

Share the Vision Annual Report 2019

Company details:

Company name: Share the Vision (Libraries) Limited

Company information: Charity number: 1136948
Company registration number: 3184753

Registered office: c/o CILIP
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Company website: www.readingsight.org.uk

Bankers: Bank of Scotland
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Independent examiner: S J McDonald ICPA
Certified Practising Accountant
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Report of the Trustees

The trustees, who are also directors of the company, present their report and accounts for the year ended 30 April 2019.

Principal activities

The charity's principal activity during the year was to promote the relief and education of visually impaired and other print disabled people, in particular but not exclusively, by improving the quality and availability of library and information services and products which provide for the reading and information needs of such persons.

Share the Vision personnel

Board Members:

Trustees are appointed as representatives by member organisations. Those who served during the year were as follows:

- James Bartlett (from December 2018)
- Alex Britton
- Jackie Chelin
- Mark Freeman (Chair until December 2018)
- Nick Fuller (from February 2019)
- Naomi Kenny (from February 2019)
- Mark McCree (Chair from December 2018)
- Zina Sabovic (from September 2018)
- Emma Scott
- Jennifer Stewart (from February 2019)
- Mark Taylor (until December 2018)
- Fiona Williams

Observers:

- Jemma Francis, CyMAL: Museums Archives and Libraries Wales, a division of the Welsh Assembly Government
- Julie Gibson (Independent)
- Katie Lusty (Arts Council England – stepped down December 2018)
- Clare Robe (Arts Council England, from December 2018)

Company Secretary:

- Mark McCree (until December 2018) / Emma Scott (from December 2018)

Chair's Introduction

2018/19 has been a year of change for Share the Vision (STV), particularly in terms of organisational roles and responsibilities at Board level, and capacity levels across the partner members. It is fair to report that whilst our commitment to support people who are visually impaired in accessing libraries and reading remains the same, the resource with which to do this is under increasing pressure and has, in real terms, decreased over the last year.

Having said that, it has been great to welcome new members onto the Board during this period, bringing fresh impetus and ideas; and we have been able to grow our capacity and expertise by working with others.

For example, STV has maintained its close association with John Vincent and the Network, who have continued to oversee the Six Steps discussion list and communications with our Six Step Champions. In the last year, we also explored together the opportunity of a training workshop in London.

David Fay, former Head of Libraries, Arts and Culture for Newcastle City Council has continued to author and develop our much-appreciated fortnightly Bulletins, carrying on the proud legacy of David Owen. We are pleased that we have been able to retain and develop this service and have received positive feedback around the new approach.

We have also worked with Marsha Lowe, Communications Manager with Libraries Connected, who has helped us strategically review our websites and social media presence.

More generally, we continue to work in tandem with our charity partners and public sector colleagues to promote accessibility and improvement through the sharing of best practice and experience.

We have continued to enjoy a mutually beneficial partnership with Libraries Connected (the Society of Chief Librarians, as was), as they have emerged as an Arts Council England (ACE) Sector Support Organisation and with a different operational and strategic model.

STV has played an active role in their review of the Universal Offers framework, and specifically with regard to the future and place of the Six Steps promise within that framework. Linked to this, the Six Steps Training Module is still freely available to members through the Libraries Connected Learning Pool platform.

Our work would not be possible without the strong support of Share the Vision's Board Members and the assistance/support we receive from RNIB, specifically in terms of hosting meetings and overseeing our social media.

In summary, the period of transition that the organisation has experienced during 2018/19 has helped renew focus on our priorities, partnerships and maximising the resources that we have at our disposal. Emerging reviews of our digital outputs (website, social media) and Make a Noise in Libraries Fortnight operations; and the early partnership discussions with The Ulverscroft Foundation all serve to illustrate the emphasis that is being put on sustaining and developing Share The Vision. Both in terms of the role it plays in the libraries sector; and, most importantly, in improving and championing accessible reading and libraries for people with a visual or print impairment.

Small company special provisions

This report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part XV of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Mark McCree
Chair
Share the Vision

Background

Share the Vision brings together public and voluntary sector library services and other library organisations to improve access to library services for over two million print disabled people in the UK. It is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee governed by Memorandum and Articles of Association incorporated 11 April 1996 amended by special resolution 27 April 2010. The membership comprises

- ASCEL (the Association of Senior Children's and Education Librarians)
- The British Library
- Calibre Audio Library
- CILIP (Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals)
- ClearVision
- Library and Information Services Council: Northern Ireland
- RNIB (Royal National Institute of Blind People)
- Scottish Library and Information Council
- Society of Chief Librarians (now Libraries Connected)
- Society of College, National and University Libraries

Libraries NI, The Arts Council England (ACE) and Museums Archives and Libraries Wales (MALD, a division of the Welsh Assembly Government) have observer status.

Share the Vision pursues its objective by

- Providing information and advice to public and voluntary sector library services
- Developing and recommending policy and strategies
- Identifying and encouraging best practice
- Supporting collaboration and networking within and between sectors
- Influencing library organisations and other stakeholders

Achievements 2018-2019

In planning the year's activities, the trustees complied with the duty in section 4 of the Charities Act 2006 to have due regard to public benefit.

To this end, key activities that were undertaken in 2018/19 included:

- The Chair, and other Board members, continued to advocate the Six Steps with partners, attending meetings and communicating the core messages with key stakeholders.
- Make a Noise in Libraries Fortnight (4-17 June 2018), had the theme of 'Changing minds, Changing times', and RNIB established the #MANIL2018 as the 'home' Twitter hashtag, which enabled people to see what activities were going on across the UK. The increased social media presence had a positive impact on raising profile and engagement with the event.
- Emma Scott continued to represent Share The Vision on the Reading Friends Steering Group, for the project administered through The Reading Agency. Through this, partnership discussions emerged regarding the production of a set of Reading Friends' guidelines around working with blind and partially sighted people.
- Share the Vision has continued to engage, where possible, with other relevant organisations and has responded to consultations and requests for support when we can.
- In August we participated in the IFLA Congress in Kuala Lumpur, where Mark Freeman presented a paper on universal design principles for public libraries in the UK.
- Jackie Chelin continued to develop the Six Steps approach within an academic library context and we have worked with SCOUNL to understand and address issues around accessible reading faced by people in education.
- A review of the Share The Vision website and the Reading Sight website was agreed and commissioned; including all new branding for the site/organisation.
- John Vincent developed a series of guidelines to support people working with blind and partially sighted people in libraries. Originally envisaged to be a set of documents aimed specifically at community libraries, through consultation and discussion it was decided to broaden their reach to all practitioners and these were developed around the turn of the year.
- Throughout 2018-2019 the Six Steps Promise has featured in workshops and discussions around the SCL/Libraries Connected Offers and Promises. The Chair has played an active role in the Advisory Group/wider conversations and direct updates and feedback has been provided on how the Offers/Promises should develop, and specifically with regard to the Six Steps.
- We have continued to deliver fortnightly Bulletins containing useful links and information surrounding sight loss.
- The organisation's over-arching strategy and work plan has not been updated in the last year; instead, succession planning and

priorities for current and future activity have been reviewed and discussed at each of our quarterly meetings, reflecting fast-changing circumstances.

- STV has paid close scrutiny to its outgoing expenditure and (as mentioned above) started to review its online presence, with a view to streamlining delivery and maximising use of available resources.
- Funds to support the organisation's work continue to be raised via a modest annual contribution from member organisations and income from this stream has largely been maintained, despite the challenging financial times that all local authorities find themselves in. Elsewhere, discussions started with The Ulverscroft Foundation around potential future strategic partnership/funding opportunities.

Induction and training of trustees

Trustees are provided with an induction and training in the form of presentations, discussions and visits.

Funds held on behalf of others

STV no longer holds any funds on behalf of others due to the fact that a residual amount remaining from work undertaken by the IFLA LPD group in the UK was directed to our attendance at the 2018 Congress.

Reserves policy

Trustees regularly review the financial situation of the charity with regard to its changing needs and circumstances, and consider it prudent to keep around 3 or 4 months' running costs as a reserve to meet any unforeseen expenditure that may occur.

Risks

Risks are regularly reviewed and addressed by the trustees. The main risk is financial instability, which is a low risk in the short term, but a higher risk in the medium term, largely due to the falling number of local authorities making a revenue contribution.

Plans for 2020/21

The key activities planned for 2020/21 include:

1. Identify and stimulate good practice in public libraries at national, regional and local level through engagement with partners and organisations both within the UK and internationally.

2. Continue to encourage universal sign-up to Six Steps and update and promote the Promise.
3. Actively contribute to the Libraries Connected review of the Universal Offers, specifically leading on the revision of the Six Steps promise.
4. Support further development and use of online information resources for practitioners and customers (i.e. Reading Sight and Learning Pool module).
5. Focus on making public library services accessible and useable; with particular attention being given to the provision of accessible reading formats and information.
6. Encourage the development of accessible and relevant digital reading services.
7. Assess the future development of reading and library services for visually and print impaired people, and what positive role Share The Vision can play in helping support that.
8. Work with ASCEL and SCONUL to understand and address issues around accessible reading faced by people in education.
9. Influence government, other key stakeholders and initiatives.
10. Ensure the organisation is effective and sustainable; including the development of a new 'work plan' and exploring further strategic partnerships.

Signed.....

Date 5th December 2019