

Annual report for the fourth Annual General Meeting, 19th October 2020

Registered Charity Number: 1165870.

First registered 4 March 2016

Chairs Report: John Roby Brown

Thanks for joining the meeting. I'm sorry that I can't be there with you at the AGM. The past year has been a strange one for everyone, with LOL closed for several months and restrictions still being in place when we did, or rather will fully open.

Firstly, I would like to thank the staff for their work during the year. Laura has proved to be an inspired appointment. Her energy and attention to detail has enabled us to keep going particularly in dealing with various members of council staff and contractors. Jason has assisted Laura to keep the building going along with his Alifm duties. Neil, our caretaker, has been assiduous in his work, particularly the additional cleaning etc, since the building reopened. Veronika has continued to work on the Fringe, which has had to be delayed due to the pandemic, but many events will take place at the end of October. Jayne has continued to support Jez in his Treasurer role and helped us to receive new funding from various sources. A big thanks must go to Jez for arranging the Zoom meetings and stepping in for me, to chair them.

The building has seen several changes during the year. Firstly the crack above the window in Alifm has been fixed by the council. All FM have built two studios in their main area and have been able to move towards vacating the old staffroom from which they had been broadcasting. This will eventually become a new space open for small meetings for the time being.

Behind the scenes work has been continuing with URBED with a view to put in a bid for a grant to undertake a feasibility study for a redevelopment of the building, while of course maintaining many of the original heritage features. The Trustee structure has been reconfigured to make more sense and improve operations through forming new sub committees.

Unfortunately, The Owl and Coconut have had to leave us. The pandemic meant that they were unable to operate in a socially-distanced way and were unable to generate the funds needed to pay even a reduced rent. We are now considering uses for the space before seeking new tenants. In the meantime the space will be used for the Fringe exhibitions organised by Veronika and Laura. And other short term projects.

A successful crowdfunder raised over £3,000 to improve the garden and hopefully the main work will have been completed by Spring. We have also sourced emergency grants to help us over lockdown.

Work continues to the fabric of the building. Getting work done by the council is not always an easy process. After all they have many demands upon them, but they have agreed to look at repairs to the roof and replace the aging boiler. The completion of these works is necessary for us to finally progress with our long term tenancy agreement.

The Trustees have continued to perform wonderfully when under the extraordinary pressure of the times. The new committee structures introduced at the last AGM worked well until the lockdown.

I have decided due to my failing eyesight and inability to cope with Zoom meetings to step down as Chair at this AGM. However, I would hope to continue as a Trustee. Having observed the Trustees over the last few years, I propose that Olivia takes over the Chair from me. I also recommend that Brittain moves to chair the Building Committee and that Claire chairs the Events Committee.

Thank you again for your attendance and we look forward to a more successful and progressive year.

Yours in co-operation,

John Roby Brown.

History of LOLCIO at Levenshulme Old Library

Levenshulme's council run Library closed its doors on Cromwell Grove in February 2016, before re-opening shortly after within the Arcadia Leisure Centre. The Levenshulme Old Library group (LOL) set itself up as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) in that year to re-open the building. In the last 4 years, and in the years before we became an incorporated charity, the LOL CIO has been developing an Arts and Culture Centre that celebrates the energy, skills and passion in our community.

By Christmas 2017 LOLCIO, ALLFM and Manchester City Council had agreed a temporary arrangement giving access to the Old Library building. This meant that ALLfm could move in at the beginning of 2018. Over the next few months it was agreed that the Owl and the Coconut would also become permanent residents, and that the building would also become a home for Levenshulme Youth Project.

Review (April 2019- March 2020):

Building on the information already in the Chairs Report, We have continued to hire out the central shared area of the building for activities such as performances, rehearsal space, yoga, and projects such as the Levenshulme Fringe. We've been taking it slowly as we develop policies for safe use, and a pricing structure that can sustain the building whilst keeping as much access to local people as possible, and making sure we compliment other facilities in the area.

Long term building tenants ALLFM, The Owl and the Coconut and Levenshulme Youth Forum continued to operate successfully in the building into 2020, though sadly LYP had to stop having a permanent base in the Old Library in late Spring 2020 due to ongoing funding pressures, though we continue to work with them when we can and they continue to serve our community. We have a number of regular groups using the space, such as Levy Little Theatre, Dance Like a Mother and Levenshulme WI, to name a few, and we seek to nurture those relationships.

Though unsuccessful for a second application to run a Creative Windrush project, we were very successful in finding repeat funding from The Arts Council. We are immensely indebted to **Veronika Diamond** for coordinating our annual highlight, the Levenshulme Fringe, an arts and culture festival that has brought many new exciting activities into the building and in the community. It's a great investment and addition to the creative arts and culture already flourishing in Levenshulme.

The Covid19 Months (April 2020- October2020):

Like many centres we had to close our building in March 2020 with the announcement of the national lockdown. We temporarily furloughed Laura, and yet managed to keep connected with our community and prepare for re-opening. This has been slower than we hoped and most sadly we lost our valuable relationship with the Owl and Coconut in September 2020 when they had to move to an online only operation. Yet ALLfm are back broadcasting from the building, and so is Levy Little Theatre and we have lots of exciting things happening this autumn, including a new 'artist in residence', and new hotdesk tenants like Irish Community Care starting soon. We have worked hard to prepare for a safe wider re-opening from November 2020.

Security was a concern whilst the building was largely empty, following a break in in July 2019, though thankfully since lockdown began we have only suffered a very little external vandalism. But we will be investing in new fencing and other outdoor improvements from our crowdfunder.

We continue to liaise with other projects and buildings, such as Inspire, and Levy Market, as well as community networks and projects wherever we can. For example supporting the new Levenshulme Post newsletter.

Future Challenges and Opportunities (Olivia O'Connell Buildings committee)

Speaking for myself, laying the foundations of a renewed Building Committee over the past year has been the biggest highlight! Since joining the Trustees last year, it's been a great first start getting a bi-monthly group together to discussing building and operations of LOL. And meeting all the lovely trustees and staff at LOL. The most significant hurdle I feel LOLCIO face is working towards a comprehensive and mutually beneficial asset transfer from MCC during a challenging few years ahead in terms of Covid 19. My hopes for the coming year? To having a fully functional LOL again by the end of 2021. It has been a huge pleasure to be part of and to see the amazing, quick and conscientious work of Staff and Trustees during the pandemic.

Future Challenges and Opportunities (Jez Hall, Treasurer)

The uncertainty of the ongoing pandemic places considerable risks on our future income generation ability and the ability to raise capital funds. That hampers our future plans. Whilst successful in initial fundraising, including from the Our Manchester fund, and new fundraising such from the Arts Council, the Windrush project and Manchester Airport Trust (we have raised nearly £100,000 in one way or another so far) we know that developing a sustainable business model remains a challenge. We know to run the building may end up costing near to £60,000 every year. We can't live on grants alone and need to generate more income from our own community fundraising activities and events (which is why the successful crowdfunder this summer is so pleasing). Whilst also by keeping down hire charges maintaining as much community access as possible. Balancing those pressures, between being affordable, open to all and paying our way can be a constant headache and stress for trustees. Managing a community building is not an easy task. But we are working tirelessly with making improvements all the time. Each challenge is an important learning opportunity, and we have remained viable, and have continued to run excellent events and raise our profile in our community and in our city.

Conclusion

It can feel that we have been going for a long time. But it is in fact, with the Covid Closure, it's less than 24 months since we properly opened the building for business. We should celebrate our success and keep the long view in mind. The existing trustees also balance many other commitments. We are all volunteers and all engaged in work or other community ventures. We are sad to say goodbye to Trustee Mark Dunn at this AGM. We always need people to replenish our board, and particularly people with the time and skills to help us run our complex and growing project. The creation of new partnerships will also help us achieve the aim of a flourishing arts and culture centre, where all local residents can express themselves, learn new skills, raise their expectations of a better future, and improve the profile of our community, as a good place for all to live, work and play.

We look forward to welcoming any new trustees today. We hope the continuing recruitment of a new administrative role to support Laura with building management and that a stronger membership base will widen our skills, and help guide our plans, so they better fulfil the needs of the community we serve.

The objects (purposes and powers) of the CIO are

To benefit and further the residents of Levenshulme and the neighbourhood, without distinction of sex, sexual orientation, race or of political, religious or other opinions by associating together the said residents and the local authorities, voluntary and other organisations in a common effort to advance education and to provide facilities in the interests of social welfare for recreation and leisure time occupation with the objective of improving the conditions of life for the residents.

In furtherance of these objects but not otherwise, the trustees shall have power:

To establish or secure the establishment of a community centre and to maintain or manage or co-operate with any statutory authority in the maintenance and management of such a centre for activities promoted by the charity in furtherance of the above objects.

Trustees of Levenshulme Old Library,

Trustees serving from September 2019's AGM

Name	Role (2019)	Retiring	Founding	Joined
Hilly Barber			Yes	2016
Jez Hall	Treasurer		Yes	2016
John Roby Brown	Chair		Yes	2016
Brittain Adams	Events committee			2017
Sidra Iftakhar		Pending		2017
Evan Pritchard		Pending		2017
Jean Bernard				2018
Mark Dunn		Yes		2018
Saf Horrocks				2019
Olivia O'Connell	Buildings committee			2019
Sana Rahim				2019
Claire Sharples				2019

Number of available Trustee places under the constitution:

12

Formally, 1/3 of trustees stand down at each Annual General Meeting. Given we have 12 trustees currently that means 4. In effect, unless they resign, Trustees serve for a term of 3 years. If fewer than 1/3 (four) voluntarily stand down and there are no other vacancies it is based on those serving the longest. Those standing down, if they wish to continue as Trustees, have to be approved at the AGM, before they begin a new 3 year term. . (Noting also the maximum number of terms any trustee can serve without a break is also 3 (e.g. 9 years)

With the retirement of Mark Dunn this means, unless other vacancies occur, Jez Hall, John Roby Brown and Hilly Barber are 'next in line' for seeking re-selection this year. If the total wishing to stand as Trustees would create more than 12 trustees then a formal election is required.

Maximum new Trustees under the constitution (without the need to hold an election): **3**

If more than one new trustee is forthcoming at this AGM, as Evan Pritchard and Sidra Iftakhar have been unable to fulfil their duties recently and have not confirmed they wish to remain as trustees within the last month, by a motion approved by 2/3rds or those at this AGM they can be retired as Trustees. In which case, unless more than three new trustees wish to stand, such a motion to retire two trustees would avoid the need to hold a formal Trustee election process at this AGM.

The final list selected to serve as Trustees for 2020 onward, including any retired voluntarily, or by such a motion, is confirmed at the next Trustee meeting, along with the election of any officer roles.

Eligibility for becoming a trustee

- Every charity trustee must be a natural person (i.e. not a group, company or other body).
- No one may be appointed as a charity trustee:
 - if he or she is under the age of 16 years; or
 - if he or she would automatically cease to hold office under the provisions of clause [15(1)(f)].
- No one is entitled to act as a charity trustee whether on appointment or on any re-appointment until he or she has expressly acknowledged, in whatever way the charity trustees decide, his or her acceptance of the office of charity trustee.
- At least one of the trustees of the CIO must be 18 years of age or over.