



ANNUAL REVIEW

SCOTTISH LIBRARY AND INFORMATION COUNCIL

2021

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CHAIR'S FOREWORD



2020-2021 marked SLIC's 30th anniversary. For over three decades SLIC has supported the library sector in Scotland. These three decades, through the development of technology, saw the management and currency of information transform access to library services beyond all recognition.

SLIC nurtured the pace of change by paving the way for technology to be embedded in library services and curating staff development programmes to ensure the workforce was well placed to enable library users to make the most of the information explosion. Both those aspects of SLIC's work remain as current today as they have been in past decades as we see new technology continue to be rolled-out through libraries, and ongoing staff development programmes move to online platforms.

To mark the anniversary year, SLIC commissioned a number of thought pieces. SLIC published an article outlining a detailed history of SLIC and introduced a new award for SLIC members. Details are available on the [SLIC website](#).

However, 2020-2021 was a year like no other. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which started to unfold in March 2020, SLIC pivoted its services online and responded to the needs of its members as the country moved into lockdown. SLIC liaised with the Scottish Government to maximise which library services could be maintained as public health guidance changed and the pandemic moved on.

SLIC members were quick to accentuate the online library offer and support library users as much as possible during lockdown and beyond. Every step of the way involved SLIC working on behalf of members to ensure safety was not compromised as restrictions began to relax. SLIC also worked tirelessly to get the message out about the innovative ways in which libraries supported users through the year as library venues closed and re-opened.

The work programme did not halt and key work packages such as the development of a new public library strategy for Scotland got underway with the creation of an Advisory Group, desk research, surveys and online workshops all taking place. Regular work programmes, such as administering the Public Library Improvement Fund (PLIF), the School Library Improvement Fund (SLIF) and the Innovation and Development Fund (IDF), were managed in the usual way.

A new strategy for SLIC itself was launched in February 2021 and the organisation also received CyberEssentials and Living Wage Employer accreditation.

This year's events have only further reinforced the important role which SLIC plays on behalf of its members and the library sector in Scotland.

The team has been working from home since March 2020, in line with Scottish Government guidance. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their unfailing input and support to maintain the high standard of work which has been delivered. I would also like to thank the SLIC Board for their insight and guidance through the year.

Ian Ruthven
Chair, SLIC Board of Trustees

PROMOTING SCOTLAND'S LIBRARY SERVICES



30 years of transforming library and information services

This year, SLIC marked its 30th anniversary. Since 1991, we have been empowering and enhancing Scotland's communities through the provision of relevant library services.

Our work is shaped by six strategic priorities:

- ADVOCACY**
- STANDARDS**
- INNOVATION**
- PARTNERSHIP**
- FUNDING**
- RESEARCH**

By delivering against these priorities, we contribute to:

- A clear vision of the role and benefits of library and information services in the 21st century.
- An ethos of self-evaluation and continuous performance monitoring.
- A robust evidence base to demonstrate impact, inform policy and support decision making.
- A climate of innovation and experimentation across the library sector.
- More effective service delivery through increased partnership working across the profession and with related agencies.
- An appropriately skilled workforce that is well equipped to meet present and future demands.

For over three decades, we have driven forward huge transformation in libraries, including those prompted by the advent of the internet and digitisation of newspapers. We have championed many innovative projects that reinforce the value of reading and information handling.

We will continue to work with our membership to promote and support the experience and expertise of Scotland's library sector, and ensure they continue to be relevant, necessary and much-loved.

RESPONDING TO COVID-19

The past year has been defined by the COVID-19 pandemic, which features strongly in this annual review.

MAINTAINING SERVICES

We pivoted online and adapted the way we work, and our priority was to ensure our members had the support and guidance they needed to navigate the pandemic and associated disruption. Crucially, we supported our members to make changes to deliver services to communities remotely while buildings were closed. Through our international networks, we gathered and shared best practice, allowing them to learn the effective ways the global library community continued to connect with users.

NAVIGATING LOCKDOWN

Working with the Scottish Government Culture Team, we supported the development of Guidance for Public Libraries, an organic document which responded to the public health guidance as the pandemic played out. We also influenced the Scottish Government Education Team to develop Guidance for Schools, which ensured that public health guidance for library services was reflected in advice.

PRINTING PPE

The network of 3D printers in public libraries, which was funded by SLIC in 2016, came to the rescue of communities across Scotland. Through our Digital Champions Network, face coverings were printed for carers at a time when PPE shortages were being driven by huge demand as the pandemic took hold.

SAFELY EXITING LOCKDOWN

As the national lockdown came to an end and venues were able to slowly reopen, it was vital they did so in a safe manner to protect employees and communities. Acting on behalf of our members, we influenced and developed Guidance for Public Libraries and Guidance for Schools, which supported public, school, college, and university libraries.

BUILDING BACK BETTER

In an effort to ensure our members have access to the best advice and support as we move through the pandemic, we engaged with a broad range of culture organisations, including Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIPS), Association of Public Libraries Scotland (APLS), SCURL, Carnegie UK Trust, National Authorities for Public Libraries in Europe (NAPLE), Gigabit Libraries, Libraries Connected, Welsh Libraries, Libraries NI and Libraries Ireland (LGMA). Learnings have been shared to inform service delivery and to influence service developments.

HIGHLIGHTS

A SUMMARY OF OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

In this section we have outlined a summary of some of the core activities we undertook to meet our six strategic priorities.

ADVOCACY

National strategies

- Vibrant Libraries, Thriving Schools: a national strategy for school libraries in Scotland: scheduled activity was adapted for COVID-19, and online support and resources were shared through Basecamp, the SLIC website and the Education Scotland professional learning community.
- Ambition and Opportunity: a national strategy for public libraries in Scotland: we commissioned an evaluation report, which found its impact has been transformational. Service design has shifted and more than £5million has been invested to drive innovation and development.
- A Collective Force for Health and Wellbeing: the action plan progressed well, in partnership with Digital Health Scotland, the NHS and THE ALLIANCE.

Ministerial engagement

Regular engagement with Ministers continued throughout the year and worked well, even in a virtual environment. We presented at the Scottish Government's National Partnership for Culture and COSLA's Culture Convenors Working Group, both of which were attended by the Minister for Economy, Fair Work and Culture. Ministers continued to publicly support our initiatives, with their contribution to planned media activity.



Events & conferences

We attended or exhibited at a range of sector conference and member events, all of which took place online:

- CILIPS conference
- SCURL Showcase
- Voluntary Health Conference
- Publishing and Libraries Day
- SLIC Annual Showcase

National Mobile Libraries Day

The second National Mobile Libraries Day took place during Book Week Scotland 2020. Where mobile services were unable to travel, libraries improvised and implemented 'throwback' social media campaigns.

STANDARDS

Evaluation

Evaluation of our work has provided evidence for the impact of our work:

- **Public Library Improvement Fund (PLIF) 2019/20**
Key finding: even small sums of project funding are extremely impactful to the sector
- **School Library Improvement Fund (SLIF) 2019/20**
Key finding: £1 million fund was transformational to the school library community



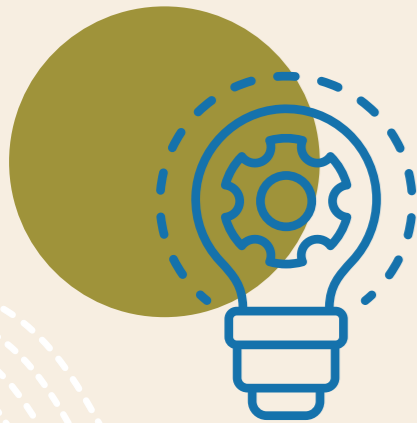
INNOVATION

Digital Training Platform

A brand new resource has been developed to upskill public library staff. The package is supported by the Digital Champions Network and will be launched Autumn 2021.

Information Literacy Toolkit

Web developers were appointed to create the toolkit, which is expected to be launched online in Autumn 2021.



FUNDING

Public Library Improvement Fund

£200,220 total awarded

6 successful bids

Focus on COVID-19 recovery

School Library Improvement Fund

£100,000 total awarded

13 successful bids

Focus on digital literacy and mental health resource for young people

Innovation and Development Fund

£24,600 total awarded

4 successful bids

Innovation & creativity in further and higher education

Bursaries

20 awards to attend CILIPS annual conference

Funding e-Newsletter

Issued every two months with information on a range of sources of financial support for the library community

PARTNERSHIP

Big Scottish Book Club

Through our strategic partnership with BBC Scotland, we promoted participation in the second series of the Big Scottish Book Club and provided grants to local authorities to enable them to purchase copies of the books featured in the programme.

Fun Palaces

We worked with Fun Palaces, the grassroots culture organisation, to curate its weekend programme of events in October 2020.

The Digichamps Network

The Digichamps Network went from strength to strength, with a clear focus on partnerships and initiatives to improve digital engagement. Many public library services got involved in Connecting Scotland, an initiative to get everyone in Scotland online, and provided support to members of the public who received digital devices during the pandemic to become digitally connected.

Scottish Government programmes

- **Book Week Scotland**

We have long been a partner of Book Week Scotland and 2020 was no exception, even amid the pandemic. A total of £19,250 was awarded to 25 local authorities to support events and activities during the annual celebration.

- **First Minister's Reading Challenge**

We are part of the Advisory Group for the annual First Minister's Reading Challenge, and supported the development of the Reading Schools programme.



RESEARCH

Research

Several research projects have created valuable intelligence to inform our work:

- **New Public Library Strategy:** a global literature review, virtual visits to libraries around the world, interviews with global sector experts, surveys of Scotland's public library staff and stakeholders, and feedback from users and non-users combined to provide a wealth of information for development of the new strategy.
- **Health on the Shelf:** independent research uncovered the size and scope of the health and wellbeing offer in libraries. The report reveals the positive health and wellbeing impact of public libraries, with a review of the impact of activities, and the financial savings they drive for the NHS.



CORPORATE NEWS

SLIC STRATEGY

In February 2021, we launched a new three-year strategic plan to guide our work in the coming years. The 2021-2024 plan has seen our priorities increase from five to six with the addition of research and development.

ACCREDITING OUR WORK

We secured two important accreditations during the year, providing security and benefits to our people and the way we work:



SLIC BOARD

Trustees

Ian Ruthven, Chair

Alison Stevenson, Vice Chair

Harry Mulvey, Treasurer

Susan Ashworth
(resigned 16 June 2020)

Fiona Clark (resigned 14 May 2020)

Fiona Dakers

Abi Mawhirt
(resigned 6 November 2020)

Sha Nazir (resigned 6 November 2020)

Peter Reid

Ann Wales
(resigned 6 November 2020)

Penny Roberston
(resigned 1 July 2021)

Andrew Olney
(appointed 24 June 2020)

Robert Ruthven
(appointed 24 June 2020)

John Scally

Anna McInnes

Robin Prior

Jonathan Tait

Jamie Fowler
(resigned 16 March 2021)

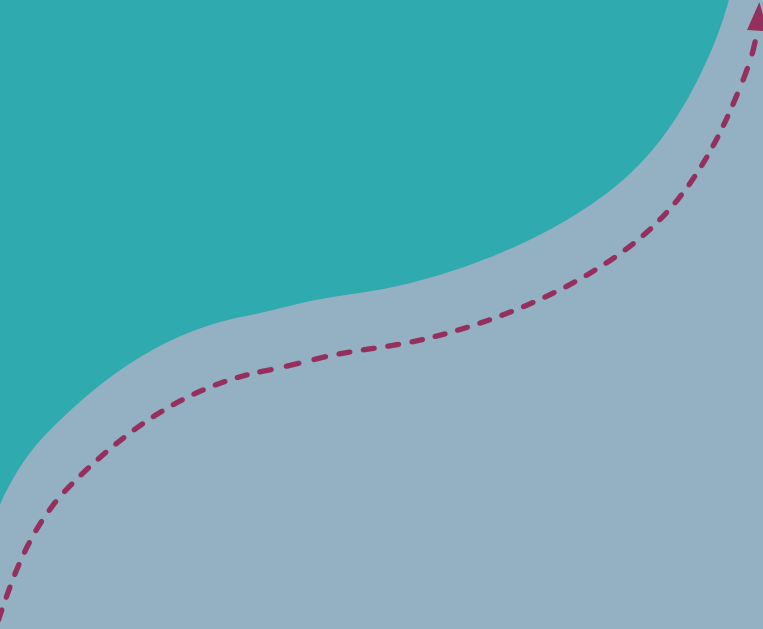
Hazel Hutchison
(appointed 6 November 2020, resigned
28 April 2021)

Rachel Stewart
(appointed 6 November 2020)

Gary Cameron
(appointed 6 November 2020)

Robert Sullivan
(appointed 6 November 2020)

Jill Reid (appointed 1 July 2021)



Suite 5.5, Turnberry House
175 West George Street
Glasgow G2 2LB
e: info@scottishlibraries.org
w: www.scottishlibraries.org

