

*Dear LARCS*

The last few weeks has seen intensive behind-the-scenes activity. The challenge has been to ensure that all procedures, each contingent upon the other, were in place so that *immediately* we received the first (of 3) funding tranche, (now safely banked!) there'd be no delay. Thanks to enormous commitment from everyone concerned, each hurdle which we, corporately, have had to leap, has been surmounted. We are, corporately, a bit breathless!

Building work will begin on the roof in early April, for which scaffolding will be erected on all sides of the Old School. (Protection will be afforded to those graves nearest on the churchyard side.) We are delighted to have Ware Construction (of Skilgate) working for us.

The building refurbishment is entirely covered by the major grant from *Power to Change*: “an independent charitable trust set up in 2015 with a £150m endowment from the Big Lottery Fund, to support, develop and grow community businesses across England.

In the face of tough economic times, there are hundreds of examples nationwide of people coming together to improve their local areas. From community-owned pubs and sports clubs to community-managed woodlands and art hubs, these enterprises are working for the benefit of local people.

Power to Change will help more of these amazing community-led businesses (*including LARCS! JMC*) to succeed...at each stage of their journey to become a sustainable community business.”

The building programme is only the First Phase; the Second, concurrent, is establishing and facilitating all services, events and activities which will be provided in the new LARC which involves many many meetings. We needed to be creative in planning ‘A Typical Week’ – now that is becoming reality. It isn't just scheduling. Ensuring policies eg Disabled Access; Health & Safety; Lettings; Monitoring & Evaluation procedures etc are mandatory. LARCS' newly-established Business Development Panel will be working with a Senior Consultant from “Locality”, appointed by Power to Change, to help us develop our future strategic plans.

Library Services will be run by Libraries Unlimited (LU) (the Public Service Mutual contracted to do so from April by Devon County Council), responsible for all aspects of the service including most importantly the employment of our

Librarians for 6 hours (as now), providing books and two of the computers, but instead from within the wonderful, light, spacious, safe and welcoming new premises. It's envisaged that an RFID (automatic checking) machine will enable borrowers to access books at other times - and the building will be open for as many hours as we can possibly arrange.

Coming together, having fun, being part of the LARCS project, and raising its profile are just as important as fund-raising in creating and consolidating community ownership of the project. *With Great Pleasure* raised £220 at Penn House recently, giving all guests great pleasure in the process. Thanks very much to Dave and Chris Lyon for their hospitality, and Humphrey Berridge who recorded the eclectic mix of anecdotes, readings and arcane recordings such as "I like bananas because they have no bones!" chosen by the Revd Tony Grosse. Very many thanks indeed to Tony, truly a Man of Letters, for entertaining us so well. (Please contact Humphrey if you would like the 2CDs (@ £3 the two, to cover Humphrey's costs).

LARCS looks forward to collaborative projects with other local groups as, for example, the Heritage Centre's innovative *Bampton's Listening Project*. The initial focus will be on memories of the Old School when, of course, it was the New School. More details available on <https://www.facebook.com/bamptonheritage/>

We look forward to seeing as many LARCS as possible at our book stall at (or near (depending on the scaffolding situation)) the **Old School at the Spring Fest 14 May**.

Please note our AGM in your diaries: **18.00, Monday 23 May in the Riverside Hall** to be followed by A Short Surprising Entertainment. We hope as many people as possible will attend and become members of LARCS. Membership will include entitlement to vote on all important issues concerning our brand new LARC.

Huge thanks and very best wishes to all our supporters – we'll soon be 600 strong. Please do contact us if you'd like to be more involved with LARCS – in any way at all. All ideas and offers warmly welcomed. Although exacting times ahead – *very exciting* times!

*Janet*

Janet Crabtree  
Chairman, LARCS

A shorter version of this message will be printed in the April issue of *Signpost*.