



## Board Meeting

**Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2016, The Watermark, Ivybridge, 10am – 12noon**

### Our Values

Our organisation is founded on the principles of trust, neutrality and openness and these are our core values:

- Welcoming – we are open, friendly, helpful and inclusive to people and their needs.
- Integrity – we work honestly and openly to build relationships based on trust and mutual respect.
- Creativity – we are dynamic, socially enterprising and creative.
- Collaborative – we are constantly looking for opportunities to work with new people, organisations and communities.
- Enjoyment - we strive to make every experience with our organisation enjoyable and rewarding for everyone involved.

### Minutes

**Present:** Julie Dent (chair), Diane Dean, Ann Draisey, Ciara Eastell, Janet Fisher, Steve Wallwork, Emily Williams

**Apologies:** Sonia Burgess, Rachel Kidd, David Lockwood, David Solomides, Jonathan Stoneman

**In Attendance:** Paul Love (Head of Finance, Libraries Unlimited), Joanne Launder (Head of Service Delivery, Libraries Unlimited), Steve Turner (Incoming Head of Commercial and Innovation, Libraries Unlimited - from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2016), Mark Peasley (Stock and Performance Manager, Libraries Unlimited – as minute taker), Charlotte Collyer (Business, IP & Fab Lab Manager, Libraries Unlimited – for items 65/16 and 66/16 only).

#### **52/16 Welcome and apologies**

- Apologies received, as noted above

#### **53/16 Declaration of conflicts of interest**

- Appointment of external auditor (see item 58/16 below): Steve Wallwork (Chair of Finance and Audit Committee) declared that he had past professional contacts with two of the shortlisted companies but that this was over 30 years ago.

#### **54/16 Minutes of Board meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2016 and matters arising**

- Minutes from the previous meeting were approved and signed as a true and accurate record.
- There were no matters arising from the minutes.

#### **55/16 Review of action log**

- Confirmation is still awaited on the registration of the 'Libraries Unlimited' brand name as the intellectual property of the organisation.

#### **56/16 Chief Executive's Quarterly Update**

- This was the first quarterly update presented to the Board and the Chief Executive would welcome feedback from Board members on the format of the report.
- The Board noted the key achievements made during the first quarter, and expressed their thanks to the Chief Executive and to all the staff.
- A copy of the report will be sent to the Devon County Council Commissioner and circulated to staff.
- Julie Dent noted the lack of progress on property issues and expressed concern that these may not be resolved by September 2016, the target date which had previously been agreed with the Chief Executive of the County Council - see minute 62/16 (b) below.
- The need for revised guidelines for Friends' Groups was raised by Janet Fisher. The Board agreed that these would be welcomed by all concerned to clarify the future role and relationship of Friends' Groups.
- The Chief Executive asked the Board specifically to take note of the update on proposed or planned changes to libraries. This principally reflects the active plans and aspirations of local communities.
- Julie Dent suggested that a framework was needed for tracking and managing these developments: in the short term working on those developments already underway; in the medium term working with communities to develop proposed ideas and plans; and a longer term strategic approach anticipating future changes to communities, principally demographic, the most notable example, at the moment, being the new town of Cranbrook.

#### **57/16 Quarterly Finance Update**

- This was the first quarterly finance update presented to the Board and the Head of Finance would welcome feedback from Board members on the format of the report.
- The Board was asked to note the financial surplus in the quarter just ended and the cash balances.
- Steve Wallwork raised a concern about the shortfall on projected rental and room hire income. The Chief Executive and Head of Finance acknowledged that this needs to be addressed. Increased marketing is needed, particularly digital, and also work to improve the quality of the service to meet customer expectations. Steve Wallwork suggested that longer term rental of space might be more helpful in meeting income targets.
- Paul Love also noted that another significant pressure is control of labour costs, particularly relief staffing costs.
- Paul Love also asked the Board to note the delay in the registration of Libraries Unlimited as a charity. This is being chased through Mutual Ventures and Winckworth Sherwood.
- Charitable registration is required to claim mandatory and discretionary relief on business rates. Mandatory relief is guaranteed and will be backdated, but it is unclear if any additional discretionary relief will also be backdated.

**58/16 Finance and Audit Sub-Committee, 18<sup>th</sup> July 2016.**

- Following a shortlisting and assessment process, the Sub-Committee were able to recommend the appointment of an external auditor. This recommendation was approved by the Board.

**59/16 Workforce, Remuneration & Resources Sub-Committee, 18<sup>th</sup> May 2016**

- The Board were asked to note progress on developing the draft employment contract for new staff, incorporating the new terms and conditions.
- Previously outstanding issues on requests for compassionate leave and carry forward of annual leave had been agreed, and will be included in the draft contract.
- More work is still required on pay bargaining and formalising our relationship with the recognised Trade Unions.
- Pending the appointment of an HR Manager for Libraries Unlimited, Devon County Council will continue to offer HR support on a 'pay as you go' basis.

**60/16 Recruitment update**

- The Chief Executive updated the Board on the recent recruitment to the new management and support posts.
- It will be necessary to re-advertise some of the posts, but the Board agreed that it is essential to ensure we get good appointments.
- Applicants had generally provided positive feedback on the recruitment and assessment process.
- Pending the appointment of the Communications and Marketing Manager, the Chief Executive requested the approval of the Board to buy in some interim support for marketing activities from a communications agency. In line with financial regulations, three quotations will be obtained.

**61/16 External environment**

- Julie Dent offered some initial thoughts on the potential impact of the EU Referendum result on Libraries Unlimited.
- An economic downturn is more likely, with continuing austerity in the public finances. Local council budgets would be further reduced with services needing to find further efficiencies and demonstrate their effectiveness.
- EU funding is likely to dry up and organisations will need to rethink their fundraising and income generation approach.
- The Board felt that we can be positive about libraries in Devon compared to the difficulties being experienced in other local authority areas but that it is likely to be an achievement just to hold on to the same levels of funds we have now.
- Steve Turner commented that DCC had commissioned a report on the possible impact of Brexit and he hoped that this could be shared with the Board. Libraries Unlimited should also look to work more closely with the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).
- The Chief Executive reported that Ed Vaizey had been replaced as the government minister with responsibility for Libraries by Rob Wilson (MP for Reading East), who would now be Minister for Civil Society and Libraries.

**62/16 Business and Operations Update**

**a) Torbay**

- The Chief Executive and the Head of Finance had attended a bidder event on 14<sup>th</sup> July for potential 'suppliers' to deliver public library services in Torbay.

- The bidder event was to assess the level of interest from potential suppliers. A decision is still awaited from Torbay Council as to when or if they wish to go out to tender.
- It is proposed to apply to the Lottery Big Potential Fund. This would provide investment to help organisations get ready for bidding for new contracts.
- Ann Draisey commented on the potential benefits to library users in both Torbay and Devon in having access to all libraries with the just one library card.

**b) Property discussions with Devon County Council**

- Current position is that Libraries Unlimited has 'Tenancies at Will' as an interim measure, with the intention to move to full leases by the end of September.
- An annual lease has been proposed for properties for which Devon County Council owns the freehold but it appears to impose significant liability for repair and maintenance costs for buildings which still remain the assets of the County Council. There is also concern over the current level of spending on maintenance.
- It now seems doubtful that these issues will be resolved by the end of September. Julie Dent will arrange a further meeting with the Chief Executive of the County Council.

**c) Library Management System (LMS)**

- The delay in implementing the new system is still a significant cause of concern.
- There has been increased contact at a senior management level, with the system supplier, Axiell, and they have noticeably increased the level of resourcing for the project. Some progress has been made as a result but there is still no clear 'go live' date.
- Libraries Unlimited will be the first customer for the new system so we are effectively co-developing the system with Axiell which has contributed to the delay. A lot of staff resource has also been required to help with the testing.
- There is a financial impact on planned budget savings for Libraries Unlimited as a result of the delay in implementation as the introduction of the new system would have reduced maintenance costs.
- The contract for the new system still stays with Devon County Council and Libraries Unlimited will request further project management support.
- Devon County Council procurement has issued Axiell with a formal notice due to their failure to comply with the contract timescales. Financial penalties and compensation are being discussed.

**d) Summer Reading Challenge (SRC)**

- The Board was shown a promotional video which can be downloaded from the Reading Agency's website. <http://summerreadingchallenge.org.uk/>
- Trustees were encouraged to attend local events in libraries over the summer.
- The service wide aim this year is to increase the number of children finishing the challenge to 50%

**63/16 Governance Update**

**a) Applications for membership**

- The Board was asked to approve new applications from membership from 12 staff members and 9 community members (Friends' Groups). All applications were approved.

**b) Staff Forum**

- Following a vote open to all staff, the 5 members of the Staff Forum were elected and held their first meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> July.
- The Chief Executive, as the representative of the Board, and the Head of Service Delivery, as the representative of Libraries Unlimited, will attend the meetings. The HR Manager, when appointed, will also attend.
- Topics considered at the first meeting were: the new HR policies; a staff 'reward and recognition' scheme; the first staff conference (planned for the autumn); allocating libraries and support staff teams to each Forum member.
- A future Staff Forum meeting and a future Board meeting would be planned for the same day to provide an opportunity for both to meet over a shared lunch.

**c) Corporate calendar**

- Individual trustees to advise of any meeting dates they cannot attend. Meetings would be re-scheduled where necessary.
- Consideration will be given to standing agenda items for the Board and Sub-Committees.
- The Chief Executive also reminded the Board that there would be some deadlines to meet in the autumn under the terms of the commissioning agreement with Devon County Council; for example, preparation of an updated business plan.

**64/16 Library tours – feedback from trustees**

- All the trustees said that these had been very useful and enjoyable. It was also a valuable opportunity for Trustees to spend time together.
- The Trustees expressed their thanks to the staff and the Friends' Groups for making them feel welcome. It was also felt that staff and Friends appreciated the opportunity to meet the trustees.
- The Trustees could detect the variability in libraries, depending on the approach of the Library Supervisor; and also the Friends' Group.
- It was agreed to arrange further tours for later in the year and that this was something that should be done, at least, twice a year.

**65/16 Business and Intellectual Property Centre (BIPC) at Exeter**

- The Board was given a presentation by Charlotte Collyer, Business, IP & Fab Lab Manager
- Following successful participation in the Enterprising Libraries project, Exeter was one of two out of the ten project libraries to be invited to join the British Library's network of Business and Intellectual Property Centres.
- The intended audience for the business support services provided will be small and micro business, and business start-ups; this fits well with the profile of businesses and business development across Devon.
- The Centre has already secured funding from the Google Digital Garage Project to provide free digital skills workshops for small businesses.
- There will be a formal launch event in the autumn. Trustees were asked to suggest people or organisations who should be added to the guest list.

**66/16 British Library's Living Knowledge Network**

- British Library is also looking to work more with public libraries beyond the area of business support.
- The work on the BIPC at Exeter has raised the profile of Devon with the British Library and Exeter has had an application accepted to join the 2 year pilot phase of the British Library's Living Knowledge Network.
- The network will build on local knowledge and national convening power to develop a mutually supportive and self-sustaining network of major libraries

- Being a member of the network will give us the opportunity to share knowledge skills and ideas, to work in partnership with its members and exclusive access to some British Library events and their collections. .
- The first steering group meeting will be held in September.

**67/16 Key messages for Staff and Friends Groups**

- Progress made during the first quarter
- Possible impact of 'Brexit'
- Awareness of current financial position
- Business and IP Centre and membership of Living Knowledge Network
- Success of tours by trustees
- Operational update on key issues such as the new library management system
- Support for Summer Reading Challenge with aim to increase number of finishers

**68/16 Any Other Business**

- Anyone interested in attending the Chairman's dinner (Chair of Devon County Council, Cllr Andrew Moulding) to let Chief Executive know.
- Minutes of previous Board meetings will be published on the Libraries Unlimited website.

**69/16 (a) Forward plan**

- Health & Wellbeing focus for September Board meeting
- Procedures and checks in place regarding access to the Register of Members

**(b) Board meetings**

- All Board meetings will run from 10 am until 12 noon:
- Sept 16<sup>th</sup> – South Molton Library **(NB. This will be a whole day session to allow for a half day Board development session)**
- November 11<sup>th</sup> – Barnstaple Library
- January 20<sup>th</sup> – Exeter Library
- March 17<sup>th</sup> – Passmore Edwards Centre, Newton Abbot

**Signed as a true record following approval at Board Meeting September 16<sup>th</sup> 2016  
(subject to any handwritten corrections)**

..... **Julie Dent, Chair**

..... **Mark Peasley, minute-taker.**