCC) • Paul West (SCC)
Invited:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandy Wilkinson (Head of Finance) • Laura Richardson (Governance Coordinator/Minute Taker)

No.	Agenda Item:	Actions:
1.	Welcome and Apologies (<i>Information</i>) Apologies: Paul West, Sam Cayford, Gemma Levi, Kevin Rodger, David Styles and Alison Leyshon	
2.	Declarations of interest (<i>Information</i>) <i>None</i>	
3.	Review and Update Action Log (<i>Decision</i>) <i>See attached.</i>	
4.	Review and agree Minutes of last meeting 25/02/21 (<i>Decision</i>)	
5.	Committee Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance and Audit – SK: Met 25th March, discussed finance situation, which will be covered again today. Lots of discussion around income generation, will be taken forward by Business Development and Sustainability Group. Melissa Matthews here to give NPO update today. All Chromebases being replaced, ongoing issues with self-service, Ian Young was looking into with provider 	

	<p>Dootrix, now resolved. No SPINE update due to lockdown. Significant underspend from the content and resources team due to lockdowns, confident will be used next year. First library to trial Patron Point software which will signpost customers to library stock they might like and improve personalised marketing. Featherbed Tales project now beginning, customers can record themselves reading a story and email to loved ones/friends. KO: Is there confidence in Dootrix as the provider for self-service? BL: no historical issues, a system update created some issues, withheld invoice from Dootrix, will be monitoring closely. LD: Lovely idea of the Featherbed Tales project, BL: They approached us with the project idea, started yesterday.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance and Risk – BL: reviewed many policies, board confidentiality, CCTV, Data Protection, Displays and Exhibitions, Information Management, Photography in Libraries and Standing Orders. Only minor amends made. Discussed governance team structure with Mike Ellwood retiring, thorough handover to Gareth Lewry, new Compliance Manager, with support from Laura Richardson, Governance Coordinator. Mike Ellwood passed his thanks to everyone for this support. • HR – KO: Wide range discussion about use of volunteers, felt they are well supported by staff and with mandatory training available to them. Laura Cooke gave thorough updates of the policies reviewed, all approved by the group. New Managing Cancer in the Workplace group has been developed, considering being extended to customers too. First annual staff award ceremony was recorded of everyone receiving their awards. Kickstart programme going really well. Excellent staff engagement with training, new courses in the pipeline. Actions being forwarded from previous staff engagement surveys. TB: cancer support group had second meeting this week, would like to hear feedback at next meeting. BL: Going really well, plans to rekindle relationship with Macmillan to support extending this to customers. • Health and Safety – MGS: met on 22nd April, Gareth Lewry gave health and safety update. Looked at COSHH guidance, alarm systems, staff safety, water testing, mixer taps being installed. Monthly checks on buildings being carried out, asbestos issues being dealt with. Bomb threat recently in Woodbridge, so library was closed as a precaution, there was no bomb found. Discussion around Hot Weather Policy being developed, if buildings reach 30 degrees considered hot weather, group reviewing the policy and will let LR know any comments by 12th May. Training: May-July risk assessment and lone working training being rolled out, more to follow in September. 	
6.	<p>NPO Update: BLOC Programme Proposal – Aims: 2018-2023: building libraries as a gateway into culture. 2023–2027: develop Suffolk Libraries as a national centre of training and research for early years practice.</p> <p>Melissa Matthews (MM): MM shared her screen and showed a PowerPoint presentation to give an overview of the programme, would like to reinvest in the programme. Arts Council funded programme, £704,000 over 4 year period. Mission is for every child in Suffolk to have a library card. Want to challenge people’s perception of libraries. Four key programme aims. National recognition in supporting accessibility and diversity within Suffolk Libraries. Top level risks and how the project mitigates these risks:</p> <p>Not delivering against the contractual requirements of project funding: A detailed business plan has been created to ensure the programme remains on track.</p>	

	<p>Lack of diversity across the organisation from the Board to the frontline: BLOC has shared learning and supported the development of an organisation wide diversity strategy.</p> <p>Staff – a lack of confidence, skills and capacity to engage with the programme: BLOC undertook a reviewal process with front line staff and have used feedback to inform planning to ensure delivery does not lose momentum and remains relevant to the day to day running of libraries.</p> <p>Contract Renewal - Suffolk County Council: The programme has a strong relationship with SCC and a representative supports the strategic development of the programmes offer via the BLOC Programme board.</p> <p>Just received a further £77k funding for the project. Opportunities from continuing the project: staff training opportunities, quality of data to meet audience needs, keep National Portfolio status, opens doors for additional funding opportunities, programme could support use of Spektrix software to capture previously lost data. DH: could presentation please be shared? MM: Send to LR to share with the board. DR: Gave great thanks and support to MMs work on this project. SK: Supported DRs point, how amazing the work MM and her team have done and are doing is. JA: Recommended MMs proposal to the board, fully supported MMs proposal, meets SCC priorities, and praise to MM and her team. TB: How does rebidding process work, is it done internally? MM: As part of extension year, we have to rebid, which will be part of MMs role to put this together. Already started the process pre-Covid by carrying out research back in 2020. Will need to incorporate into Arts Council new 10 year strategy which has recently been released (MM to send to LR to circulate). TB: Key points as to how we meet the accessibility and diversity requirements? MM: Two elements to this, how Suffolk libraries work with existing stakeholders, and how recruit to programme externally. Accessibility and Diversity Board in place, Champions group in place, unconscious bias training available to staff. JA: Creative Case for Diversity is about embedding diversity across the organisation, includes workforce governance. TB: Gave support on professionalism of presentation and running of the programme. Group gave unanimous support to the rebidding proposal. DR: Bring proposal back to the Board in August – LR to add to agenda.</p>	
7.	<p>Chief Executives Report</p> <p>BL: Set out against strategic pillars, this report covers three of the four as no update for measuring impact on this occasion.</p> <p>Libraries are reopening gradually in line with government guidelines, if plans follow the current roadmap hoping to go ahead with Summer Reading Challenge etc if restrictions continue easing.</p> <p>Projects: Circular art auction, fundraising opportunity and local artists can showcase their work, idea and work has come from a Kickstart worker (Ella), demonstrates the work young people can produce with the support of the programme. Author talks for Suffolk Libraries Day were really well received, hoping to carry out next year as well. Featherbed Tales as discussed earlier has just launched. LD: Marketing case studies, impact of ‘Device to your Door’ with two people being employed, and the Kickstart member generating the circular artwork auction would be great examples. GQ: How is the customer service usage percentage calculated? BL: Zendesk software sends customers a question and evaluates their responses. LD: Had experience of this recently, it was quick and easy to use, hopefully receives good uptake in responses as</p>	

not lengthy to answer. TB: Saturday recently in Beccles was their busiest day so far, staff were pleased to see the turnout. LD and DH: Local library has received positive feedback from customers, including children.

Finance Report and Management Accounts

Statement from CEO Bruce Leeke:

“I wanted to update everyone on our financial position at the end of the last financial year, which ended on 31st March 2021.

At the end of 2020/21 we reported a surplus of £647k. *This has altered from the £730K reported in the Accounts attached to the Board Report due to additional expenditure becoming known and a re-categorisation of the Device to Your Door Grant to restricted funding.* This may, at first glance, seem like a healthy position to be in, but I want to be transparent about the story behind the numbers as this is not a time to be complacent.

Like many organisations our income generating activities, such as fines and charges and room hire, suffered during lockdown and we lost out on around £500k. This loss was partly offset by a reduction in staff costs due to the way we had to operate during the various lockdowns.

Suffolk County Council have been very supportive during the pandemic, continuing to provide our contracted funding in full to ensure that none of our staff needed to be furloughed.

During 2020/21 we were eligible for and secured substantial COVID recovery grants. These not only helped us last year but will be needed to help us meet future challenges that our organisation and local communities will face in the years ahead. Without these one-off grants we would have seen an actual loss of £212k. The surplus in 2020/21 is partly offset by a deficit budget of £320k for 2021/22. This deficit could grow if the immediate recovery doesn't go as smoothly as everyone hopes and our ability to start generating income is once again restricted.

8.

The current financial position gives us some breathing space and the chance to plan ahead but we know the future will be tough. Our costs grow every year and we are facing a global economic crisis which will inevitably have an impact in the years to come.

Your hard work during lockdown has shown the difference a library service can make even when our normal activities are suspended. The value of what we do has been widely recognised and appreciated by customers and the organisations we work with. The pandemic has affected everyone and there is huge potential for us to play a key role in helping communities recover.

This is why it's still vital for us to fundraise and for people to recognise that we are a charity that is a 'good cause' – in fact I'd argue we're a 'great cause'. Raising our own funds puts us in a stronger position to maintain what the government has recognised as an essential service and to go on developing new services and ideas to make life better for the people who need us.

I hope this helps to explain our financial position. To summarise, in the short term we have a small financial buffer, due to the surplus from 2020/21, to protect our

	<p>organisation in an unpredictable world. This puts us in a stable place for 2021/22 but we will need to work hard to ensure we continue to be a successful and sustainable organisation in such a changeable environment in future years.”</p> <p>MW: confirm surplus of £647k will be submitted to auditors as our final position. Covid grants were £860k. £90k from council recently. Benefitted from having so many sites because grants given for each location, update further at next meeting. Prison contract going forward, disappointingly Suffolk Libraries only received 0.4% rise from People Plus. Prison staff were given the 1.89% rise in April alongside all library staff. ‘Device to your Door’ recategorisation moved to be a restricted funds, to allow the project to run through to December 2021. Mobile libraries are having their checks carried out by new provider, proactive and cost efficient company, still looking into installation of solar panels on the libraries. Libraries reopening gradually (began 12th April), some funds will be needed to support PPE requirements going forward. Lots of libraries relocating, will update on figures when available. In the future Long Melford library may need a new premises, still looking into this. Capel St Mary is nearing its lease end, will keep board updated of progress.</p> <p>KO: Has previous mention of benefactor who wanted to donate to the libraries been taken into consideration?</p> <p>MW: Will approach the potential donor when mechanical works have been carried out to see where they would like to contribute.</p> <p>KO: Efficiency of using diesel vehicles going forward?</p> <p>MW: Environmental cost of building new vehicles is too high, looking into ways to reduce carbon footprint etc of existing vehicles with the budget allocated.</p> <p>TB: Could MW add a one or two line summary on the libraries relocating?</p> <p>MW: Yes, this will be added.</p>	
<p>9.</p>	<p>Business Development and Sustainability: <i>(Decision)</i> Green agenda, business development etc. <i>(added from discussion at the last board meeting)</i></p> <p>TB: Business Development and Sustainability Working Group - Provisional focuses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market intelligence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why don't people use their libraries? • Competitive analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Whose business could we compete for? • Growth opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How can we increase our commercial and political impact? • Communication channels <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do we get complex messages to fragmented target groups? • Skills, capacity, and finance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What do we have? Where is it located (e.g. with partners)? How can we afford it? • A greener library service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How can we provide leadership in our communities in the quest for sustainability in Suffolk? <p>This group are planning to meet for the first time on Tuesday 11th May.</p> <p>Green agenda: Part of our role as a responsible employer and contract with SCC.</p>	

	DH: Political impact: use visual and infographics to demonstrate everything Suffolk Libraries has to offer LR to send the Board the Suffolk Libraries branding guidelines.	
10.	<p>Policies (<i>Information</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board Confidentiality Procedure – approved by Governance and Risk Committee 3/4/21 – adopted by the board • Mediation Policy – approved by HR Committee 1/4/21 – TB: has been successfully applied in three cases already, policy is very constructive and supportive approach to issues. KO: mediators need to be trained, Laura Cooke is trained, and Emma Brennan is undergoing her training, other libraries are partaking in this too. Adopted by the board • Variation of Contract Policy - approved by HR Committee 1/4/21 – adopted by the board 	
11.	<p>Running hybrid meetings into the future: Possible amendment to Suffolk Libraries IPS Rules to reflect future need to run hybrid meetings (including AGMs)</p> <p>Group agreed to keep rules as are, sufficient enough Trial technology in a committee meeting</p> <p>Current Charity Commission guidance says that even though the emergency Governance and Insolvency legislation, which enabled meetings to be held online even if not in the governing document, is ending, that meetings can continue in this way, despite the legislation ending - but this decision should be recorded. Group supported hybrid options in the future.</p>	
12.	<p>Any other business (<i>Information or Decision depending on what needs reviewing</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KO: Praise to library staff for undertaking twice weekly testing, and offering collection of the test kits to staff and customers, TB and group agreed to not make mandatory, but encourage all to self test prior to attending in person meetings. 	
13.	<p>Date of next meeting: (<i>Information</i>) Thursday 24th June 10am-12pm</p>	

The meeting closed at: 12.10pm