

LARC Chairman's Report April 2021 to March 2022

This report covers the activities of the LARC and does not include the Library, run by Libraries Unlimited, for which there will be a report later in the meeting.

The past two AGM's have been delayed beyond the end of their respective financial years in March. In 2021 that was because of Covid and this year to allow for adjustments to our management structure to enable the LARC to continue into the future.

Since April 2021, the LARC has been open for 4 days /week, reflecting a combination of availability of volunteers to run the LARC and very welcome regular hirings.

Volunteers are key to many organisations, no less for LARC. Although several of our pre-Covid volunteers were unable to return post lockdown, we were fortunate to have several new volunteers join, which ensured that we could open on 3 days/week for general purposes, with some flexibility to cover inevitable absences. Our volunteers are due our very sincere thanks for their efforts and commitment. And not to forget those 3 hardy volunteers who manned a very wet book stall at the Charter Fair last year! We are of course always looking for more volunteers!

There are two dilemmas for the LARC at the moment. One is the significant financial loss this year, approximately £2300, as you will see later from the financial report. We renewed our electricity contract earlier this year at considerably higher charge and of course this could increase further. Improving our financial situation will be a significant challenge for the management team. The other dilemma is that the general services we offer have been, and still are, relatively little used post lockdown, possibly reflecting the slow return of some to venture into public places, and the possibility that during lockdown, many people set up their own IT facilities. Sue Courtney has continued her smart phone and tablet assistance, for which many thanks, but the cost of supplying Broadband greatly outweighs the income from computer use. The availability of IT facilities we feel is a key part of the service that the LARC can offer to would be hirers, but we are aware of the cost of doing so and we will look into ways of reducing that cost.

The outcome is that some open sessions can be very quiet for the volunteer on duty! We do have occasional visitors asking for information or bus timetables and the water tower is very popular with dogs, but finding ways to encourage more casual visitors is a challenge for the future.

On the positive side however, we *have* stayed open over the last 2 years, working hard to encourage more community use of the LARC for group activities and occasional meetings, which have increased significantly and of course brings in very welcome income. There is room for more, especially evening activities. Fortunately for us, the breakdown of the heating system in the church last winter saw a number of church activities relocating to the warmth of the LARC,

and we were pleased to be able to offer alternative accommodation. Hopefully the church heating will be restored for this coming winter! In addition to the restarted art classes, we were very pleased to accommodate the Creative Writing group, which has uncovered a surprising number of would be authors. Some of the writings are available to read here and vary from the comic to the downright sinister! And this year has seen the take-off of the walking group who use the LARC as a starting place and a finish here with a cuppa. Very well supported, a great service for Bampton and a proper use of the LARC. Congratulations to all concerned!

One loss post lockdown was the Toddler Group, and the need for someone younger and more resilient than me to restart it. Unexpectedly, we were approached by the local 'Action For Kids' representative late last year, who were looking to extend toddler groups into rural areas. Through their initial help and the enthusiasm of some local Mums- its always Mums!- the toddler group is running again on Friday mornings.

As reported above, volunteers are essential to the broad coverage that the LARC has provided in the past. No less is the many successful activities for younger people, especially during the school holidays, that Gen and Jo have run since the LARC first opened. We have run a few activities for younger people this past year but more extensive events will require some new committed organisers.

The very nature of the LARC lends itself to those smaller groups and activities, in need of limited but warm space and facilities, and it would be good to see activities such as bridge, music groups or language classes taking place. The venue is here, we need the organisers!

I said at the start that this report does not include the Library. However, it would be very remiss indeed of us not to acknowledge firstly, the fee that Libraries Unlimited have continued to pay even, when the Library was operating on a restricted basis, and secondly the help that our Librarian has given the LARC this last year. In addition to providing Library services, she has helped to keep the building itself in good order and continued the photocopying services in the absence of a volunteer. Thank you Pam.

I also said at the start that this AGM was delayed to allow for changes to the management team at LARC. We currently have only 3 Trustees, the minimum allowed by our constitution, and looking for more has been a high priority. We are fortunate in appointing a new Trustee, which will be dealt with later on. But I am looking to retire from the chairmanship/LARC in the near future - I will have done 8 years by 2023, near the maximum allowed in our constitution - and setting up a succession strategy was key. Fortunately we have found a way forward which will be reported later in the meeting.

The LARC of course doesn't run on its own and many people make it happen. So to anyone who has helped over this past year, in any way whatsoever, please consider yourselves very much thanked!

And not least of these are Stan and Sarah Vincent, who have made this excellent venue available at a minimum cost, for the benefit of the community in Bampton.

LIBRARY AND RESOURCE CENTRE SUPPORTERS
BAMPTON DEVON
RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

		2021
Incoming Resources		
Donations	195	0
Grants from BTC	0	0
Other trading activities	290	0
Interest and Investment Income	65	92
Income from charitable activities		
Fees and sales	3407	2201
Other income		
Total Receipts	3957	2293
Resources expended		
Costs of generating voluntary income		
Fund raising costs		
Payments for Charitable Activities		
Property costs	4405	2951
Equipment costs		
Other support costs	1925	1156
Total resources expended	6330	4107
Net income/ expenditure	-2373	-1814
Fund balances brought forward	15349	17163
Fund balances carried forward	12976	15349
Funds at 31 March 2022		
Cash in hand	136	84
National Westminster Bank	599	3088
Investments		
United Trust Bank	5242	5177
Fidelity Funds (see below *)	7000	7000
	12976	15349

* Note: value at 31/03/22 was £7472