



Joint Archives Board

Date: Wednesday, 4 February 2026
Time: 2.00 pm
Venue: MS Teams Online

Members (Quorum: 2)

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

Chief Executive: Catherine Howe, County Hall, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1XJ

For more information about this agenda please contact Democratic & Governance Services Meeting Contact 01305 211926 - Louis.wicks@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. If you would like to attend this meeting and have any specific requirements please contact the Democratic Services Officer named above.

For easy access to all the council's committee agendas and minutes download the free public app called Modern.Gov for use on any iPad, Android, and Windows tablet. Once downloaded select Dorset Council.

Agenda

Item		Pages
1.	APOLOGIES To receive any apologies for absence.	F_PRO
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.	F_PRO
3.	MINUTES	F_PRO

To confirm the minutes of the last meeting held on the 5th of November 2025.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

F_PRO

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 Louis.Wicks@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk by 8.30am on Friday 30th January.

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

F_PRO

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
Louis.wicks@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk by 08:30am on Friday 30th January.

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

6. BUDGET 2026/27 AND SERVICE DEVELOPMENT PLAN UPDATE REPORT F_PRO

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

7. URGENT ITEMS F_PRO

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.

8. EXEMPT BUSINESS F_PRO

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.

This page is intentionally left blank



JOINT ARCHIVES BOARD

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 5 NOVEMBER 2025

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

Present remotely: Cllrs Marion Le Poidevin and Andy Martin

Apologies: None

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

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

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

61. **Apologies**

There were no apologies for absence.

62. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

63. **Minutes**

The minutes of the last meeting held on 05 February 2025 were confirmed and signed.

64. **Public Participation**

There were no public questions.

65. **Questions from Councillors**

There were no questions from councillors.

66. **Joint Archives Service Budget Monitoring and Budget Setting 2026/27**

The Service Manager for Archives and Records presented the report for the Joint Archives Service (JAS) budget monitoring and budget setting for 2026/27. It was explained that the report gives an overview of the budget position. The JAS was over budget and was looking to increase by £32,000 next year. This year the

service managed to bring in £72,000 from two separate Dorset Estates for the archives. Since 2010 the service had raised over £1 million in external funding. During 2024-25 £800,000 was invested in the Dorset History Centre to bring the building to good working order.

It was noted that section three of the report showed the current financial position. A minor saving was made involving an employee dropping a day per week of work which would help meet next year's budget. Section five covered the salary and building energy costs. Dorset History Centre was about to sign a new contract with Ancestry. A benefit of this new contract was to include a free subscription to Ancestry for both Dorset Council and BCP's library services worth approximately £10,000 per annum to each library service.

The reserve position was around £56,000; it was previously capped at £50,000 but increased due to minor savings.

In response to a question the Service Manager for Archives and Records explained that of the figures under 5.5, the lower figures were a part of the recommendation brought with this report.

The recommendation was proposed by Cllr Dedman and seconded by Cllr Beddow.

Decision:

1. That the Joint Archives Board request the budget uplift from each council as detailed in the report noting the budgetary pressures on the service and the steps it has taken to manage its outgoings.
2. That the Joint Archives Board agree to the JAS deploying the service reserve to match fund the Development Phase of the capital project, assuming the National Lottery Heritage Fund application is successful in March 2026.

67. Joint Archives Service Fees and Charges 2026/27

The Service Manager for Archives and Records introduced the report. The report detailed ideas for realistic increases to charges where there was a tolerance to pay fees. There had been increasing resistance to paying fees, but this information was anecdotal. It was suggested that the service should look at what other archive services are charging for similar services and try to match a medium position. The service was trying to increase income wherever possible. By increasing the quantity of online content via Ancestry, it would make it realistic enough for people to want to pay.

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

- The Service Manager for Archives and Records explained that it is not very common that TV companies come to their service. It was fortunate that they had the interest from them to come to them.

- It was explained that some lines in the report for services don't show previous because they are new.
- It was suggested that the TV companies were possibly not aware that the service exists which resulted in the lack of interest.
-

The recommendations were proposed by Cllr Beddow and seconded by Cllr Hope.

Decision: That the revised fees and charges, as set out in the appendix to the report, be recommended to the executive bodies of the two funding councils for implementation from 1 April 2026.

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

The Service Manager for Archives and Records presented the report for the Development Plan. The executive summary highlighted the achievements of the service. It was mentioned that this service plan was due to expire the following year but had every intention of revising and renewing the plan to something similar. Contingent on the new plan was the success of the Lottery application which would have fundamentally changed the way the service operates over the future years. Two key challenges were highlighted; the first was capital investment and the second was the collection of records in both paper and digital forms. There was extra staff working on the projects, and there was still a high level of interest in the archives.

There were two archive apprentices that were doing well and would complete their programs in October 2026. A new advisory group had been set up for museums to pick up on areas of interest. It was noted that volunteering is strong and the service would like to do more but was limited by what could be managed. An aspect of the Lottery project was to take on more of a wider community for the archives. The online catalogue had swelled to 420,000 entries. Multiple projects including the Wessex Water and the Bournemouth Yellow Busses projects were mentioned alongside their success. The application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund was to gain resources for a hoped-for project to create around 22,000 box spaces along with improvements to the DHC building and a large-scale public engagement programme.

The following responses were provided in answer to questions from members

- The Service Manager for Archives and Records spoke regarding AI's future involvement in the service saying that certain parts could be conceived such as reading and cataloguing once AI reaches a certain level of intelligence, but there would always be a human presence to make sure the documents are being handled correctly. There will be an upward demand for online services as more documents were created and more would be used and so were keen to reduce the need to be in person.
- It was mentioned that libraries, archives and museums should be joined up more to look at better sustainability.

The recommendations were proposed by Cllr Dedman and seconded by Cllr Florek.

Decision:

1. That the Joint Archives Board endorses the implementation of the 2021-2026 service plan appended to this report as demonstrating the quality, variety and value for money provided by the Joint Archives Service;
2. That the Joint Archives Board supports the Joint Archives Service'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. That the Joint Archives Board endorses the Joint Archives Service's application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund to facilitate major capital improvements to Dorset History Centre.

69. **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

70. **Exempt Business**

There was no exempt business.

Duration of meeting: 2.00 - 2.41 pm

Chairman

.....

Joint Archives Board

4 February 2026

Budget 2026/27 and Service Development Plan Update Report

For Decision

Cabinet Member:

Cllr R Hope, Customer, Culture and Community Engagement

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

Local Councillor(s): All

Senior Leadership Team:

J Mair, Director of Legal & Democratic

Report author and job title: Sam Johnston, Service Manager for Archives and Records

Email: sam.johnston@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Statutory Authority: Local Government Acts 1962 & 1972; Public Records Act 1958; Freedom of Information Act 2000; Environmental Information Regulations 2004; Data Protection Act (GDPR) 2018.

Report status: Public

Executive summary (maximum of 500 words) This report provides an update to the Joint Archives Board following its meeting on 5 November 2025. At that meeting a recommended budget for 2026/27 was endorsed by members. The purpose of this meeting is to confirm that recommendation. In addition, the report will update the Board on service development plan activity since the last meeting. Of key significance was the bid submission to the National Lottery Heritage Fund in November. The outcome of this application will have a major bearing on the future strategic direction taken by the service.

Recommendations: The recommendations are that the Joint Archives Board:

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

Reason for Recommendations: Effective oversight of Joint Archives Service budget via the Joint Archives Board is required under the terms of the *Inter-Authority Agreement on Archives, 2022*. The recommendations will be placed before the executives of both funding councils.

1. Service Budget 2026/27

- 1.1 The Joint Archives Service budget settlement for 2026/27 was recommended at the last meeting of the Joint Archives Board on 5 November 2025. The table below provides information on the population split and the corresponding apportionment of costs between the two funding councils together with the recommended uplift for 2026/27:

Joint Archives Service – budget apportionment					
	Population (ONS estimates 2024)	Percentage split 2026/27	Agreed Contribution 2025/26	Proposed increase in contribution 2026/27	Proposed total contribution 2026/27
Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council	407,194	51.11	£325,054	£7,439	£332,439
Dorset Council	389,557	48.89%	£309,820	£7,116	£316,963
Total	796,751	100%	£634,874	£14,555	£649,402

- 1.2 The additional funding (£14,555) provided by the two councils represents an uplift of 2.29%. To maintain the service at its current capacity however, an uplift of just under 5% is required.
- 1.3 When adjusted for inflation using the Retail Prices Index (RPI), the cost of delivering the same service in 2025/26 would equate to **£948,655** — had annual inflationary uplifts been applied consistently over the past 11 years. This means the service is operating with a budget that is approximately 33% lower in real terms, demonstrating a significant erosion of funding over time despite the service cost remaining broadly unchanged. The property maintenance element of the budget (repairs and maintenance, rates and energy) is forecast to overspend significantly by the close of the financial year meaning that the service reserve which had been allocated towards Lottery match-funding will be much reduced on what had been anticipated.
- 1.4 In order to maintain the service's current capacity, the budget shortfall for 2026/27 will be met by a small staff salary saving and an anticipated uplift in income from Ancestry.co.uk. due to the signing of a new agreement. The latter has the additional benefit of being able to provide free access to

Ancestry in both Dorset and BCP Council library services representing a combined saving to the authorities of around **£20,000** per annum.

2. Service Development Plan - update

- 2.1 The current Service Development Plan for the JAS is due to expire in 2026. A successor Plan will be written in mid-2026 in advance of the next JAB meeting to ensure that it can be reviewed by staff, stakeholders and partners.

3. Bid to National Lottery Heritage Fund

- 3.1 The JAS has submitted its capital bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) for funding to support the enlargement and improvement of Dorset History Centre. The application met the 12 November deadline and the Lottery's London and South Committee will meet to make its decision on 5 March. The outcome will clearly have a major bearing on the JAS's future work plan and commitments. A positive decision will see the service embark on an 18-month development phase project to design the 'delivery' phase of the project which would follow a successful second stage application. The delivery phase would last for around 3 years, completing in mid-2031.
- 3.2 If NLHF declines to fund the project then the JAS will need to review its options in consultation with both councils and evaluate the best course of action to allow it to meet the looming demand for additional physical archive storage accommodation.

4. Ancestry

- 4.1 Discussions with Ancestry.co.uk about the renewal of the agreement with the JAS have advanced well. The service has written out to all of Dorset's parishes (over 300) to seek permission for additional digitisation of relevant records to take place. At the time of writing over 66% had responded positively. It is hoped that other record sets will also be digitised so increasing the volume of content online. It is likely that Ancestry will be on-site at DHC to digitise records later in 2026.
- 4.2 The anticipated increase in income will help the service meet its budget requirements for 2026/27. The project will also provide a meaningfully larger quantity of genealogical material for the worldwide audiences who access it as well as free access to residents of Dorset and BCP council areas via their respective library networks.

5. William Barnes project

- 5.1 Work on the project to catalogue the archive of Dorset dialect poet William Barnes is progressing well. Project archivist Ruth Burton has sorted and ordered the collection in readiness for the catalogue to be created before the project's projected end date of August 2026. In addition, a small reference group of Barnes experts has been formed to assist with the analysis and

description of parts of the collection. DHC is working closely with the William Barnes Society on this project.

6. Sylvia Townsend Warner archive project fundraiser

- 6.1 DHC holds the archive of Sylvia Townsend Warner, a well-known 20th century writer who lived in Dorset with her partner Valentine Ackland. Warner published novels, poetry and was a prolific correspondent. The recent unveiling of a statue of the writer in Dorchester together with her growing literary reputation has prompted the JAS to seek to raise the funds to catalogue the archive – something that would take an archivist around 12 months to achieve. With the active support of Dorset Archives Trust the service intends to try and raise the requisite funds (£48,000) through a combination of crowdsourcing and grant applications.

7. Bournemouth Jewish records

- 7.1 Following the successful transfer of 70 boxes of Hebrew and Reform congregational records to DHC at the end of 2025, DHC is keen to build on its work with Bournemouth's Jewish community. Having taken advice from archive projects successfully delivered in Liverpool and Sheffield the service is keen to expand the scope of collecting where possible to include organisational, business and cultural archives that help to tell the story of the town's Jewish residents. Once a fuller appreciation of the potential archival resource is known, an approach will be made to the Rothschild Hanadiv Foundation for potential funding.

8. Wessex Water

- 8.1 Work on this large archive funded by the company itself approaches the half-way mark with completion at the end of March 2027. It consists of several hundred boxes and over 1000 maps. Records relate not only to Wessex Water but to many associated organisations such as Bournemouth Gas and Water, the Environment Agency and the National Rivers Authority. The records also cast light on other aspects of life – for example the effects of bombing on Weymouth and Portland during WW2 and its effect on the water supply.

9. Collections Weeks 2025

- 9.1 In late November and early December the JAS closed for two weeks in order to undertake its annual collections-focused work. Staff supported by a large body of volunteers worked on a wide range of tasks for which it is normally very difficult to find time during the standard working week. Achievements included the re-housing of over 500 boxes of legal records, the accessioning of a range of new material and the auditing of collections. The full report on the fortnight and its outcomes can be found here:
<https://news.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/dorset-history-centre-blog/2025/12/12/collections-fortnight-2025-what-did-we-do/>

10. New material

10.1 Since the last meeting of the Board, the JAS has received several significant new deposits of material. These include:

- The records of Poole Harbour Commissioners – the more than 50 ‘day books’ recording every ship entering the port dating from 1838.
- An autobiographical manuscript by Bridport apothecary and notable Dr Giles Roberts, 1799 – purchased at auction with support from the Friends of the Nations’ Libraries.
- A collection of over 1000 glass plate negatives deposited post-digitisation by Sherborne Museum (late 19th-early 20th century).

11. Conclusion

11.1 This report concludes the period of the JAS’s 2021-2026 Service Development Plan. The next meeting of the Joint Archives Board will be presented with a new Plan which will scope out the next 5 years of the service’s priority activity. The challenge to provide additional archive accommodation remains. The decision in March on the application to NLHF will heavily influence the service and its trajectory in the coming years.

1. Alternative options considered

There is no alternative model for delivering archive services currently under consideration.

2. Legal considerations

None

3. Financial implications

All activities described in this report are covered by either the JAS revenue budget, reserve or an externally-sourced grant.

4. Natural environment, climate & ecology implications

DHC has significantly improved its energy performance through a major project to reduce consumption whilst ensuring the maintenance of high-quality environmental controls. This, combined with the generation of solar energy through PV panels on roof elevations has rendered the building highly energy-efficient.

5. Well-being and health implications

The JAS contributes to wellbeing outcomes for both councils and improving the quality of life for residents of BCP and Dorset Council areas and attracting visitors to the county lie at the heart of its work.

6. 6. Other implications

None

7. 7. Risk implications

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

Current Risk: Medium

Residual Risk: Medium (due to pressure on archive accommodation).

8. 8. Equalities

The JAS has completed a full EQIA. Areas for further consideration include working with younger people and with black and ethnic minority groups and religious minorities. Improved digital provision will also assist in providing greater access to collections for people living at some distance from Dorchester.

9. 9. Appendices

None.

10. 10. **Background papers**

None.

11. Report sign-off

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 Director of Finance and Commercial (Section 151 Officer) and the appropriate Portfolio Holder(s)

This page is intentionally left blank