

**Minutes of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Archives Committee
meeting held on 20 June 2013**

Present: Janine Bridges (Vice-Chairman), Mike Lawrence (Chairman) and
Michael Greateorex

Apologies for absence: Ian Parry

PART ONE

1. Appointment of Chairman and Vice-Chairman

The Committee noted changes to the County Council's membership of the Joint Archive Committee following the recent County Council elections on 2 May 2013 and welcomed Mike Lawrence and Michael Greateorex to the meeting. The City Council also confirmed Andy Platt would replace Mrs G. Hassall, as the substitute member, to represent the City Council in the event that Dr Bridges was unavailable, but would only assume voting rights in her absence.

(a) **RESOLVED** - That Mike Lawrence be appointed Chairman of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Archives Committee up to the annual meeting of the Joint Committee in 2014.

Mike Lawrence took the Chair

(b) **RESOLVED** – That Dr Janine Bridges be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Archives Committee up to the annual meeting of the Joint Committee in 2014.

2. Declarations of Interest in accordance with Standing Order 16

None at this meeting.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 2013

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 2013 be agreed and signed by the Chairman.

4. Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Archive Services: Annual Report 2012/13

The Committee considered the joint Annual Report of the Director for Place and Deputy Chief Executive and the Director of People - Adult and Neighbourhood Services (Schedule 1 to the signed minutes), on the work of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Archive Service for the period April 2012 – March 2013.

The Committee noted that 2012-2013 was the first in the current three-year planning cycle for the Joint Archive Service. The year's Annual Report showed both positive achievements and steady progress towards meeting the overall strategic objectives of the Archive Service within the current Forward Plan, 2012-2015. These objectives were: (i) an integrated onsite and online customer experience; (ii) an innovative online presence which showcases Staffordshire's collections; (iii) engagement with

Staffordshire's communities to strengthen their sense of identity and place; (iv) celebration and discovery of Staffordshire's history; (v) a sustainable high performing service which provides leadership for the Archives and Heritage Sector; (vi) improving and promoting user access to Staffordshire's collections; (vii) delivering high quality care of Staffordshire's collections; (viii) extended volunteer working in Archives and Heritage providing opportunities for people to increase their skills and help support access to collections.

The Annual Report demonstrates a productive year for the Joint Archive Service in terms of its performance, achievements and associated activity. The most notable successes had been: achieving compliance plus with the Customer Service Excellence Standard; attracting grant funding for several projects including the Great War Centennial, Bradford Archive and Manorial Documents Register; launching the Service Facebook page, implementing new opening hours and staffing structure; successful preparation for inspection by the National Archives; and making significant progress on the contract to digitise key family history resources.

The Committee discussed promoting the work of the Archive Services including; the use of social media via Flickr, Twitter and Facebook; the Members' Bulletin (edited by Member and Democratic Services); and encouraging ancestral tourism to help benefit the local economy, including through links with Enjoy Staffordshire.

The Committee noted the public service statistics detailed in the report. They also noted that the Joint Archive Service produced good performance results against its local targets for public service delivery and achieved a 99% customer satisfaction rating in the national Public Services Quality Group User Survey. Overall it was a successful year for the Service and they continue to meet high standards whilst also developing plans to adapt to changing demands.

RESOLVED – That the Annual Report for the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Archive Service for 2012/13 be received as a record of the performance of the service in the year under review.

5. Joint Archive Service - Outturn 2012/13

The Committee considered a joint report of the County Council's Director of Finance and Resources and the City Director of Central Services presenting the final outturn for the Joint Archive Service for 2012/13 (Schedule 2 to the signed minutes).

The outturn showed that the service had spent £655,167 compared with an approved budget of £660,650 giving an underspend of £5,483 which was transferred to the General Reserve at the end of the financial year. The General Reserve had a balance of £86,003. The Archive Acquisition Reserve had a balance of £62,342 towards the purchase of new collections for the benefit of archive users in the County and City. The Committee were reminded that the Joint Archives Committee was required to complete a Small Bodies in England Annual return for the year ended 2013 and this had been completed and was available for the Chairman to sign, when approved.

RESOLVED – (a) That the report be received;

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

6. Inspection by the National Archives

The Committee received a joint report of the Director for Place and Deputy Chief Executive and the Director of People – Adult and Neighbourhood Services on the Inspection by the National Archives (schedule 3 to the signed minutes).

The Committee noted that the inspection was carried out under the auspices of the 1958 Public Records Act and the Historical Manuscripts Commission warrant. It was carried out over two days with the inspector visiting all three sites, accompanied by the Head of Service and other officers as appropriate. Each site was assessed separately but also the whole of the Joint Archive service in respect of its joint delivery of: policies, plans, online catalogue, website, conservation service, and other whole service projects.

The Committee noted that the results of the inspections were very positive for the Service, especially at Stoke-on-Trent, where the improvements had been praised. The Head of Service confirmed that she would continue dialogue with the Inspector to assess the recommendations made and to develop a plan to make improvements as appropriate.

RESOLVED – that the report on the Inspection of the Joint Archive Service by the National Archives be received.

7. Review of Volunteer Policy

The Committee considered a joint report of the Director for Place and Deputy Chief Executive and the Director of People – Adult and Neighbourhood Services on the revised Volunteer Policy (schedule 4 to the signed minutes).

A review had been undertaken to update the Policy reflecting changes proposed following consultation with volunteers (via a survey of volunteers in the Archive and Museum Services) during November / December 2012. It had also been aligned with the County Museum Service so that the Policy covered Archives and Heritage in Staffordshire as well as the whole of the Joint Archive Services.

The Committee noted that volunteers contributed 4,717 hours to the Archive Service in 2012/13, which was equivalent to 2.4 full time members of staff per week across the service. The results of the survey testify the appreciation of this role and the value it provides in retaining volunteers.

The 2009 Policy and the County Museum Volunteer Policy were both evaluated and found to be very similar. The difference between the two had been reconciled and a single policy formed. The main changes to the policy included:

- (i) alignments to ensure that the policy covers the Joint Archive Service and County Museum;
- (ii) updating the strategic outcomes which the policy supports;

- (iii) updating the range of activities carried out by volunteers to include preservation work and care of collections;
- (iv) ensuring the corporate process for recruiting volunteers is included in the policy and the policy fits within corporate policies;
- (v) a change in emphasis to stress partnership working with volunteers;
- (vi) inclusion of a commitment to offer opportunities to find out more about the work of the Service; and
- (vii) retaining the rewards of discounts at events and an annual thank you lunch.

The volunteer agreement had been updated to take account of the new policy. Volunteers would be informed of the policy revision as a start to the process of ensuring they understand how their work contributes to the overall work of the Archive Service and County Museum Service. All new volunteers were required to complete and signing the volunteer agreement. Comment was made that as access to the Archive Service changes the needs of volunteers will be considered.

RESOLVED – that the revised Volunteer Policy for the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Archive Service be approved.

8. Date of next meeting - 21 November 2013

RESOLVED – That the next meeting of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Archive Committee be held on Thursday 21 November 2013 at 10.30 am at the City Central Library, Hanley.

9. Exclusion of the public

That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business which involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) of the Local Government Act 1972 indicated below.

The Committee received an update on the following item.

10. Award of Contract to Digitise key family history collections

Chairman