

Annual Report: April 2023-March 2024

Introduction

Welcome to our annual review for 2023-2024; this report covers the period from April 2023 to March 2024. Copies of the accounts are available on request.

Firstly, thank you for your continued support of The Network. Please see Appendix C for a reminder about ways of making the most of your subscription.

Our work

Key successes included:

- Producing newsletters for Oct 2022-Nov 2023¹
- Producing 23 Ebulletins for the period April 2023-March 2024
- Regularly adding events, resources and new features to the website²
- Participating in some 65 meetings, courses, workshops and conferences.

Further information about these – and other – areas of work are in the report that follows.

Working towards social justice and developing approaches to community engagement are still very much live issues – it is increasingly clear that libraries, museums, archives and cultural & heritage organisations have a key role to play in this (despite the economic position), and The Network is contributing to the spread of good practice and the raising of our sector profile.

Finally, my thanks to all those who shared good practice, made enquiries, and generally contributed to The Network – please continue doing so!

My particular thanks go to Juliet Pirez and Susanna Barnes for being the counter-signatories for The Network's bank account.

John Vincent
August 2024

¹ There was a slight delay whilst I was writing the Sanctuary book, so the Newsletters are being published still, but a bit late, eg the Nov 2023 issue was published in Mar 2024.

² See: <https://seapn.org.uk/>.

Membership, contacts and enquiries

Organisational members at March 2024

There are 85 organisational members.

Here are the new joiners and leavers:

Joiners

None.

Leavers

Blackpool; BookTrust; York

Individual members

At March 2024, The Network had 6 individual members.

Partners

The Network is continuing to work in partnership with a number of key organisations and individuals, including CILIP; City of Sanctuary; Libraries Connected; and Share The Vision.

Membership of JISCMAIL lists

The following lists are open to anybody:

| List | 2023-24 | 2022-23 |
|---|---------|---------|
| LAC [people working with care-experienced children] | 179 | 192 |
| Learning Disability | 185 | 186 |
| LGBTQ [people working with LGBTs] | 323 | 325 |
| Libraries and Museums of Sanctuary | 202 | - |
| Network Ebulletin | 534 | 558 |
| Older people [people working with older people] | 162 | 161 |
| Travellers [people working with Travellers] | 153 | 156 |

The following are primarily for Network members only:

| List | 2023-24 | 2022-23 |
|--|---------|---------|
| Network Newsletter | 274 | 284 |
| The Network [for circulation of general information and enquiries] | 190 | 197 |

The following is primarily for Network and Prison Libraries Group members:

| List | 2023-24 | 2022-23 |
|---------|---------|---------|
| Prisons | 153 | 155 |

In addition, The Network manages the Reading Sight list (formerly Six Steps):

| List | 2023-24 | 2022-23 |
|---------------|---------|---------|
| Reading Sight | 314 | 310 |

Enquiries

These include enquiries made on the email lists The Network coordinates (eg Prisons):

April 2023-March 2024

39³

The Network website statistics

During the re-build of the website, no stats were collected, but, since the beginning of April 2024, we are now able to see how the site is being used, and this will be reported next year.⁴

Making a difference

As noted above, The Network makes a difference, including:

- Drawing together, highlighting and disseminating innovation and good practice
- Being active in the sector on behalf of members: adding to and widening the debate about libraries, museums, archives, cultural heritage organisations and social justice issues
- Working with Network members and across the sector to help develop strategy
- Campaigning and lobbying on behalf of the sector
- Giving advice and information, and sharing good practice from other Network members
- Giving support to colleagues.

³ The range of enquiries was wide, including provision for homeless people; the provision of materials in Swedish in libraries; ideas about getting published; reviewing of accessibility criteria; when you apply an ISSN as opposed to an ISBN.

⁴ Just for info, between the beginning of April 2024 and 25 June, the website received 1000 visits; the most popular pages are the homepage, HiVis 2024, and Libraries Change Lives.

The work of The Network, 2023-2024 – Report by the Networker

I worked some 830.00 hours for the Network between April 2023 and March 2024. This is an outline of what that involved:

| Activities | Hours 2023-24 | % 2023-24 | Hours 2022-23 | % 2022-23 |
|--|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| <i>Externally-funded work</i> | | | | |
| Preparation, delivery and follow-up to training courses | 65.75 | 7.9% | 159.75 | 18.0% |
| Birmingham LoS application | 6.00 | 0.7% | 13.75 | 1.6% |
| Birmingham course | 0.50 | 0.1% | - | - |
| Peninsula of Sanctuary Libraries project | 20.25 | 2.4% | - | - |
| Peninsula of Sanctuary Libraries project – drafting bid to ACE | 12.50 | 1.5% | | |
| | | | | |
| <i>Externally-funded work</i> | <i>105.00</i> | <i>12.6%</i> | <i>173.50</i> | <i>19.6%</i> |
| | | | | |
| Managing The Network: admin (membership; producing Annual Report, etc) | 14.75 | 1.8% | 14.00 | 1.6% |
| Managing The Network: managing JISCMail Lists | 0.50 | 0.1% | 1.75 | 0.2% |
| Managing The Network: accounts | 52.75 | 6.4% | 48.25 | 5.4% |
| Managing The Network: maintaining our website | 12.75 | 1.5% | 3.75 | 0.4% |
| Emails | 243.75 | 29.4% | 244.00 | 27.5% |
| Work on Newsletters & Ebulletins | 205.75 | 24.8% | 173.00 | 19.5% |
| Work on LGBT History Month etc | - | - | 2.25 | 0.2% |
| Other writing | - | - | 26.25 | 3.0% |
| Other activities (eg attending meetings) | 25.00 | 3.0% | 25.50 | 2.9% |
| Jodi Mattes Trust Board meetings etc | 6.25 | 0.8% | 2.50 | 0.3% |
| STV Board meetings | 13.50 | 1.6% | 10.50 | 1.2% |
| Enquiries | 9.50 | 1.1% | 8.75 | 1.0% |
| Responding to reports etc | 4.00 | 0.5% | 4.75 | 0.5% |
| Work on 'New Arrivals' & Libraries of Sanctuary | 59.25 | 7.1% | 50.25 | 5.7% |
| Work with CILIP (eg on new strategy; CDEG Committee) | 33.25 | 4.0% | 36.00 | 4.1% |
| CILIP LGBTQ+ Network Steering Group | - | - | 2.75 | 0.3% |
| CILIP Benevolent Fund | 37.25 | 4.5% | 41.75 | 4.7% |
| Attending online talks, courses, conferences | 4.50 | 0.5% | 7.25 | 0.8% |
| Giving online presentations (unpaid) | 2.25 | 0.3% | 10.00 | 1.1% |
| | | | | |
| <i>Paid for from subscriptions, income from courses, etc</i> | <i>725.00</i> | <i>87.4%</i> | <i>713.25</i> | <i>80.4%</i> |
| | | | | |
| TOTAL | 830.00 | 100% | 886.75 | 100% |

Initiatives and Developments⁵

- During 2023, Electric Putty – who had created and maintained our website – closed their company. They recommended Digital Murph⁶, and he successfully created our new website for us and has been very supportive as I have learned how to use/update it.

⁵ John Vincent was commissioned by Facet Publishing to edit and write for a new series on libraries and social justice. The first title, *Libraries and Sanctuary: supporting refugees and other new arrivals* was published in Nov 2022. The second title, *Care-experienced young people and libraries* [working title] has just been started. This is just for info, as the hours worked on writing the book are not included in the hours worked (above).

⁶ See: <https://digitalmurph.co.uk/>.

Attendance at conferences, seminars, formal and other meetings, visits, etc

- Gave a talk at the in-person opening of the Kittiwake Trust Multilingual Library, Gateshead (Mar 2024)
- Attended online webinar on effectively managing neurodivergent members of your team (Mar 2024)
- Online meeting with David Rinehart and Dolores Fogarty re: LGBTQ+ issues (Mar 2024)
- Attended online webinar on workplace environment and neurodivergent workers (Mar 2024)
- Online meeting with Tess Osborne and Elizabeth Mavroudi re: Research project on diaspora women, peace and virtual reality (Feb 2024)
- Attended CILIP AGM online (Oct 2023)
- Attended webinar for launch of the CILIPS REVEAL (“Reinforcing Ethics and Values for Effective Advocacy for Libraries”) project⁷ (Oct 2024)
- In-person meeting with Daniel Li and Ying Mathieson (Sinoist Books) and Krisztina Lackoi (BL) (Sep 2023)
- Online meeting with Daniel Li and Ying Mathieson (Sinoist Books) (Jul 2023)
- Attended webinar on climate refugees, organised by War on Want (Jul 2023)
- Attended webinar “‘Escape to an Autumn Pavement’ – Sexual Identity in Caribbean Literature” (Jun 2023)
- Attended webinar on engaging young people (Jun 2023)
- Attended SWRLS AGM (in person), Exeter (Jun 2023)
- Webinar with QuickBooks to introduce QB Online (May 2023)
- Online meeting with Faye Claridge (creator of both the WeBear and WeRoar projects which have been showcasing the work of prison artists in both the UK and the USA) (May 2023)
- Attended in-person National Acquisitions Group Forum, London (May 2023)
- Attended online planning meeting for CILIP Conference (May 2023)
- Attended online Crowdfunder webinar (May 2023)

CILIP Benevolent Fund

John Vincent became Chair in Jan 2022.

- Introduced/attended Better With Money webinars (Sep 2023, Jan 2024)
- Attended meetings (Jun, Oct 2023, Feb 2024)
- Online meeting with Better With Money (Aug 2023)
- Online meetings with other Trustees (Jun 2023)
- Online meetings with prospective Trustees (Jun 2023)

CILIP Community, Equality & Diversity Group

- Online meeting with CDEG & CILIP re: EDI (Sep 2023)
- Online meetings with Oliver Jenkins & Karen Berry (Jun 2023, Mar 2024 (x2))
- Online meeting with Paul Caton (CILIP) (May 2023)

⁷ See: <https://www.cilips.org.uk/reveal/>.

- Attended Committee meetings online (Apr, Sep 2023)

Share The Vision Board

John Vincent is a Board Member.

- Attended meetings online (May, Sep, Dec 2023, Feb 2024)

Libraries of Sanctuary [LoS]/City of Sanctuary [CoS]

- Attended online LoS Forum meeting (Jun 2023)
- Attended LoS Network online meet-ups (May, Jul 2023)
- Attended CoS online briefing (Apr 2023)

Peninsula of Sanctuary [PoS]

- In-person course, “Working with new arrivals and becoming a Library of Sanctuary”, Plymouth (Sep 2023)
- Online course, “Working with new arrivals and becoming a Library of Sanctuary” (Apr, May 2023)
- Attended project meetings (May, Jun, Jul, Aug, Sep (x2), Oct (x2) 2023)
- Meetings with Jane Choules (Project Co-ordinator) (Apr, May, Jun (x2), Aug (x3) 2023, Feb 2024)

Peninsula of Sanctuary – possible bid to ACE for follow-up

- Meetings with ACE and SWRLS (Jul, Aug, Oct, Dec 2023, Mar 2024)

Jodi Mattes Trust

There was one final meeting to close the charity formally in Apr 2023.

Support for students, researchers, etc

- Online meeting with Finola Murphy to discuss her dissertation research into Section 28 and LGBTQIA+ representation in children's books in public libraries in the UK (Aug 2023)
- Online meeting with Lorna Howard to discuss her dissertation on Drag Queen Story Hours (Jul 2023)
- Online meeting with Jessica Allen to discuss her dissertation on “The workplace experience of trans* librarians in UK libraries” (Jun 2023)
- Online meeting with Anastasia Spiliopoulou re: her dissertation on provision for new arrivals (Apr 2023)

Formal responses made by the Network

- Completed Museum Association annual survey (Nov 2023)
- Responded to survey by Mermaids to help develop their future strategy (Sep 2023)
- Completed Clinks Impact Stakeholder Survey (Sep 2023)

- Commented on GLL (Wandsworth)'s draft LoS application (May 2023)
- Commented on draft version of CILIP's *Managing safe and inclusive public library services: a practical guide* (Apr 2023)

Publications – The Network's own

- *The Network Newsletter*, issues 260-272
- *The Network Ebulletin*, numbers 373-395.

Publications – articles, blogs, books, reports etc

- John Vincent regularly updates the PoS Basecamp site to share info and details of events across Devon and Cornwall libraries.

Courses and other events (April 2020-March 2021)

1. Our own open courses

- None.

2. Other organisations' open courses/Lectures

- Online course, "Working with new arrivals and becoming a Library of Sanctuary", for "Improving Me" (Mar 2024)
- In-person course, "Working with new arrivals and becoming a Library of Sanctuary", Plymouth for PoS (Sep 2023)
- Chaired the session, "New Voices, Big Ideas" session at CILIP Conference, Birmingham (Jul 2023)
- Online talk "Working with new arrivals" as part of the M25 Consortium series, "The role of libraries in supporting refugees and asylum seekers" (Jul 2023)
- Online course "An introduction to equality, equity and diversity" for SWRLS (May 2023)
- Online course, "Working with new arrivals and becoming a Library of Sanctuary", x2 for PoS (Apr, May 2023)

3. In-house courses and talks

- Online course, "Working with new arrivals and becoming a Library of Sanctuary", for Lambeth Libraries (Jan 2024)
- In-person course, "Working with new arrivals and becoming a Library of Sanctuary", for Lambeth Libraries (Jan 2024)
- In-person courses (x2 half-days) "Working with older people", Birmingham (Jul 2023)
- Online course, "Working with new arrivals and becoming a Library of Sanctuary", for Barnsley Libraries (May 2023)
- Online course, "Working with new arrivals and becoming a Library of Sanctuary", for GLL Libraries (Apr 2023)

Appendix A: Meetings with key contacts

These included:

Kelly Saini Badwal (Sutton), Briony Birdi (Sheffield University), Binni Brynolf (Chatham House), Jo Cornish (CILIP), Simon Cox (Digital Library Ltd), Sarah Edwards (Hampshire), Tom Epps (Birmingham), Sally Garwood (Suffolk), Louise Greener (CILIP), Jasmine Kershaw (Lewisham), Krisztina Lackoi (British Library), Sultan Mahmoodi (Sutton), Alex Martin (GLL), David McMenemy (University of Glasgow), Nick Poole (CILIP), Lewis Punton, Melissa Steiner (Birkbeck College), Shelley Trower (SWRLS), Jo Ward (“Improving Me”)

Appendix B: Making the most of your subscription

Member organisations and individuals use The Network to:

- Ensure that their services are well placed to meet national, regional and local objectives
- Draw on and share expertise and good practice
- Work with other Network members to benchmark services
- Keep up-to-date effectively with new developments across the social justice field, without having to read every new document themselves as the information has already been distilled for them
- Ensure that colleagues across their service are also able to keep up-to-date via targeted emails to their desk-tops
- Ensure value for money by being able to book places on Network courses and receive in-house training at reduced cost.

When a library (or museum or archive) service from a local authority joins The Network, this automatically confers membership on the **whole local authority**.

The benefits are that:

- Council departments can share knowledge about issues that matter to them, and your service is placed at the centre of this authority-wide information-sharing
- It's a cost-effective way of stretching limited resources (and, in addition, other Council departments could contribute towards the cost of the subscription)
- Related organisations within the local authority area, such as independent and District Council museums, archive collections, schools, and others, can also share this targeted information in an extremely effective way.

Some public library services forward the Newsletter and Ebulletin (as well as other emails from our elists) to targeted contacts across the Council (thereby ensuring that the library service is contributing to corporate targets and agendas), and have also subscribed key local authority staff to some of the email lists. Information is also forwarded to contacts in the community.

They also regularly share updates on service developments with other Network contacts, and ask for advice and suggestions on service plans.