

JOINT ARCHIVES COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Joint Archives Committee was held on 22 April 2010.

PRESENT:

Councillor S Clarke (Redcar and Cleveland Council), Councillor D Budd (Middlesbrough Council), Councillor V Tumilty (Hartlepool Council) and Councillor Mrs M Womphrey (Stockton Council).

OFFICIALS:

J Baker, J Brittain, G Jarritt, C Lunn, B Robinson and E Tennant.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

J Nicholson (Friends of Teesside Archives Group).

****APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of S Cartledge, L Featherstone and J Tweedy.

****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 18 February 2010 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

****MATTERS ARISING****REVIEW OF TEESSIDE ARCHIVES SERVICE**

Regarding the storage of Coroners and Solicitors' records, and whether or not additional funding could be raised via the introduction of storage charges, the Committee was informed that the overall collections policy would be reviewed once an appointment to the Archives Manager position had been made.

VACANCY FOR ARCHIVES MANAGER - UPDATE

Concerning the post of Archives Manager, interviews had been held on 8 April 2010; however it was explained that the position remained vacant. One further interview had been scheduled.

ORDERED**1. That the information as presented be noted****BUDGET UPDATE REPORT**

Following the informal recommendations that were made during the previous meeting of the Joint Archives Committee on 18 February 2010, the Head of Service for Libraries submitted 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 for the fees and charges for 2010-2011.

As Members were advised at the previous meeting, the budget which was recommended by the Joint Archives Committee at its meeting on 23 July 2009 had subsequently been referred to and

agreed by the Tees Valley Chief Executives. Each authority had been invoiced, and paid, their proportion of the budget as agreed.

Appendix 1 of the report showed the revenue budget at 31 March 2010.

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 actual spend showed that the 2009-2010 budget had come in under budget, as projected, largely due to the vacancy of the Principal Archivist's post. Underspends would be refunded to the other local authorities after closure of the 2009-2010 accounts. The amounts to be refunded were also shown in Appendix 1 of the report.

The budget for 2010-2011 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). Charges for the financial year 2011-2012 would be discussed by the authorities and brought to this Committee at the 28 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.

With regard to the closure of the 2009-2010 accounts, a discussion ensued pertaining to the refund of underspends. It was explained to Members that refund payments could be made either in the first quarter of 2010-2011 or across the year. Alternatively, it was suggested that the money could be re-invested into the Archives service. Following discussion of the three options it was decided that the underspend amounts would be refunded back to each constituent authority. This partly owed to the fact that the refund amounts had previously been issued and had therefore been involved in some of the authorities' 2010-2011 budget-setting. The Head of Libraries Service would liaise with representatives from each authority on an individual basis in order to identify the most appropriate refund repayment plan for them.

ORDERED

- 1. That the likely budget out-turn for 2009-2010 be noted.**
- 2. That the proposed budget for 2010-2011 be approved.**
- 3. That the fees and charges for 2010-2011 be approved.**

REASON

The decisions were supported by the following reason:

- 1. For reasons outlined in the report.**

PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR JANUARY 2010 - MARCH 2010

The Acting Principal Archivist submitted a report the purpose of which was to update Members on the performance of Teesside Archives for the period January 2010 – March 2010, 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 this period was 1543. A breakdown of these was included in Appendix 1 of the report. The 11.7% who were from outside the area were from elsewhere in Britain – Devon, Cumbria, Oxfordshire, etc., the tourist season not yet having begun. The two lone visitors from abroad were businessmen from the company Magemar, based in Szczecin in Poland. Teesside Archives had been assisting the company in a project to refurbish a Smiths Dock built ship 'Bembridge', by providing copies of documents and plans from the Smiths Dock collection.

There were a total of thirty-nine accessions of archive material during this period. These included: copies of photographs of the cabinet workshops of Dickson and Benson Ltd, drapers and house furnishers of Middlesbrough, additional pupil records from Sir William Turner School at Coatham, Second World War civil defence records relating to Stockton, and Hartlepool Archaeological Building Records. Some of these acquisitions were placed on display for Members' perusal.

There had been a total of forty-five events/talks/visits/displays over this period. Teesside Archives had attended the local/family history day at Redcar Library and the Family Learning Day at the Dorman Museum in Middlesbrough. Teesside Archives organised behind the scenes tours and explanations of the work of the department for two groups of people from the University of the Third Age. There had also been visits from several groups of students from the local adult education services who were being taught to trace their family trees using records available in the department. The Learning and Access staff organised visits to Teesside Archives by four schools, one from each of the authorities, as part of the Strategic Commissioning, Crossing Historical Boundaries Project. The aim of the project was to familiarise school children with the history of their area and the historical records available, and to produce a book of poetry or piece of creative writing. In February the Learning and Access Officers visited London as a Continuing Professional Development exercise, funded by MLA, in order to see the outreach activities offered by national institutions such as The National Archives, London Metropolitan Archives, The Guardian Newsroom, The British Library and The Foundling Museum. A display was provided for the Seaton Carew local history month.

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 and could be seen in Appendix 2 of the report.

Conservation 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 228 items were repaired, cleaned and repackaged. This included detailed conservation work on the Alan Dowson photographic collection relating to the Middlesbrough Transporter Bridge, which included unusual images not seen before by the general public.

Some 62,426 records were treated in preservation projects. This involved cleaning, repackaging, labeling and reboxing into acid free enclosures. This included 60,106 negatives from the commercial photographer, Mathers of Middlesbrough, the images covering the whole of the Teesside area.

Other duties and events had included: carrying out paid conservation work for various institutions and members of the public; giving six 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 in Appendix 2 of the report.

During discussion, it was highlighted that a significant number of enquiries had been made in respect of the Smiths Dock collection. A suggestion was put forward to review this in respect of potential exhibitions at a future date; the Committee discussed this.

Members discussed visitor figures in respect of the Archives service. A question was raised with regard to the number of virtual/online visitors that the service had received. It was explained that virtual/online resources figures continued to increase, however official analysis had not yet been undertaken. It was suggested that an analysis of the virtual/online resources figures for the last five years be carried-out in order to identify trends and help facilitate future planning of the service. This matter would be pursued.

Reference was made to Appendix 2 of the submitted report. In relation to Local History Month and Adult Learners' Week, it was explained that a film show event had been arranged to take place on 11 May 2010, which would include a preview of Craig Hornby's latest film. On 15 May 2010 a Local History fair would be taking place in the Archives building. Thirty stalls would be set-up in the search room and a tour of the conservation suite had been organised. In addition, children's activities would be held in the Education Room. A photograph was tabled showing a marquis that would be loaned from Hartlepool for the event.

The representative of the Friends of Teesside Archives Group highlighted that a recommendation of the review was that the group would be set an annual income generation target. However it was pointed out that the group were independent and would therefore be unable to offer funding to the Service. It was agreed that this reference to the Friends of Teesside Archives would be removed from the Action Plan.

ORDERED

- 1. That the Head of Libraries Service pursue the matter of carrying-out an analysis of virtual/online resources figures for the last five years.**
- 2. That the reference to the Friends of Teesside Archives be removed from the Action Plan.**
- 3. That the performance report for January 2010 – March 2010 be noted.**

REASON

The decisions were supported by the following reason:

- 1. For reasons outlined in the report.**

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS 2010-2011

It was noted that arrangements had been made for future meetings of the Joint Archives Committee to be held on the following dates in the Spencer Room, Town Hall, Middlesbrough in respect of the 2010-2011 Municipal Year:

Thursday 22 July 2010
Thursday 28 October 2010
Thursday 27 January 2011
Thursday 28 April 2011.

ORDERED

- 1. That the information as presented be noted.**

ANY OTHER ITEMS**APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR 2010-2011**

At the previous meeting of the Joint Archives Committee on 18 February 2010, it was suggested that the Committee appoint a Vice-Chair from the 2010-2011 Municipal Year onwards. It was explained to Members that if a Vice-Chair were to be appointed, alterations to the Committee's Terms of Reference would need to be undertaken. Copies of the Terms of Reference together with a supplementary sheet indicating where the changes would be required were tabled for Members' information. Members discussed the proposal and agreed to the necessary amendments. Appointments of Chair and Vice-Chair for the 2010-2011 Municipal Year would be made at the 22 July 2010 meeting of the Joint Archives Committee.

ORDERED

- 1. That changes to the Terms of Reference be undertaken as required.**
- 2. That the information as presented be noted.**

QUORUM

Prior to consideration of the following items Councillor V Tumilty left the meeting for another impending engagement.

In the absence of a quorum the meeting continued on an informal basis.

CORUS

Following the mothballing of CORUS on Teesside, discussions were currently being held with the Tees Valley Cultural Officers Group in respect of potential joint-working ideas with the Archives service. It was hoped that an outline of the proposals would be presented at the 22 July 2010 meeting of the Joint Archives Committee. It was highlighted that One North East had received general notification of the on going deliberations. Members discussed the industrial heritage of Teesside and supported the idea of the joint-working unit.

RECOMMENDED

- 1. That the information as presented be noted.**

CIRCULATION OF PAPERS

A discussion ensued pertaining to the circulation of meeting papers and the suggestion made that the papers be forwarded electronically. This matter would be looked into.

RECOMMENDED

- 1. That the matter regarding electronic circulation of meeting papers be explored.**
- 2. That the information as presented be noted.**