

17 Matters Arising.

The County Archivist gave a brief verbal update relating to Y Storfa.

He outlined that the contractors continue on site and the completion date for the project remains at May 2025. The building continues currently to be in the "demolition" phase. He would enquire further and update Members regarding the options for a site visit, as discussed in the previous meeting in due course.

Staff will shortly be undertaking a conservation training course relating to the moving of archives, which should prove useful going forward.

18 Report of the County Archivist.

The County Archivist presented a report which outlined the work of the Joint Archive Service during the period December 2023 – February 2024.

2024/2025 Revenue Budget.

Kim Collis presented a verbal report and update which gave details of the Joint Archive Service Revenue Budget for 2024/2025, the reserves held by the Joint Archive Service.

He referred to his impending retirement in June 2024 and indicated the role would be restored to full time going forward, his current role having evolved to allow Swansea Council to fill the statutory post of Data Protection Officer.

He indicated that there was only a small increase on last year's budget. Provision in the budget had been made regarding digital preservation going forward which is detailed in his report later in the agenda, as well as funds for the Archive Trainee going forward.

He outlined both the amounts held in the collections and archive training reserves as at 31 March 2024.

Members noted the verbal report.

Use of the Service

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

Outreach and Educational Activity

He reported that two schools have received sessions during the quarter.

Staff have also provided talks to a local historical group.

The service continues to run a monthly session for the Glamorgan Family History Society, Swansea Branch.

Staff have also been involved in a collaborative group with the Teacher Education department at Swansea University, Richard Burton Archives, South Wales Miners Library and Partneriaeth to produce some easy access archival resource packs for teachers, this could prove to be an excellent resource going forward.

Wales Broadcast Archive

He reported that the Clip Corner was launched at Swansea Civic Centre on 15th January with a small ceremony hosted by the National Library of Wales.

Although the Clip Corner will only be located there for the time that the Archive Service remains in situ, there will be a new Clip Corner incorporated into Y Storfa in the space occupied by the South Wales Miners Library. This city centre location should add footfall and usage to the facility.

Archives Online Catalogue

He outlined that technical issues remain with the software linked to the searching of the online catalogue. An issue occurred in October 2023, and Swansea Council IT staff and the external provider continue to work towards a solution.

A work-around has been arranged, so that the online catalogue remains available to users via the Archives Hub.

Digital Preservation

He outlined that, further to discussions at previous meetings on this matter, the Archive Service is entering into a consortium to undertake digital preservation (the archiving and permanent preservation of born-digital and digitised records). The consortium which has taken shape in the past months consists of West Glamorgan, Glamorgan, Gwent, Conwy and North East Wales Archives plus Cardiff and Swansea Universities and the University of Wales Trinity St David (UWTSD). Provision has been made in the budget to pay for the annual subscription to the commercial provider of these services.

External funding is expected to be available to support a short-term post to assist with the process of setting up the digital repository and the Archive Service has been in discussion with Swansea University and UWTSD about submitting a joint application for such funding. The anticipated match-funding requirement is expected to be in the region of circa £5-10k.

The importance of digital perseverance going forward is key, with many records now only being produced in electronic format.

Agreed that the training reserve can potentially be used to support such an application, in the region of expenditure indicated above, should such an application be made and be successful.

Professional Meetings and Training

He listed the various professional groups and meetings that staff had attended during the quarter.

Fees and Charges for 2024/25

He referred to the table of fees and charges for the Service and detailed the percentage rise that will apply from 1 April 2024.

Agreed that the fees and charges for 2024/25 be approved.

Accessions of Archive Collections

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

Staff

He reported that Katie Millien, Archivist, had left the Service in January, to take up a post with Carmarthenshire Archive Service, with special responsibility for setting up a service to that county's schools. Katie had been a highly valued member of the team for over sixteen years and her contribution to the work of the Service, particularly in setting up our own service to schools, is immeasurable. Her post has been advertised and will hopefully be filled shortly.

The Chair asked that her and the committees best wishes for her new role and thanks for her years of service be passed to Katie by the County Archivist.

He also outlined that approval was needed to support the continued funding of the Archive Trainee position.

Agreed that the use of the training reserve to fund an Archives Trainee for 2024/25 be approved.

The County Archivist then spoke further to the announcement he made at the last meeting, outlining that this was the last report to the joint committee before his retirement. He thanked the Committee for their interest and support over the past twenty years and assured members that procedures are also in place to recruit his successor, as a full-time post, as detailed earlier in the budget report.

He outlined and reflected on both his time as County Archivist and his previous roles and indicated he had enjoyed working for the service, and referred to some highlights from his time in post which included the purchase of the Neath Abbey Ironworks collection and its subsequent UNESCO recognition, his idea for and involvement in the development of the UK-wide Archives Card reader's ticket and the Tithe Maps of Wales project.

He wished the staff and his successor the best in the future, particularly with the move to Y Storfa in the city centre.

Minutes of the West Glamorgan Archives Committee (15.03.2024)
Cont'd

The Chair and Members of the Committee then paid a series of tributes to Kim and thanked him for his hard work, passion, enthusiasm, dedication and commitment to the service over the years, and wished him a long, happy and healthy retirement.

The meeting ended at 11.15 am

Chair