



Wales Higher Education Libraries Forum (WHELF) Constitution

Last approved: 23/07/2020

1. Introduction

WHELF is the collaborative group of Higher Education, knowledge management, and research libraries in Wales.

WHELF aims to promote innovative professional practice and cooperation across our members' library, knowledge and information services; providing a focus for the development of new ideas and services. Through the work of our members and through our wide range of Groups, WHELF enables and supports education, research, community engagement and the civic mission of our institutions.

2. WHELF Mission

to promote collaboration and innovation in library, knowledge and information services across Wales

3. Aims

For the benefit of our users, services and institutions, we will:

- Lead the development of Library, Knowledge and Information services and professional practice across Wales
- Engage with our users to develop and improve our services, and to promote Wales' collections to global audiences
- Deliver cost and service benefits for our institutions through shared services, collaborative procurement, service innovation and other approaches
- Explain how our services deliver value, and demonstrate the impact of Library, Knowledge and Information Services on, and beyond, our broad range of users
- Influence policy makers and funders in library, knowledge and information sectors
- Work with others to develop cooperative library, knowledge and Information network across Wales, the UK and beyond

4. Membership

Institutions eligible for membership will:

- Either be a Higher Education Institution funded by HEFCW, or have a base in Wales and hold collections of research significance; provided those collections are available to researchers and users from other institutions.

- Provide access to collections and services in support of researchers, students and the public.
- Actively participate in the WHELF Board, WHELF Groups and collaborative activities.

Notwithstanding these criteria, admission to membership is at the discretion of the existing WHELF members.

WHELF may invite members of relevant organisations to become ex officio members, without voting rights.

Membership of WHELF is by institution. The Director of Libraries or equivalent senior role is expected to represent the institution at WHELF Board meetings. With the agreement of the WHELF Chair, a substitute may be nominated to attend a Board meeting if the normal representative is unavailable.

Membership of WHELF is conditional upon payment of an annual subscription.

5. Honorary Officers

WHELF's Honorary Officers consist of a Chair, a Vice Chair and a Treasurer. The Officers are elected by and from the members of the WHELF Board and are responsible for ensuring the effective operation and coordination of WHELF.

The Chair will ensure the mission and aims of WHELF are addressed; coordinating and arranging meetings and activities as necessary. The Chair and Board may delegate activities and responsibility to WHELF Board members and WHELF Groups as appropriate. The term of office will normally be for a period of two years.

The Vice Chair will support WHELF's Mission and Aims and may have delegated areas of responsibility. The term of office will normally be for two years.

At the end of the Chair's term of office, the Vice Chair will normally become the Chair of WHELF. In the event of the Vice Chair choosing not to take the Chair, this will trigger nomination and election for both posts from the WHELF Board members; in this case the Chair and Vice Chair will be eligible for re-election.

The Treasurer will be responsible for all the financial aspects of WHELF including its accounts and budgets. The term of office will normally be for a period of two years. The Treasurer will be eligible for re-election.

If an Officer leaves mid-term an election will be held to elect a new Officer.

6. WHELF Development Officer

The **WHELF Development Officer (WDO)** is an appointed post that supports the activities of WHELF and the WHELF Board. The WDO will also be the Secretary to the Board.

The WDO will be appointed, on WHELF's behalf, by a WHELF member organisation, through its agreed recruitment and selection procedures. A WHELF Officer and the relevant Board member, will be expected to sit on the recruitment panel. Funding will be provided by WHELF to the host institution on an ongoing basis, but may be cancelled with written notice of not less than six months.

The WHELF Development Officer will normally report to the Chair.

7. WHELF Board and its Meetings

The WHELF Board will:

- Use the resources of WHELF to deliver its stated Mission and aims
- Monitor and update the WHELF Strategy, Aims and Action Plan
- Identify opportunities and issues, and contribute actively to discussion at WHELF Board meetings, suggesting Agenda items as appropriate
- Establish Groups as necessary to fulfil the Mission and Aims of WHELF
- Ensure every WHELF Group has Board level engagement
- Operate within the values of WHELF at all times

Board Meetings

- Meetings of the WHELF Board will normally be held four times a year at times and locations (including online) that are convenient
- Meetings will normally be chaired by the Chair, or the Vice Chair if the Chair is not available
- Decisions will be made on a simple majority of votes of all members, except as noted below in Sections 10 & 11
- Decisions may be made in-between meetings on the same basis, with votes being cast and counted by e-mail, or through any other appropriate method acceptable to the Board
- Minutes of WHELF Board meetings will be made available to all Board members online
- The WHELF Board may invite relevant guests to attend meetings as beneficial to its business
- Simultaneous translation facilities will be made available on request to any member of WHELF who wishes to contribute to a Board meeting in Welsh, or to any invited speakers who may wish to do so. Please inform the WHELF Development Officer four

weeks prior to any WHELF meeting if any WHELF member or speaker would like translation facilities

- WHELF Board members and officers will be responsible for arranging their own travel and related expenses in relation to Board meetings; accommodation is provided by WHELF for residential meetings
- Should it be agreed that an institution may bring an additional delegate to a WHELF meeting, the full cost, including accommodation, must normally be met by the institution

8. WHELF Groups

- The WHELF Board may establish Groups to address specific topics or issues.
- Each Group will have at least one named Chair and Vice Chair, who will be staff members of WHELF member organisations
- Each group will provide an appropriate Terms of Reference outlining
 - The overall mission and aims of the group
 - The organisation of the group and its activities
 - How the group will select chairs and members, and any terms of office
 - Whether the group is open to external membership
- Each Group will arrange their own meetings and activities
- Each Group will update their section of the WHELF Action Plan
- Each group will provide a written update on their activities to the WHELF Board at least two weeks prior to each WHELF Board meeting
- Each Group will have an identified engagement route to the WHELF Board through a named Board member
- Any post created by a Group, and funded by the members of that Group, to support WHELF activities or projects will be agreed in advance by the WHELF Board. The Group members will jointly be responsible for the appropriate arrangements for the funding, appointment and management of any such appointment through one of the WHELF Member organisations' HR processes
- Groups may form sub-groups, if appropriate to oversee specific activities or tasks
- Groups and their activities will be opportunities for staff to gain leadership, professional and project experience
- Groups will be open to all WHELF members, and may include external individuals or organisations where beneficial to their aims
- Groups will ensure their mission and aims, a list of members, their activities and action plans are visible to all WHELF members either through the WHELF website, or an alternative provision

9. Financial Regulations

a. WHELF Budget

WHELF is a non-profit making group, and any funds generated through membership fees or other activities shall be used to fulfil the Mission and Aims of WHELF.

WHELF income and budget will:

- fund the WDO post
- cover the costs of WHELF Board meetings
- be used to further the Mission and Aims of WHELF through means agreed by the WHELF Board

The WHELF account should always contain enough money to cover 12 months operation; including the WHELF Development Officer's salary and usual administrative costs and overheads.

b. WHELF Treasurer

Subject to the authority of the WHELF Board, the Treasurer shall supervise the financial affairs of WHELF and in particular the procedures for dealing with receipts and payments.

- The Treasurer shall prepare a financial report for each WHELF meeting
- The Treasurer will propose annual subscription levels for each WHELF member
- The Treasurer is responsible for maintaining accounts on behalf of WHELF at the Treasurer's host institution and will be the main or sole signatory on any transactions. Transactions above £2,500 shall also be agreed by another Officer or the Board
- The Treasurer shall ensure that all appropriate arrangements are in place for the prompt collection and banking of all income as well as making approved payments
- The Treasurer will keep all the financial records: invoices received and sent, expenses claims, grants awarded to or by WHELF, subscriptions levied, etc.
- The Treasurer will provide advice to WHELF on the state of its finances, and any financial opportunities or risks that become apparent to the Treasurer
- The Treasurer will ensure that WHELF adopts some simple rules of financial management to which the Treasurer can refer, so there is some written authority to balance the Treasurer's responsibilities

c. Subscriptions

- Annual membership subscriptions for the forthcoming year shall be recommended by the Treasurer for approval at the WHELF meeting in February each year.

- The Treasurer shall ensure that all subscriptions are collected promptly from members, by issuing a formal invoice to each member for payment.
- The annual subscription shall take the form of a charge to be agreed at the WHELP meeting in February to take effect from 1st August of the same year. Failure by an institution to pay any subscriptions levied by a date specified on the invoice will result in the suspension of that institution's membership until such time as all accounts have been settled.

d. Income

- The financial year shall run from 1st August to 31st July.
- Details of any income due to WHELP shall be notified to the Treasurer who will ensure that an invoice is raised by the Treasurer's host institution.
- The income of WHELP shall be applied only in the furtherance of the Mission and Aims of WHELP.
- Unexpected expenses must be agreed by at least two, uninvolved, WHELP Officers.

10. Amendments to the Constitution

Amendments to the Constitution can be made through the approval of at least two thirds of Members entitled to vote. Any proposed amendments must be submitted in writing to the WHELP Chair for consideration by the Board.

11. Dissolution of WHELP

WHELP shall be dissolved if a resolution is carried by a majority of two thirds of WHELP Members entitled to vote. Dissolution shall take effect from the date of the resolution and the WHELP Officers shall be responsible for winding up the assets and liabilities of the association. Any assets remaining after the discharge of the debts and liabilities of WHELP shall be distributed amongst members in proportion to the amount each member has paid in subscription fees in the previous year.