Lapidus

NOVEMBER
2026

Annual Report 2026

Note From our Chair

It is a pleasure to bring you our annual report which summarises our work on behalf of members for the period April 2025 - March 2026. The year, in which we anticipated the celebration of our 30th birthday, certainly presented challenges. However, we have been determined in our work to continue to provide services for members, and a large looming deficit which would have wiped out Lapidus was averted.

We changed the structure and focus of our contracted support team and ended the year with a manageable deficit of £408. Our magazine has been widely praised, LLRC remains the backbone of our events programme and LIRIC formed ambitious plans for publication.

Members' support for a new CIC status, with a recognition of our potential to broaden our reach and directly affect the lives of those who are underserved in society, strengthened our discussions to extend the reach of Plumb Lines. Do read our report to find out more about the year for Lapidus International.

Mel Perry, Chair

Contents

Our People	4
Activity Reports	5
Chair's Report	5
Treasurer's Report	7
Lapidus Living Research Community (LLRC)	10
LIRIC Journal	12
Plumb Lines	14
Coordination Team	17

Our People

Directors
Melanie Perry, Chair
Matt Bennion-Pedley, Treasurer
Peter Emelone
Caroline Burnley

Coordination Team
Flo Reynolds, Membership & Creative Development Lead
Briony Storer, Marketing & Events Coordinator

Plumb Lines
Regina Beach, Editor in Chief

Web Developer
Tom Higginson for Modulo Studio

Lapidus Living Research Community
Kim Etherington, Victoria Field, Mel Perry, Jeannie Wright, Sue Spencer, Samantha Merryweather

Lapidus International Research and Innovation Community (LIRIC) Journal
Johanna O'Shea, Co-Editor
Jessica Shelley, Co-Editor
Giulia Tosolini, International Editor
Buki Akilapa, Deputy Editor
Editorial Board: Buki Akilapa (Chair), Tim Buescher, Kim Etherington, Reinekke Lengelle, Poonam Madar, Mel Perry, Mary Pringle, Kate Thompson, Elisabeth Winkler, Jeannie Wright

Research Database
Kate McBarron

Lapidus Groups
Scotland - Ken Cockburn
Humber, Ouse, Tweed - Sue Spencer

Activity Reports



Chair's Report
Mel Perry

I recognise that Lapidus members are the engine and fuel of this organisation. Over the last 30 years their passionate commitment to the significance of words and writing for wellbeing has helped build us. Moreover, their continued involvement and willingness to contribute to our success is astounding. It is members who give their time, vision and expertise to the magazine, to the LIRIC journal, to the LLRC sessions every month, to Write Here, Right Now. to conferences and other events. As we say in Welsh Diolch o'r galon, Thank you from my heart . Know that Lapidus achievements are those of its members.

At our AGM in November 2025, members voted in favour of Lapidus becoming a Community Interest Company (CIC). I know that a change in our legal status was a long-held ambition and I am delighted that the change was effected this year. It gives Lapidus opportunities to strengthen partnerships with other similar organisations and to pursue funding for services which deliver our wider community benefit purposes and strategy.

One such area of community benefit is the Plumb Lines project with Regina Beach as Editor in Chief. I am delighted that we implemented a pilot project to work alongside and publish Bristol-based people whose lives and voices are are not often recognised and certainly not published. The publication of the poetry collection Flight, funded by the Katrina Rowan Plumb legacy enabled us to spotlight and celebrate the writing of people accessing Bristol Drugs Project, Diverse UK and Misfits Theatre Company. In the same year we were delighted to agree a plan with the fund's donor to both extend the reach of the project by working alongside six community groups, to offer further support to group leaders with expert advice on writing for wellbeing from a Lapidus member and to conduct a piece of research into the impact of the project on its beneficiaries.

Lapidus Living Research Community (LLRC) endures as our primary networking and connection hub. The nature of research in our business is collaborative and centred in the experiences and views of participants. The presentations and ensuing discussions at our regular monthly meetings model our preferred research methodologies and approaches. Those who attend LLRC are engaged and moved by the openness of presenters and they value the chance to respond in writing within the sessions.

Kate Poll and Alison Cable, with support from Sophie Poll-Hulshoff, took our bi-annual magazine to new heights. Each edition was bumper, with articles, commentaries and members' own creative work. Sadly the editing team stepped away this year. We miss them and I know how much members miss the magazine too. We aim to bring a new team and different approach soon. And thank you Alison, Kate and Sophie for all you did to make the magazine such a valued and respected part of our offering to members.

We saw some changes in the team that coordinates our academic journal, LIRIC. Tim Buescher stepped away as Editor at the end of 2025 and we welcomed a new team of Editors in Johanna O'Shea, Jessica Shelley, and Giulia Tosolini in the summer. They are supported by the LIRIC Editorial Board and particularly Buki Akilapa as Deputy Editor, Mary Pringle, Production Editor, Elisabeth Winkler as Secretary and Kim Etherington. The new team has exciting plans to take LIRIC forward, to be more visible and to be indexed in the academic journal world.

I am delighted that our monthly newsletter has continued to offer information about Lapidus activities and provide connection into our website and across the membership. We are always pleased to hear news of member initiatives and welcome your stories so get in touch if you have a story to share.

Following changes to the Lapidus Coordination team in 2025, I would like to pay tribute to our Membership and Creative Development Lead Coordinator ,Flo Reynolds, who ensured "business as usual" for members and supported a measured and strategic approach to Lapidus realising its strategic priorities. Flo was joined by Briony Storer as Marketing and Events Co-ordinator whose skills have helped us sequence the promotion of our activities in a considered fashion.

In October 2025 I had the privilege as a practitioner to attend and make a presentation to the 2nd European Biblio/Poetry Therapy Conference (EBPTC) in Jyväskylä, Finland. As a consequence of this I represented Lapidus International on the planning group, led by Victoria Field, for the 3rd EBPTC to take place in Canterbury in October 2026. It has been a privilege to be part of this network and to be stimulated by the many varied, yet still unifying, approaches to words and writing for wellbeing.

I would like to thank my Director colleagues who stood down last year- to Alison, Buki, Gareth, Kate and Rick. Thank you to Matt and Peter who remained with us as Directors and to Caroline who joined as a Director in November 2025. Together they bring a right combination of scrutiny, sense and sparkle to our deliberations.

My final thanks are for my former Co-Chair, Lucy Windridge-Floris, who stood down at last year's AGM. It was a pleasure to have the support and friendship of a wing-woman to share the load of the challenges we faced in the year and to revel in the joy that our members and wider beneficiaries found in the service Lapidus provided.



Treasurer's Report
Matt Bennion-Pedley

In last year's report, I explained how in 2024/25 Lapidus drew heavily upon its reserves in order to invest in an improved website and larger co-ordination team. Although this investment delivered undoubted benefits, it unfortunately did not translate into the increased membership numbers and income anticipated. 2024/25 therefore resulted in a £15,362 deficit for the year and remaining balances of £15,402 on 31st March 2025. I also explained how that financial trajectory had continued into 2025/26 and that by the end of October 2025 Lapidus's overall balances had reduced to £10,500. Had this trajectory been left unchecked, Lapidus would have run out of cash earlier this year.

The Board therefore took decisive action and made the difficult decision to reduce its co-ordination team from four members to just two. It also took the opportunity to agree a revised and broader role with Flo Reynolds, who became Membership and Creative Development Lead, and to recruit a new Communications and Marketing expert in Briony Storer.

As can be seen from the tables below, these changes enabled us to halt our perilous financial trajectory and return Lapidus much closer to a balanced budget. Lapidus ended 2025/26 with an overall deficit for the year of just £408 and remaining balances of £14,918 on 31st March 2026.

The outlook for the current financial year is much more stable. Despite facing some significant cost increases relating to the website and other digital subscriptions, as at 30th October 2026 Lapidus's balances (excluding Plumb Lines, whose resources are ringfenced) stand at £14,500 and are expected to end the year at approximately £15,000. This is in line with the Board's agreed policy of maintaining sufficient working capital, both to manage short-term cashflow fluctuations and be able to invest in new content where opportunities arise e.g. through an expanded events programme.

I am also pleased to report that membership numbers, which had fallen to 315 by early March, have now recovered and, as at the end of October, stood at 335. This, together with recent changes to our membership subscription fees, should provide us with the firm foundations we need to help deliver our strategic plan and ensure a successful future.

Income and Expenditure Account		2025/26		2024/25
		£		£
Income				
Subscriptions and Events		25,104		21,505
Publication Sales (Plumb Lines)		77		0
Bank Interest		156		0
Contributions from specific grants / legacies (Plumb Lines)		9,452		1,645
Total Income		**34,789**		**23,150**
Expenditure				
Co-ordination team and other contractor costs		24,543		27,280
Event speaker and other event-related costs		2,415		2,096
Computing, printing and other office costs		803		61
Website maintenance, development, hosting and digital subscriptions		4,123		5,833
Third party grants (Plumb Lines groups)		1,500		0
Bank and payment provider charges		1,135		744
Insurance		274		503
Company Fees including accountancy / professional fees		480		1,996
Total Expenditure		**35,273**		**38,513**
Surplus / Deficit (-) Before Tax		**-484**		**-15,362**
Corporation Tax @ 19%		0		-68
Surplus / Deficit (-) After Tax		**-484**		**-15,294**
Balance Brought Forward from Previous Year		**15,402**		**30,696**
Balance Carried Forward to Next Year		**14,918**		**15,402**

Balance Sheet		31/03/2026		31/03/2025
		£		£
Current Assets				
Debtors		0		1,645
Savings Accounts		14,765		0
Lloyds Bank		200		13,524
PayPal		253		533
Total Current Assets		**15,218**		**15,702**
Current Liabilities				
Corporation Tax		0		0
General Creditors		300		300
Total Current Liabilities		**300**		**300**
Net Current Assets		**14,918**	*	**15,402**
(* Including £156 relating to Plumb Lines)				

Priorities for the coming year include:

- expanding and enhancing our membership offerings so that we are able to support, attract and retain more members;
- building upon our new Community Interest Company (CIC) status, which will enable us to explore more opportunities akin to the hugely successful Plumb Lines project;
- building more resilience throughout our organisation by providing the support our numerous volunteers need to be able to continue giving up their time and expertise;
- building our external fundraising capacity and capability; and
- leveraging the skills, experience, knowledge, interests and enthusiasm of all of our membership so that we can continue to provide a broad range of writing for wellbeing offerings to the wider public, in keeping with both our mission (enhancing the lives of individuals and communities worldwide) and overarching charitable objectives, as enshrined in our articles of association.

The last 12 months have been particularly challenging for Lapidus from a financial perspective. The outlook, though, is much rosier and Lapidus can enter the next chapter of its development with great confidence.



Lapidus Living Research Community (LLRC)
Mel Perry, Chair of the Board of Directors and Research Director

Our monthly Saturday sessions which focus on areas of research in the field of words and writing for wellbeing have continued without a break. This commitment is thanks to a small group of Lapidus members who volunteer their interest, time and skill to identify and support presenters, promote the events and provide technical support each month. As I reflect on the past year of our steadfast LLRC events I recall respect, curiosity, and energy among those who come. Participants are respectful in their engagement with the activities that might be included in a session. Their questions and comments show that they are curious about the content of a topic being presented and where that fits with their own work. Members' comments suggest that they will reflect on their own practice and follow up with suggestions for reading and development. Two particular areas which sit with me are the notions that me-search is research as Alison Cable quoted Reinekke Lengelle, and the enduring discussions that we have that practice is research is practice. All features of our work fold into and enhance each other like laminations in a fine pastry.

In the period April 2025-March 2026 we welcomed 376 participants and our Facebook group has grown to 253 members. We continue to meet either at 10.00 a.m. or 4.00 p.m. Thanks to the international nature of our community we have welcomed presenters from Lithuania, Belgium, Netherlands, Croatia, Wales and England. and enjoyed the following sessions:

- Berit Kaschan–Using Family Systems theory in Biblio-Poetry Therapy work
- Cheryl Beer–Sonic Nature: Sensing the Garden of Wales. (Future Wales Research Fellowship)
- Kate McBarron–Exploring the Writing-for-Wellbeing Landscape
- Mariana Casale–Re-authoring Narratives of Hope.
- Celia Hunt–A personal reflection on the evolution of the field of words and writing for wellbeing & Lapidus
- Emica Calogjera–Mitigating Stress and Enhancing Creativity among Teachers.
- Jurgen Pieters–Farmacological fictions. The limits of bibliotherapy.
- Kate Poll–Compassion Journalling
- Kim Etherington–Conversations about collaborative inquiry
- Ineke Duit–Finding the road to voice again:after the silencing process by homophobia
- Elisabeth Winkler–How can therapeutic creative writing uncover a more nuanced story of a past self?--

- Claire Williamson–The 5 Fs: when the story alters... exploring responses to narrative disruption and creative antidotes
- Helen Foster–Moving Poems: making poetry films as a creative wellbeing practice

Thank you to my colleagues Victoria Field, Sam Merry, Kim Etherington, Jeannie Wright and Sue Spencer who keep the agenda relevant to our field and provide hosting and chairing support. And thank you to Flo Reynolds and Briony Storer who support the volunteers in helping us to promote LLRC as a key component of Lapidus' events programme.



LIRIC Journal
Buki Akilapa, Chair of the LIRIC Editorial Board and Deputy Editor

LIRIC continues to bring research, lived experience and creative practice into conversation, providing an open-access space in which knowledge about writing for wellbeing can be shared and explored. Lapidus's values remain embedded in this work: our commitment to inclusion, compassion and respect for different voices shapes how we support contributors, engage with personal narratives and make research accessible to a wider community.

Volume 5, Issue 1, published on 15 March 2026, reflected the breadth of this community. Kate McBarron's Exploring the Writing for Wellbeing Landscape offered a reflective review of the evidence, while Penny Simpson's The Embedded Writer presented a model for delivering creative writing programmes in community settings. Elisabeth Winkler's Subtle and Significant Shifts explored therapeutic writing, self-discovery and self-compassion through revisiting personal journals.

Dawn Garisch's essay, Invisible Mending, considered the unexpected insights and connections that can emerge through creative writing and their contribution to wellbeing. A review of Epistemic Justice and the Postcolonial University, co-authored by Lucy Windridge-Floris and Buki Akilapa, brought questions of knowledge, representation and whose voices are heard into the issue. Together with Tim Buescher's editorial, these contributions invited readers to consider both the possibilities of writing for wellbeing and the responsibilities involved in sharing and interpreting experience.

The reporting year also included a significant editorial transition. Tim formally resigned as Editor in November 2025 but continued working with Kim Etherington to bring Volume 5, Issue 1 to publication in March 2026. We warmly thank Tim for his leadership and dedication to LIRIC, and Tim and Kim for their care and commitment in completing the issue and supporting continuity during this period of change.

The growing connection between the Lapidus Living Research Community (LLRC) and LIRIC has been particularly encouraging. Presenters at LLRC are developing their contributions into submissions for the journal, creating opportunities for ideas first shared in discussion to reach a wider readership. This connection supports a welcoming research culture in which practitioners and researchers can learn from one another and develop confidence in sharing their work.

Beyond the reporting period, Volume 6, Issue 1 was published on 4 May 2026. It included Sue Walters' exploration of practitioners' and students' relationships with research in Creative Writing for Therapeutic Purposes, alongside Buki Akilapa's exploration of girlhood, migration, grief and healing through soul work. We also welcomed Sue Spencer and our three new editors, Johanna O'Shea, Jessica Shelley and Giulia Tosolini, to the LIRIC Editorial Board in summer 2026. Their appointments offer reassurance and renewed energy for the journal's future; their contributions will be covered more fully in next year's report.

We thank our authors, reviewers, editors and Editorial Board members, including those who have joined or stepped away, for the time, thought and care they give to LIRIC. Their collective commitment helps us put Lapidus's values into practice, sustaining a journal where different experiences are respected and writing for wellbeing remains at the heart of our shared inquiry.

Plumb Lines
Gina Beach, Plumb Lines Editor in Chief



Project Overview

The Plumb Lines Project was established through a partnership between Lapidus International and the Plumb family, in memory of Katrina Plumba poet, educator, and advocate for under-represented voices. Katrina worked closely with writing groups across Bristol and beyond, using creativity to promote healing, self-expression, and empowerment. Following her death in 2021, the Plumb family sought to honour her life and values with a legacy which would support projects that reflect her belief in the transformative power of writing. The Katrina Plumb Fund was set up and is held by Foundation Scotland. The Plumb Lines project is executed on the family's behalf by Lapidus International.

Editor in Chief

In January 2025 (Stage 2), Regina Beach was appointed Editor in Chief (EIC) to lead the team and produce the pilot anthology. Regina was onboarded and joined the project in April 2025. She managed the project, primarily working remotely. She led the editorial team, and liaised with the Board, benefactors and key stakeholders.

The pilot anthology Flight was successfully completed within the time frame of 6 months. The volume is in both hard copy and e-book form and available for sale on the designated Plumb Lines website page of Lapidus. Flight represents the work of all three involved groups.

1. The Misfits Theatre Company, led by people with learning disabilities.
2. Diverse UK, who work with adults identifying as autistic.
3. Lyrically Lifted by the Bristol Drugs Project, which uses creativity to engage adults affected by drug or alcohol use.

Plumb Lines Process and Policies

The EIC created a work plan and process document for current and future projects including:

- Worked with the web developer to creating a Plumb Lines landing page on the Lapidus web site with an application form for interested group members and created criteria and process document for accepting groups into projects
- Development of contracts and payment processes for groups upon project to receive their £500 bursary

- Development of permissions and author contracts to secure rights for publishing
- Developed digital processes and storage with tools including Google Docs, Zoho email client, Canva, and Lulu
- Creation of editorial and design style guides for publications
- Purchase of ISBNs for future projects (ebooks and print)
- Establishment of small press (Lapidus Publishing) to use as the imprint for all Plumb Lines and other Lapidus publication projects
- 6-month cohort timeline for each project

Lapidus Publishing

A Lapidus imprint was created for future print book distribution. Lapidus International owns
the imprint. This imprint/small press means that Lapidus International can maintain consistency over all Plumb Lines projects associated with Lapidus International. Any profit
from books sold will be earmarked for future Plumb Lines projects.

Promotion of the Project

- Several blog posts for the Lapidus website and social media posts were created by the EIC and Lapidus Coordinator
- EIC presented at the Lapidus Summer festival 2025
- Introducing the Plumb Lines project for Lapidus Magazine issue 6
- Jo Plumb wrote a personal essay about their Aunt Katrina for Lapidus Magazine issue 7

Anthology Launch

The launch took place at the biennial Creative Bridges Conference, held on September 14th-15th 2025. This was preceded by a teaser/soft launch at the Lapidus International Summer Festival on 21st June 2025.

The launch event served multiple purposes:

- Project Information: it provided details about the project's goals.
- Group Highlighting: it specifically highlighted and celebrated the contributions of each participating group.
- Readings: participants read their work aloud.
- Special Presentation: Jo (Plumb family member) gave a talk specifically about their memories of Katrina.
- Engagement with members and external delegates.

Successfully Securing Funding for Phase II August 2026-28

Over the 2 years, we envisage:

- 4 cohorts of 3 groups each, giving a total of 12 writing groups and approximately 180 contributors.
- 4 separate anthologies produced, each published under the Lapidus imprint and Plumb Lines logo.
- A research component to measure impact of the project on participants
- 1 editor responsible for the production of all 4 anthologies, as well as a How-To guide with chapters from each group leader, a summary of the research findings and a chapter on publishing and printing

Other Developments Beyond March 2026

Plumb Lines is expanding outside Bristol for cohort 2 which commenced in August 2026 and will conclude with the Identity anthology in February 2027. We have groups from Bristol, Canterbury, and North Shields taking part.

An introduction of the Phase II Plumb Lines project was given at the Lapidus Summer Festival 2026 by the Editor In Chief.

For cohorts two and beyond we are pleased to have the addition of mentors for group leaders who want one. We have created an application process and pool of interested Lapidus members with suitable credentials for future projects. A contract for these mentors was created by our Treasurer.

We are very excited about the forthcoming How-To book project including the research from the cohorts 2 and 3 research project and chapters from each of the 12 group leaders in Cohorts 2, 3, 4 and 5. This will be the first nonfiction title from Lapidus Publishing

Cohorts 2 and beyond are being offered complementary 1-year Lapidus membership for group leaders and members over 18.

Coordination Team
Flo Reynolds, Membership & Creative Development Lead



The period April 2025 to March 2026 has been one of significant development and change for the Coordination team. We've had some changes to our line-up and have been working to strengthen the organisation, refresh its offer to members and building a more sustainable foundation for the future.

Working closely with the Board of Directors, we've been developing the systems and practical arrangements needed to translate the new strategic plan into action. This includes a restructure of the coordination team, the recent review of membership arrangements and pricing, and improvements to the organisation's operational infrastructure. In April 2026 we welcomed Briony Storer to the team as Marketing Coordinator. Briony has already had a huge impact on improving our communications through reviewing our data protections, developing our brand, and making sure that our online channels are working as a coherent whole. The results of this work will only continue to grow.

Earlier this year I worked with the board to develop a new value proposition, in response to member feedback and to ensure that our offer is year-round and full of opportunities to connect across our community. You may have seen some of this work through new initiatives like our onboarding sessions for new members and the Networking Carousel. The aim has been to build on the success of projects like the Living Research Community (LLRC) monthly seminars and to have a range of events, networking opportunities, publications and more on offer every month of the year.

Alongside this, we've been working on the day to day things that keep Lapidus running, from supporting governance by the Board, to coordinating between our different project teams, maintaining our digital infrastructure, and supporting members to make the most of their membership.

Looking ahead, this work provides a foundation for the continued development of Lapidus as a connected and sustainable organisation, responsive to feedback from members and emerging opportunities. There are many exciting new ideas in the pipeline, so watch this space!

On a personal note, my contract with Lapidus ends on 30 November, and after that I will be moving on to focus more on my coaching, facilitation and strategy practice. Since joining the coordination team in January 2024, I have had the pleasure of working with the Board of Directors, colleagues, volunteers and many members of the Lapidus community. Thank you all for making my time here so enjoyable. I'd especially like to thank Mel and Matt, who have been so generous with their time, guidance and trust in me. I wish everyone involved in Lapidus, both members and those working 'behind the scenes', all the best going forward, and I won't be a stranger!

Lapidus

www.lapidus.org.uk
info@lapidus.org.uk

Lapidus International is registered as:
Lapidus Community Interest Company
Suite A 82 James Carter Road
Mildenhall
Bury St. Edmunds
England
IP28 7DE