

GLAMORGAN ARCHIVES JOINT COMMITTEE

14 DECEMBER 2018

Present: Councillor Burnett (Chairperson)
Councillors Cowan, Cunnah, Henshaw, Jarvie, R Lewis, Lewis,
Robertson, Smith, Colbran and Robson

19 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors B Jones (Caerphilly), S Bradwick (Rhondda Cynon Taf), E George (Rhondda Cynon Taf) and Mrs K Thomas.

20 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

21 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2018 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson.

22 : REPORT OF THE GLAMORGAN ARCHIVIST FOR THE PERIOD 1 SEPTEMBER - 30 NOVEMBER 2018

Members were provided with an update on the work, visits and achievements of the service for the period 1 September 2018 – 30 November 2018; the Dashboard of Objectives, Appendices listing notable accessions, information on collections, interesting enquiries and the Commemoration of the centenary of the First World War which took place from 1 December 2017 to 30 November 2018.

In summary, the Archivist explained that Armistice anniversary events have dominated engagement activities during the quarter; Appendix V listed the year's related activities with the majority taking place in the last 3 months. This quarter had also seen an exceptional take up of the Archives' school workshops and education visits (518 school and university students). While this was welcome and, for the moment, manageable, the pressure of unanticipated demand has been felt in other parts of the service. She added that it had become increasingly difficult to give time to planning and innovation around income generation and digital preservation and while cataloguing targets for current accessions were just about met there was no capacity to address the inherited backlog of unlisted material in the Collection. In conclusion, the Archivist stated that Glamorgan Archives remains a flagship service in Wales and this was thanks to the sterling efforts of staff and volunteers and despite increasingly difficult financial circumstances.

The Chairperson thanked the Archivist and invited questions and comments from Members of the Joint Committee.

Members noted the focus for the coming year on educational visits from Special Schools and asked how they could instigate these visits for Schools they are Governors for. The archivist explained that it would be useful to have someone

introduce the school to the Service or maybe staff could undertake an initial visit and check such things as accessibility.

Members shared positive feedback they had received regarding the Archives Service and requested that this was shared with staff too.

Members noted the huge diverse range of collections that come into the Service and asked how they are submitted. The Archivist explained that the range has increased due to the level of publicity the service now has, and they are taking in collections at the rate of 1 per day they are open. She further explained that some collections come from Magistrate Courts, lots more from individuals which haven't been expected, also from house clearances etc.

Members asked how long the service could take in collections at this rate before they are full. The Archivist stated that they are still on track with regards to space, when the building opened it had 25 years' worth of space and they are currently where they expect to be. The Archivist added that it would become an issue when they have to give up income generating space to take in collections.

Members noted the increase in Education work and asked if this was actively pursued. The Archivist explained that it wasn't any more, people find the service due to the profile and publicity they have; adding that as it is a free service they are seeing more and more visits from schools in more deprived areas, including local schools who can walk or take public transport. It was noted that the service usually only receive around 2 weeks' notice of the visits. Members asked if anything was being done to assess if these visits may become an issue in the future and the Archivist explained that they are monitoring and managing the situation at the moment; the visits don't happen in the summer holidays and they could start to introduce a planning/booking system in the future if needed. Members agreed that adequate scheduling may be needed in the future.

Members were pleased to see the increase in website hits.

The Chair was pleased to say that she had attended a Post Graduate training course in Kew Gardens and that the Glamorgan Archives Service was known there and the Archivist was well respected both individually and professionally.

RESOLVED: to note the contents of the report.

23 : 2018-2019 BUDGET MONITORING & 2019-2020 BUDGET PROPOSALS

Members were advised that this report provided the projected full year revenue outturn for the 2018/19 financial year. It also detailed the proposed revenue budget for 2019/20. Officers outlined the key points of information from the report and provided the following summary of information:

For the current year, the net cost of the provision of the Glamorgan Archives Service is projected to be £684,226 representing an overspend of £30,226 against the approved budget of £654,000.

No reduction in Local Authority contributions are budgeted for 2019/20. Use of the General Reserve to drawdown £50,000 will fund the budget gap. Previous years saw a reduction in this reliance.

Budgeted use of the reserve is proposed to be £50,000 in 2019/20 and £25,000 in 2020/21, after which further savings will need to be identified or additional contributions from member Local Authorities would be necessary.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members as below:

Members discussed the possibility of additional contributions from member Local Authorities and considered that this needed to be looked and addressed as soon as possible. Officers explained that they were seeking authority to start work immediately with the finance officers from the member Local Authorities to look at this in the medium term.

Members sought more information on Grants and the Archivist explained that MALD is a central Government Grant which helps achieve some core functions of the service, it doesn't pay for it in it's entirety and is always project based.

The Archivist reiterated that the biggest challenge facing the service was the NDR, a reduction in this rate would help the service the most. Members discussed whether the Joint Committee could do anything to help with this and the Archivist explained that an All Wales approach was being taken and that ARCW, the Welsh Museums Fed, and Welsh Libraries were taking a direct approach to the Minister for Culture and Local Government, presenting issues that are happening. The Archivist stated that as soon as she has feedback on this she would report to the Joint Committee and that she may seek additional support with regards to the Welsh Government and Westminster.

Members considered that an additional Joint Meeting may be needed or a sub-committee formed to look at this pressing issue.

Members referred to the £100k in reserves and asked if any work had been to determine how long the service could run on these reserves alone. Officers stated that this hadn't been done but it was something that they could look at.

RESOLVED to:

- Note the projected full year position for the 2018/19 financial year as presented in the report.
- Recommend the draft budget proposals for 2019/20 be accepted, as presented in this report.
- Recommend that officers progress work with Local Authority representatives to develop a sustainable approach to the medium term budget challenges.

24 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

15 March 2019 at 2.00pm.

The meeting terminated at 3.20 pm