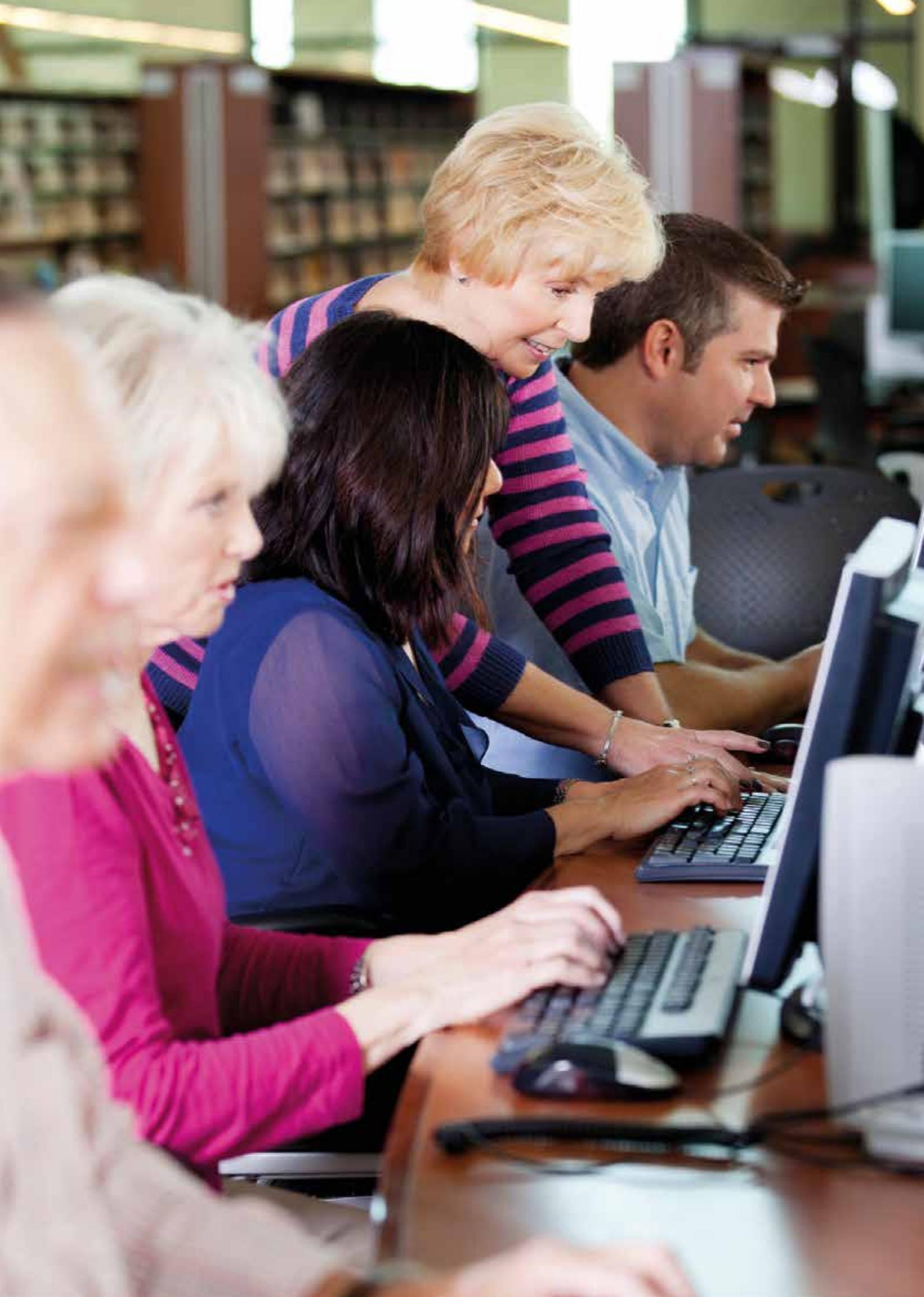# SL*i*C

Scottish Library & Information Council

Annual Report 15/16

▶ Chair's Foreword

This year saw the launch of Scotland's first national strategy for public libraries, Ambition and Opportunity: A Strategy for Public Libraries in Scotland 2015-2020. With the support of the Scottish Government, COSLA and Carnegie UK Trust and under the leadership of Martyn Evans, Chief Executive of Carnegie UK Trust, the creation of the strategy provides a platform on which a strong message for public libraries can be taken forward.

The Scottish Government has asked Scottish Library Information Council (SLIC) to lead on the implementation of the Strategy and in support of this an Advisory Group has been formed with representation from key stakeholders such as Carnegie UK Trust, Publishing Scotland and the Scottish Council of Voluntary Organisations (SCVO). The Heads of Public Library Services are key members of the Advisory Group and are playing a leading role in the delivery of the Strategic Aims.

The implementation of Ambition and Opportunity has made a strong start with over £1.4 million of funding attracted at a national level to deliver free WiFi in public libraries across Scotland, introduced 3D printers to all public library services and implemented a range of Early Years literacy programmes in public libraries.

Despite the challenging financial context in which public libraries find themselves operating, the strategy is clearly delivering an enhanced service for libraries in local communities. This demonstrates the strength of the sector and the support it continues to receive from the advocacy which SLIC undertakes on its behalf, not least by administering the Public Library Improvement Fund (PLIF) and the Innovation and Development Fund (IDF) on behalf of the Scottish Government.

To assist with understanding the complex environment in which public libraries find themselves SLIC commissioned an independent evaluation on Evidence of the use of Volunteers in Volunteer Run Libraries (published in August 2015) which highlighted that while volunteers can add value to services there is no sustainability in a volunteer only operation, which does not represent a viable model for a public library service. SLIC also commissioned a review of the Public Library Improvement Fund to demonstrate the value which this fund brings to the Public Library sector in June 2015. This review highlighted that relatively small amounts of funding delivers significant impact and supports innovation within the sector.

While implementing Ambition and Opportunity forms a substantial part of the overall SLIC output, you will see from this report that SLIC supports its entire membership through advocacy and partnership working in addition to the training events which have taken place for staff from member organisations.

Finally, I would like to highlight a key report which SLIC published in May 2015, the Review of Library Services in Scotland's Prisons, which was undertaken in partnership with the Scottish Prison Service. This demonstrates just one of the ways in which SLIC supports the wider library and information community.

In presenting this annual report, I would like to thank the SLIC team for the range and quality of work which they deliver and the SLIC Board for their diligence and commitment. My first full year as Chair has been both exciting and inspiring, and I look forward to working with SLIC and our wider community to support even greater developments in the coming year.

Gordon Hunt
Chair, SLIC Board

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▶ Advocacy

Ambition & Opportunity: A Strategy for Public Libraries in Scotland 2015-2020

The first national strategy for Scotland's public libraries was published on 2 June 2015 and attracted £1.4 million of funding to libraries in its early months.

'Ambition & Opportunity: A Strategy for Public Libraries in Scotland 2015-2020' sets out six strategic aims and 18 key recommendations to build on the strong heritage of Scotland's libraries. The strategic aims are to promote: reading, literacy and learning; digital inclusion; economic wellbeing; social wellbeing; culture and creativity and be excellent public services.

The Scottish Government asked SLIC to lead on the implementation of the strategy. SLIC established a strategic advisory group comprising key stakeholders, such as the Carnegie UK Trust, Publishing Scotland and the Scottish Council of Voluntary Organisations (SCVO). Local delivery on each of the strategic aims is led by heads of public library services who act as strategic leads for each of the six aims and are represented on the advisory group.

Every Child A Library Member

A pilot scheme to encourage library membership from birth was launched by First Minister Nicola Sturgeon on 25 August 2015. Every Child a Library Member (ECALM) is an important programme which could play a significant role in closing the attainment gap, reducing social exclusion and promoting equality of opportunity.

A total of £80,000 of Scottish Government Funding was made available through SLIC to trial methods of giving children automatic library membership at key stages. Through the scheme children were given a library card either at birth, age three or four, or in Primary 1. Libraries also worked closely with schools and communities to promote the services they offer to families.

Following the success of the pilot, which included all 32 public library services in Scotland, it is intended the scheme will become an established programme across Scotland's libraries following an independent evaluation being commissioned to establish best practice.

ECALM will be a key component in delivering Ambition and Opportunity.

Read, Write, Count

Scotland's libraries played a lead role in the introduction of the Scottish Government's Read Write Count campaign, supporting the use of reading, writing and counting in everyday activities among families of P1-3 children. The initiative was launched on 6 February 2016, as part of National Libraries Day. Libraries across the country held a wide range of activities and events to promote the Read, Write, Count objectives.

SLIC was awarded £198,000 to provide grants to libraries in support of Read, Write, Count.

Information days for Library staff across Scotland were held in Edinburgh and Glasgow in January 2016.

▶ Standards

How Good is Our Public Library Service?

The first assessments under the updated self-assessment model for public library services, How Good is Our Public Library Service? (HGIOPLS), took place in the Scottish Borders in February 2016. Further visits are planned with Aberdeen City Council and Moray Council in 2016/17.

The process was led by Professor Peter Reid of Robert Gordon University on behalf of SLIC and supported by peer assessors and the assessment panel chairs who had been specially trained by Quality Scotland. HGIOPLS replaced the Public Library Quality Improvement Matrix.

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Wireless connectivity at 96% of public libraries

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▸ Innovation

The Public Library Improvement Fund (PLIF)

PLIF has supported innovation and development across the public library network since 2006. The fund was this year held at £500,000 and is administered by SLIC on behalf of the Scottish Government, involving an annual competitive bidding process.

In 2015/16 bids were received in support of three key priority areas: Community Engagement, Digital Creativity and Inclusion and Health and Wellbeing. A total of 21 projects were successful including the creation of a dialectogram to shape the redevelopment of Clydebank Library in West Dunbartonshire, the appointment of a Coder in Residence at Glasgow Life Libraries and the extension of the Braw Blether Bibliotherapy network in Midlothian Libraries. Full details are available at scottishlibraries.org/public-library-improvement-fund/plif-awards-2015.

At a national level, PLIF also supported the roll-out of the highly successful Appiness programme, which was pioneered by North Ayrshire libraries and won the CILIP Libraries Change Lives Award in September 2015. Appiness is an early years' programme which focuses on supporting family learning by introducing young children and their parents or carers to a range of high quality education apps using tablet devices. The programme was extended to a further 12 library services in 2015/16.

Innovation and Development Fund (IDF)

This year's IDF was awarded to three projects, which shared a total fund of over £30,000. These were:

Further Education Standards Research – Dundee and Angus College

This project aims initially to research current Further Education (FE) landscapes, roles and responsibilities and to work towards developing sector-led FE Standards.

GSA Zine Collection – Glasgow School of Art

As part of this project, the GSA zine collection will be fully accessible to the student body of the school as well as the general public. The project also entails the running of workshops for students and the general public to generate a sustainable, living zine collection in Scotland.

These Foolish Things – Scottish Poetry Library

This project aims to offer innovative training and support to libraries and care homes to collect a 'library' of vintage objects, and learn a range of ways of using them together with poetry and stories, in community-based work with older groups and people with dementia, including in care homes.

Public Library WiFi

Following the successful Scottish Government Public Broadband Wireless Programme in 2014/15, libraries were allocated a share of the £1.5 million in August 2015 to extend public library WiFi provision. SLIC worked in partnership with Scottish Futures Trust to allocate the funding across library services, resulting in wireless connectivity at 96% of public libraries.

3D Printing

SLIC was awarded £76,000 to support 3D printing activities in public libraries in March 2016, following a successful bid to the Scottish Government Digital Directorate. As part of the funding, every library service in Scotland will be offered a 3D printing kit including the printer, a 3D scanner and printing materials. Library staff will also be invited to take part in a one-day training event to support their use of the printers.

▶ Partnership

▶ Digital Champions

SLIC continues to support a network of 32 Digital Champions in public libraries by coordinating a series of quarterly meetings featuring a broad range of external speakers working around the digital agenda. The meetings also encourage the Digital Champions to share knowledge and experience and good practice in developing digital initiatives. In the past year meetings have included a DigiTable demonstration from South Lanarkshire Libraries, a guide to 3D printers and an introduction to coding clubs for young people.

▶ SCURL

SLIC continues to support the work of the Scottish Confederation of University and Research Libraries (SCURL) through an ongoing funding stream and collaboration with the SCURL Service Development Manager.

A number of task and finish groups were convened to support SCURL objectives. The Metadata Group enjoyed exchange visits with colleagues in the Netherlands to learn from best practice. The Collaborative Collections group is continuing to identify ways forward with regards to duplication of materials being stored in several collections.

▶ Creative Scotland

Creative Scotland awarded SLIC £190,000 to deliver a Film Education in Libraries pilot. Library Services were invited to submit applications for the pilot projects. Six library services were successful and are taking projects forward. Creative Scotland have a particular interest in the learning which is obtained through this pilot and to that end an independent evaluation will run throughout the 18 month pilot programme.

▶ Events

▶ eBooks Conference

In collaboration with SCURL and JISC Scotland, SLIC hosted the 14th annual eBooks conference at the Technology and Innovation Centre, University of Strathclyde in October 2015.   Over 100 delegates from academic, public, health and special libraries across the UK attended. The varied programme included speakers from Finland and the Netherlands and the keynote address was given by Dr John Scally, National Librarian and Chief Executive, National Library of Scotland.

▶ FE Practitioners' Forum

The annual FE event took place at City of Glasgow College, Riverside campus in November 2015. Over 50 staff working in FE colleges in Scotland attended. The delegates took the opportunity to visit the Library at the newly opened campus. As well as presentations from several of the FE colleges, speakers included Genevieve Clarke from the Reading Agency and Professor Andrew Prescott from the University of Glasgow.

▶ Information Literacy Symposium

In collaboration with the Information Literacy Community of Practice, SLIC organised an information literacy symposium which took place at the Scottish Government office at Atlantic Quay in February 2015. Over 80 attendees from all library sectors were represented and had the opportunity to hear speakers from the health, education, welfare and housing sectors on the demand they faced for information literacy. A second Symposium will take place at Atlantic Quay in November 2016.

▶ First World War Centenary Event

SLIC joined forces with the Imperial War Museum to organise this event which featured presentations by Dundee, West Lothian and Shetland Library services on their PLIF funded WW1 projects. Over 50 people from a wide range of organisations gathered in Dundee to discuss national plans and partnership projects to mark the Centenary of WW1 in 2016.

▶ National Strategy

A reception was held in September 2015 to thank everyone who was involved with the development of Ambition & Opportunity; A Strategy for Public Libraries in Scotland 2015-2020. The event was held at the National Library of Scotland.

▶ Libraries, Reading and Information for Young People

Two events were held in Glasgow and Edinburgh in March 2015 and featured speakers from the Scottish Book Trust, Reading Agency and Young Scot sharing best practice with library staff on engaging with Young People. Both events were facilitated by the Tree of Knowledge.

▶ PLACE Training

A total of 33 staff from 15 library services across Scotland, successfully completed a 6 session training course aimed at raising awareness about best practice in community engagement and developing staff understanding and skills in consultation.

▶ How Good Is Our Public Library Service?

Training courses for both Peer Assessors and Chair Assessors were held in 2015. The training was carried out by Quality Scotland in Edinburgh.

▶ Scottish Learning Festival

SLIC participated, as part of the exhibition, at the Scottish Learning Festival in September 2015 to promote the educational impact of libraries and to engage with the education sector. Promotional materials were produced for the event, featuring key facts about school libraries' performance which had been drawn from the outputs of a SLIC-led data gathering exercise.

▶ Standing Literacy Commission

SLIC contributed to the work of the Standing Literacy Commission on the development of the Scottish Government's Literacy Action Plan. The report points to a generally improving picture for literacy levels in Scotland from early years, through schools, colleges to adult learning. However, it highlights the need to continue to address the gap in attainment between the most and least deprived young people. It also welcomes SLIC's Every Child a Library Member pilot scheme.

▶ Publications

▶ Volunteer run Libraries

SLIC commissioned a literature review to explore the impact of volunteer-run libraries, amid moves towards devolving more power to local communities through the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill, and the ongoing pressure on public service spending.

The report, Evidence on the use of volunteers in libraries and on volunteer-run libraries was published in August 2015 highlights the useful role of volunteers in extending and supplementing library services, and outlines the types of roles that volunteers fulfil, including assisting with shelving books, supporting a reading group, acting as a computer buddy and assisting with Bookbug sessions.

However, it concludes that volunteer-run libraries without paid professional staff and local authority support are not the preferred option.

▶ Review of the Public Library Improvement Fund

The Robert Gordon University was commissioned by SLIC to review of the impact of the Public Library Improvement Fund (PLIF). The final report was published in June 2015. Key highlights showed that fairly small sums of money could be very impactful for the sector and that there was a great deal of innovation and creativity within the sector.

▶ Review of Prison Library Services in Scotland

SLIC worked in partnership with the Scottish Prison Service to review the prison library provision and establish best practise. This report was published in May 2015 and now informs the Scottish Prison Learning Strategy. Key findings highlighted best practice being found where public libraries and prison libraries co-produced the library offer with the prison.

▶ SLIC Board Update

Jennifer Louden and Claire Scott stepped down from the Board in June 2015 and Jeanette Castle in January 2016. At the AGM in November 2015, Fiona Clark Library & Information Services Manager, Aberdeen City Libraries was re-elected to serve another term. Also in November, the board welcomed Fiona Dakers, Senior Manager – Libraries, Customer & Culture, ANGUSalive and Donald Maclean, Librarian at Perth College.