#

**President Elect recruitment pack**

October 2020

## Welcome from Carol Stump, President

Dear Libraries Connected member,

I’m delighted that you are interested in helping to shape, grow and lead the future for Libraries Connected. As the membership organisation for public library leaders in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, we belong to you and the role of President has a vital role in ensuring we remain rooted in our membership.

**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.**

From April 2018, we received funding from Arts Council England to become a Sector Support Organisation. We now have a small paid team, and a robust four year business plan that will see us diversify our income streams, enhance the sector support we currently offer and bring together the diverse strands of our existing work. This will ensure a strong national voice and a dynamic, forward looking approach to supporting the public library sector at a time of significant change and challenge.

We are now seeking nominations for President Elect, to serve from June 2021-2022 and thereafter as President from June 2022-2024, and for one more year as Past President. Throughout this period, he/she will also be a member of the Board of Trustees.

The Board of Trustees is responsible for providing the organisation with effective challenge and scrutiny and are collectively responsible for setting and reviewing our strategic direction, in line with Libraries Connected charitable objectives.

Our President is a key role for our organisation, as a confident figure head with vision, expertise and creativity to help us develop and grow our role as a Sector Support Organisation. It’s a role I feel honoured to hold, as well as immensely rewarding and inspiring as I am privileged to see so much innovation and determination across our sector.

This information pack will provide you with information about the organisation’s mission, core purposes and future plans and details about the key skills and attributes we are looking for in the President.



**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, which 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 a new approach to delivering sector support activities based on the following principles:

#### **‘Test and learn’**

Our approach to delivering sector support services will be 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 will require 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 relies on its members to deliver against a mutually agreed approach. Libraries Connected has until recently relied on the voluntary contributions of members to deliver ambitious new work plans and service development approaches across the sector. We plan to build on this way of working, retaining the engagement of Libraries Connected members whilst 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 tool 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 sector and other related and complimentary sectors over recent years. We will use our role as a Sector Support Organisation to strengthen existing partnerships and develop new ones for the benefit of the sector.

## Libraries Connected’s key areas of work 2018-22



**In 2021/22 we aim to**:

Build on the great work Libraries Connected has achieved since its inception. These are very different times and we have moved a lot of services online, but now it is vital that we move from service recovery to establishing libraries as key players in our communities.

Our focus will include:

* Libraries in Lockdown research: with a clear focus on the community impacts libraries made, and the gap of who they did not reach (i.e. proving that physical buildings and regular services are necessary for vulnerable and disadvantaged)
* Continue our peer support via basecamp and via webinars on key themes.
* Income generation support via the Future Funding programme
* Strengthen our regional networks building on the work started with Activist
* Review the Public Library Skills strategy, including continued support for the Transforming Leadership Course.

## Our board of Trustees

Our Board of Trustees comprises 13 trustees:

* Two people elected from Libraries Connected Membership (Libraries Connected President, President Elect)
* Seven people appointed from Libraries Connected Membership on the basis of their skills and experience
* Four people appointed independent trustees.

**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 President’s role

The President is a key role for Libraries Connected. As our figurehead, the President provides a confident voice to advocate for public libraries and celebrate their impacts. The President also chairs the Board of Trustees, so provides strategic insights and ensures the organisation is managed responsibly.

The President is a member of Libraries Connected and is elected by the membership at the AGM.

The full appointment is for a period of four years:

* President Elect June 2021-2022

This year provides opportunities to work alongside the President as an induction to the role.

* President June 2022-2024
* Past President June 2024-2025

Throughout this year, the Past President supports the new President in the role and also chairs the Advisory Committee.

This vacancy is for a candidate from Libraries Connected Membership. All Heads of Libraries (or equivalent) who are members of Libraries Connected may apply. No previous experience on the Libraries Connected Board or the Advisory Committee is required.

This is a voluntary role but reasonable expenses will be paid.

Location: Board meetings will be scheduled throughout the year and will take place in London and Birmingham. The role will involve travel to other locations across the UK and potentially abroad.

Time commitment: Approximately 10 days per year

As a Board member of Libraries Connected, you will be both a director of a company and trustee of a charity. You will therefore, have duties and responsibilities under company law and charity law. Whilst 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

**The role**

**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***

Across our Board we look for the following specific skills (and we have special interest in the areas in bold). We do not expect any the President to possess all of these skills, however 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 in its early development or 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 candidates to able to provide examples of:

* Ability to be a confident advocate and public speaker
* Experience in chairing boards or committees
* 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, sub-committee meetings and be available for and respond to telephone calls and electronic communication from senior management of the organisation
* Willingness to attend daytime and evening events

# How to apply

To apply to be the President, please send a short biography, and a statement about what you would like to achieve as President 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 shared with the Libraries Connected membership for a process of online voting on Monday 2 November
* The results will be announced at the Libraries Connected AGM on Wednesday 2 December 2020. The President Elect will formally take up the role at the Libraries Connected Annual Seminar in June 2021.
* 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, please feel free to contact us. Carol Stump (President, *carol.stump@kirklees.gov.uk*, Mark Freeman (Past President, *markfreeman@stockton.gov.uk*) or Isobel Hunter (CEO, *Isobel.hunter@librariesconnected.org.uk*)

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Email:

**info@librariesconnected.org.uk**

Twitter:

**@libsconnected**

Or join our mailing list at:

**librariesconnected.org.uk/signup**