

Covid-19

He reported that the archive searchroom in the Civic Centre in Swansea had reopened on 29th September 2020. Visitors have to pre book slots and pre-order the documents they wish to view. Numbers are limited due to social distancing guidelines.

He reported that staff had been spilt into two teams to ensure continuity of service for the public if one team had to self-isolate. He indicated that the reopening of the service had proved popular with both public and staff.

Louise Miskell welcomed the reopening and outlined the invaluable resource that the Archives provides, particularly whilst the University library remains closed.

Kim Collis reported that due to the layout of the building and issues with many of the volunteers shielding, there are unfortunately no plans currently to reopen the Mechanics Institute in Neath.

Outreach and Educational Activity

Kim Collis and Andrew Dulley reported that the Service had taken part in the annual Explore Your Archive campaign, which ran between 21-29 November. This built on the successful social media engagement during the lockdown period earlier in the year. A programme of posts were put together, appearing simultaneously on Twitter and Facebook.

It was outlined that due to the search room reopening and the staffing resources needed to support this, there had been an impact on the amount of online activity that had taken place. However the Service remains committed to continuing social media activity going forward.

The fact that the searchroom in Swansea was one of only a few in Wales to have yet reopened was mentioned during further discussion.

Use of the Service

Kim Collis outlined that despite the reopening of the facilities outlined above, visitor numbers remain low, but online activity continues to hold up well given the circumstances, with staff working towards placing more information online for the public to access.

The Creation of Teaching Resources Relating to Wales' Connection With the Slave Trade

Kim Collis outlined the progress, and excellent joint working and collaborative arrangements in place to develop the above teaching resource.

He indicated that the resource will, when developed, be divided into three modules, as follows:

- Wales' part in the slave trade and the abolition movement, 1750-1850

- The growth of diverse urban communities in the south Wales ports, 1870-1920
- Post-war immigration and modern multi-cultural Wales, 1945-2020

He indicated that the initial draft of the first module above has been sent to Race Council Cymru for comment and was then forwarded by them to Professor Charlotte Williams, who is chairing the working group on the rebalancing of the Wales history curriculum.

Archives Accreditation

Kim Collis reported that further to the discussions held at the last meeting, the accreditation panel had met on 4 November 2020 and considered the evidence submitted in terms of progress against required key actions.

He indicated that they recognised the commitment from Swansea Council to relocate the archives and appreciated that work on a potential new home has been delayed by a number of factors, in particular the pandemic. The Panel therefore decided that West Glamorgan Archive Service should remain a provisionally Accredited Archive Service for a further 12 months.

The potential negative impact of the provisional status on any potential grant funding going forward was detailed.

He outlined the work being carried out by officers in preparation of any possible temporary relocation of the Service's collections, to be split between Glamorgan Archives and the Richard Burton Archives in Swansea University.

Accessions of Archive Collections

The County Archivist outlined and reported on the list of archives received by the Service during the quarter, which included a set of personal papers from the former Chief Executive of Neath Port Talbot Council.

The meeting ended at 12.07 pm

Chair