

JOINT ARCHIVES BOARD

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 4 FEBRUARY 2026

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

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

Sam Johnston (Service Manager for Archives and Records), Joshua Kennedy (Democratic Services Officer), Louis Wicks (Democratic Services Officer Apprentice), Jonathan Mair (Director of Legal and Democratic and Monitoring Officer), Hannah Brown (Service Manager for Finance) and Matti Raudsepp (Director of Customer and Business Delivery, BCP)

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

71. Apologies

There were no apologies.

72. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

73. Minutes

The minutes of the last meeting held on the 5th of November 2025 were confirmed and signed.

74. Public Participation

There were no questions from the public.

75. Questions from Councillors

There were no questions from councillors.

76. Budget 2026/27 and Service Development Plan Update Report

The Service manager for Archives and Records presented the report.

The recommended budget still stood which was presented in the November meeting. The report was to update the committee on the recent activities of the archives service. The new agreement with Ancestry would increase income with additional funding provided from a small saving from an employee reducing their hours.

There had been significant attrition to the repairs and maintenance budget. The reserve was £55,000 but was likely to be reduced to no more than £22,000 due to costs involving maintenance of the building. The £50k reserve had been allocated as match funding towards the Lottery application should it be successful. The service would now need to source that funding from elsewhere. The new agreement with Ancestry would save about £10,000 for each council through the provision of free access in both Dorset and BCP libraries once the project is completed. This would last for ten years.

The application to the National Lottery Heritage fund was submitted for the 12th of Nov deadline and the result of the application should be known in roughly four weeks from this meeting. There was set to be a development phase and a delivery phase. The delivery phase would include the new building. The total cost of the project being £4.7m. If the project was approved it would be a five year undertaking. If it was rejected, then they would need to consider the feedback from NLHF and look to see if it would be worth going back for another application. There would be a new service development plan brought to the next meeting.

It was explained that obtaining the Ancestry contract had been a lengthy process with a 70% positive response from consultees. There was a space identified within DHC where people could do the work to digitise the archives, which would result in additional clicks and income for the service. The Hardy project had been fully completed, and the 11 notebooks had been digitised and are available via the catalogue which was ready to be promoted to the public.

The Dorset Archives Trust were set to start a fundraiser to raise the £48,000 to catalogue the collection of Sylvia Townsend Warner and would be seeking to raise funds through trusts and foundations. There was work being undertaken in Bournemouth with the Jewish congregation, and there was a meeting with members of the congregation a week prior to the panel meeting. There was evidence of success from similar projects in areas such as Sheffield and the congregation seemed engaged with the collection of these archives. The Wessex Water archives was going to be made accessible through an ongoing externally funded project. There are 700 boxes of material and over 1000 maps being worked through which included all the predecessor bodies.

There was a two-week closure which happened before Christmas to allow focus on boxes being archived. There were some lessons learned as to how things can be done more efficiently but staff had still been very effective.

In response to questions the Service Manager explained:

- That the Joint Archives Service was feeling their way along to see what happens in regard to the archives of the Jewish Congregation. They were putting some tests together to show what the communities were hoping to achieve and that this would encourage people to come forward, however timing was not precise. When it was ready to be presented, they would be happy to work with other contacts.

The recommendations below were proposed by Cllr Scott Florek and Seconded by Cllr Andy Martin.

1. That the Joint Archives Board confirms the 2026/27 budget recommendation to the two funding councils from the 5 November meeting of the Joint Archives Board.
2. That the Joint Archives Board notes the service updates within the body of the report and the progress made with particular projects and workstreams.

The recommendations were approved by the committee.

77. Urgent Items

There were no urgent items.

78. Exempt Business

There was no exempt business.

Duration of meeting: 2.00 - 2.21 pm

Chairman

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