

Annual Report for 2020/21

This is the Report of the Trustees of the Aldeburgh Library Foundation (ALF) on how it carried out its activities to meet its charitable objectives for the public benefit and the financial resources generated and employed. The report should be read alongside the Report and Accounts as well as the Data Privacy and Protection, Safeguarding, Equality and Inclusion policies that are posted on our website. Broadly we meet our charitable objectives in the following ways.

Partnerships:

Board members have continued our collaboration with other local providers, such as Britten Pears Arts with the Red House facilities and staff, Aldeburgh Cinema, Aldeburgh Church Hall, Aldeburgh Primary School, and the Aldeburgh Society amongst others.

The Library is seen as a major educational resource, and partners are keen to help us in achieving this aim. Currently with nearly 1,000 users in the Aldeburgh area, and good links with school children and their parents, we believe the Library will continue to serve the whole community across the spectrum from very young to elderly, working adults and retired.

Adult Education classes:

We have provided educational talks, classes, and inclusive activities for adult age groups with enrolments growing to over 700 a year since our start in 2012. Most of these activities occur in the Library in a normal year.

The Friends of Aldeburgh Library:

Ensuring wide public participation in shaping the future of the Library was a key commitment. The Friends of Aldeburgh Library (FOAL) has been established as an integral 'supporters arm' of the Foundation. Those who join FOAL are also Associate Members of the Foundation, participating in its governance by nominating a member of the Board, as do the Town Council and the Aldeburgh Society.

The Library in the Community:

The board regularly reviews the work of the Library Manager in progressing the vision of Suffolk Libraries, and of the Aldeburgh Library Foundation for Community activities. FOAL raises income annually to help fund an extension of staff hours to enable more time to be spent on partnerships with schools and other community groups to use the Library, on exhibitions and displays, publicity and on leading the team of dedicated Library

Assistants. This activity was severely impacted by the restrictions due the pandemic but has recovered in the new year.

Library Refurbishment

The Foundation has raised over £130,000 in funds since inception, principally via adult education and activities income, donations, loans, and small grants to help refurbish the Library's facilities and its furniture and equipment including a dedicated Children's Area. The latest and largest project was largely completed in the 2019/20 year. The official handover from ALF to Suffolk Libraries, delayed somewhat by the pandemic, took place in September 2020.

Current Year to March 31st, 2021

The Foundation had a strong operational year with both FOAL donations and courses generating good surpluses despite the pandemic. The main outgoing was the final payment of the Library's refurbishment project. We also received grants from local community groups for the outside seating on the new patio area which has been popular during the pandemic.

The Board was able reduce its contractual commitments for 2020 and early 2021 without reducing capacity. In September 2020 we restarted the Talks and Courses in the Library as part of an agreed pilot for Suffolk Libraries as well as successfully using online video via Zoom for several strands. The appetite for attending events and workshops was still strong right up until the second lockdown and our limited offering effectively sold out. Our thanks go to students and tutors who adapted to new technology with patience and verve as well as to the Library staff who ensured we were hosted safely when in the building.

Financially the Foundation's Adult Education and Activities remain strong, and we are prepared for most eventualities, confident that we can deliver safely in the Library when permitted as well as by Zoom where appropriate.

We are grateful for the generous donations from the FOAL membership that have continued as well as grants from local community groups. The Library itself has demonstrated its real value as a Community asset this year and we will continue to support it.

Financial Report

The Foundation's available cash position rose during the year from £10,350 to £12,857 on March 31st 2021. During the same period the refurbishment loan was reduced by £5,000 and by the same amount in June 2021 in this current year.

Financial Reserves policy

As a Charity we have a declared financial reserves policy to hold sufficient to meet our contractual obligations for running costs of the charity looking ahead 12 months. These costs were around £2,000 the financial year for this report. Your Board expects these charitable obligations to rise in the coming 2 years back to a more normal level of around £6,000 pa as the Library re-starts its community activities.