

Contents

CILIPS CONFERENCE 2023 by Fiona Elder	2
CILIPS Conference 2023 by Jennifer Dye	3
Future Visions: CILIPS 2023 Conference by Caitlin Macleod	7
CILIPS CONFERENCE 2023 by Helen Burns.....	8

CILIPS CONFERENCE 2023 by Fiona Elder

It was appropriate that in the gift bag given to each delegate at this year's CILIPS conference there was a packet of wildflower seeds. Every CILIPS event or conference seems to have its own particular atmosphere, and this year as I sat in the audience I just kept thinking about gardening. (Bear with me...)

I love gardening. I love planting, tending, even weeding - but this doesn't mean that I am a proficient gardener: just a happy gardener. I watch gardening programmes, I visit gardens that are open to the public, and I admire. But my small patch, with its nest of snails and the border where a small burn runs through in the wettest weather? It's never going to touch the beauty of Monty's Don's Longmeadow, or for that matter the garden down the road from me which opens for the Scotlands' Gardens scheme. (Grrr.) I do what I can, with the resources I have, and create a serviceable space.

What has this to do with CILIPS? I attended on Tuesday, and everything I heard from the platforms was awe-inspiring, but the projects and aims seemed so tantalisingly out of reach when a good day in a community library is one where the doors stay open and the planned sessions can go ahead. There was definitely a wee mood amongst some of the delegates of "This is all very fancy, but how does this relate to what I ACTUALLY do in my job?", and "We're not open full hours after covid yet, so how could we do THIS!". I had to rise above my daily stresses and remember how to tune in to the knowledge of the library strategists on the stage.

The absolute highlight for me was Josh Sendall, whose keynote speech should be available to every library member of staff in Scotland to remind us of why our work matters to our communities. This doesn't appear to be available on the CILIPS website, but it should be - I would definitely benefit from listening again!

I loved the optimism of the immediate past presidents - Amina Shah, Cleo Jones and Martina McChrystal (hosted by Kirsten MacQuarrie). The insight and understanding of women who triumphed at their jobs and revolutionised the perceived wisdom about libraries in a time of huge cutbacks in spending for public services was truly #WINspirational.

The Making a Difference at Fab Stirling team demonstrated how they have developed their MakerSpace - willingly sharing their expertise so we can shamelessly copy the good bits and avoid the pitfalls.

The exhibitors were helpful and interesting: particularly the Scottish Book Trust Team who are motivational experts, everyone seemed to leave their stall with tips, tricks and new information.

I was glad I attended the conference. It was encouraging to think beyond the basic day-to-day of tidying and groups and rhyme times and rotas. We need time to pause to evaluate why we do what we do, and to adapt to the changing needs of our communities.

CILIPS Conference 2023 by Jennifer Dye

This was my first conference and I was very excited about it. I had been to Bookbug conferences before and enjoyed milling around, meeting like-minded people, networking and sharing ideas. I knew I would miss all that but I was anticipating a day of fun and facts.

The Welcome Speech by the current head of CILIPS was good. Meeting people initially and looking to see who matched our suffragette cards was fun. We also discussed the involvement of the libraries as a public service during the pandemic and how we facilitate help and advice during this time. We discussed how the library is a community hub and how we combat loneliness and social isolation.

Richard Aird gave a very interesting speech about the different projects that CILIPS are involved with. I enjoyed this part very much. Mr Aird talked about Green spaces, sustainability, and environmental issues. In 2021, the libraries were the most visited cultural service – the equivalent to once a week for each person in Scotland. 64 % of people would give the libraries very positive feedback and that is a big positive?

Doctor Adele Patrick - Looking to the Future. This was a very wide and diverse talk about women in the libraries. She used the acronym VUCA.

- Volatile
- Uncertain
- Complex
- Ambiguous

This was in relation to the ‘Firehose of Falsehoods’ being reported in the media. We need to adapt and we need to grow. She was adamant that Libraries should be beacons and havens in shattered constituencies. They should strive to be pillars of knowledge.

Pamela Tulloch – Chief Executive of Scottish Library and Information Council.

She highlighted the way in which Libraries showed resiliency and endurance during the pandemic, recovering quickly from the difficulties presented and showing toughness and the capacity to last after difficult situations.

We then saw some lovely scenes from the library in central Nairobi, Glasgow women's library in Bridgetown.

After a small change in the line - up, we commenced the first session.

My first session was supposed to be with the Archive. Learning how they gathered their history and how to make it more accessible for the community as a whole. Not just for the deaf and blind community.

Instead, I attended Open Access group.

The presentation was showing us the fair and equitable academic Publishing model. This was an alternative approach to academic publishing. Giving students and academics free access to all. The access would be granted by institutions who have signed up to the model. Any printed material would be done to order. This would work out to be more sustainable.

Scottish Universities Press is a non-profit organisation with all profits being reinvested for the benefit of all institutions. A small subscription fee would give them access to all. This works alongside their non-profit ethos. The fee would be covered by their grant.

This is very much in the way of their 'community over commercialisation' edict. It also has an ECR (early career research) author's research fund to help writers at the grassroots level. This is part of their Even Up inclusivity programme

There is a website in developmental stages now.

My second session was with *Janette Castle – West of Scotland University Librarian. An introduction to research on the impact of Public Libraries in Scotland on Loneliness and Social Isolation.*

Libraries are the most important non-medical support buildings in the community, providing advice, support and a safe place for patrons providing:-

- Relief from daily routine.
- Influence to peoples tolerance.
- Meeting diverse needs.

- Combatting loneliness.
- Haven for the socially isolated.

Using the three ps, (People, places, partnerships.)The main aim is to reach non-users. This could be in a number of ways.

- Non engaged parents
- Core values
- Working with partners. (NHS etc.)

We then met in the main conference room.

Peter Reid – Community Cohesion and Resilience in Lockdown

Peter Reid praised the actions of the libraries in Lockdown. He highlighted –

- Support by the library staff chatting to the local users.
- Alerting and signposting to other agencies for their benefit.
- Libraries being an essential part of the community imbedded to the very core.
- Positive feedback from the users.
- Engaging with people more on the physical side.
- Welcoming community.
- Safe space.
- Community space

I then attended the talk by *Dr Sabik Zhan*.

He spoke very movingly about his journey to Scotland and how the libraries became a haven. He talked about the language of kindness, community, integration, hopes, dreams, and the journey to freedom.

The multi-agency support he received was amazing.

The Final talk was from *Nicola Mulholland – Futurologist*.

She talked animatedly about productivity, innovation and improving output by introducing the 3-day week. She spoke about how home working and blended working was having a positive impact on output. She also introduced the wonderful ZEDONK! I felt that this was not for public libraries but it was a great talk by a good speaker.

We attended our final breakaway session. The session I wanted to do was full so I attended the Bookbug Session.

It was done both as an academic and a mother.

I felt that the numbers on the charts were not reflective of the broad spectrum of users we engage in Dundee. In particular the way that the information was gathered.

Thank you for this opportunity. I hope to attend another in the near future!

Future Visions: CILIPS 2023 Conference by Caitlin Macleod

'[Looking to the Future](#)' provided a theme that inspired transformative, hopeful world-building talks from professionals blazing new trails. Josh Sendall's '[The space between: libraries as hubs for discovery, exploration, and connection](#)' poetry infused invocation of libraries as thriving dynamic eco-systems serving their community's needs was a brilliant introduction to a day filled with ruminations on where libraries could target their existing structures to greater serve communal interests. This mirrored well with fellow keynote speeches on '[#WINSpiration](#)' exploring feminist leadership in library services, and '[Searching for AI that Benefits Libraries](#)' exploring ways artificial intelligence can benefit library workers.

[Glasgow Women's Library](#)'s Volunteer Coordinator Gabrielle Macbeth [shared the environmental growth the library has been through](#), in 'The work of Glasgow Women's Library "Green Cluster": gardening, documenting action, inspiring change, and reducing carbon emissions' including [their journey toward achieving Net Zero by 2030](#), and the positive impact established so far. Particularly, their use of a 'Green Cluster' to embed environmentalism into their organisational roles beyond appointing a sustainability head was a particularly inspiring action. Macbeth spoke about the creation of a community garden, as Glasgow Women's Library wanted their changes to expand beyond reducing harm on the environment and promoting positive impact for pollinators and community groups. Even with limited space, the garden flourished into a bridge between the community and library, connecting with primary schools, visitors and walkers.

In 'Mirrors & Windows - Reflections and Explorations in Social Outreach and Engagement in Audio-Visual Heritage through the Lens of the Moving Image Archive', [Dr Perla Innocenti](#) and Vhari Robertson gave insight into digital/physical archive practice, and how to further the longevity and reach of archives. Robertson's research took residence around [The Audio-Visual Archive housed at National Library of Scotland](#), and provided tailored recommendations to further outreach based on expertise from staff. Both speakers' passion for preserving not only historic footage, but the public's free access to this media provided exciting insight into archival methodology and community engagement practice. The recommendation to empower communities with the skillsets to maintain their own archive was a particularly hopeful future action for library and archive workers to journey toward.

Ellie Muniandy led 'Diversity is Not Enough, We Need Transformation', based on their research and work with [National Library of Scotland](#). Muniandy imparted both theoretical and practical insight into measures currently taking place to improve equality, diversity and inclusion practices in library workforces across Scotland: including insight into retention rates for employees from underrepresented backgrounds, and structural methods to improve the experiences of these employees within the sector. Particularly, their decision to have brainstorming sessions regarding our experience and strategies for transforming societal conditions alongside workplace equity and inclusion led to some further insight into the future of library workplaces.

The CILIPS conference was absolutely charged with ideas and avenues to explore, from the speakers, to delegates and suppliers. The future of libraries was solidified as being vast and filled with literature, learning and luminous leaps forward.

CILIPS CONFERENCE 2023 by Helen Burns

It's been a while since I attended a CILIPS conference. In fact, I've struggled to pinpoint exactly when that was, with only a hazy memory that it took place in Edinburgh and I was fairly new in post as a school librarian. So it seems fitting that on this occasion I was, again, fairly new in post, having made the switch from schools to community libraries last year and still feeling like a rabbit caught in the headlights with all that this entails.

Of the three sessions I attended during the day it was the second, on the impact of public libraries on loneliness and social isolation, that I thought might be of most relevance in regards to the shift in focus in my new(ish) role. It did much to reinforce my views on the importance of libraries for communities but... well, it did rather preach to the converted. Advocacy issues were mentioned. I have a scribbled note about "local authorities not realising everything libraries do...". There's another scribbled note that "libraries are about connections and social interaction" and that, as such, we should not allow ourselves to be replaced [wholly] by virtual equivalents. Or, indeed, leave libraries unstaffed? I'll just leave that there!

The other sessions I attended – on Bookbug and a literacy project for primary schools – felt closer to home and my previous experience of working with children. Bookbug is great, isn't it? That moment when a young child masters Incy Wincy is such a joy. But this session discussed its impact for parents and the presenter's enthusiasm was infectious. It gave pause for thought on how we can improve engagement, not just with Bookbug but library resources as a whole. The primary school project – Love to Read, by the Literacy Hub at the University of Edinburgh – was incredibly interesting and I would urge anyone working with schools or primary aged children to check it out. A huge amount of work has gone into it and while its effects are still being measured, the principles seem sound and I could see the scope for library involvement. Any effort to encourage a love of reading is never wasted – we all know *why*, but this session provided a potential route for *how*. Their blog is at <https://blogs.ed.ac.uk/lovetoread/>

They keynote talks between sessions can only be described as inspirational. Sabir Zazai of the Scottish Refugee Council shared his experiences of how libraries help those most in need. Adele Patrick of the Scottish Women's Library talked about service provision in the face of adversity and I particularly liked her quote about libraries being "lightning rods in the culture wars". But it was Dr Nicola Millard, an Innovation Partner with BT, that I immediately followed on Twitter. Nicola deals in the future. She also mentioned zedonks. Google it.

There was a lot packed into the first day of the conference. Worth going? Definitely. Many thanks to the Tayside branch for the opportunity.

Helen Burns

Library & Information Officer, Leisure and Culture Dundee