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**Trustees recruitment pack**

October 2020

## Welcome from Carol Stump, President

Dear applicant,

I’m delighted that you are interested in helping to shape, grow and lead the future for Libraries Connected. We are a membership organisation for public library leaders in England, Wales and Northern Ireland partly funded by Arts Council England as a Sector Support Organisation.

**Our vision is an inclusive, modern, sustainable and high-quality public library service at the heart of every community in the UK. We believe modern public libraries should be the cornerstone of the community and should deliver a diverse spectrum of local needs around information, learning, literacy, employment and digital skills, health, culture and leisure.**

Since April 2018, when we received funding from Arts Council England to become a Sector Support Organisation, we have been through a programme of organisational transformation to evolve from our former existence as the Society of Chief Librarians. Our transformation has included:

* Becoming a registered charity as well as a company limited by guarantee
* A name change and re-brand to convey our mission and vision
* Appointing a Chief Executive and a small but expanding paid team
* The establishment of our office base in London
* Recruitment and development of our Board.

We are now nearly two years into our four-year business plan and have achieved a great deal since we became established in our new organisation.

Over our first two years of operation, we have achieved some significant steps forward, taking on the challenges of our legacy projects from the Society of Chief Librarians (SCL) but also working with partners such as Arts Council England and CILIP to move forward on a number of major new projects. These have included:

* Stabilisation of our commercial contract work with Sopra Steria
* The development of a Blueprint for Libraries
* Continued development of the Public Library Skills Strategy – including delivery of Leading Libraries diversity programme
* A proposal for a Regional Support Network for public library services
* A major review of the Libraries Connected Universal Offers
* The commencement of work to develop an Accreditation Scheme for library services
* Delivery of Novels that Shaped our World in partnership with BBC
* Securing funding to deliver the Future Funding skills and capacity programme

Since the organisation was transformed into Libraries Connected, over £1 million of extra funding has been secured for work on projects and development and we are very grateful to the support from Arts Council England, as our major funder.

Over the last six months, we have refocused the organisation to support libraries through the COVID-19 pandemic, curating #LibrariesFromHome, developing the service recovery toolkit and fostering an incredibly strong peer-led community of practice on Basecamp.

Our Board was recruited in the spring of 2018 and is chaired by our President. The Board has steered the development as the new organisation, and now works confidently to provide effective challenge and scrutiny and is collectively responsible for setting and reviewing our strategic direction, in line with our charitable objectives.

We now have a vacancy for one member trustee, to take up post in January 2021.

Our trustees must have a passion for the future of libraries, along with the vision, expertise and creativity to help us develop and grow our role further as a Sector Support Organisation. We are looking for a range of skills and experience among our trustees and for people with a passion for our mission and purpose.

The Board is committed to fostering a confident, diverse and inclusive library leadership, and is particularly keen to encourage applications from people to grow the diversity of our board in terms of ethnicity, disability and age (under 50). This trustee post can also be seen as a development opportunity for those new to the role of trustee of a national body, as the Board offers support through a buddy scheme and induction training for those new to the role of trustee.

This information pack will provide you with information about the organisation’s mission, core purposes and future plans as well as details about the key skills and attributes we are looking for in a trustee. This is an exciting time for us all and I look forward to hearing from applicants who share our appetite for change and development in the public library sector.



Carol Stump

Libraries Connected President and Chief Librarian, Kirklees Council

## Introduction to Libraries Connected

Our charitable objects are to advance the education of the public by assisting in the establishment, maintenance, operation and development of libraries and library services in the United Kingdom.

Libraries Connected (previously SCL) has been supporting and leading libraries since 1993.

In that time, we have represented public libraries on national forums, attracted additional funding and partnerships to the public library sector and developed a number of tools and frameworks for service delivery, that over 80% of public library services in England and Wales have signed up to, to support a high-quality library service for the public.

As a sector support membership organisation our mission is to:

* **Represent** the public library sector nationally, regionally and locally and to communicate the value of libraries to decision makers and to a limited extent to the general public
* **Connect** partners to local libraries, by brokering national partnerships with a wide range of partners around the delivery of services and for the attraction of funds, by working together and making optimal use of resources
* **Improve** the provision of local library services by developing and disseminating standards of best practice, provide training and development for library staff and facilitating a network of library leaders across the UK
* **Drive** innovation and new thinking around the important role of libraries in a modern society.

We have developed five strategic outcomes as a framework for our activities in the period 2018-22. These goals have been mapped onto and will support and enhance the delivery of Arts Council England’s goals:

1. Public library services are relevant, well-used services at the heart of communities providing strong benefit to communities and meeting local needs
2. Public library services are responsive and able to adapt to new opportunities and challenges, using sector-wide test and learn approaches, research and evidence to inform approaches to service innovation, development and adaptation
3. The public library leadership and workforce has access to the skills and information they need to respond to changing contexts, deliver high quality service and develop and adapt new services as needed
4. The core offer of public libraries is understood by stakeholders, partners and funders, and this offer is seen as valuable and relevant to the outcomes they wish to achieve, leveraging new partnership opportunities, funding streams and increased investment
5. Libraries Connected is a strong, sustainable sector support organisation which also supports and advocates for the wider sustainability of the sector.

We are in a phase of change and development and our business plan outlines an approach to delivering sector support activities based on the following principles:

#### ‘Test and learn’

Our approach to delivering sector support services is a ‘test and learn’ approach, informed by intelligence and supported by data collection and evaluation of the effectiveness and impact of our activities and their influence on the sector’s impact as a whole. This kind of approach requires us to flex and change to respond to new challenges and opportunities as they occur.

#### Co-production with the public library sector

Libraries Connected is a membership organisation that counts on its members to deliver against a mutually agreed approach. Until recently we have relied on the voluntary contributions of members to deliver ambitious new work plans and service development approaches across the sector. We have begun to build on this way of working, retaining the engagement of our members while relieving them of the responsibility to plan and deliver activities on a day-to-day basis.

#### The Universal Offers as a communications framework and organising principle

Until now Libraries Connected has used the Universal Offers as a delivery framework for sector support services, a tool to help the sector understand its unique contribution to communities and a communications vehicle to express the value the sector provides to external stakeholders. Going forward we plan to bring together some of the work being undertaken separately by Universal Offer Leads and working groups to avoid duplication and ensure that learning is systematically analysed and presented so that the sector is easily able to use it as a tool for service development and improvement.

#### Partnership

Libraries Connected values the strong partnerships it has developed with stakeholders and organisations within the library and other related and complimentary sectors over recent years. We constantly use our role as a Sector Support Organisation to strengthen existing partnerships and develop new ones for the benefit of the sector.

## Libraries Connected key areas of work for the period 2018-22



**In 2020 we aim to**:

* Continue to develop the organisation, reviewing executive and governance structures as necessary and ensuring that we are meeting our charitable aims
* Continuing to monitor and manage the existing commercial partnerships which have been forged and act as agent for individual library services
* Maintain and review as necessary our four-year business development plan and work to support our long-term sustainability
* Support the sector in helping to expand capacity and skills in income generation in library services
* Work with BBC Arts to deliver a year-long reading campaign
* Deliver the Leading Libraries leadership development programme and support workforce development through the Public Library Skills Strategy
* Work to develop the second stage of the Regional Support project through focused pilots
* Launch and embed the four revised Libraries Connected Universal Library Offers
* Begin to develop our next four-year plan and proposal to Arts Council England for the period 2022-2026
* In addition to our planned programme of work, we will continue to offer support for libraries to reopen and evolve their services after lockdown and to advocate for the vital contribution libraries make to community recovery.

## Our board of Trustees

Our Board of Trustees comprises 11 Trustees:

* Two people elected from our membership (President and President Elect)
* Seven people appointed from our membership based on their skills and experience
* Four people appointed as independent trustees.

The current vacancy is for one Libraries Connected Member Trustees. All heads of library services (or equivalent) who are members of Libraries Connected are eligible to apply.

**Key role of Trustees**

* To ensure the organisation complies with our articles of association and pursues the objectives defined in them
* To ensure the organisation applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objectives
* To contribute actively to the Board of Trustee’s role in giving firm strategic direction to the organisation, setting overall policy, defining goals and setting targets and evaluating performance against agreed targets
* To safeguard the good name and values of the organisation
* To ensure the effective and efficient administration of the organisation
* To ensure the financial stability of the organisation
* To protect and manage the property of the organisation and to ensure the proper investment of the organisation’s funds
* To appoint the Chief Executive Officer and monitor his or her performance
* To ensure equality and diversity is prioritised in all aspects of the organisation’s business and operation.

In addition, with other trustees, each trustee must hold the charity ‘in trust’ for current and future beneficiaries by:

* Ensuring that the charity has a clear vision, purpose and strategic direction and is focused on achieving these
* Being responsible for the performance of the charity and for its corporate behaviour, ensuring that the charity complies with all legal and regulatory requirements
* Acting as guardians of the charity’s assets, both tangible and intangible
* Ensuring that the charity’s governance is of the highest possible standard.

As well as the various statutory duties, any trustee should make full use of any specific skills, knowledge or experience to help the Board make good decisions.

The above list of duties is indicative only. Trustees will be expected to perform all such additional duties as are reasonably proportionate with the role.

# The role of Trustee and person specification

**The role**

These vacancies are for candidates from Libraries Connected Membership.

This is a part-time, voluntary role and reasonable expenses will be paid. All Heads of Libraries (or equivalent) who are members of Libraries Connected are eligible to apply.

Location: Board meetings will be scheduled throughout the year and will take place in London and Birmingham, and via online meetings.

Time commitment: Approximately 12 days per year

Tenure: Up to three years, with a maximum of three consecutive terms

Board members of Libraries Connected will be both directors of a company and trustees of a charity. They will, therefore, have duties and responsibilities under company law and charity law. While not onerous these must be taken seriously.

Details about being a trustee and the duties of a trustee can be found here: [*https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-essential-trustee-what-you-need-to-know-cc3*](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-essential-trustee-what-you-need-to-know-cc3)

**Person specification**

**Values and personal attributes and skills**

These are general values and attributes that we expect all trustees to possess.

* A commitment to the mission, purposes and values of Libraries Connected
* A passion for public libraries
* A commitment to the organisation and willingness to devote time and effort
* Willingness to challenge and be challenged
* Good independent judgment and strategic vision
* An understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship
* A commitment to embedding diversity and inclusion across the organisation
* A commitment to Nolan’s seven principles of standards in public life – selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

**Knowledge and understanding**

We are looking for the following specific skills. While we do not expect any single candidate to possess all these skills, any successful candidate must possess two to three of the following:

* Understanding of the role and value of libraries and commitment to supporting and improving library services
* An understanding of the challenges of leading an organisation, particularly in periods of significant change
* Excellent financial insight and commercial business development skills
* Strong understanding of digital communications and modern information environments
* Excellent professional communication and marketing skills and experience
* Understanding and experience of the wider cultural sector within which the Arts Council and public libraries operate
* Strong HR skills and professional background
* Professional legal qualifications and experience.

**Experience**

We expect all trustees to be able to provide examples of:

* Demonstrable experience in any of the above specialist skills
* Demonstrable experience of building and sustaining relationships with key stakeholders and colleagues to achieve organisational objectives
* A proven track record of sound judgement and effective decision-making
* A history of impartiality, fairness and the ability to respect confidences
* A track record of commitment to promoting equality and diversity.

**Other**

* Willingness to attend Board meetings, occasional sub-committee meetings and be available for, and respond to, telephone calls and electronic communication from senior management of the organisation
* Willingness to attend occasional daytime and evening events.

We welcome applications from people new to the role of trustee, as we provide a buddy scheme and induction training.

We also welcome applications from people who will grow the Board’s diversity especially in these factors: disability, ethnicity and age (under 50).

# How to apply

To apply to be a trustee, please send a CV and covering letter setting out how you feel you meet the person specification above to Robert Davies at: *robert.davies@librariesconnected.org.uk*

* The deadline for the receipt of applications is 6pm on Friday 30 October 2020
* All applications will be assessed against the criteria in this brief by a selection panel, comprising the President of Libraries Connected and three independent panel members
* Shortlisted applicants will be asked to attend an online interview in mid-November
* Please contact Isobel Hunter, CEO (*isobel.hunter@librariesconnected.org.uk*) or Carol Stump, President (*carol.stump@kirklees.gov.uk*) if you have any questions about applying to be a trustee before submitting your application or if you would like to discuss the role further.

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Email:

**info@librariesconnected.org.uk**

Twitter:

**@libsconnected**

Or join our mailing list at:

**librariesconnected.org.uk/signup**