

Update from the Barlow Chair of Trustees

The last few weeks have been hectic and the Trustees have been dealing with a large range of matters, some of which need urgent resolution. I recognise how difficult and stressful this time has been for everyone but I want to reassure you that our priority as Trustees is to stabilise the situation and ensure that unresolved issues (some of them of long standing) are addressed and dealt with as quickly as possible.

In this difficult and busy time the Trustees are very aware how much we rely on the volunteers to keep the day to day operation of the Barlow going so smoothly. We are massively grateful for their continuing support and dedication.

I have to inform you that we have had no handover information from the former Trustees. Consequently, we lack documentation in some key areas: for example the state of the HLF bid and Resilience Fund expenditure. The current Trustees are taking steps to remedy this.

Financially the Barlow has over £270,000 in the reserve account, thanks to a very generous donation from the Barlow family brought about by the good offices of John Mather. The Friends of the Barlow has over £4,500 in its account and we have enough in the current account to meet our obligations. You should know that in August alone the income derived from **volunteer led fundraising activities** was £1,645.00.

However, to offset that good news we face significant unpaid bills, and considerable staffing costs. We need to urgently put financial controls in place and set up a budgeting system. No accounts have been kept for 2018 so we need to bring the book-keeping up to date. We need also to resolve outstanding queries from the 2017 accounts so that the qualified status can be removed. Otherwise we will be unable to apply for any funding.

Other priorities include negotiating the matter of unpaid VAT with HMRC and resolving the anomalies in the leases of the Cricket Club and the Bowling Club.

I can confirm that Stephanie George, the Reading Room Manager, has resigned to go to another job. We wish her well. Appropriate cover over the next weeks has been arranged with Sara Lobley. Meanwhile we will be consulting with volunteers about the Reading Room's future development.

Finally, we are hoping to enhance the Board of Trustees with up to four new members nominated by the Community User groups. A letter inviting nominations will go out early next week.

I will publish regular updates to keep you informed of progress. Meanwhile the minutes of the Board are available to view on the website and on the notice board in the Barlow.

Thank you again for your continuing support.

Christine Waring
5th September 2018