7th August 2019

Dear colleagues,

On behalf of the Board of Trustees and Presidential Team at CILIP, I would like to thank you for your further letter to the Board (submitted online 26.07.2019) concerning CILIP’s Employer Partner Scheme.

As noted in our previous response, we believe in free and open debate and as fellow librarians, information and knowledge workers, we welcome your engagement to help shape our policy and practice. In this spirit, I have asked the CILIP team to coordinate an open Town Hall meeting (open to both members and non-members) in October to discuss the matters raised in this correspondence in person.

We will hold this meeting in the Autumn in recognition of the fact that many people are away over the Summer and September is a particularly busy time for some of our sectors. We will ensure that the date, time and location of the meeting is widely advertised and that remote participation is also possible. I hope that as many of your co-signatories as possible will take this opportunity to attend.

In anticipation of this discussion, I would like to take a moment to offer a few observations on behalf of the CILIP Board of Trustees and Presidential Team.

**CILIP as an open, democratic and member-led Chartered Institute**

CILIP exists to bring librarians, information and knowledge workers together, to advocate on their behalf and to support their professional development. This role is defined in our Royal Charter and the way in which we fulfil it is set out in *Securing the Future*, our 5-year Action Plan which we will renew in 2020.

The Action Plan, the aims and priorities it defines and the activities we undertake were developed through a completely open consultation with both members and non-members called *Shape the Future*. I am pleased that thousands of our professional colleagues participated in this consultation and the resulting work programme has been widely celebrated for its role in strengthening our work on behalf of the sector – including our advocacy for and on behalf of public library workers and the users of public library services.

Our progress against this Action Plan has been reported in three Annual Reports and at three Annual General Meetings and is completely open to scrutiny by members. It is also, as you yourselves have noted, subject to ongoing scrutiny by the Board of Trustees and Presidential Team, who are themselves elected democratically from among the membership.

The shape and structure of the Employer Partners Scheme is fully documented and available openly through the CILIP website. Although participants will be welcome to raise any and all questions at the Town Hall meeting, we feel that the answers to your list of questions are a matter of public record and have therefore already been answered.
The role of the Employer Partners Scheme

To restate the point made in our previous reply, CILIP shares your view that a central focus of our work must be on promoting the creation of high-quality, secure and well-paid jobs for librarians, information and knowledge workers and on supporting our members in making their own case for better employment terms and conditions.

The Employer Partners Scheme has been a considerable success over the past two years, offering an extremely important platform for dialogue with sector employers in the fulfilment of our mission and purpose.

The Scheme has helped us to develop the much-needed LAIS Apprenticeship Scheme, to develop our skills model the better to reflect the current and future needs of the job market and to address concerns about the de-valuation of professional skills. It has helped us to create a virtuous connection between the needs of employers in all sectors and the teaching and learning provided in LIS schools.

It has provided us with a mechanism to make the case to employers for building their library and information workforce, for valuing Professional Registration and for supporting the CPD of their staff. It has given us access to information about forthcoming opportunities for librarians, information and knowledge workers. It has helped us to take structured action to address the findings of the 2015 CILIP/ARA Workforce Mapping which highlighted serious issues with equality, inclusivity and diversity in our workforce.

The growth of the Employer Partners Scheme has strengthened CILIP's knowledge of and ability to be effective in key sectors which directly affect our members. It has helped us to improve our understanding of and support for library, information and knowledge workers in Higher Education and Research, in Health, in Government and in the wider corporate sectors.

It has also helped us to have constructive dialogue with public library services that have had to consider staffing cuts because the budget available to their Local Authority has been slashed. In some cases, the Employer Partners Scheme has helped us make the case for retaining professional staff in services that are facing these significant cuts.

The Scheme has also encouraged some employers, including at least one engaged in the provision of public library services, to engage more proactively with the CILIP Ethical Principles. In some cases, our relationship with an employer through the Employer Partners Scheme has directly contributed to better outcomes for CILIP members.

The Employer Partners Scheme, in short, provides a two-way mechanism for CILIP to work with employers in all sectors to the direct benefit of our members. We are already aware of, and vigilant about, the risk that an employer will seek to use an implied relationship through the Scheme to legitimise decisions that are to the detriment of workers or service users. This is managed carefully in the Terms & Conditions attached to the Scheme and through the staff team’s ongoing dialogue with the Employer Partners themselves.

Next steps

This correspondence has been very valuable in highlighting the legitimate concerns of members and non-members about CILIP's independence and our ability to act first and foremost in the interests of our members and individual librarians, information and knowledge workers.

There are three further current developments, which are currently being implemented, to which we would like to draw your attention.
The first is that we are undertaking a sector wide *Membership Research* project between September and December of this year, with the explicit aim of reaching out to non-members and understanding their needs and expectations from CILIP as an organisation that aspires to be a fully inclusive and representative membership body. I would strongly urge you and your co-signatories to use this open consultation as a direct channel to influence the direction of CILIP;

The second is that, as mentioned previously, CILIP Trustee and Chair of the Ethics Committee Dawn Finch will be bringing to the Board of Trustees a proposal for an *Institutional Ethical Framework* to sit alongside the newly-revised *CILIP Ethical Framework* and will provide an additional layer of assurance for members that organisations joining the Employer Partners Scheme are being asked to subscribe to a framework which is better-suited to some of the areas in which you have raised concerns;

The third is that our new collaboration with The EveryLibrary Institute and the launch of the *Libraries Deliver* platform ([http://www.librariesdeliver.uk](http://www.librariesdeliver.uk)) is already providing an important channel to strengthen our collaboration with and support for public library supporters and campaigners. We would encourage you to get involved in this campaign, which we hope will enable us to confront the challenges ahead more effectively and productively.

One message we take from your two letters is that you and your co-signatories care very deeply about CILIP’s ability to act independently and authoritatively on behalf of the profession.

We are no different from you in this – CILIP is a member-led organisation and we are librarians, information and knowledge workers that have taken on voluntary roles in the governance and direction of CILIP because we also care about its position as the only fully-independent leadership organisation in the library, information and knowledge sector.

Together, and in solidarity with other librarians, information and knowledge workers in all sectors, we face a very considerable challenge over the next few years. We are confronted with the economic impact of Brexit, the combined damage to public services of nearly a decade of public sector austerity and a generation of political stakeholders who do not understand the value of libraries or the professional skills of our workforce.

In order to continue to build our advocacy for and defence of library services and librarians, we all need a professional association that is influential and powerful, guided by our core values. This is why we sincerely believe that, in addition to the personal and professional benefit of being part of CILIP’s membership, we must call on all librarians, information and knowledge workers to unite under our common banner, the better to amplify our collective voices and to shape our activities.

We trust that this addresses your concerns and we look forward to further discussion on the matters raised here at the Town Hall meeting, the date for which we will advertise as soon as possible following this letter.

Yours sincerely,

[BY EMAIL]

Caroline Brazier
Chair, CILIP Board