

Board Meeting Minutes

Title of Meeting:	Suffolk's Libraries Board Meeting
Purpose:	To further the development of Suffolk Libraries
Date:	Thursday 26 th August 2021
Place:	Virtual meeting via Zoom
Times:	10am-12pm
Attendees:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tony Brown (Board Member) (Chair) • Sylvia Knights (Board Member) (Vice Chair) • Debra Reay (Board Member) • Maureen Garratt-Simpson (Board Member) • Derrick Haley (Board Member) • Sheila Fox (Board Member) • Bruce Leeke (CEO) • Liz Ditton (Board Member) • Kathy Oliver (Board Member) • Rebecca Leek (Board Member) • Kevin Rodger (Board Member)
Standing Invitees:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jayne Austin (SCC) • Gemma Levi (SCC) • Sam Cayford (SCC) • Councillor Andrew Reid (SCC)
Invited:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giles Kerkham (Larking Gowen) • Mandy Wilkinson (Head of Finance) • Laura Richardson (Governance Coordinator/Minute Taker) • Melissa Matthews (Creative Programmes Manager) • Krystal Vittles (Head of Service Delivery)

No.	Item:
1.	Welcome and Apologies <i>(Information)</i> Apologies: Kathy Oliver, Kevin Rodger, Sheila Fox, Gemma Levi, Jayne Austin
2.	Declarations of Interest <i>(Information)</i> None

	<p>Auditors report on Accounts Year ending 31st March 2021 (<i>Information</i>)</p> <p>SK introduced GK. Gave overview of current situation as contract negotiations are still ongoing, waiting for contract extension to July 2024 be agreed and signed. Going concern statement will be amended, GK will gave a further update on this. SK gave thanks to MW and GK for their work on this.</p> <p>GK: Unusual but expected situation for Suffolk Libraries, as numerous buildings have been closed for a long period of time during the pandemic, and covid grants have been received for each site giving a large surplus. Fortunate to also receive restart grants.</p> <p>Going concern: The question to ask is 'Can Suffolk Libraries continue to operate for the 12 months' if contract is not agreed'. The contract is almost agreed, unfortunately legal teams are on holiday so final wording amends are still to be agreed and signed off. The finances of Suffolk Libraries is secure through to September 2022 based on figures presented to GK by MW on a reviewed budget and cash forecast.</p> <p>Sustainability: planning for contract negotiations following tender of contract in 2024</p> <p>Proposing revised disclosure (MW circulated to board 25.8.21) – see attached.</p> <p>SK: Agrees wording is correct, have all board members reviewed this? LR: All Board members raised hands to confirm.</p> <p>3. RL: impact of people reading this, i.e. employees, and how this is managed.</p> <p>GK: Supported RL view, Suffolk Libraries runs to a contract with a term.</p> <p>SK: Important to liaise with friends' groups, stakeholders and staff so all are aware of the situation.</p> <p>DR: What has contributed to delays on signing off the contract?</p> <p>SK: Annual schedule does not necessarily match SCC schedule, historically there has been delays getting contracts signed off, important wording is correct before signing.</p> <p>SC: Agree with frustration, some of the delay has been because contract was due for full procurement process, which was not possible due to covid, contact extension discussions has been offered. Sincerely apologised for the delay, all are working as fast as possible to get this agreed.</p> <p>SK: Thanked SC for her contribution and understanding.</p> <p>TB: is there a deadline for the signing of the contract and accounts? SK: Need to send out accounts as soon as possible with the AGM upcoming on 23rd September.</p> <p>MW: It is important that going concern letter reflects current situation, and that the contract agreement is not compromised by the account's deadline date.</p> <p>DH: Agreed approach is appropriate.</p> <p>TB: Does the board accept the amended going concern document and accounts? LR: Board approved.</p> <p>GK: Will adapt documents and send across so they can signed.</p> <p>LR to send out for signatures.</p> <p>MW: Gave great thanks to GK and his team.</p>
4.	<p>Review and Update Action Log (<i>Decision</i>)</p> <p><i>Updated see attached.</i></p>

5.	<p>Review and agree Minutes of last meeting 24/06/21 (<i>Decision</i>) AR: Please clarify the chair for the previous meeting? SK: SK Chaired the meeting. LR amended this. LD gave update on her review of mandatory training – felt that safeguarding children training was not needed for the board. Safeguarding adults in mandatory. Agreed as correct.</p>
6.	<p>NPO Update (<i>Information</i>) 10:35 MM joined the meeting and shared her screen with the group to show a presentation. MM to share presentation with the board following the meeting. Obtained £121,000 in additional revenue for Suffolk Libraries MM gave overview of the achievements and risks of the programme going forward. RL: raised concerns around diversity and ensuring reach into Suffolk communities. Discussions around permaculture – incorporating all needs of communities into Suffolk libraries offer/projects. DR: gave great support to the development and achievements of the programme so far. MM: Aware just being open is not enough, always considering ways of expanding the programmes reach. Permaculture – part of the 10 year investment principles is to explore environmental responsibility and community engagement, micro funding pots available for each library to bid for, in discussions with a permaculturist who worked on the Stowmarket garden project. RL: Agreed with MM, about the whole approach, supports the programme. RL/MM to meet to discuss further. TB: thanked Melissa for her contribution. Are Arts Council showing any concern regarding diversity of the programme? MM: So far have really supported the development of the programme so far, received a high rating in 2020 and work done since should mean achieving this again in 2021. LD: When will funding be confirmed? MM: Application for fifth year finding will be sent in September (£179K), application for following four years funding will be submitted in March 2022, should know by October 2022. TB: Gave great thanks and support to MM and her team for the amazing work the project is completing.</p>

7.	<p>Committee Updates: <i>(Information)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance and Audit – SK: met 29/7 and GK was present and gave audit report. Monthly finance report: arts fair produced a good income, Nikki Hulse is working hard on developing new partnerships, Barclays are extending their locations to Bungay, Eye, Ipswich and Halesworth. Kickstart programme is going really well. IT progress report, no major issues and staff PC upgrade going well. SPINE restarting when Newmarket building works are completed. 4% increase in physical and digital borrowing in comparison to a same period from previous year. • Governance and Risk – BL: informal meeting as was not quorate, BL, SK and DH attended. Risk Registers were reviewed prior to the meeting and no issues or concerns were raised. Discussions around national recruitment problems, this will be added to the risk register. Will share risk registers and a summary document with the Board, likely at the December meeting – action LR. • HR – TB: Met yesterday 25/8, Laura Parker gave detailed updates. Audited on Suffolk libraries participation in GALLUP survey, moved from 27 to 44 (out of 100). Showed that levels of engagement and commitment are moving in the right direction. Agreed new procedure on carrying out investigations into disciplinary procedures, performance improvement procedure which is taking the place of the capability policy, and grievance procedure were all approved. Trend for sickness is down since start of the year. Some managers have left recently, highlighted issues with pay scales of manager roles especially with national wage rising soon – Laura Parker is looking into this. • Health and Safety – MGS: no update since last meeting – meeting 16th September 2-4pm. • Business Development & Sustainability Working Group – TB: Group met 27/9, Nikki Hulse is developing some important connections and relationships bringing in more income. Leon Paternoster gave details of a research study being undertaken with University of East Anglia hopefully in September, looking at why people do and do not engage with libraries. Sustainability discussions to be continued and developed at the next meeting.
8.	<p>Chief Executives Report <i>(Information)</i></p> <p>BL: Snapshot against strategic pillars. Busy period, most activities and events are up and running again.</p> <p>Top 10 events for the months has just launched to help engage customers.</p> <p>Re-launch of traditional services: big catch up campaign was well advertised via buses, bill board, local press, outside signage, increased website traffic and social media platforms – leading to increased footfall, sign up to summer reading challenge etc.</p> <p>Creating stronger evidence base to show SCC for example the impact libraries have on communities, wellbeing survey has been produced by University of Suffolk being distributed to library users before and after they engage in activities and will be compared to clinical scales and they will then provide us with a report.</p> <p>TB: Include in staff update that the Board have reflected on all of the hard work staff and SLT are carrying out and express the Boards gratitude – action BL.</p>

9.	<p>Finance Report and Management Accounts <i>(Information)</i></p> <p>MW: Trends – increased footfall in libraries is resulting in increased income especially from photocopying and printing. Income from Barclays has increased due to using more sites. The first mobile library is booked in to be wrapped</p> <p>Moving broadband to new provider ‘Aqueous’ more streamlined and cost effective.</p> <p>Forecast: Break even predicted at this time, the next forecast may see it moving into a deficit position, which is nothing to be concerned about. Very prudent with spending currently, waiting for contract to be signed. Any deficit this year needs to be offset against the surplus of last year – to be expected as reinvesting the surplus into libraries.</p> <p>Long Melford – received invoices until March 2022, six-month notice period if they want library to relocate. Asked for price to extend the library within the same site.</p> <p>Saxmundham – trying to engage town council to increase outdoor signage to new location.</p> <p>DR: Reflection on property update – visited Kesgrave library recently, very popular library, increased population recently, library seemed too small for the usage of the library. What are the strategic plans for developing libraries to continue meeting the community need?</p> <p>BL: Working hard to liaise with SCC a strategic approach in the future to address this.</p> <p>SC: Liaising with BL/MW and property team, more tricky with new planning team and developers are pushing back on spends under section 106. MW is working hard to provide data on what communities need so can provide this to developers.</p>
10.	<p>Any other business <i>(Information or Decision depending on what needs reviewing)</i></p> <p>None.</p>
11.	<p>Date of next meeting: 28th October 2021 4-6pm</p>