



Joint Archives Board

Date: Wednesday, 5 February 2025
Time: 2.00 pm
Venue: A link to the meeting can be found on the front page of the agenda.

Members (Quorum: 2)

Laura Beddow, Lesley Dedman, Scott Florek, Ryan Hope, Marion Le Poidevin and Andy Martin

Chief Executive: Matt Prosser, County Hall, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1XJ

For more information about this agenda please contact Democratic Services Meeting Contact 01305 224710 - joshua.kennedy@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting, apart from any items listed in the exempt part of this agenda.

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Agenda

Item		Pages
1.	APOLOGIES	
	To receive any apologies for absence.	
2.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	
	To disclose any pecuniary, other registrable or non-registrable interest as set out in the adopted Code of Conduct. In making their disclosure councillors are asked to state the agenda item, the nature of the interest and any action they propose to take as part of their declaration.	
	If required, further advice should be sought from the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting.	
3.	MINUTES	5 - 8
	To confirm the minutes of the last meeting held on 13 November 2024.	

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Representatives of town or parish councils and members of the public who live, work, or represent an organisation within the Dorset Council area are welcome to submit either 1 question or 1 statement for each meeting. You are welcome to attend the meeting in person or via MS Teams to read out your question and to receive the response. If you submit a statement for the committee this will be circulated to all members of the committee in advance of the meeting as a supplement to the agenda and appended to the minutes for the formal record but will not be read out at the meeting. **The first 8 questions and the first 8 statements received from members of the public or organisations for each meeting will be accepted on a first come first served basis in accordance with the deadline set out below.** Further information read [Public Participation - Dorset Council](#)

All submissions must be emailed in full to Joshua.kennedy@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk by 8.30am on Friday 31 January 2025.

When submitting your question or statement please note that:

- You can submit 1 question or 1 statement.
- A question may include a short pre-amble to set the context.
- It must be a single question and any sub-divided questions will not be permitted.
- Each question will consist of no more than 450 words, and you will be given up to 3 minutes to present your question.
- When submitting a question please indicate who the question is for (e.g., the name of the committee or Portfolio Holder)
- Include your name, address, and contact details. Only your name will be published but we may need your other details to contact you about your question or statement in advance of the meeting.
- Questions and statements received in line with the council's rules for public participation will be published as a supplement to the agenda.
- All questions, statements and responses will be published in full within the minutes of the meeting.

5. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

To receive questions submitted by councillors.

Councillors can submit up to two valid questions at each meeting and sub divided questions count towards this total. Questions and statements received will be published as a supplement to the agenda and all questions, statements and responses will be published in full within the minutes of the meeting.

The submissions must be emailed in full to

Joshua.kennedy@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk by 08:30am on Friday 31 January 2025.

[Constitution - Dorset Council](#) – Procedure Rule 13.

6. URGENT ITEMS

To consider any items of business which the Chairman has had prior notification and considers to be urgent pursuant to section 100B (4) b) of the Local Government Act 1972. The reason for the urgency shall be recorded in the minutes.

7. BUDGET AND SERVICE UPDATE REPORT

9 - 14

To receive a report from the Service Manager for Archives and Records.

8. EXEMPT BUSINESS

To move the exclusion of the press and the public for the following item in view of the likely disclosure of exempt information within the meaning of paragraph x of schedule 12 A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended). The public and the press will be asked to leave the meeting whilst the item of business is considered.

There are no exempt items scheduled for this meeting.

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JOINT ARCHIVES BOARD

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 13 NOVEMBER 2024

Present: Cllrs Laura Beddow, Lesley Dedman, Scott Florek, Ryan Hope and Marion Le Poidevin

Present remotely: Cllrs Andy Martin

Also present: Christine Fowler (Chair of Dorset Archives Trust)

Officers present (for all or part of the meeting):

Lisa Cotton (Corporate Director for Customer and Cultural Services), Sam Johnston (Service Manager for Archives and Records) and Joshua Kennedy (Democratic Services Officer)

41. **Apologies**

There were no apologies for absence.

42. **Appointment of Chair**

The BCP Portfolio Holder was entitled to Chair the Joint Archives Board as per the procedure rules, however Cllr Martin didn't wish to be Chair at this time, so it was proposed that Cllr Hope be appointed Chair.

Proposed by Cllr Beddow and seconded by Cllr Florek.

Decision: That Cllr Hope be appointed as Chair of the Joint Archives Board, until either May 2026 or the BCP Portfolio Holder wishes to Chair the meeting again.

43. **Appointment of Vice-Chair**

Proposed by Cllr Hope and seconded by Cllr Le Poidevin.

Decision: That Cllr Martin be appointed as Vice-Chair.

44. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

45. **Minutes**

The minutes of the last meeting held on 05 February 2024 were confirmed and signed.

46. **Public Participation**

There were no public questions.

47. **Questions from Councillors**

There were no questions from Councillors.

48. **Joint Archives Service Development Plan (2021 - 26) Monitoring Report**

The Service Manager for Archives and Records provided a verbal summary of the report to the board. He listed the key points of the report including the work that had been achieved since the last Joint Archives Board meeting and the upcoming priorities for the service.

In response to members questions the Service Manager for Archives and Records provided the following replies:

- Should the Capital Project not be completed, the options would have to be reevaluated, and third-party storage options would have to be explored, although that would be more costly in the long-term in comparison with expanding the current building.
- The JAS's contract with Ancestry.com would be up for renewal in 2025 and the service was currently deciding how best to re-negotiate the contract to ensure the best return for the service.
- The current contract with Preservica was set to expire in June 2027 and leading up to that, alternative software providers would be considered in line with procurement rules.
- The service has close relations with colleagues in the Russel Coates Museum and Poole Museum and the JAS has worked on cataloguing the collections of Bournemouth Borough Council and Borough of Poole in the past.
- Work had been done to contact the Jewish community in Bournemouth to support the cataloguing of their collection, which was currently not recorded.

Proposed by Cllr Beddow and seconded by Cllr Florek.

Decision:

1. The Joint Archives Board endorsed the implementation of the 2021-2026 service plan appended to this report as demonstrating the quality, variety and value for money provided by the JAS;
2. The Joint Archives Board supported the JAS's ongoing work to ensure the safe and effective transfer of appropriate physical and digital records from both BCP and Dorset Councils to ensure the preservation of the corporate memory and to deliver council efficiencies;

3. The Joint Archives Board noted the commitment by Dorset Council to £540k of capital match funding to support a renewed bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund in 2025.

49. Joint Archives Service: Review of Fees and Charges

The Service Manager for Archives and Records presented the report for the proposed fees and charges for 2025/26. It was explained that the service had benchmarked their fees and charges against other services of a similar size and location, in order to ensure that they were fair for users and also that the service was maximising potential income. Dorset Council had recommended an increase of 2.5% on fees and charges overall and the service had generally followed that advice.

Members were in agreement that a small uplift in some of the charges were appropriate and expressed that the charges in general were fairly modest.

Proposed by Cllr Dedman and seconded by Cllr Beddow.

Decision: That the revised fees and charges as set out in the report be recommended to the executive bodies of the two funding councils for implementation from 1 April 2025.

50. Joint Archives Service: Budget Monitoring and Budget 2025/26

The Service Manager for Archives and Records presented the budget monitoring report to the board. It was noted that the service had worked on a standstill budget for 8 out of the last 10 years and that generally the service had worked to increase external income. It had been calculated that an uplift of approximately £16,000 was needed to the service's budget to maintain current levels, mainly due to rising costs of staff and energy.

Members agreed that it was important to fund the JAS so that it could continue to provide the same levels of service.

Proposed by Cllr Dedman and seconded by Cllr Hope.

Decision: That the Joint Archives Board recommend the budget uplift from each council as detailed in the draft budget proposals for 2025/26.

51. Urgent Items

There were no urgent items.

52. Exempt Business

There was no exempt business.

Duration of meeting: 2.30 - 3.28 pm

Chairman

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Joint Archives Board

5 February 2025

Budget and Service Update Report

For Decision

Cabinet Member and Portfolio:

Cllr R Hope, Customer, Culture and Community Engagement

Cllr Andy Martin, Customer, Communications and Culture, BCP Council

Local Councillor(s): All

Executive Director:

A Dunn, Executive Director, Corporate Development

Report Author: Sam Johnston
Title: Service Manager for Archives and Records
Tel: 01305-228929
Email: sam.johnston@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Report Status: Public (the exemption paragraph is N/A)

Brief Summary: The Joint Archives Board (JAB) met last on 13 November 2024. It was agreed that following further analysis of the councils' financial positions the Board would need to reconvene in the New Year to confirm the service's budget for 2025/26. This report will provide update information on the budget position to assist the board in making its decision. The report will also update members on developments within the service.

It is recommended that the Joint Archives Board:

1. Approves the JAS's 2025/26 draft budget for adoption by both funding councils. This is a c.3% uplift in the budget for each council jointly providing a further £17,198 for the Joint Archives Service.
2. Notes the positive news relating to service delivery and projects by the Joint Archives Service.

Reason for Recommendation:

To comply with the terms of the *Inter-Authority Agreement on Archives (2022)*.

1. Background

1.1 The Joint Archives Board last met on 13 November 2024. This report provides an update on financial matters as well as notable developments within the service since the last meeting. A key outcome of the meeting is the recommendation of a budget for the service for the financial year 2025/26.

2. Budget 2025/26

2.1 At its meeting of 13 November 2024, it was recommended ‘that the Joint Archives Board request the budget uplift from each council as detailed in the draft budget proposals for 2025/26’. The proposed increase amounted to c.3% from each of the partner councils. The total uplift, if approved would be £17,198. This follows a ten-year period in which the service has absorbed eight cash standstill financial settlements.

2.2 The proposed increases from each council are:

- BCP Council £9,417
- Dorset Council £7,781

2.3 If approved, the budget contributions for 2025/26 would be thus:

Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council	£322,715
Dorset Council	£307,590
Total	£630,305

3. Capital project

3.1 At its November meeting, the Board was updated on the current status of the long-standing work to provide additional appropriate accommodation for archives. The current storage position is becoming extremely tight with c. 4% available space remaining for physical archives. Over 250 boxes of archives were received at DHC in December 2024 and physical space will become increasingly limited over the next 2-3 years.

3.2 Work has re-commenced to review and confirm the specification and costings of proposed capital and public engagement work including partnerships that would form the body of an application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF). It is intended that an Expression of Interest be submitted to the NLHF by mid-February. If successful, this would provide a 12-month window in which a Stage 1 application could be submitted.

4. Collections Weeks

4.1 The JAS held its second 'Collections Fortnight' in December. As with the first of these now annual events, the period of uninterrupted work on both archives and the workspaces in which they are preserved and accessed was invaluable. Volunteers helpfully supplement the staff team to maximise the value of the available time.

4.2 Key outputs from the fortnight included:

- A complete reorganisation, cleaning and reconfiguration of the 'Sorting Room' – the space into which most incoming archives are received, sorted and checked prior to transfer into the repositories.
- The checking, re-packaging and enhanced description of two major collections – D-BLX (Bloxworth Estate) and D-SHA (Sherborne Almshouse)
- Auditing 1500 boxes (representing about 3% of the total collection)
- Proving additional capacity to the Hardy archive project
- 50 new accessions listed including photographs of T.E. Lawrence, material from Wytch Farm Oil Field and the Jurassic Coast Trust.

The service has published a [blog](#) detailing the activity involved.

5. Projects and service updates

There has been good progress made on a number of projects and other workstreams undertaken by the JAS.

5.1 Hardy

Work on the cataloguing of the archives of Thomas Hardy is progressing well and is on schedule to complete in September. A bid led by Dorset Museum and Art Gallery to Arts Council England for Designated status for the Hardy collection (objects and archives) has passed through its first stage. A second stage application will be submitted during 2025. [Designated status](#) is the highest UK accolade available for a cultural collection signifying 'outstanding importance'. The only other Designated collection in Dorset is at the Tank Museum. An attempt to secure some rare Hardy correspondence at auction in December was unsuccessful although a fundraising campaign managed to successfully garner c. £10,000 in pledges much of it from public donations.

5.2 [Sounds of the Southwest](#)

The JAS is a partner in this major regional Lottery-funded project which seeks to digitise rare and fragile sound recordings from across the

southwest. A set of analogue recordings has been transferred to Bristol to be digitised including recordings of people who knew Thomas Hardy. In addition, there will be training provided to JAS staff on how to manage and promote sound collections.

5.3 Yellow Buses/Wessex Water

Thanks to successful external funding applications work on the Yellow Buses and Wessex Water archives has now commenced with an 0.6 FTE archivist employed on a fixed-term contract until March 2027. A further externally funded 0.6 FTE post of Collections Assistant will be recruited to support the archivist between August 2025 and March 2027. Some of the funding will also cover conservation and digitisation work later in the project.

5.4 Estate archives – external income

The JAS has received two payments totalling £15,000 from the depositor of an estate archive with a third payment due in March. This will take the total sum to over £22,000. As the funds have been paid to Dorset Archives Trust, they can benefit from Gift Aid. When the full sum is available, the service will be able to employ an archivist to catalogue the collection over eight months. This is a good example of our work to encourage the owners of archives to contribute to the costs of cataloguing and conserving their collections.

5.5 DHC building works

Following a substantial hiatus in the renovation work at Dorset History Centre, contractors are now back on site. Current predictions are that work will complete by the end of April 2025 whereupon the car park will be returned to use.

5.6 Sandford Orcas – Acceptance in Lieu

Archives relating to the manor of Sandford Orcas have been permanently transferred to DHC following approval under the terms of the Acceptance in Lieu (of inheritance tax) scheme administered by Arts Council England. The scheme operates to allow the transfer of important cultural property into public collections where they can be preserved and accessed in perpetuity. The Sandford Orcas records include an estate map of 1702, manor court rolls and substantial amounts of estate papers.

5.7 Outreach – ‘Saving Bournemouth’s Jewish Heritage’

The JAS is working with two of Bournemouth’s Jewish congregations to ensure the preservation and longevity of their respective records. The service successfully acquired a small grant from the Rothschild Foundation which has funded a consultancy review of the records, their quantities, types and heritage values. It is hoped that the service will be able to move forward in the coming weeks in collaboration with the two congregations to plan the transfer of records to DHC.

6. Financial Implications

There is a budget uplift implication associated with this proposal for both funding councils described above in section 2.

The two funding councils provided financial position statements for the last meeting of the JAB in November 2024:

Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council:

BCP Council continues to face challenging financial circumstances and is currently planning the actions necessary to meet its 2025/26 budget gap, in order to set a balanced budget. A range of savings and efficiencies are being identified to support this process, which will be confirmed in due course in line with normal budget setting timescales.

Dorset Council: financial forecast for current year

At the end of December, the Council is forecasting an overspend of £10.8m, which represents 2.7% of the Council's budget requirement (£397.7m).

This forecast is of significant concern as it identifies unbudgeted service pressures of £21.2m, which are only partially mitigated by Central Finance funding improvements of £10.4m.

The current forecast will require use of reserves. In previous years where there has been improvement during the year, this has typically been due to 'central finance' mitigation, such as releasing the contingency or improvements to collection fund. These have already been deployed in the current year and are therefore not available to mitigate any future pressures

7. Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Implications

N/A

8. Well-being and Health Implications

N/A

9. Other Implications

None

10. Risk Assessment

10.2 HAVING CONSIDERED: the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: Medium
Residual Risk: Medium

11. Equalities Impact Assessment

The JAS undertook a full EQIA in August 2023

12. Appendices

None

13. Background Papers

None

14. Report Sign Off

- 11.1 This report has been through the internal report clearance process and has been signed off by the Director for Legal and Democratic (Monitoring Officer), the Executive Director for Corporate Development (Section 151 Officer) and the appropriate Portfolio Holder(s)