

OPEN BOARD MINUTES

Title of Meeting:	Suffolk's Libraries Board Meeting
Purpose:	To further the development of Suffolk Libraries
Date:	Thursday 25 th August 2022
Place:	Hybrid meeting in person at Stowmarket Library as well as via Zoom
Times:	4pm-6pm
Attendees:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belle Bradley (Board Member) • Bruce Leeke (CEO) • Debra Reay (Board Member) (Chair) • Derrick Haley (Board Member) • Kathy Oliver (Board Member) • Krupa Sodha (Board Member) • Liz Ditton (Board Member) • Maureen Garratt-Simpson (Board Member) • Rebecca Leek (Board Member) • Sylvia Knights (Board Member) (Vice Chair) • Tony Brown (Board Member)
Standing Invitees:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Andy Cuthbertson (Senior Commissioner at SCC for SL) • Councillor Bobby Bennett (SCC) • Gemma Levi (SCC) • Jayne Austin (SCC) • Sam Cayford (SCC)
Invited:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laura Richardson (Governance Coordinator/Minute Taker) • Mandy Wilkinson (Head of Finance) • Melissa Matthews (Creative Programmes Manager) • Sophie Curle (Larking Gowen)

No.	Item:
1.	<p>Welcome and Apologies (<i>Information</i>)</p> <p>Apologies: DR/TB/GL/JA/SCa. Sylvia will be chairing this meeting. Attending via zoom: LD/DH/BB/AC/MM/MGS <i>(Reminder to speak to the microphone in the centre of room during hybrid meetings)</i></p>
2.	<p>Auditors Report – Larking Gowen</p> <p>SCu: gave overview of the audit, highlighting key figures for context. Then summary of board report and representation letter. Audit went well, positive outcome. Deficit 328,000, which was expected. Balance sheet mostly stable compared to previous year. Reserves policy: states 950,000 currently at 1.1 million, reported defect without covid grants would be 822,000. Board approved the accounts by show of hand (including those on zoom). Accounts were then signed. SK gave thanks to the Auditors.</p>
3.	<p>Declarations of Interest (<i>Information</i>)</p> <p>None.</p>

4.	<p>Review and Update Action Log (<i>Information</i>) <i>All actions are complete</i></p>
5.	<p>Review and agree Minutes of last meeting 23/6/2022 (<i>Decision</i>) Group approved the minutes of 23/6/22.</p>
6.	<p>Chief Executives Report (<i>Information</i>) Bruce gave overview of the report to Andy. Board approved taking on of three new prison library contracts. Suffolk Libraries is managing the entire contract. 10 year anniversary plans going well. Discover More passed expression of interest stage with arts council which could be matched by SCC, deadline for full application is 12th September (for 260,000 match funded) KO: Gave praise to James Powell work in the 10 year anniversary celebrations. BL agreed and also gave praise to Andy Wisner who developed lots of the video clips. RL/BL discussed difficulties with recruitment, such as pay, cost of petrol. SK: Cost of living: could Suffolk libraries provide a cost of living fund for staff should they need support, but may not qualify for benefit support for example. RL suggested providing a list of benefits for employees perhaps with partners such as co-op for 10% off groceries as an example. BL to look into. DH: Agreed with SK's concerns. Discussion around libraries as warm spaces, social supermarket, clothes donation points in libraries, local suppliers to help by supporting hot drinks customers in the colder months. SK mentioned rise in utilities costs. BL: Matt Shenton is monitoring grant finder software, any board members that see any funds available to share with BL/MW.</p>
7.	<p>Finance Report and Management Accounts (<i>Information</i>) Some revenue options are increasing such as fines and charges, room hire, will donation of 10,000 from a member of public although not a member. MW updating forecast every month. Vertas have provided a prediction of utility bills increasing from 29p a unit to 49p a unit, meaning Ipswich library could potentially cost 7,500 a month to heat. May be an interim national minimum wage rise too, which would use up a large percentage of the reserves to cover – monitoring this. MW continuing to chase the work needed externally at Woodbridge library. AC: was raised at a recent meeting, now has seen pictures will continue to look into getting funding arranged for work to begin.</p>
8.	<p>NPO Update (<i>Information</i>) MM began her update at 4.59pm. MM shared a presentation with the board. KO: Gave praise to Lowestoft beach hut project.</p>

9.	<p>Youth Working Group (Decision)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal from Belle and Krupa (for approval) <i>(Please read beforehand if possible, and any queries can be sent to Belle or Krupa directly before the meeting if helpful)</i> • Opportunity for that age group to get involved in Suffolk libraries as it begins its next journey following 10 year celebrations • BB and KS will run and would ask for support when the group grows • Great CV opportunity for young people • SK great initiative and opportunity for young people • DH and LD agreed • How does youth council link – this is the same group, will check final name with MM • BL and KO support the initiative, please ask for any support needed. unanimous show of hands in support
10.	<p>Policies (Decision)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board Code of Conduct to be approved (no changes) • Show of hands for approval.
11.	<p>Environmental sustainability (Information)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal update from Bruce Leeke (CEO). • Jenny Patch is lead role on ESFG and is running campaign to recruit more staff to be involved. • Trailing books without plastic covers at Stowmarket to monitor how they do • Action plan is in progress and closely monitored • Creating a calendar of activity to make it fun and engaging • Looking into more grant funding to support group further • Green Fridays – celebrate weekly environmental projects in the libraries starting end of September • Meeting Tim from SCC to discuss grant funding opportunities
12.	<p>Committee Updates: (Information)</p> <p>12.1 Finance and Audit – met 17/8/22, auditors report as given today was presented by Giles at this meeting.SPINE update still recovering, physical loans at 78% of pre covid levels. Summer reading challenge increasingly popular, my Suffolk story completed. No major IT issues, new filter system in place to more closely monitor. New self service kiosks being rolled out. Moreton hall one plus hours are monitored on CCTV via Stowmarket library as hours match. Contract extension has now been signed.</p> <p>12.2 Governance and Risk – not met since last meeting</p> <p>12.3 HR – met 7/7/22. Covid safety measures such as screens are still available if staff would still like them. Staff no longer need 2 negative tests to return to work, can return if they feel well after 5 days. Targeting job fairs to support recruitment. Wellbeing evaluation framework being developed, Jane Cox taking lead on wellbeing champions and recruiting more (potentially opening to volunteers too). Six peripatetic LIAs in post across county to cover relief and sickness. There will soon be 7 undertaking the CILIP apprenticeship programme. Virtual training still most popular. Sickness levels reducing slightly, covid still one of main absences. Praise to HR team for their continual hard work to support staff. KS: Is there update on fundraising manager post? BL: one more second interview next week then can appoint.</p> <p>12.4 Health and Safety – not met since last meeting.</p> <p>12.5 Business Development & Sustainability Working Group – <i>no update since last meeting</i></p>

13.	<p>Risk (Information) Verbal update from Bruce Leeke (CEO) - Financial challenges that are to come due to inflation, minimum wage rises, increasing running costs and cost of living crisis e.g. utilities rising. If SCC receive less funding than expected in December, then decisions will need to be made which will be run by F&A and the board at the time (All hypothetical scenarios at the moment such as closing some on Sundays, closing some sites fully, reducing central team as potential examples). AC: continue to keep open communication with AC and BL to mitigate as much as possible and find ways SCC can support Suffolk Libraries.</p>
14.	<p>Any other business (Information or Decision depending on what needs reviewing)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit to the Stock Unit – suggested date and time of 23rd September 9.30-12.15 for 6 board members (can arrange a second visit if needed for more to attend) – all to please let LR know if attending (x3 so far) – LR to contact PH to rearrange to January. • Please keep LR informed of any mandatory training you have completed • Meeting dates for 22/23 attached (subject to change)
15.	<p>Date of next meeting: (Information) 27th October 2022 4pm-6pm – Stowmarket Library or Zoom</p>