

# 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	31 <sup>st</sup> August 2017
Place	Riverside Community Centre, Stratford St. Andrew
Time	2.00pm – 3.30pm
Attendees	Tony Brown, Sylvia Knights, Alison Wheeler (Chief Executive), Maureen Garrett Simpson, Sarah Wilson, Jonathan Ogden, Colin Rockall, Sue Buck, Stephen Taylor (SCC), Sara Blake (SCC), Cllr Tony Goldson (SCC), Charlotte Clark, Marion Harvey
Invited	Nikki Hulse (Governance Manager), Krystal Vittles (Libraries Innovation and Development Manager), Peter Baker (Head of IT), Mandy Wilkinson (Head of Finance), Paul Howarth (Stock & Content Manager), Daniel Harvey (Community Team Lead), Paula Phelan (Head of HR), James Powell (Marketing & Communications Manager)

		Action
1.	<p><b><u>Welcome and apologies:</u></b></p> <p>Apologies were received from Sara Blake, Krystal Vittles, Marion Harvey and Charlotte Clark and Cllr Tony Goldson.</p>	
2.	<p><b><u>Declarations of interest:</u></b></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>	
3.	<p><b><u>Minutes of previous meeting of 29<sup>th</sup> June 2017:</u></b></p> <p>The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of discussions.</p> <p><b>Matters arising</b></p> <p>There were no matters arising which will not be covered in this agenda.</p>	
4.	<p><b><u>Decisions:</u></b></p> <p><b>1. Freddy's Fund</b></p>	

	<p>The Vice Chair and Chief Executive presented this paper.</p> <p>Frederika ‘Freddy’ Philips, a keen library user and supporter from Halesworth, has given Suffolk Libraries a donation of £5,000 to support the organisation. The money will be released in two tranches; the first tranche (£2,500) is ready for invoicing and the second tranche (£2,500) will be available March/April 2018. This is a one-off donation and will not be used to fund any ‘core’ services and Freddy has specified that the fund be used for either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suffolk Libraries to develop itself further as an organisation in order to help it bid for further significant funding or to ensure the organisation is ready to bid for the contract after 2022.</li> <li>• Suffolk Libraries to focus on supporting literacy in Suffolk. Freddy recognises that Suffolk has a significant literacy issue and would like to help the library service support readers of all ages across the county.</li> </ul> <p>After consideration of the implications of using it to develop the organisation, it was proposed that Suffolk Libraries uses this fund to support literacy development across Suffolk. It was recommended that libraries and community groups work together to create local projects to support literacy and reading and to bid into a central fund for projects which will improve literacy in communities. The suggested scale for the bids were £100, £250 and £500.</p> <p>SW mentioned that this process should be light-touch as it could become bureaucratic and take up a lot of resource. This was agreed.</p> <p>The Chair queried the suggested amounts and asked how much could be achieved with £100. The Vice Chair responded that this would encourage innovation and creativity and would also assist with match-funding which lots of bids require.</p> <p>All were in favour of this proposal.</p> <p>The Chair stated that an official letter should be sent to Frederika to thank her. Frederika will be attending the AGM and the Chair will mention this in his speech.</p> <p>The Chief Executive mentioned that this reinforces the value of community groups and is a fabulous example of the community ownership of Suffolk Libraries. The SCC Commissioner agreed and stated that this is a good story and could inspire other philanthropists. The Vice Chair will speak with Frederika regarding wider publication.</p>	<p>AW TB</p> <p>SK</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p><b><u>Update from committees:</u></b></p> <p><b>Finance, Governance and Audit</b></p> <p>The Chair of Finance, Governance and Audit stated a number of items covered in the agenda were discussed at the committee meeting and gave an update on other discussions as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal signing of the annual accounts.</li> <li>• Monthly finance update.</li> <li>• Progress on IT projects.</li> </ul>	

- An update on stock.
- Deed of Variance – this is now in place.
- 2016/17 CIPFA return.
- Transition Board and next 5 years.

The next Finance, Governance and Audit Committee meeting is due to take place in November so the Head of Finance and Chair of the Finance, Governance and Audit Committee will meet in the interim to ensure everything is on track.

**SK/MW**

### **Staffing Committee**

The Chair of Staffing Committee gave an update of discussions as follows:

- The next 5 years.
- Proposal to cancel the two staff forums in December and replace with one. This was agreed and will take place on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2017.
- Training – Suffolk Needs Met training has received very good feedback and more sessions are being arranged.
- Sickness absence – the number of staff absent with sickness has increased in comparison to figures from the last two years.
- There were two individual confidential staffing matters discussed. One of these matters has now been resolved.

### **Health & Safety Committee**

The Chair of Health & Safety Committee stated that there has not been a committee meeting since the last Board meeting.

### **Transition Board**

The Chair of the Transition Board stated that the next 5 years programme had been discussed at length in addition to the following:

### **Suffolk Libraries Local**

This pilot project is approaching the time when a decision will need to be made. The SCC Commissioner stated that SCC are about to make an on-line survey ‘live’ to gain feedback from the public along with hard-copies of the survey. SCC will then analyse the responses, speak with senior managers and report back to Suffolk Libraries in early October.

The Chief executive mentioned that an Ipswich Councilor and Ipswich Borough Council are looking to put together a fully funded 2-year project to run a Suffolk Libraries Local branch in North East Ipswich. She asked that this is factored in to the SCC discussion.

The SCC Commissioner stated that this is a good model and there could be section 106 monies for the Suffolk Libraries Local model rather than the provision creating a new static library. There could be a greater success for the Suffolk Libraries Local model in requesting 106 monies and Suffolk Libraries Local could be used as outreach from a base at larger libraries.

	<p>The Vice Chair asked if Suffolk Libraries could look at more local government funded sources to sustain this service, such as town and district councils. The SCC Commissioner responded that this would be a good idea.</p> <p>This will be discussed further at the forthcoming Transition Board meeting.</p>	
<p>7.</p>	<p><b><u>Management reports:</u></b></p> <p><b>Monthly Finance Report:</b></p> <p>The Head of Finance presented the management accounts for July 2017 to the Board. The year to date position is a surplus of £64k which is currently on target. The highlights of the report were as follows:</p> <p><b>Employee costs</b> The continued recruitment freeze is bringing the actual employee costs in under budget but it is expected that relief costs will rise over the next couple of months as the libraries who have unfilled positions cannot cover staff absence without bringing in relief.</p> <p><b>Direct library costs</b> The first quarter costs for Vertas have been received this month.</p> <p><b>Support services</b> Support services are running over budget due to additional work being undertaken by HR due to the staff restructure. It is expected that an accrual relating to SCC IT costs will be released once the timetable of IT infrastructure moves have been realised, this will balance the overspend out.</p> <p><b>Prisons</b> The overdue account has been escalated to the top finance department and payments are now being received. It was agreed that penalties for overdue payments will be written in to the service level agreement for next year.</p> <p><b>LBaRT</b> LBaRT are bringing in slightly higher than budgeted sales which may be carried forward to the year end, with a smaller loss than budgeted.</p> <p><b>Stock Fund</b> There is an overspend for the stock fund but this is not an area for concern as the funds are released consistently each month whilst the expenditure fluctuates.</p> <p><b>Mental Health Fund</b> The contract has been finalised by SCC and invoices are started to be received from the partner agencies.</p> <p><b>Grant funding</b> The final installment of the digital screening bid is due in September which will bring the project to an end. Both Gainsborough and Chantry have funds available for youth projects.</p>	

**Chief Executive Report:**

The Chief Executive gave highlights of the report as follows:

**Anti-social behaviour**

There has been an escalating concern about anti-social behaviour and safeguarding issues at Gainsborough library, exacerbated by sickness and personal issues for staff. Urgent and decisive action was taken to support staff coping with extraordinary numbers of exuberant youth, and a temporary early closure was agreed with the County Council.

The library is undoubtedly a very popular hangout for young people, and while this is to be encouraged and recognised as admirable, it must also be a library where others wish to go. Follow up work will take place in the autumn to rebalance this and realign the library to the core offer.

Thanks were given to the Community Team Lead and Libraries Innovation and Development Manager who did a fantastic job in dealing with the issues.

The SCC Commissioner also gave his thanks for keeping him up to date on these issues which were very well dealt with.

**Suffolk Libraries Extra**

Over £3,000 has been raised so far. Platinum members have been invited to the AGM and will be listed in the annual review.

**Beccles**

Following a resignation, Nicola Spindler is the new interim library manager at Beccles.

**NPO**

The Chief Executive explained that Snape Maltings have approached Suffolk Libraries to be involved in work for older people.

**IT**

The staffing in IT is now stable.

**Library refurbishments**

There have been amazing library refurbishments at Halesworth and Rosehill libraries. Cllr Tony Goldson attended the opening ceremony at Rosehill. The Chief Executive stated that it is important that Suffolk Libraries continues to improve the service across the county.

The SCC Commissioner stated that Halesworth was a major piece of work which happened whilst the library manager was away, highlighting the excellent handover she gave to her team.

The Chief Executive concluded the update by stating that Suffolk Libraries can go in to the AGM with a strong sense of pride in their achievements and optimism for the future.

<p><b>8.</b></p>	<p><b><u>Modelling and plans for future funding and the next 5 years:</u></b></p> <p>The Vice Chair stated that there will be a special Board meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2017 where greater detail and more clarity of the contract sum negotiations can be given.</p> <p>Positive and confidential talks with SCC will be ongoing until mid-September.</p>	
<p><b>9.</b></p>	<p><b><u>Any other business</u></b></p> <p><b><u>CEO Recruitment update</u></b></p> <p>The Chair stated that the closing date for applications for the CEO role was earlier this week. The applicants have been reviewed and the Chair is delighted with the quality of applicants so far.</p> <p>At the recommendation of Sir Laurie Magnus, the Patron of Beccles Library, the services of a head-hunter have been retained to assist with this process and has been given a 4-week period to attract further applicants.</p> <p>Further updates will be given as the process proceeds.</p> <p>The final interviews will be held on 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> October 2017.</p>	
<p><b>10.</b></p>	<p><b><u>Date of the next meeting:</u></b></p> <p>26<sup>th</sup> October 2017, Bury St. Edmunds Library</p>	