

Minutes of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Archives Committee meeting held on 16 July 2015

Present: Ben Adams (Chairman), Terry Follows (Vice-Chairman), Ian Parry and Mike Davies (Invitee/Observer)

PART ONE

1. Appointment of Chairman and Vice-Chairman

The Committee noted changes to the City Council's membership of the Joint Archive Committee following the recent elections and subsequent changes to its Cabinet and welcomed Terence Follows to the meeting. They noted the change of substitute member to Janine Bridges (in place of Adrian Knapper) to represent the City Council in the event that Mr. Follows was unavailable, but would only assume voting rights in his absence.

(a) **RESOLVED** - That Ben Adams be appointed Chairman of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Archives Committee up to the annual meeting of the Joint Committee in 2016.

Ben Adams took the Chair

(b) **RESOLVED** – That Terence Follows be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Archives Committee up to the annual meeting of the Joint Committee in 2016.

2. Declarations of Interest in accordance with Standing Order 16

No declarations at this meeting.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 26 March 2015

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 26 March 2015 be agreed and signed by the Chairman.

4. Joint Archive Services: Annual Report 2014/15

The Committee considered the Annual Report for 2014/15 (schedule 1 to the signed minutes) providing an account and review of the work and performance of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Archive Service for the financial year from April 2014 to March 2015.

The Committee were aware that the terms of the Joint Agreement for Archive Services between Staffordshire County Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council required an annual report of the Joint Archive Service to be brought to the Annual Meeting in June, to give them a full overview of the range of activities, progress and performance of the Service.

The year 2014/15 was the final year in the current three-year planning cycle for the Joint Archive Service. This year's Annual Report shows both positive achievements and

steady progress towards meeting the overall strategic objectives of the Archive Service within the current Forward Plan, 2012-2015.

The annual report demonstrated a very productive year for the Joint Archive Services in terms of its performance, achievements and associated activity. The most notable successes included: the delivery of two grant funded projects to catalogue the Bradford Archive and to digitise the Staffordshire Manorial Documents Register. The service was also successful with its bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund to digitise and index the rare Military tribunal records. The service also launched the first phase of the Staffordshire Collection with Find My Past. Almost three million records went online at the launch and celebration event held on July 2014 at the Staffordshire Record Office for volunteers who worked with the service. The Committee acknowledged that all these projects relied on volunteer support to make them happen and widen access to the collections.

The Stoke Archives had received some exciting new collections which would form major projects for 2015/16, these included the Michelin Archive (deposited in December 2014) and the Minton Archive (March 2015). The greatest disappointment of the year was the rejection of the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) bid to extend Staffordshire Record Office. However the feedback from HLF was used to develop a new plan for the service and, with the support of consultants, a new vision was developed.

The Committee noted the public service statistics detailed in the report, and that they had achieved a 100% customer satisfaction rating in the national Public Services Quality Group User Survey. It also maintained its Customer Service Excellence award retaining its two compliance plus ratings. The Committee also noted the service continued to change and was developing a new vision which moves away from building based services. Overall it was a very successful year for the Service and they continue to meet high standards whilst also developing a new ten year vision to adapt to changing demands.

The Chairman asked that the thanks of the Committee be passed to the volunteers; Friends of the Archive Services; and staff for their hard work and dedication to the service. Arrangements would be made for Terry Follows and Mike Davies to have a tour of the Stafford Record Office and store.

RESOLVED - That the annual report on the work of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent (Joint) Archive Service for the period April 2014 to March 2015 be received and approved.

5. Joint Archive Service: Revenue Outturn 2014/15

The Committee considered a joint report presenting the final outturn for the Joint Archive Service for 2014/15 (Schedule 2 to the signed minutes).

The outturn showed that the service had a net spend of £661,544 compared with an approved budget of £682,250 giving an underspend of £20,706 which was transferred to the General Reserve at the end of the financial year. The General Reserve now had a balance of £120,655. The Archive Acquisition Reserve had a balance of £57,542 towards the purchase of new collections for the benefit of archive users in the County and City. It was noted that final income levels were also up by £7,986, due to increased sales and fees charged.

The Committee were reminded that this was the final year that the Joint Archives Committee was required to complete the Small Bodies in England Annual return for the year ended 2015. The return had been completed and would be available for the Chairman to sign, when approved. The new Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 means that Joint Committees would no longer be required to have their accounts separately prepared and audited. Government had made this change as the appropriate parts of the financial results of Joint Committees were reported in the accounts of their constituent bodies and so were audited by auditors appointed by those local bodies.

The Chairman commented on the amount in the General Reserve and was reminded that £50,000 was earmarked as matched funding towards the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) bid. It was noted that some reserve was required for emergency use but extra matched funding could be requested when the design brief for the HLF bid was finalised.

RESOLVED – (a) That the report be received;

(b) That approval be given for the Chairman to sign the completed Small Bodies Return for 2014/15 for submission.

6. Progress report on options for Staffordshire History Centre and Consultation

The Committee considered a joint progress report on the Staffordshire History Centre and consultation. Members were aware that the Archives and Heritage Vision was approved at the Joint Archive Committee on 26 March 2015 and they noted that The William Salt Library Vision was approved by the Trust at their Annual General Meeting on 11 May 2015. Both bodies agreed the next stages of developing delivery options and consulting formally in the summer.

On 9 March a stakeholder workshop was held to identify options for the delivery of the Vision. Nine options were identified (detailed in Appendix 2 to the report) and subsequently written up and developed to be appraised by a wider group of stakeholders in May. The consultants had now analysed the results of the workshops and the Project Board recommended four options to consult on and these included:

- Option 1– Create the Staffordshire History Centre Project with external funding. This was the preferred option of both groups.
- Option 5 – Staffordshire History Centre plus museum storage/exhibition & Lottery funding (i.e. Option1 plus Museum). This ranked second from both groups.
- Option 7 – Staffordshire Archives and Heritage – retain all sites & achieve budget savings required. This represents the no change option but still implements the savings required.
- Option 9 – Staffordshire History Centre with (Heritage Lottery Fund) HLF funding on a new site. This ranked fourth overall.

The Committee noted that consultation had started on 19 June 2015 and a press release had been issued to inform people about the new vision and the consultation process would be completed this summer. Information about the consultation was being added to the Vision page on the Archive Service website and continued to be updated as new information becomes available.

Next Steps

The results of the consultation would be collated and analysed during the remainder of August. It was agreed that the consultants complete the analysis and feedback the results to the Project Board, stakeholders and partners. This additional work would cost an estimated £3,000 to cover approximately 6-7 days of work. The preferred option would be identified and the design brief developed. The brief will then be issued as part of a competitive design process to identify a preferred design before submission of the bid in December.

It was hoped that the final sign off from the Joint Archive Committee and the Strategic Property Board would be obtained during October / November. It was suggested that arrangements are made for the Committee to meet in October to consider the design brief before its submission. The legal issues concerning the William Salt Library Trust and the lease of the building to the County Council would also be progressed to ensure a workable solution was identified before the bid was submitted.

RESOLVED – (a) that the progress report is noted, for information.

(b) that the Joint Archive Committee approves use of the Archive Service reserves to fund support for the analysis of consultation results at an estimated cost of £3,000.

7. Minton Archive Project

The Committee received a joint report updating them on the gift of the Minton Archive to Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Archive Service by the Art Fund. The complex ownership and custodial history of the archive was reported to its meeting on 26 March 2015. Subsequently the Art Fund completed the purchase of the archive from Waterford Wedgwood Royal Doulton (WWRD) for £1.65M on 31 March 2015 and by immediate gift transferred ownership to the Archive Service. This transaction however was not a simple donation and the Archive Service and the City Council took on certain obligations, detailed in the report, as conditions of the gift.

The gift of the Minton Archive to the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Archive Service by the Art Fund had created opportunities and obligations which the Archive Service was collectively undertaking under the title of the Minton Archive Project. This activity was funded, where there were costs, by the Art Fund.

It was noted that the concentrations of Stoke-on-Trent City archive's resources on this important archive was only possible because external support was available, and also some extra costs were being borne by the Art Fund.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

8. Date of next meeting - Thursday 19 November 2015 at Stoke-on-Trent (venue to be confirmed)

Following discussion regarding the need to sign off the final design brief for the Staffordshire History Centre it was agreed that arrangements are made for the Committee to meet in October to consider the design brief before its submission in December.

RESOLVED – That arrangements be made for a meeting of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Archive Committee on a date to be agreed in October 2015 in Stoke-on-Trent, at a venue to be confirmed.

Chairman