



City and County of Swansea

## Minutes of the **West Glamorgan Archives Committee**

Remotely via Microsoft Teams

Friday, 11 June 2021 at 11.00 am

**Present:** Louise Fleet (Chair) Presided

### **Councillor(s) - Swansea**

L S Gibbard

L R Jones

J A Raynor

R V Smith

### **Councillor(s) – Neath Port Talbot**

A R Aubrey

W F Griffiths

H N James

R Mizen

### **Associated Organisations**

Louise Miskell

Swansea University

### **Officer(s)**

Gareth Borsden

Democratic Services Officer

Kim Collis

County Archivist

Craig Griffiths

Head of Legal - NPT

Wayne John

County Librarian - NPT

### **Apologies for Absence**

Councillors P M Black & P A Rees and A Dulley, S Perons & J Watkins

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## **1 Welcome/Thanks.**

The Chair welcomed Councillor Jen Raynor back onto the Committee and thanked Councillor Mike Durke who she was replacing for his contribution over the years.

## **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 12 March 2021 be approved as a correct record

#### **4 Matters Arising**

The County Archivist reported that the staff structure remains unchanged for the moment, but Covid and the potential new facility provide an opportunity to review and revise provision going forward.

He indicated that the actual physical unveiling of the blue plaque to the anti-slavery campaigner and activist, Jessie Donaldson had to be postponed in the pre election period and will now take place on June 19<sup>th</sup>

#### **5 Report of the County Archivist.**

The County Archivist presented a report which outlined the work of the Joint Archive Service during the period March 2021 – May 2021.

##### COVID-19 Pandemic

He indicated that the Swansea searchroom reopened to the public on Tuesday 6 April on an appointment-only basis, following the easing of restrictions imposed by the latest national lockdown.

He outlined that he hoped to open the Family History Centre as soon as the relevant restrictions are eased and allow this to happen.

He indicated that there is no date yet, to reopen the facility at the Mechanics Institute in Neath, but reported that discussions with Neath Port Talbot Council and Neath Antiquarian Society remain ongoing.

##### Outreach and Educational Activity

He stated that all outreach work during the quarter remains limited by the lockdown and of necessity has been confined to online engagement with our users and social media followers. We continue to engage with schoolteachers remotely and provide online educational resources for, mainly, primary schools.

The Service also continues to promote itself via the social media platforms of Facebook and Twitter and has more recently added the medium of Microsoft Teams as a means to deliver online lectures and family history advice.

The online talks given during the quarter remain popular with the public.

He referred to the publication of the service's annual report which can be found at [Swansea - Annual Report of the County Archivist](#).

Members of the committee supported and commended the contents of report and welcomed the diverse mix of articles contained within it.

He indicated that the project on the history of Wales' connection with the historic slave trade has grown during the last quarter and now encompasses almost all Welsh local archives together with Bangor, Swansea and Cardiff Universities. Very

positive feedback has been received from the working group set up to review the Wales Curriculum with regard to this subject and the project is making steady progress.

#### Former British Home Stores Building

He reported further to the update given at the March meeting and stated that Swansea Council has appointed Coreus Group to head a Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) to develop the City Centre Community Hub project planned for 277-278 Oxford Street.

Amongst other tasks, the MDT will investigate whether a part of the building is capable of conversion to an archive repository which will meet British Standard 16893. The County Archivist has attended an initial exploratory meeting with the architect engaged by the Coreus Group, Neil Farquhar of Austin-Smith Lord Architects of Cardiff. A report on the suitability of the building for housing the archive will be issued in due course and the County Archivist will continue to liaise with the MDT to achieve this goal.

He outlined the importance of any new facility achieving the BS 16893 standard for archives. Members of the committee supported the need for any new facility to achieve the necessary BS standard.

#### Use of the Service

He indicated that the figures relating the use of the service reflect the effect of the pandemic.

#### Talks and Professional Meetings

He reported on the various meetings attended by staff during the quarter.

#### Archive Collections

He reported on the list of archives received by the Service during the quarter.

The meeting ended at 12.12 pm

**Chair**