

Share the Vision Annual Report 2021

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 2021.

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

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

- James Bartlett
- Emily Cross
- Alex Britton / Fiona Taylor
- Jackie Chelin
- Mark Freeman (Treasurer)
- Nick Fuller
- Naomi Kenny
- Mark McCree (Chair)
- Zina Sabovic
- Emma Scott (Company Secretary)
- Jennifer Stewart

Observers:

- Carys Dawson (Culture and Sport Division [formerly Museums, Archives and Libraries Division, MALD], Welsh Government)
- Christopher Edwards / Kate Leonard (representing Society of Chief Librarians, Wales)
- Clare Robe (Arts Council England)
- John Vincent (The Network)

Chair's Introduction

Welcome to our Annual Report for 2020-2021. The period covered by this Annual Report is May 2020 to April 2021.

2020-21 has clearly been a year like no other, with the impact of COVID-19 being felt across all aspects of society. Despite the significant challenges that the pandemic has presented to those working in the library sector, services have demonstrated dedication, flexibility and resilience to maintain, modify and develop provision to ensure that the needs of customers continued to be met during the most trying of times. Share the Vision, alongside many, largely shifted into a virtual/online realm; but in doing so, the Board managed to continue to meet quarterly and to progress a relatively significant range of activity in alignment with our core aims.

Regarding the Board, after a period of transition, we have now been able to consolidate; and the breadth of experience and knowledge of the members has provided a solid foundation on which to build for the future.

We have continued to work closely with wider partners, such as Libraries Connected and Ech, to review the Six Steps Promise (now the Vision and Print Impaired People's Promise), and maintain and develop the Reading Sight website (www.readingsight.org.uk), respectively. These have been significant undertakings for the organisation, and it is positive that we now have these strong 'foundation' resources in place and fit for purpose.

We are very grateful that David Fay (former Head of Libraries, Arts and Culture for Newcastle City Council) has continued to research and produce our regular Bulletins. These have been sustained throughout the pandemic and are now digitally archived and accessible via Reading Sight.

Additionally, RNIB and Karen Whittingham, specifically, who helped support and deliver Hi VIS 2020, which was a great success, focussing on the theme of celebrating the word in all its forms and formats. Following feedback from various stakeholders, we changed the name of 'Make A Noise in Libraries' Fortnight to 'Hi VIS' in 2020 as the emphasis of this initiative had shifted over the years, from being originally forged largely as a campaigning vehicle, to something that latterly has predominantly sought to highlight the excellent work that is going on in libraries for people with a vision impairment. We thought that the title should change to reflect this shift; 'Hi VIS' seemed to be a good fit and it certainly appears to have landed well with the audience as engagement via social media was significant in 2020/21 (3.3k mentions; 2.7M reach).

We also launched our three year strategic partnership with The Ulverscroft Foundation in June 2020, to coincide with Hi VIS fortnight, and this marks a major step forward for the ambition and sustainability of Share the Vision. This partnership is an exciting, landmark development, and one that should enable us to deliver more positive change around a set of shared aims. It further cements our over-arching belief that, in working together for the benefit of visually and print impaired library users and readers in general, we can achieve more.

Finally, as ever, my sincere gratitude goes to all the people who have given of their time, expertise and support to Share the Vision during such a challenging year - Thank you.

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
- Libraries Connected / Society of Chief Libraries (Wales)
- 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

Key achievements 2020-2021

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 2020/21 included:

- Review of Six Steps/Vision and Print Impaired People's Promise - Attending meetings as part of the wider Universal Offers review (Libraries Connected) and undertaking a revision of key content.
- Share the Vision entered into a strategic partnership with the Ulverscroft Foundation in 2020. A three year Action Plan was latterly 'launched' in April 2021, following delays relating to the pandemic. The plan provides a focus for the partnership and sets out a range of activities and developments that will be delivered to help achieve a set of shared aims (see Plans for 2021/22 below).
- Hi VIS fortnight (1-14 June 2020) - The 'Make A Noise in Libraries' brand was completely overhauled and relaunched as Hi VIS, along with some strong digital promotion, which saw increased levels of engagement.
- Reading Sight website (www.readingsight.org.uk) was further developed and new content made available. Performance of the website and general feedback over its first full year of operation was very positive.
- Share the Vision has continued to engage, where possible, with other relevant organisations and has responded to enquiries, consultations and requests for support.
- Emma Scott continued to represent Share The Vision on the Reading Friends Steering Group, for the project administered through The Reading Agency.
- The Chair has played an active role in the Libraries Connected Advisory Committee and played an active role in the review of the Universal Offers/Promises, as noted above.
- We have continued to deliver regular Bulletins containing useful links and information surrounding sight loss.

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 sustainability, which is a relatively low risk in the short to medium term (as a result of the new partnership with The Ulverscroft Foundation), but at a higher risk in the longer 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:

- Deliver on the actions set out in the Share the Vision/Ulverscroft Foundation action plan (2021-24); including producing marketing and promotional materials and seeking to embed the Vision and Print Impaired People's Promise in emerging accreditation and regional support structures.
- Increase awareness of, and encourage universal sign-up to, the Vision and Print Impaired People's Promise and develop training and development opportunities around this.
- Support further development and use of online information resources for practitioners and customers (i.e. Reading Sight and Learning Pool).
- Highlight and encourage good practice in public libraries at national, regional and local level through engagement with partners and organisations both within the UK and internationally; in particular through the Hi VIS fortnight initiative.
- Focus on making public library services accessible and useable; with particular attention being given to the provision of accessible reading formats and information.
- Encourage the development of accessible and relevant digital reading services and assess what positive role Share the Vision can play in helping support that.
- Continue to work with ASCEL and SCONUL to understand and address issues around accessible reading faced by people in education.
- Influence government, other key stakeholders and initiatives.
- Ensure the organisation is effective and sustainable

Signed.....

Date 30th September 2021