

**Minutes of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Archives Committee
meeting held on 22 November 2012**

Present: Pat Corfield (Vice-Chairman, in the Chair), Gwen Hassall, Liz Staples,
and Jeremy Oates (Observer)

Apologies for absence: Janine Bridges and Ian Parry

PART ONE

9. Declarations of Interest in accordance with Standing Order 16

None at this meeting.

10. Minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2012

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2012 be agreed and signed by the Chairman.

11. Predicted Outturn 2012-13

The Committee considered a joint report of the Director of Finance and Resources and the City Director of Corporate Services detailing the current predicted outturn for the Joint Archive Service for 2011/12 (Schedule 1 to the signed minutes).

Members noted that the latest revenue outturn forecast showed a predicted underspend of £157 which would be transferred to the General Reserve at the end of the financial year. The current balance on the General Reserve was £80,268 of which £9,788 had already been earmarked for alterations / environmental controls at Stoke. Mr. Corfield (Vice-Chairman in the Chair) commended the budget.

The Archive Acquisition Reserve had a current balance of £62,342 towards the purchase of new collections. The Head of Archive Services gave details of the Manor Court Book and Hatherton Diary purchased using the Acquisition Reserve following a question from Mrs. Hassall.

RESOLVED – that the report be received.

12. Review of Fees and Charges 2013-14

The Committee considered a joint report of the Director for Place and Deputy Chief Executive and the Director of Adult and Neighbourhood Services (Schedule 2 to the signed minutes) detailing proposed amendments to the scale of fees and charges to be applied by the Joint Archive Service with effect from 1 April 2013.

The Archive Service fees and charges had been reviewed on an annual basis for a number of years to allow the Service to adapt its services according to demand and cost of provision. The review was intended to be a balanced approach which encourages use of the services whilst still ensuring that income was generated to support the running of such services.

The Committee noted that the standard sources for income generation for the Archive Service were: a range of copying services; the sale of photographic permits; research, transcription and certification services; sales of publications; donations; and fees for talks by and group visits to the Archive Service.

The Head of Archive Services detailed the key amendments to the fees and charges to the Committee. She informed them that the review had been carried out in consultation with staff; a benchmarking exercise with neighbouring archive services; and an annual consultation forum with a mix of archive users, partners and stakeholders within the service. The proposed fees and charges detailed in the report were recommended for approval as they represent a fair and reasonable increase.

The Chairman asked that the Committee's thanks be passed to the staff for their excellent work and dedication to the archive service.

RESOLVED – that the fees and charges detailed in Appendix 2 of Schedule 2 to the signed minutes be approved for introduction by the Joint Archive Service from 1 April 2013.

13. Update on Digitisation of Key Family History Resources

The Committee considered a joint report of the Director for Place and Deputy Chief Executive and the Director of Adult and Neighbourhood Services (Schedule 3 to the signed minutes) updating them on the proposal to digitise key family history sources.

The Archive Service had continued to work on the proposal and had kept the Committee up to date with the plans since originally reported in February 2012. They had been assisted by the County Councils Procurement and Legal teams to develop an Invitation to Tender and Proposal Contract. There had been a delay due to the legal process required between the County Council and the Diocese, although the Diocese would now provide a letter of support, following consultation.

The proposal would be posted on the County Council's website in November to give commercial providers the opportunity to bid against it. It was hoped that a successful bidder would be appointed in December for the contract to start as soon as possible. The length of the contract would be ten years, with a break at seven years, and there would be an option to add in other material to the digitisation project. The Committee noted that the Staffordshire Archive Service would still own the digitised material and the information would be free to users through the Archive Service and libraries in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

The estimates of likely income were difficult to provide however but it was anticipated that it could generate an additional £25-30,000 income for the service. Although the launch of content online will affect existing income generated through photocopies and research, which was factored into these predictions.

RESOLVED – that the update on the digitisation of key family history collections be noted.

14. Proposals to relocate William Salt Library to Staffordshire Record Office

The Committee considered a joint report of the Director for Place and Deputy Chief Executive and the Director of Adult and Neighbourhood Services (Schedule 4 to the signed minutes) detailing proposals to relocate the William Salt Library to the Staffordshire Record Office, and re-launch the two services and rebrand them.

The Committee noted that: the current William Salt Library building does not provide adequate storage and environmental conditions for the collections to modern standards; the Library was run in parallel with the Record Office but public access to the building was difficult; relocating the Library offered opportunities to deliver access to archive and local studies collections in one redeveloped research facility and this facility would offer a single site with improved public access to the Library collections alongside those of Staffordshire Record Office; and the new development would offer more cost effective public access to the county's historic collections.

They noted that the William Salt Library collections and building was owned by the William Salt Library Trust and it was run under a Charity Commission scheme to ensure that the collections were accessible to the public. The Head of Archive Services had developed a business case for relocation of the collection as requested by the Trust following an extraordinary meeting of the Trust in July 2012.

The proposal was to move the collection from the Library and relocate it to Staffordshire Record Office and bring it together with the archive collections held there. The proposal also included the re-design of the Staffordshire Record Office public and office areas to accommodate the collection and the staff from the Library. It would give the opportunity to re-position and launch the service as the 'Staffordshire History Centre' or similar concept catering for a wide audience in Staffordshire. It would also complement the digitisation project as this will change the way people use the Archive Service.

RESOLVED – that the proposal to (a) relocate the William Salt Library to Staffordshire Record Office be received.

(b) re-launch the two services and rebrand them be received.

15. Date of next meeting - 21 February 2013

RESOLVED – that the next meeting of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Archive Committee would take place on Thursday 21 February 2013 at 10.30 am at the Civic Centre, Stoke-on-Trent.

Chairman