

**Minutes of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Archives Committee
meeting held on 18 February 2016**

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

PART ONE

16. Declarations of Interest in accordance with Standing Order 16

No declarations at this meeting.

17. Minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2015

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2015 be agreed and signed by the Chairman.

18. Annual Service Plan 2015/16: Predicted Outturn Performance

The Committee received a joint report detailing the predicted outturn against the targets set in Joint Archive Service's Annual Service Plan (Schedule 1 to the signed minutes). They noted that the Archive Service had made very good progress against its targets this year.

The Service Plan sets the annual targets for the performance of the Joint Archive Service. The targets work towards the overall achievement of the Archive Service's current three year service objectives, which were set out in its new Forward Plan, 2015-2025, approved by the Joint Archives Committee at its meeting on 26 March 2015. The key achievements for the year were: (i) acquisition of the Minton Archive and first phase of access achieved; (ii) strengthened partnerships with William Salt Library Trust and Keele University; (iii) development of the Staffordshire History Centre project and submission of stage 1 Heritage Lottery Fund bid; (iv) partnership with Find My Past had delivered 90% of the material online; (v) 92% of archive collections have a description in the online catalogue; and (vi) Staffordshire Pasttrack website re-platformed and launched.

The areas for concern during the year had been: focus on the Staffordshire History Centre project had resulted in fewer events being delivered and had delayed work on achieving Archive Accreditation; usages was lower than the previous year as physical visits continued to decline and virtual visits were affected by the Pasttrack website work; only 82% of collections were stored in the correct conditions; and approaches for new collections had remained static.

Members noted that the Staffordshire History Day had been moved to coincide with the new Staffordshire Day on 1 May. They were also pleased to note that the Joint Archive Service was not only renowned for the quality of its collections but also members of staff were called upon to talk at national conferences.

RESOLVED – that the report be received and noted.

19. Predicted Outturn 2015/16 and Proposed Review Budget 2016/17

The Committee received a joint report informing them of the predicted outturn for 2015/16 and details of the net revenue budget for 2016/17. (Schedule 2 to the signed minutes).

At the October 2015 Joint Archive Committee, approval was given to use a further £50,000 of the Archives General Reserve (initially £50,000 had been approved and previously ear marked) to increase the Joint Archives 'match funding' contribution to £100,000 in total towards the current Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) bid. At this stage, if the full £100,000 was utilised to support the forthcoming HLF bid then the balance on the Archives General Reserve would reduce to £22,659 subject to any year end revenue balance transfer (underspend or overspend) from the current Joint Archive Agreement budget.

The Committee noted that the Joint Archive Service budget for 2015/16 was currently predicted to be underspent by £5,990 and any underspend would be transferred to the General Reserve at the end of the financial year. The General Reserve would have a balance of £22,659 (net funding committed) and the Archive Acquisition Reserve, which enables the Joint Archive Service to purchase collections for the benefit of archives users in both the City and the County, currently holds a balance of £57,542.

Members noted the 2016/17 revenue budget of £731,050 had been increased by 4.1% when compared to the net revenue budget plan for the current year. Under the Joint Archives Agreement, the total cost of the service was currently apportioned between the two respective local authorities and was revised in mid 2014 to reflect the latest available population levels across the county. This had resulted in the percentage share to the City Council at 22.59% and the County Council at 77.41%. The proposed 2016/17 budget had been apportioned on this basis giving the City's share at £165,150 and the County's share at £565,900.

The Chairman asked about the potential changes to the Archives Service over the next few years and the implications for the revenue budget, with the closure of the Lichfield Office and the HLF bid for the Staffordshire History Centre. He asked that a projected draft budget for the next three years be submitted to the June meeting, for information. A Member also commented on the amount of the predicted underspend and asked that a review of the revenue budget be undertaken to look at whether the budget could be reduced for future years. The result of this review would be reported back as part of the Revenue Outturn 2015/16 report at the June meeting.

RESOLVED – (a) that the predicted outturn for 2015/16 be received and noted;

(b) that the net revenue budget for 2016/17 be approved, subject to the outcome of the review.

20. Report on Staffordshire History Centre consultation findings and preferred option for development

The Committee received an update on the final bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for the Staffordshire History Centre (Schedule 3 to the signed minutes).

The draft bid had been shared with the Project Team, Project Board, partners and HLF Development manager and amendments had been made based on the feedback. The final bid has been brought together as an illustrated brochure which was referred to in the main application. Various letters of support for the bid have been received.

The HLF bid was submitted on 11 February 2016. The bid would be assigned to a grants officer who will make the case for presentation to the HLF West Midlands Committee and the National HLF Board and a decision would be made in May 2016. Following the decision the Service would either proceed to the development phase of the project or reassess the fall back options to continue with the remodelling of the Service.

The Chairman expressed his appreciation for the work undertaken on the project by the archive staff.

RESOLVED – that the final bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for the Staffordshire History Centre be noted.

21. Minton Archive Project

The Committee received a joint report informing them of the forthcoming publicity about the acquisition of the Minton Archive (Schedule 4 to the signed minutes).

Members were aware that the Minton Archive was gifted to the City of Stoke-on-Trent by the Art Fund and would be held at the Stoke-on-Trent City Archives. The completion of the Minton Archive Project in December 2015 had brought an end to the first phase of work. Stoke-on-Trent City Archives undertook to complete the following, project funded up to £30,000 by the Art Fund: (a) to complete an audit, create a box-list and basic online catalogue for material for the Minton Archive and associated collections; (b) to mount a display of material from the Minton Archive and associated collections at the Potteries Museum and Art Gallery (PMAG); and (c) through these activities make the Minton Archive and associated collections accessible to the general public and raise the profile of the Minton Archive and the Joint Archive Service.

The Committee were aware that the Minton Archive was an important national asset and there was a need to make it accessible to the wider public not just academic world. To maintain the impetus given by the project the City Council had made the post of Digital Development Officer permanent on the Stoke-on-Trent City Archives establishment. This would ensure that the website would continue to grow and develop (link to the website – www.themintonarchive.org.uk). The Archive Service were seeking further grant funding from various avenues to continue with the conservation and catalogue work on separate parts of the Collection. A sum of £100,000 (with £76,000 remaining) had been ring-fenced within the Futures Fund established by the Art Fund to support the

Minton archive specifically, and it was felt that the most efficient use of this generous support would be to provide match funding when applying to other grant giving bodies.

The Chairman expressed his appreciation for the work undertaken by Chris Latimer on the project and commended the celebration event.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

22. Date of next meeting - 16 June 2016 at the City Centre Library, Bethesda Street, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, ST1 3RS

RESOLVED – That the next meeting of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Archive Committee be held on Thursday 16 June 2016 at 10.30 am at the City Centre Library, Bethesda Street, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, ST1 3RS.

Chairman