

Good afternoon, President, ladies and gentlemen, members and non-members. I'm Tom Roper; I'm a Clinical Librarian, I work in a service called an NHS Library and Knowledge Service. I'm proud to say that, like many of you, I have been a member of CILIP since its foundation, and before that a member of the Library Association and the Institute of Information Scientists. I held office in LA and CILIP groups, have served on policy committees and am a mentor.

I want to talk about why we are here. We're here because, when the profession at large became aware of the the rebranding project, there was considerable concern expressed in a number of different places, on mailing lists, in informal conversations in workplaces, at professional events and on social media, across every sector of the profession.

These concerns were inspired by two causes, the flawed nature of the project itself, especially the surveys conducted on our behalf by Spencer Du Bois, and the list of proposed names they canvased. I shall not say more about the survey, and the seconder of the motion, Charles Oppenheim, will expand on that point.

Secondly, the rebranding project came in for considerable and deserved criticism both from within the organisation and outside, as being a diversion, at a time when the services in which CILIP members practice, in all sectors, but most noticeably in the public sector, for example Lincolnshire, are under threat. We know the positive impact our professional skills can bring to science, to culture, to life, and yet, when they are needed most, we see services slashed and shut, and our members unemployed.

I want to stress that criticism of the rebranding exercise does not come from those who oppose change and embrace inertia; they came from a broad cross-section of the profession; the more senior and the new professionals, from all sectors, from rank-and-file members and from people with admirable records of service to CILIP at the highest level.

That's why, rather than grumble to one another, over a hundred members signed the requisition to call today's meeting and debate the motion I propose. We wanted to bring the matter to the highest body of the organisation, to be debated democratically and resolved. In my view, on receipt of the motion, work on the rebrand should have been stopped, until the democratic procedures of the Institute had been followed. Unfortunately, that didn't happen and Council pressed ahead regardless.

So I make no apology for using our democracy to get this matter debated. Every membership organisation faces the problem of how to get members actively involved in its affairs. This meeting is an all too rare example of that active involvement, and each of us here should be thinking of ways to sustain that.

We have had, and continue to face, a deepening crisis in our membership. The old Library Association at one time boasted nigh-on 25,000 members. Even allowing for demographic changes and deskilling in library and information services, it is frightening that we now find ourselves with, according to the Management Report that went to the meeting of Council last week, under 14,000, 13,864 to be precise. Those same papers, incidentally, also show a negative variance in income of just under £40,000, a figure you may wish to bear in mind when thinking of the cost of the rebranding exercise.

How do we win back the members we've lost and win new ones? I talk to non-members. No one has ever, ever said to me, I wouldn't join because of the name. They say that it's

expensive, they perceive CILIP to be ineffectual and irrelevant, but they never ever say it's the name.

A change of name is not unthinkable, but there has been no compelling, well-researched case made for one, and no evidence offered for a change. The best we have is that the Chair of Council found it difficult to explain what CILIP means to a confused journalist. But I'm not sure we should base decisions about our organisation's future on the ease or otherwise of talking to journalists. If we make the news, if we lead the media, then it doesn't matter if we call ourselves the Secret and Holy Society of the Disciples of Ranganathan, they'll talk to us because without us, there won't be a story. The Carnegie and Greenaway medals, one of the most high-profile things we do, have not suffered from being called the CILIP Carnegie and Greenaway medals.

Finally I want to read you an e-mail written to me by a library school student:

'During our course, students have discussed the role of CILIP in our current and future careers and we have generally agreed that there are areas for improvement. I think it's great that the organisation is focussed on creating change - however, I do not recall any of my fellow students (young or old) mentioning an expensive rebrand/new name as being a necessary aspect of making the organisation more relevant and useful to both members and society at large. If it's not already the case, I would personally rather see the money be paid to local branch committee members for their advocacy work on behalf of libraries. (Not sure why we should be ashamed of the word!) Ultimately, I think it's what you do that counts, not your name or logo.'

What happens if we pass the motion? We will be making a clear statement to members and to the wider world that we focus on what matters; we will be in a position to win back old members and recruit new. We will be in a position to become what I think everyone here today wants us to be: a strong, active professional association, led by its members and listened to when it speaks. "it's what we do that counts'.

