



THE DEVON & EXETER INSTITUTION
LIBRARY & READING ROOMS
(Founded 1813)
Registered Charity No. 1172445

Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting

Wednesday 24 February 2021: at 5.00pm - meeting held by Zoom

Trustees present - Margaret Knight (MK), Derek Knight (DK), Henry French (HF), Geoff Roberts (GR), Sandra Bond (SB), Shane Cormie (SC), John Reeves (JR), Richard Templeton (RT), Max Goodison (MG), Ruth O'Neale (RO), Imogen Dudley (IG), Christopher Chanter (CC)

Staff present - Emma Laws (EL) Emma Dunn (ED) – Part 2 only

1. **Apologies:** none
2. **Conflicts of interest:** None reported
3. **Part 1:** changes to the governance structure were discussed
Part 2: ED and EL joined the meeting at 5.50pm
4. **Minutes of the last meeting on 13 January 2021** – were agreed
5. **Matters arising :**
Item 9.ii Change of signatories to the CCLA account still need to be made

6. **Directors' Reports: ED and EL**

ED reported that a pre-application for listed building consent had been made to Historic England and Exeter CC with their response to the general principle of the application expected in approx. one month. Detailed application is yet to be determined.

The next PSG the PSG will prioritise capital works to be covered in the NLHF grant and separate out the works which would be subject to additional fundraising and operational capitalisation. Our programme supports and contributes to the main drivers of Exeter's recovery programme. ED is focussing on the Activity Plan, which is the principal document in the application and sets out the vision, mission and outcomes of the project for people, in order to meet the mandatory NLHF outcome of widening participation. Our application has been compressed from a two year into to a one-year timescale and the bid will be ready for submission in May 2021. The collection review forms part of the Interpretation Plan.

The development of the Business Plan is progressing and will be presented to the Finance Advisory Group first. It will look at all elements of income generation, venue hire, programme, grants, catering. Merchandising and philanthropic giving.

EL reported that she has made a stage 1 funding application to the Pilgrim Trust for a new and discrete digitisation project using staff and DEI volunteers without TownsWeb support. Additional funding applications from the Foyle Foundation and other sources are being prepared.

The methodology of the Collection review has now been positively peer reviewed and Phase 1 of the pilot review has been completed.

Security of the collection is being reviewed. Tony Rhodes is installing a deterrent system for the open shelves and EL is considering introducing a no coats / no bags policy in the Library (this will not affect the new community rooms and public spaces). Research so far from the pilot has revealed that 30% of our original stock has disappeared. This includes collections sold since the 19th Century up to recent times to pay for operational and maintenance costs.

The SW material is now becoming more of an historic collection and this will require some storage and access considerations.

Preparations for staged re-opening are being made. Provisionally, in mid- May the DEI will open 10am-5pm Tuesday -Friday and 10am- 4pm on Saturdays as in Sep 2020 i.e. social distancing, mask wearing, book quarantining and tours will a rule of six. Our final Stage 5 opening plan depends on the vaccine roll-out but could be as early as the summer or early Autumn. Our new permanent opening times will be 10.00am to 5.00pm Tuesday to Saturday, closed on Mondays.

Subject to dates, the Courtenay Room will be re-opened to members for self-service tea, coffee and cakes. The lack of lunches since Mary left in February 2020 has been a reason for some members not to renew their membership, so it is important to keep members informed of re-opening plans. It was noted however, that while lunch provision was popular, this service had been run at an overall loss in the past and we were in fact providing subsidised lunches to a small proportion of our membership. ED and EL note that Courtenay Room lunch service will not resume until the trustees have employed or delegated an appropriately skilled person to take this forward, along with other member services.

7. Leadership Team: MK

The minutes of the 10 February meeting were discussed. Under item 4: mid- and long-term budget concerns, DK clarified that the continuing 'expected 10% reduction membership due to non-pandemic reasons' referred to the longstanding annual turnover of our membership due to re-location, death of members etc. In the past, this reduction had been matched or exceeded by new member recruitment which had not been possible in the past year and will be dependent on resumption of a normal operating service in the future.

The Board agreed for the need to undertake a fundraising drive through a task and finish group. RO will include this suggestion with any other proposals for governance change for Board consideration.

RO

After clarification, the Board agreed the recommendation that future budgets should be harmonised to ensure that funding for operational and programme delivery staffing is fully integrated

8. Finance Advisory Group: MK

The Board considered the discussions on the operational funding gap between May and Sep 2021 held at the Leadership Team on 10 February and the subsequent recommendations proposed by the Finance Advisory Group at their meeting on 15 February. It was clarified that the potential staffing shortfall was between £20-25k. The 45k shortfall discussed at the January Board relates to underwriting match funding for the NLHF project, to facilitate submission in May. The following resolution, proposed by RT and seconded by CC, was unanimously agreed.

- *The Board approves the principle of using up to £25,000 from the CCLA Investment Funds to bridge the operational and project funding gap between May and September 2021. This enables retention of staff capacity to deliver programme activity fundamental to project and grant delivery outcomes. The use of Investment funds for this purpose conforms to Charity Commission guidelines and advice.*

It was further agreed that the Board would need to review the financial situation in September 2021 if the Round 2 NLHF bid is unsuccessful. ED notes that subject to comments from NLHF, the R2 could be resubmitted in November 21.

RO left the meeting at 7.00pm

Building and contents insurance: DK noted that discussions to reduce our premium payments for the coming year had been made with our current Insurers, Ecclesiastical, and other suppliers.

9. AOB

On behalf of the DEI, JR is dealing with an application to the Valuation Office to change the cottage premises from a domestic to a business rate valuation. He has chased progress is awaiting a reply.

JR

The meeting ended at 7.10pm

11. Date of next meeting: Wednesday 7 April at 5.00pm