



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **West Glamorgan Archives Committee**

Remotely via Microsoft Teams

Friday, 22 July 2022 at 10.00 am

Present: Louise Fleet (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s) - Swansea

P M Black
E J King

L R Jones

J E Pritchard

Councillor(s) – Neath Port Talbot

J Hurley
N Jenkins

R Mizen

S Renkes

Associated Organisations

Louise Miskell
Sarah Perons

Swansea University
Diocese of Llandaff

Officer(s)

Gareth Borsden
Kim Collis
Craig Griffiths
Wayne John
Tracey McNulty
Geoff Bacon

Democratic Services Officer
County Archivist
Head of Legal - NPT
County Librarian - NPT
Head of Cultural Services
Head of Property Services

Apologies for Absence

Councillors W Carpenter and R V Smith & A Dulley and J Watkins

1 Welcome.

The Chair welcomed the new Councillors from both Swansea and Neath Port Talbot to their first meeting of the joint committee.

2 Disclosures of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

In accordance with the Code of Conduct adopted by both Authorities, no interests were declared.

3 Minutes.

Resolved that the Minutes of the West Glamorgan Archives Committee meeting held on 11 March 2022 be approved as a correct record.

4 Report of the County Archivist.

The County Archivist presented a report which outlined the work of the Joint Archive Service during the period March – May 2022.

Neath Service Point Reopening

He outlined that the service point based in the Mechanic Institute in Neath had reopened on Monday 25th April allowing public access to the collections held there.

The Neath Antiquarian Society were also providing a services to the public on Thursday morning via their volunteers.

He outlined that since reopening there had been a problem with the internet access at the institute due to a faulty broadband connection. He indicated that this will hopefully be fixed shortly by a change of suppliers.

Use of the Service

He reported on the figures relating the use of the service via its various platforms both in person and online.

National Broadcast Archive

He reported that the Family History Centre in Swansea Civic Centre will shortly become one of the first locations for a 'Clip Corner' which is an access point for the archives of several Welsh TV companies via a National Library of Wales project.

A small area of the Centre has been cleared and redecorated ready for a rebranding as a facility for viewing archive TV footage from the BBC, ITV and S4C.

Following questions and queries from Members, he indicated he would investigate the possibility of the 'Clip Corner' being used for special one-off showings in local communities and would report back to the next meeting.

Relocation of the Archives

He outlined that a decision in principle to relocate the Archive Service to the City Centre Hub was taken by Swansea Council's Cabinet in December last year, however Neath Port Talbot Council has yet to formally approve the proposed transfer of its archives.

The City Centre Hub project has passed RIBA Stage 3, which relates to spatial co-ordination within the building. He displayed a detailed floorplan showing the archive searchroom on the first floor and the archive strongroom on the second (top) floor,

the latter connected to the former by a document lift. The new searchroom has seating for ten people at document tables, including one for oversized documents/maps and three seated at PC desks and one using a microfilm reader.

The RIBA Stage 4 which is the next phase relates to technical design, but a number of challenges remain as to how the archive strongroom will maintain environmental stability in accordance with BS 4971 in particular with the temperature stability of the new facility which has to achieve an annual average of 18 degrees, within a 13-23 degree parameter. An appropriate protocol for the movement and transfer of oversize documents from the strongroom to the public area also needs to be developed and agreed.

He then outlined the proposed new facilities size and comparison to other Archives Services facilities across Wales.

He outlined he would be happy to arrange a visit to the current strongroom at the civic centre in Swansea for new members of the Committee and would contact them after the meeting to do this.

Geoff Bacon and Tracey McNulty then outlined and referred to the amount of consultation and discussion that has gone on to get the project to its current point.

They outlined and detailed the wider benefits of the scheme which would add to the revitalisation ambitions of Swansea Council for the city centre. As well as accommodating the Archives, the vision for the new Hub is of a multiple-use facility including a library as well a range of other Council departments and services and other partner organisations as well. The potential for the building to be used seven days a week was discussed.

External funding from Welsh Government towards the project was outlined as around one third, with the remainder coming from Swansea Council capital funding.

Members discussed the potential for extension of opening hours, greater online availability of records and improved liaison with the Library Service. The building could raise the profile of the Service due to its closer links and the fact that more people would be visiting the new building. The issue of increasing staffing levels to meet the required extended opening hours was also raised and discussed.

The need for the archive strongroom to achieve the environmental parameters of BS4971 was discussed. Geoff Bacon indicated that the archive collection would not be moved from the Civic Centre until it was established that the strongroom met BS4971, conformity with which was a prerequisite of Accreditation.

Craig Griffiths outlined that the intention was that a report would be presented to Neath Port Talbot Members in September outlining the proposals and the implications for their Authority of the proposed relocation going forward.

Members of the Committee then discussed at length the matters and issues raised during the presentation and report and asked various questions and sought clarity on certain issues, the Officers responded accordingly.

Members also requested that an additional informal briefing session be arranged prior to the next meeting of the Joint Committee, so that any areas needing clarity and further information can be discussed and reported.

Outreach and Educational Activity

The County Archivist outlined that there had been no outreach work other than the regular social media posts or activity with schools during the quarter.

Accessions of Archive Collections

He detailed on the archives received by the Service during the quarter.

The meeting ended at 11.30 am

Chair