

Share the Vision Annual Report 2020

Company details:

Company name:	Share the Vision (Libraries) Limited
Company information:	Charity number: 1136948 Company registration number: 3184753
Registered office:	c/o CILIP 7 Ridgmount Street London WC1E 7AE
Company website:	www.readingsight.org.uk
Bankers:	Bank of Scotland PO Box 1000 BX2 1LB
Independent examiner:	S J McDonald ICPA Certified Practising Accountant Station Chambers 36 Bolton Street Bury Lancashire BL9 0LL

Report of the Trustees

The trustees, who are also directors of the company, present their report and accounts for the year ended 30 April 2020.

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
- Emily Cross (from December 2019)
- Alex Britton / Fiona Taylor
- Jackie Chelin
- Mark Freeman
- Nick Fuller
- Naomi Kenny
- Mark McCree
- Zina Sabovic
- Emma Scott
- Jennifer Stewart (from May 2019)
- Fiona Williams (until November 2019)

Observers:

- Jemma Francis/Carys Dawson (Culture and Sport Division [formerly Museums, Archives and Libraries Division, MALD], Welsh Government)
- Julie Gibson (Independent) - stepped down as Board Member (May 2019) and as Observer (September 2019)
- Clare Robe (Arts Council England)
- John Vincent (The Network) from September 2019

Company Secretary:

- Emma Scott

Chair's Introduction

Welcome to our Annual Report for 2019-2020.

2019-20 has been a challenging but nonetheless positive year for Share the Vision (STV), with major developments achieved before the COVID-19 pandemic emerged towards the end of the period covered by this Annual Report (i.e. May 2019 to April 2020).

In terms of the membership of the Board, it has been a time of transition, with long-standing Members stepping down – Julie Gibson and Fiona Williams, and our sincere thanks go to them for their time, expertise and support for the organisation over the years. At the same time, we have welcomed new Observers from CILIP, MALD, and The Network, which gives Share The Vision valuable, wider context and input to our work.

Alongside our core partners on the Board and across the Library sector, the extra capacity and expertise that we have been able to bring in has played, and will continue play, a major role in us achieving our aims; and being able to deliver more activities and action for the people that Share The Vision serves.

This year, we have worked closely with Marsha Lowe, Communications Manager with Libraries Connected, who project managed and helped steer the redevelopment of the Reading Sight website (www.readingsight.org.uk) and the wider strategic review of our web and social media presence. Also, Deb Ryan played a key role in reviewing the content of the former websites (i.e. the separate 'Share The Vision', and 'Reading Sight' websites) and in preparing new content.

David Fay, former Head of Libraries, Arts and Culture for Newcastle City Council has continued to research and produce our regular Bulletins. Relevant content has been harder to come by since the pandemic arrived, but this update remains highly appreciated and is now fully integrated with the updated Reading Sight website.

Additionally, Karen Whittingham provided direct and proactive support for Hi VIS 2020 (see more below), which helped make it a major success, with us almost doubling previous year's performance levels in terms of engagement.

My thanks go to all the people who have given their time, skills and support to Share The Vision over the last 12 months.

The emerging strategic partnership with The Ulverscroft Foundation is an exciting, landmark development, and one that should enable us to deliver more positive change in the future. It also further cements our overarching belief that, in working together for the benefit of visual and print impaired library users and readers in general, we can achieve more.

Mark McCree
Chair, Share the Vision

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.

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) and The Network 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 2019-2020

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 2019/20 included:

- Advocacy for Six Steps with partners - Attending meetings and communicating the core messages with key stakeholders; and beginning the review/update of Six Steps Promise, to ensure it maintained currency and relevance.
- Make a Noise in Libraries Fortnight (2-15 June 2019) - The theme of MANIL 2019 was 'Get Connected', focussing on the areas of digital access and loneliness within the visually impaired community. A review of the direction, title and branding of MANIL was undertaken and decisions made with a view to instigating changes in 2020.
- A review of the Share The Vision website and the Reading Sight website was completed and the rebranded, blended site (www.readingsight.org.uk) was launched.
- A set of practitioner Guidelines were completed by John Vincent and subsequently made freely available via Reading Sight; and these were also highlighted via Libraries Connected.
- Emma Scott continued to represent Share The Vision on the Reading Friends Steering Group, for the project administered through The Reading Agency and a bespoke overarching 'Reading Friends' Guidelines document was also produced (launched during MANIL 2019).
- 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 (including the Axe The Tax campaign).
- We have also looked to broaden our Board membership with The Network now fully integrated and contact made with organisations such as Listening Books and Seeing Ear.

- The Chair has played an active role in the Libraries Connected Advisory Group and played an active role in the review of the Universal Offers/Promises, specifically with regard to the 'Six Steps'.
- The Learning Pool 'Six Steps' content was reviewed and updated/corrected by Helen Drakard.
- We have continued to deliver regular Bulletins containing useful links and information surrounding sight loss.
- A strategic partnership with The Ulverscroft Foundation was developed and finalised, with the direct support of Robert Gent (Chair of the Foundation). A three year programme of activity was co-produced and will be in place from 2020-21.

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 holds no funds on behalf of others.

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 2021/22

The key activities planned for 2021/22 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 increase awareness of, and encourage universal sign-up to, the updated Vision and Print Impaired People's Promise.

3. Actively contribute to the Libraries Connected review/delivery of the Universal Offers.
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 embedding our new 3 year 'work plan' with The Ulverscroft Foundation and exploring further strategic partnerships.

Signed 

Date 30th October 2020