

GLAMORGAN ARCHIVES JOINT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting of the Glamorgan Archives Joint Committee held at Glamorgan Archives, Leckwith, Cardiff on Friday 12 March at 2.00pm.

Present:

Members Representing: Vale of Glamorgan County Borough Council
County Councillor A D Hampton (Chair) and
County Councillor A M Ernest

Cardiff County Council
County Councillors J Hooper, R Jerrett & A
Robson

Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council
County Councillor R Bevan

Mrs Kate Thomas

Officers in Attendance: Miss S Edwards, Glamorgan Archivist
Mr D Pellegrini, Programme Director,
Glamorgan Archives
Mr H Jones, ICT Business Manager, Caerphilly
County Borough Council
Mr P Bradshaw, Information Manager,
Cardiff County Council
Mr H Singh, Accountancy Manager (Special
Projects), Cardiff County Council
Miss K Rees, Committee and Members Services,
Cardiff County Council

These minutes were approved subject to the amendment highlighted in bold of the inclusion of Mr M McLaggan in the apologies.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors L C Morgan and P Hacking, Bridgend County Borough Council; County Councillors J B Criddle and G Parker, Caerphilly County Borough Council; County Councillor M Davies (Mrs), Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council, and **Mr M McLaggan**.
2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST
Members had no declarations of personal interest in matters

pertaining to the agenda.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting of the Glamorgan Joint Archives Committee 11 December 2009 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4. MATTERS ARISING

The Committee asked what the current situation was with Co-opted Member vacancies. In response the Glamorgan Archivist explained there was scope for up to 6 Co-opted members with a maximum membership of four years. A report would be brought forward for consideration at a future meeting but to date no progression had been made due to the move.

5. ANNUAL PLAN – REPORT OF THE GLAMORGAN ARCHIVIST

The Glamorgan Archivist informed that the two year plan, agreed in 2008 to take the service into the new Glamorgan Record Office, focusing effort on the move to the new premises and associated change management activities was now complete. The plan presented today was for one year only, the aims were more or less the same as in previous years, however, the objectives were firmly focussed on the needs for the initial year of occupation:

- Existing service levels would be reviewed in the light of the extended opportunities offered by the improved facilities;
- Staff would be fully trained to deliver these services efficiently and effectively from the new premises.

Certain areas had been highlighted for matters of importance:

- Higher security levels
- Higher service of I.T.
- New phone system
- Staff development

The Glamorgan Archivist drew attention to the aims of the service:

- A. To complete the New Glamorgan Record Office Programme
- B. To establish effective management of the Collection
- C. To promote access to the Collection
- D. To ensure effective management of resources

The Annual Plan April 2010 – March 2011 Objectives were referred to with the intention to complete outstanding projects, which involved development of security procedures and to monitor snagging. Staff development was one of the main objectives and these tasks involved, training in ICT and telephone systems and to ensure all staff were familiar with the new building and to finalise emergency planning procedures.

In order to develop existing service levels for the Collection it was vital to ensure consistency in application of standards and performance indicators in collections' management. A prioritised plan for addressing catalogue backlog, along with development strategy for conservation work and devices for the receipt of digital records.

The Committee were informed that the retrieval of information electronically could be accessed but depended on Cardiff Council's I.T. system. Expertise was needed on software and hardware applications as to date certain packages were not available in-house to format documents. Digital records needed to be stored and there was the possibility of using the data centre in Cardiff Bay for the receipt.

The CALM database needed to be completed along with ensuring full training in all CALM modules for staff, with development needs for digital preservation.

Access was improving and remote access could be approached without travelling to the building and using the services available on-line. On-line training would be made available to users and staff would be trained in order to advise users on public access I.T. services. It was noted that a majority of users were elderly and it was essential that staff develop and improve skills to assist those users with their access requirements.

Resource Management was progressing with the commitment to maintain and develop appropriate levels of staffing and staff development. Policies would be reviewed and the commitment to IIP was still a priority. Staff could now access Cardiff Council's Intranet site, which provided access to the CIS and SAP systems which was proving very useful and informative for users. Finally it was hoped that training requirements of Investors in Volunteers be explored.

RESOLVED – That the contents of the report be noted and endorsed.

6. REPORT OF THE GLAMORGAN ARCHIVIST ON THE PERIOD 1 DECEMBER 2009 TO 28 FEBRUARY 2010

The Glamorgan Archivist informed that it was their third month in the building and the staff had adapted to their new surroundings extremely well. The initial move took place on 4 January 2010 and the building was open to the public within the second week. The service provided by Carillion was very good and contact with Carillion's Project Manager was maintained on an almost daily basis in order to address the snags that were proving difficult to resolve and these had been flagged as issues between Carillion and its various subcontractors and suppliers. The main issue was the Conservation Wallboard – uneven lighting of surface. A portable scaffolding tower had been purchased for use by contractors working at the building, to obviate the repeated charges from contractors who were renting equipment from local hire shop.

Expenditure was within predicated levels and the programme remained on target for completion within budget. All of the Contract Sum had now been paid to the developers, PMG Estates Ltd, with the exception of the 2.5% retention which in accordance with the Contract was being held until 26 October 2010.

With regard to packaging, preparation of the Collection for the decant by Richard Morgan, Archivist, and by the conservation team, headed by Mike Hodgson, continued at the Glamorgan Building throughout December. Both Richard Morgan and Mike Hodgson deserved particular recognition for their hard work, in often difficult circumstances, which enabled the collection to be safely moved.

In November 2009, the box making machine was dismantled by the suppliers, Kasemake, and transferred to the new building where it was installed in the box making room. It was immediately set to use. The machine and its room were a popular point in the visitor's tours in January and February. The Committee asked if there had been problems with moisture in the boxes and in response the Archivist explained that moisture had not been a problem due to some of the strong rooms being very

dry and therefore not being at risk. The Archivist drew the Committee attention to the numbers of material packed and it was noted that a 30,187 boxes had been made.

The original contractors assigned for the Fit Out had gone bust, and the furniture was now being ordered through Bridgend Office Furniture (BOF) but delays had been encountered, particularly with items manufactured abroad.

The Conservation Studio in Cathays Parks was packed up and moved to the new building in November. The Isolation Room was complete. The Cleaning Room was complete and thanks to the continued hard work and professionalism of all staff, and also to the efficiency of Commercial Transfer, the removal contractor, the decant project was successfully completed during the last quarter, including County Hall on 10 December 2009. The Committee Members were pleased to hear that during the whole move the search room had remained open to provide the service and with the Glamorgan Building emptied, the lease was officially terminated on 31 January 2010, ending 70 years of occupation.

The vast majority of the ICT equipment ordered through Cardiff Council had been delivered and installed. A number of reconfigurations of how some equipment was set up would be considered as usage settled down. Under the old suppliers several members of staff with sufficient relevant knowledge were permitted to have system administrator privileges and could carry out such changes. Unfortunately Cardiff Councils ICT department did not currently allow this and so there would be inevitable delays in certain areas of the system due to the need to involve a third party. The public Wifi network had been well received by those users that had taken advantage of it.

Publicity about the new building had appeared in the national and regional press. The news section of the National Archives Ancestors magazine featured a report on the move in January 2010. Under the heading 'Transporting the Past' it gave details of the new building the task of moving all the records to Leckwith and a photograph of racking in one of the strong rooms ready to receive documents. The report said that 'laid end to end they would stretch from Pontypridd to Merthyr'. A report and photograph of the Glamorgan Archivist also featured on the BBC's popular Who do you Think You Are website.

A talk by Susan Edwards on the British standard for archive keeping, BS5454, featured on the Metalrax Museum Storage website. It was part of an 'Expert Series' of videos produced by the company which was sponsoring the ICON conservators' conference taking place in Cardiff in March.

The Committee were informed that no official opening had taken place to date. Every meeting was classed as an official event, by inviting officers, members and former staff. The Council press officer was in the process of arranging a celebrity opening but to date nothing was confirmed. The Committee were of the view that an official launch was required due to Archives being remote and it needed to be celebrated, it didn't necessarily have to be an official opening and could be classed as a visit.

The Glamorgan Archivist informed that the Archives' alien registration cards, showing refugees from Germany, were also highlighted on news websites for Holocaust Memorial Day in January. All the features had reference to the new building helping to keep the move in the news. Colin Thomas' new book on Hughesovka was widely publicised in the local press and much of the research for the book was carried out at Glamorgan Archives. There was a great deal of interest among professional colleagues about the new building and the operational plans for service delivery. In January a team from Birmingham Central Library spent a morning with the Glamorgan Archivist touring the building and discussing the programme and the future. Following the visit the original brief and the business plan were requested and supplied.

The application to the National Manuscripts Conservation Trust for a project to reverse old repairs on selected tithe plan was unsuccessful.

A new Heritage Lottery Fund grant stream was offering bursaries to attract a broader diversity into the heritage sector, Skills for the Future. Caerphilly CBC had submitted an expression of interest to the same scheme on behalf of library services in south east Wales and had invited Glamorgan Archives to consider joining as lead partner.

The Committee were updated on the CALM maintenance which

was moving on 84% and had 88,397 entries. Conditions in the Glamorgan Building had deteriorated as the decant proceeded but required little intervention. A few teething problems had been experienced during the first few weeks of occupation; humidity level in strongrooms 3 & 4 had sometimes been lower than the parameters specified and a few minor roof leaks had been discovered, none in document storage areas, which had been dealt with by contractors. The lifts also had experienced a few bugs which have had to be sorted out. Although some fine tuning was still required overall everything was working to standard.

The Welsh Electronic Records Information Management Group, the Wales branch of the Records Management Society, held their south Wales meeting in Glamorgan Archives and members were given a tour of the building.

Since January CALM's registration module had been used to record details of visitors. This logged the same information as the paper system previously in use, such as contact details and research interests, as well as visit dates. It was also possible to upload a photograph to each user record. Having been registered, each visitor was now given a card bearing a unique identification number and barcode. On future visits, a member of staff scans the card on arrival, bringing up the visitor's CALM registration record, allowing their identity to be easily confirmed. All members of staff had been trained in the use of this system and it was proving a great success.

Work was also been completed by CALM's developers Axiell, to customise its document production functionality to Glamorgan Archives requirements. This feature would allow staff to request items through the CALM catalogue, replacing the existing paper-based system and providing more effective tracking of documents usage.

Development of DServe, the public interface for the CALM database has progressed significantly during the last quarter. Designs for the search pages were completed and a prototype version, created by colleagues in Cardiff Council's ICT department,

The Committee asked if access was now accessible to family history records. In response, the Glamorgan Archivist confirmed

that access was now available via eight pc's and it was a free provision.

The plan for digital records was on-going, along with the plan for the receipt of records. A written application had been made to the National Archives for the allocation of papers of the Bruce family, Lords Aberdare to Glamorgan Archives.

As part of Promoting Access to the Collection telephones and computers took a few weeks to be put in place but the search room was opened on 16 February, immediately all its furniture had been delivered and installed. Once that was complete persons were invited to come along for respective visits.

A major focus over the last quarter was arranging a series of tours of the new building for depositors and registered users. Invitations to visit the new building were sent with the Glamorgan Archives Christmas card and were sent to around 3,000 individuals. The card featured an image of the Office in Cathays Park alongside one of the new building and the message gave details of change of location and change of name. Each card carried an invitation to visit the new premises in January, with tours for depositors to take place the week beginning 11 January and tours for registered users on three days during the last week of the month. The tours proved to be extremely popular with 39 depositors visiting and 181 registered users.

The local MP, Kevin Brennan, made contact before Christmas and arranged to visit for a tour in February. A tour was requested by the Communities First Partnership of Rumney, Roath and Grangetown. The visitors were local history society members and a useful discussion took place on potential partnership working.

The South Wales Record Society was the first group into the completed Glamorgan Archives as their Executive Committee met there in January. The first 'twilight' session for teachers was held at the beginning of February.

The Glamorgan Archivist drew the Committee's attention to the number of meetings being held in the new facility, including Women's Archive of Wales and Cardiff and Co. It was also noted that a Private Detectives conference could possibly be held at the facility.

The Committee were concerned that members of the public were experiencing difficulties with public transport to the centre. In response the Archivist assured that all respective bus routes were available on the Cardiff Bus website.

The Committee were updated on the programme of events, together with the Principal Archivist speaking to a meeting of the Friends of Insole Court, Llandaff about the work of the Office.

Essential projects needed to be completed, including developing the website and integrating electronic and paper filing systems. Expenditure was being monitored against estimates now that the building was fully occupied.

Summary

The Glamorgan Archivist was pleased with the move, especially the contribution made by staff with their hard work and dedication to make the move as painless as possible and to the even less glamorous job of keeping the day to day services going with reduced resources and under increasingly uncomfortable conditions.

The Committee thanked the Glamorgan Archivist for the report and for all the hard work that had been achieved.

RESOLVED – That the contents of the report be noted and endorsed.

7. Any Other Business

The Committee made reference to the Gareth Jones Diaries, with the possibility of the exhibition being held in Barry Library. Currently the exhibition was held at Trinity College, Cambridge. However, Barry Library was concerned with the facilities available at the Library to fully house the exhibition and had asked Glamorgan Archives for help with expertise and assistance on the matter.

CHAIRMAN