

SCOTTISH POETRY LIBRARY: AGM 2022

Report from the Co-Chairs

In early November 2022, Creative Scotland committed their grant support to regularly funded organisations to March 2025. Along with a positive cashflow and a moderate cash reserve, this means that, for the short-term at least, the SPL a going concern. We aim to grow our reserves to three months' operation costs.

At our Board and staff team away day we focused on the challenges and opportunities that the SPL will likely face at a time of escalating energy and other cost of living increases. The discussion included the retainment and professional development of our workforce at a time of tightening budgets. Given that many arts venues and book festivals are experiencing hard times, and some are facing the threat of closure or greatly reduced services, we are cautiously optimistic that we will continue to deliver our services to a high standard through adapting our working practice with free postal loans, national and international partnership projects, events and workshops focusing on schools and equalities communities.

For the second accounting year in a row, the pandemic impacted on our commercial revenues from events and retail sales. Our non-grant revenue was down by around 50 per cent. We have sought to mitigate this through growing our income from room and venue hires. However, low demand for events ticket remains a concern. We have adapted to a free/pay what you can model to encourage attendances.

Our end of year accounts present a surplus, reflecting the decision in March 2022 by Creative Scotland to provide the SPL with a Recovery Fund for Cultural Organisations Cultural Grant. This award was designated for spending in the following financial year from April 2022 to March 2023.

Regarding our governance practice, the Board continued to conduct its meetings online and supported home-working for staff during those periods when the library was mandated to be closed to the public. Through supporting two staff sabbaticals, we were able to invest more in programme activity. We worked with our poetry ambassadors to showcase 20 new commissioned works. Our film commissions included the SPL's first major initiative with Scotland's new national Makar Kathleen Jamie for the COP26 Climate Change Summit.

The SPL is determined to elevate poetry across all of Scotland. Towards this aim, we have also supported the City Makars Network and a new mentoring scheme of Next Generation Young Makars for writers aged between 18 years and 25 years.

We would like to thank the Board and staff team for their endeavours and passion in keeping the poetry library's work engaging, innovative and impactful during the pandemic, and to our audiences and borrowers for their support and engagement with our collection, resources and programmes.