

JOINT ARCHIVES COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Joint Archives Committee was held on 18 February 2010.

PRESENT:

Councillor S Clarke (Redcar and Cleveland Council), Councillor P Thompson (Substitute for Middlesbrough Council), Councillor V Tumilty (Hartlepool Council) and Councillor Mrs M Womphrey (Stockton Council).

OFFICIALS:

J Baker, J Brittain, S Cartlidge, J Hubbard, G Jarritt, C Lunn, B Robinson and J Tweedy.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Dr J Heggie (The British Steel Archives Project) and J Nicholson (Friends of Teesside Archives Group).

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor D Budd (Middlesbrough Council) and L Featherstone.

****DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest made at this point of the meeting.

****MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Joint Archives Committee held on 23 July 2009 were taken as read and approved as a correct record.

****MATTERS ARISING****PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR APRIL - JUNE 2009**

The Library Resources Manager informed Members that the issue surrounding Archives volunteers and their ineligibility to reclaim travel expenses had now been addressed.

Regarding the concerns that had been raised in respect of an appropriate vehicle not being made available for the transportation of Archives equipment, the Committee was informed that Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland Councils had each reviewed this issue and arranged for suitable vehicles to be put in place. The Committee welcomed this positive feedback.

REVIEW OF TEESSIDE ARCHIVES SERVICE

A discussion ensued pertaining to the storage of Coroners and Solicitors' records, and whether or not additional funding could be raised via the introduction of storage charges. Regarding Coroners' records, the Acting Principal Archivist informed the Committee that, under the Public Records Act (1958), these records must have been made available and stored appropriately in order to ensure immediate access to them when required. Regarding Solicitors' records, it was pointed out that documents of high historical value were often contained within these. Depositors would be approached in order to discuss this issue together with future storage options, and the outcome would be reported back to the Committee at a future meeting. During the discussion, it was indicated that three-quarters of a new storage area had been filled in one-year. In light of this, and to ensure that unnecessary items were not taking up essential storage space, it was noted that the overall collections policy would be reviewed in the future.

The Review of Teesside Archives Service report had been revised and forwarded to the Tees Valley Joint Chief Executives' Group for consideration. The Committee's recommendation to

follow option one had been agreed and the budget and administration set. Members welcomed this positive news.

ORDERED

- (i) **That the information as presented be noted.**

BRITISH STEEL ARCHIVES PROJECT - UPDATE

Members received a PowerPoint presentation entitled 'The British Steel Archive Project – Progress Update' from the Project Manager. The Committee was informed that the partnership programme with Teesside Archives was now in its final year and due to be completed on 31 December 2010. The presentation covered the following topics:

- Aims of the Project – these revolved around Access, Skills, Community Cohesion and Promotion of the Teesside Area.
- Core Objectives of the Project.
- Additional Objectives of the Project – including a Volunteers Programme, Sustainability and successful continuation of the project's work following its official completion in December 2010.
- Funding – £403,152.00 had been awarded to the project, equating to an excellent 42% achievement rate in relation to the £954,297.00 that had been applied for. Additional income had been secured from a combination of sources including grants that had been awarded to Teesside University, donations, sponsorship and merchandise sales.
- Project Team Members.
- Progress made in relation to Conservation, Catalogue, Community Engagement, the Volunteer Programme, Collection Care and Digitisation.
- Sustainability of the Project – including future skills training initiatives, income generation, research and teaching.
- The remaining work programme.
- End of Project Objectives – including continual updating of the website, a continued partnership with Teesside University, the four local authorities and Teesside Archives, and production of a final report including an external evaluation of the project.

In the discussion that followed a question was raised with regard to the availability of the British Steel merchandise that had been produced. The Project Manager indicated that items such as calendars and pencils were available to purchase from locations such as the Dorman Museum and Teesside Archives, however commercial unit retail was not a viable option due to the commission payments that would be involved. It was suggested that the local authorities could assist with this matter by potentially retailing merchandise from additional locations such as Tourist Information Centres.

A question was asked concerning the possibility of Teesside Archives establishing a permanent working dialogue with Teesside University. The Project Manager indicated that this was a very good suggestion, however any future activity pertaining to this project would require additional sources of funding. During a discussion concerning the issue of funding, it was noted that a recent contribution made by Middlesbrough Council had assisted enormously with regard to a recent KTP grant funding application that had been made in respect of the project.

Reference was made to the impending closure of Corus and the Committee discussed the significance of the British Steel Archives Project at both local and national level.

The Project Manager explained that Outreach activities had been fundamental in raising the profile of the British Steel Archives Project, all of which had been tailored to the specific geographical area where the activities had taken place. Mention was made of a recent exhibition in Hartlepool that had attracted over 700 people.

The Chair thanked the British Steel Archives Project Manager for her contributions to the meeting.

ORDERED

- (i) **That the information as presented be noted.**

PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR JULY - DECEMBER 2009

The Acting Principal Archivist submitted a report the purpose of which was to update Members on the performance of Teesside Archives for the period July – December 2009, and to provide the Committee with an update on the Action Plan.

The last inspection of Teesside Archives by the National Archives (TNA) was in 2008. In 2008 this inspection regime was supplemented by an annual self-assessment, scored by the TNA. As previously reported the service was scored as a three-star service (out of four) and was said to be neither improving nor deteriorating.

There were currently no statutory indicators or standards relating to archives services. A C.I.P.F.A return was required on an annual basis. The range of work undertaken by Teesside Archives was varied and included conservation and outreach work. The submitted report provided a summary of this work.

The number of visitors to Teesside Archives during the period July – December 2009 was 3155. A breakdown of these was included in Appendix 1 of the report. The 19.6% who were from outside the area included searchers from America, New Zealand and South Africa.

There were a total of 114 accessions of archive material during this period. These included: Newspaper cuttings relating to an air taxi service operating from Sandy Flatts Farm in Middlesbrough; Boy's records from Sir William Turner School at Coatham; Minutes of the Cleveland and Stockton Gymnastics Association, and additional records from the Coroner for the Hartlepool area. A copy of the newspaper article entitled 'Hopes to Keep Air Taxis on Teesside', dated 16 September 1948, was tabled for Members' interest.

A very large collection of some 10,000 to 15,000 photographic negatives was also deposited with Teesside Archives. The negatives ranged in date from 1967 to 1989 and covered the Teesside area, recording subjects such as the Tees and Hartlepool Port Authority, theatrical productions at Billingham Forum and other local venues, as well as views of buildings in Middlesbrough, Hartlepool and Thornaby. The full extent of the coverage of this collection would only become apparent once it had been indexed.

The Service Review identified the need to concentrate more on Outreach activity in the Borough's of Hartlepool, Redcar and Cleveland and Stockton. This was currently being planned as detailed in Appendix 2 of the report. There had been a total of 75 events/talks/visits/displays over this period. Teesside Archives had attended the Northern Family History Fair at Gateshead and the Cleveland Show at Stewart Park in Middlesbrough. Staff had also attended the Hartlepool Headland Local History Day. Staff from Teesside Archives had been involved in radio programmes twice during this period, once with BBC Radio Tees and once with Community Voice FM. Students from Cleveland College of Art and Design used Teesside Archives' searchroom to film a reconstruction from the film "The Shawshank Redemption". On Saturday 14 November 2009 Teesside Archives hosted the annual Archives Awareness Day School. The title given to the day school was "A Cabinet of Delight", the title being chosen to emphasise the variety of records available at Teesside Archives. The day was a mixture of talks, workshops and a film show. Thirty-nine members of the public attended, comments from whom included "more of them please, twice a year at least". An information pack detailing the Awareness Day was tabled for Members' information. Teesside Archives organised behind-the-scenes tours for members of the public as part of the Discover Middlesbrough Programme. There was also a visit by the Redcar and Cleveland Branch of MIND. The Learning and Access staff organised World War Two commemorative workshops to mark the outbreak of the war. They worked with Holy Trinity Church and two schools in North Ormesby to investigate the history of their community. They arranged a visit to Teesside Archives for the institute of Chartered Managers. During December 2009 several groups of first year history students from the University of Teesside visited Teesside Archives in order to be shown how to make use of the facility in their

academic research. Recent displays had included one on the buildings in Exchange Square in Middlesbrough, and another for the Hart Village Heritage Project.

Conservation work had been carried out on a variety of archives in the last three months in order to make them available to the public for research. In total 395 items were repaired, cleaned and repackaged. This included full conservation of early maps of Middlesbrough and Saltburn.

Some 2295 records were treated in preservation projects. This involved cleaning, repackaging, labelling and reboxing into acid free enclosures. The condition of these collections was noted so that any future conservation required could be prioritised. This included a large collection of photographs from the water board covering all four boroughs.

Other duties and events had included: Attending the annual training conference held by the Society of Archivists; Giving training and advice to the British Steel Archive Project as the conservation work progressed; Carrying out paid conservation work for various institutions and members of the public; Giving five talks/demonstrations to various groups; Assessing new collections as they came in, repackaging and shelving them; Up to ten hours a month were taken performing routine environmental monitoring and checking the condition of the whole archive building.

The Action Plan put to the Committee on 23 July 2009 as part of the Review of Teesside Archives Report had been updated and further key actions added. This could be seen at Appendix 2 of the report.

With regard to Outreach work, the Chair welcomed the news that in December 2009 a meeting had taken place between staff from the four partner Borough's. It was explained that the intention was for meetings to be held on a quarterly basis. Concerning Outreach work in schools, it was suggested that presentations could be made to Head Teacher groups in order to facilitate Outreach activity. Furthermore, it was suggested that the build-up of contacts within individual schools would also prove particularly effective in terms of Outreach work. These ideas would be investigated and the outcome reported back to the Committee at a future meeting. During discussion it was proposed that additional Outreach activity venues be researched. This would also be undertaken and the outcome reported at a future meeting. It was noted that a recent Archives Outreach presentation in Middlesbrough had been very well received by those in attendance. Members wished to thank the Outreach team for this event.

It was reported that an increase in the amount of work done by the Conservator for external organisations would reduce the amount of time available to conserve deposited archive material. The Committee discussed this issue and a question was raised as to whether the number of private projects would permit the opening of an additional part-time post. This matter would be looked at in the future.

Regarding the option of Teesside Archives becoming a Charitable Trust, the Committee was informed that this would be pursued once the vacancy for the Archives Manager had been filled.

It was noted that the next Joint Archives Committee meeting scheduled to take place on 22 April 2010 would be held at the Teesside Archives building.

ORDERED

- (i) **That the Performance Report for July - December 2009, together with the additional information as presented, be noted.**

QUORUM

Prior to consideration of the following item Councillor P Thompson left the meeting for another impending engagement.

In the absence of a quorum it was agreed by those present to continue with the meeting on an informal basis.

BUDGET UPDATE REPORT

The Library Resources Manager presented a report the purpose of which was to:

- a) Update Members on the 2009-2010 revenue budget.
- b) Advise Members on the proposed 2010-2011 budget for Teesside Archives.
- c) Seek approval to progress with this submission.
- d) Seek approval for the fees and charges for 2010-2011.

The revenue budget for 2009-2010 had been passed to the Tees Valley Chief Executives' Group for consideration. A previous report, Review of the Teesside Archives Service, that had been presented to the Committee on 23 July 2009 showed, in Appendix 2, that a budget of £248,434 was recommended in order to keep the service at its current level. The Chief Executives confirmed their agreement that the service would continue at its current level, as recommended by this Committee, and at the budget identified. This was set out as Option One of the report. Each authority had been invoiced and had paid their proportion of the budget as agreed.

Appendix 1 of the report showed the revenue budget at 31 December 2009.

The 2009-2010 budget had been adjusted to reflect the actual pay award of 1% as opposed to the estimated pay award of 3%.

The outturn projection indicated that the 2009-2010 budget would come in under budget due to the vacancy of the Principal Archivist's post. Any underspends would be refunded to the other local authorities after closure of the 2009-2010 accounts.

The 2010-2011 proposed budget had been set following considerations of all issues in the service review and following agreement by the Chief Executives. It was based on the 2009-2010 budget plus inflation. A full breakdown of the budget was given in Appendix 2 of the report. With regard to each authority's financial contribution, the percentage split was based upon the population mid-year estimates for 2008.

It was proposed that the fees and charges for 2010-2011 be held at the 2009-2010 level (although the fees and charges income budget had increased in line with inflation). Changes for the financial year 2011-2012 would be discussed by the authorities and brought to this Committee at the October 2010 meeting. This was in line with the financial procedures of Middlesbrough Council and as laid out in the SLA. New income strands would be considered by the joint authority working group as part of the continuing need to look for new sources of income and service efficiencies.

In the discussion that followed a question was raised with regard to the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 financials concerning Service Charges and Systems (Maintenance). It was explained that previous capital had been amalgamated and split between the two divisions and budgets proposed to reflect this. With regard to Systems, a query was raised as to the types of systems that had been purchased from this budget fund. It was highlighted that the CALM system had been acquired through this.

It was pointed out that some of the GL Code Descriptions at Appendix 2 of the report would be amended in order to ensure that the descriptions were relevant to the expenditure being made.

In the absence of a quorum the Committee made the following recommendations, subject to formal ratification at the next meeting:

RECOMMENDED

- i) **That the 2009-2010 revenue budget update report be noted.**
- ii) **That the proposed 2010-2011 budget for Teesside Archives be noted.**
- iii) **That progress regarding this submission be approved.**
- iv) **That the fees and charges for 2010-2011 be approved.**

VACANCY FOR ARCHIVES MANAGER - UPDATE

The Library Services Manager provided the Committee with a verbal update regarding the vacancy for Archives Manager. It was noted that an advertisement for the post had been made. The closing date for applications was 26 February 2010 and interviews would be held on 8 April 2010.

RECOMMENDED

- (i) **That the information as presented be noted.**

ANY OTHER BUSINESS**APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR**

It was suggested that a Vice-Chair for the Joint Archives Committee be appointed from the 2010-2011 Muncipal Year. This matter would be reviewed at the next meeting on 22 April 2010.

RECOMMENDED

- (i) **That the information as presented be noted.**

SUBSTITUTION

A discussion ensued concerning the current arrangements in respect of quorum and the requirement for Members to appoint a substitute in order to prevent cancellation of Joint Archives Committee meetings. It was noted that representation was required from all four authorities in order for meetings to be quorate.

RECOMMENDED

- (i) **That the information as presented be noted.**