

# Running public service mutuals in real life

**Suffolk Libraries**

# **Living life as a mutual**

Alison Wheeler

CEO

# Suffolk Libraries

## A story about people

- A story which began in 2011...about the people who work for Suffolk Libraries, who campaigned for their local library, who support and volunteer, and the people who lead our mutual



# A campaigner's story



# Suffolk Libraries

**A well used community facility**



# Suffolk Libraries

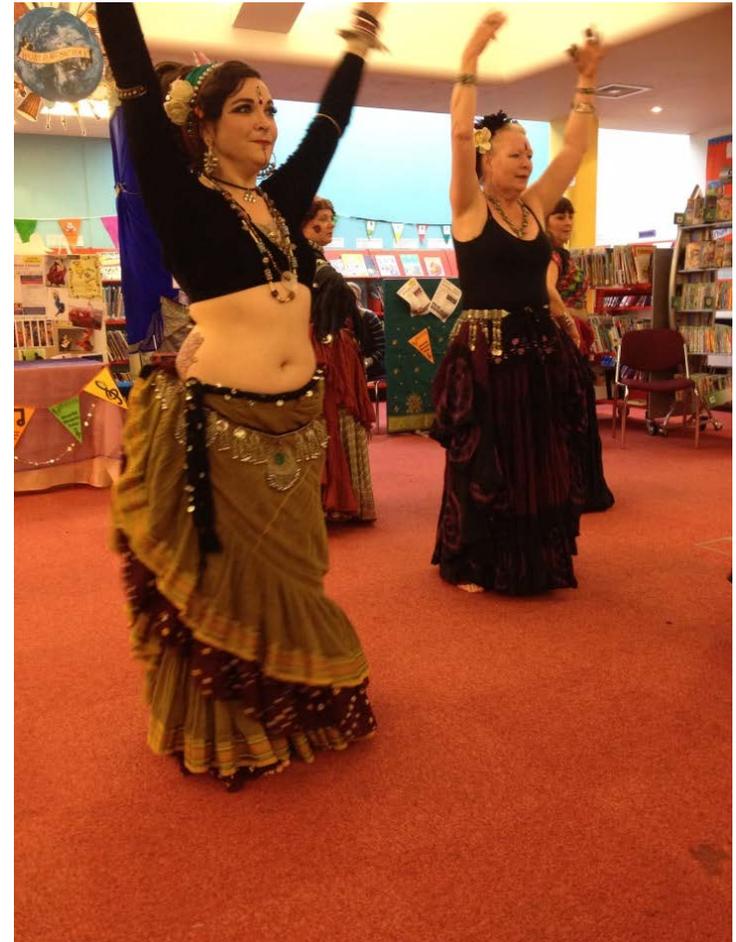
People who lead transformation from the front



# Suffolk Libraries

## What do the staff say?

- “We’re not lucky we’ve worked hard for it!”
- I am proud to work for Suffolk Libraries
- Opportunities and freedom to try new things. Including staff in decision making and asking for their opinions and views.
- I feel confident in the way Suffolk Libraries is working hard to remain relevant. It feels like we've had a lot more activities and events to plan and run since we became IPS. Commitment to the living wage is also excellent.



# Suffolk Libraries

**We are hugely supported by our  
community group supporters**



# Suffolk Libraries

## Some of the highlights of our story.. from the last five years

### We've earned and won

- Freedom, independence, and flexibility
- New expertise in business skills and a reinvigorated workforce
- A swifter pace and a commitment to progress
- We have developed our staff and communities together to be more confident, ambitious and willing to experiment or take risks
- We understand and are working towards a confident direction

### We learned

- That inaction is the enemy of progress but self-belief breeds success
- To let go of old assumptions and take down artificial barriers
- What's really important to us, our staff, our communities and our customers

# Suffolk Libraries



**The signing of Suffolk Libraries contract extension  
with Suffolk County Council**

# Suffolk Libraries

## Five years on, the transformation continues

- The Next Five Years
- A 5 phase programme
- Everything reviewed
- March – December 2017
- Phase 5 in 2018



# The Next Five Years

4 October 2017

## Phase 1

### Information gathering and listening

Customer Survey  
Staff survey  
Stakeholder discussions  
Staff workshops

#### Outcome:

Evidence and data to help plan ahead and understand what customers want and what staff believe to be core skills for the future  
Profile raising

## Phase 2

### Analysis and planning

Using all the data gathered to develop the core local library offer  
Work with managers to plan proposals for consultation  
Review of central services  
Work with UNISON

#### Outcome:

Preparation of draft working patterns for formal consultation in Phase 3

## Phase 3

### Formal consultation

150 staff consulted  
Alternative proposals sought to the working patterns and changes proposed  
Trade union consultation on methodology and on the formal proposals

#### Outcome:

Alternative working patterns provided for 7/10 libraries  
118 emails into consultation box  
Legal duties met

## Phase 4

### Carrying out the changes

Publish booklet with guidance and vacancies  
Meet with individuals in October and December  
Assessment and decisions in November

#### Outcome:

Changes made  
New working patterns agreed and staff chosen to deliver them.  
Notice and redundancies under way and notice periods underway for people not staying.

# Suffolk Libraries

## Areas of continuous challenge

- Culture change with staff
- Skills and competencies for the future
- Traditional to modern library transitions
- Politics
- Perceptions



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## My Story



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## But now

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# Suffolk Libraries

## And what's the best advice we'd give to anyone starting out?

- It's a marathon not a sprint
- Its an intense first few years- as you are doing everything for the first time
- OD is like...washing
- Its worth it

