

Joint Archives Advisory Board

5 February 2021

Joint Archives Service: Service Plan (2018-21) Monitoring Report

For Decision

Portfolio Holder:

Cllr J Haynes, Customer and Community Services
Cllr Mohan Iyengar, Tourism, Leisure and Culture, BCP Council

Local Councillor(s): Pan-Dorset service

Executive Director: J Sellgren, Executive Director of Place

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Report Status: Public

Recommendations:

- (i) Endorses the implementation of the 2018-21 service plan appended to this report as demonstrating the quality and value for money provided by the JAS;
- (ii) Notes the range of positive and innovative collections, learning and engagement-related work undertaken by the JAS;
- (iii) Notes that the relatively small size of the JAS staffing structure means that any future budget reductions will have a direct and clear impact on the service's ability to deliver the service plan.
- (iv) Supports the JAS's role in identifying, transferring and preserving the records of the 9 predecessor authorities and the two new unitary councils.

Reason for Recommendation:

Effective oversight of the regular service delivery element of the service plan by the Joint Archives Advisory Board is required under the terms of the Joint Archives Agreement, 1997.

1. Executive Summary

This report updates the Joint Archives Advisory Board on the current and future work of the Joint Archives Service (JAS). The Service Plan appended to this report carries detailed information on the service's activities and the report will highlight work undertaken against the JAS's key objectives. The service has:

- Delivered public access to collections and information throughout the Covid-19 pandemic
- Completed the Wellcome Trust-funded cataloguing of the Herrison Hospital (Dorset Asylum) archive
- Continued work on the Frink archive project.
- Continued to expand the range and type of digital preservation activities
- Delivered significant energy savings through the use of passive environmental technology
- Acquired important new collections.

The JAS priorities for 2018-21 are:

- i) Actively acquire archives relating to Bournemouth, Christchurch, Dorset and Poole and to work through all available means to preserve them to optimum effect;
- ii) Provide efficient, innovative and quality services which deliver rewarding customer experiences for all DHC customers and value for money for the two funding authorities;
- iii) Work with a wide variety of audiences and through education, community engagement and marketing to raise the profile of DHC, so encouraging access to and appreciation of the archival resource;
- iv) Increase and sustain volunteering at the DHC and elsewhere so adding value by delivering targeted programmes of work;
- v) Seek, with a range of partners across the two authorities, project opportunities which both enhance funding to the JAS and deliver positive outcomes and mutual benefits to all parties;
- vi) Manage the DHC building with all possible efficiency, so increasing the benefits for customers, collections and staff;
- vii) Create, implement and embed a digital preservation strategy;

2. Financial Implications

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

3. 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.

4. Climate 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. Other Implications

None

6. Risk Assessment

Having considered the risks associated with this decision, the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: Medium

Residual Risk: Medium

A revised risk register can be found at the rear of the service plan. Risks are presented in descending order of severity, the principal two being:

- i) The risk of further local government funding cuts during the financial year 2021/22 and beyond.

- ii) Failure to develop preferred option to provide additional space for physical collections held at DHC.

7. Equalities Impact Assessment

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.

8. Appendices

Appendix 1: Joint Archives Service Plan 2018-21

Appendix 2: Joint Archives Service Strategic Risk Register

9. Background Papers

- Public Service Quality Group statistics 2018
- Accession records, service statistics and service records.
- Accreditation data, 2018
- Archives Unlocked, The National Archives, 2020
- JAS policies, revised 2020
- Previous reports to the JAAB

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Joint Archives Service (JAS) is Accredited by The National Archives and holds the corporate archives of its funding councils and their predecessor bodies as well as thousands of individual collections dating from 965AD which collectively make up the written heritage and memory of Bournemouth, Christchurch, Dorset and Poole. In addition, DHC holds Public Records on behalf of HM Government.

The JAS provides services to the public in three principal ways:

- On-site - public access at Dorset History Centre (DHC);
 - Off-site - learning and community engagement;
 - Online – a large and growing market for web-based resources, particularly given the JAS's relationship with Ancestry.co.uk, its catalogue and digital engagement work.
- 1.2 Often a blend of one or more of these elements may be involved and JAS service provision is fundamentally a balance between collections-related preservation work and access to information and resources in a variety of formats and media. Twice-annual consultations on the service plan, its goals and priorities are held with colleagues from within the JAS and from BCP Council. Close communication with the Museums Advisor for Bournemouth, Christchurch, Dorset and Poole means that opportunities for collaboration between museums and archives can be identified at an early stage.

2. Background

- 2.1 An updated service plan for the JAS 2018-21 is appended to this report. It builds on the activities and outcomes of the last service plan and offers a 3-year strategic approach to the JAS's work in keeping with the Board's long-standing, stated preference for an aligned 3-year budget and service plan. The service plan has adopted and integrated the key messages of the national strategy for archives developed by The National Archives (TNA) *Archives Unlocked* (2020), namely Trust, Enrichment and Openness.¹
- 2.2 The current service provision and priorities are under review in a wide-ranging consultancy-led analysis of the JAS undertaken by Elizabeth Oxborrow-Cowan and Associates. The report is due to be released in February 2021 and will provide the basis for the two funding councils and the service to determine the JAS's priorities in the forthcoming years. This in turn will result in the drafting of a new service plan.
- 2.3 The JAS, in common with wider society, has been significantly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. Most obviously, DHC had to close its doors to the public for a prolonged period (20 March-7 July and throughout November 2020). However, it has proved possible to maintain and even grow a relationship with

¹ <https://nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives-sector/projects-and-programmes/strategic-vision-for-archives/strategic-priorities/>

current and new audiences through remote access and digital engagement. This will be detailed later in section 4 of the report.

- 2.4 The two most pressing challenges for the service remain:
- (i) The continuing search for an affordable and long-term solution for the future additional collections storage required by the service. Opened in 1991, DHC is now approaching full capacity with 3,500 empty box spaces (of a total 56,000).
 - (ii) Council records – the JAS is keen to ensure that the corporate memories of both new unitary councils plus those of the nine predecessor councils are safeguarded through the orderly and managed transfer of hard copy and digital records. This is a significant and on-going piece of work and extends to both hard copy and digital records.

3. Service Structure and Capacity

- 3.1 The service's core capacity is 11.67 fte posts which is unchanged from the previous report. Two archivists working on externally-funded projects have completed their contracts.
- 3.2 The JAS was successful as part of a four-service consortium in acquiring a 15-month trainee. This is fully-externally funded through The National Archives as part of its 'Bridging the Digital Gap' programme and is intended to grow the archive sector's digital preservation capacity and skills. The trainee will be hosted by the JAS until March 2022.

4. Covid-19 and its Impact

- 4.1 At the time of writing, Lockdown is in force and it is impossible to predict how long the necessary public health measures will be in force. The JAS in common with almost all public services closed to the public on 20 March. Staff continued to undertake regular checks of the building and collections to ensure their continued integrity. Staff worked from home, focussing on electronic collections management tasks. The service maintained a phone and email enquiry service. From early May, a limited number of staff returned to DHC to undertake work that could not be done from home. Careful risk assessment was carried out and hygiene and social distancing measures were instituted. This allowed conservation and project work to continue as well as access to collections to fulfil public enquiries.
- 4.2 The JAS was one of the first archive services to re-open its doors to appointment-only bookings on 7 July. Initially operating two days a week, this extended to three days plus a fourth day for volunteers to re-enter the building. Demand remained strong and appointments filled up quickly. The second lockdown in November meant that this activity ceased, although the service re-opened in early December, remaining open until the current lockdown came into force. Careful management of public spaces and collections meant that the facilitation of public access to records worked in the main very well and can be re-activated when safe to do so.
- 4.3 The JAS was very keen to keep in touch with its current audiences and where possible to use digital technology to attract new audiences. To this end, staff focussed on making more information available through a variety of channels. During 2020:
- 117 blogs published (compared to 52 in 2019)

- 27,400 views of the blog (compared to 11,306 in 2019)
- Twitter followers rose from 2296 to 2614
- Newsletter subscribers rose to 11,335

- 4.4 The JAS, working with Lighthouse, Poole initiated its 'Corona Diaries' project. Following a public appeal over 100 people from across the county agreed to record their thoughts, observations and ideas relating to their personal experiences of the pandemic. Many of the diarists are still at work and in due course, when the current crisis has abated, the records, both digital and hard copy will form part of the permanent record at DHC.

4. Museums Advisor for Bournemouth, Christchurch, Dorset and Poole

- 4.1 The Museums advisor for Bournemouth, Christchurch, Dorset and Poole is based at DHC. The role is not part of the JAS although is managed within the same service unit and work between the two areas is closely aligned. Key developments since the last board report in December 2019 have been;
- Supporting the roll-out of a new Dorset Council Voluntary and Community Sector funding regime, which now incorporates revenue funding agreements with 11 Dorset museum trusts
 - Contributing to a diverse range of emergency funding applications to enable the sector to survive Covid. Dorset museums have secured over £3 million to date.
 - Working with South West Museum Development colleagues to connect museums to digital training and networking opportunities, so professional standards can be maintained and developed
 - Completing the implementation of the Lottery funded *Rural Resilience* programme to secure tangible improvements in governance, business planning and marketing for the museums mentored as part of this process.
 - Working closely with selected museums including the Russell-Cotes to remodel business plans, ensure operations are Covid compliant and seek new income generation initiatives.

5. Community Outreach and Public Engagement

- 5.1 Covid-19 severely disrupted the delivery of community engagement activities, both 'business as usual' and project-based. DHC's Community Engagement Officer was seconded to and worked for approximately 3 months on the Community Shield response at Dorset Council. However, much activity has still gone on whilst Covid has precluded face-to-face interaction.
- 5.2 Necessarily, projects due to run in 2020 (Letters Live performances and schools programme and My Creative Life, a partner project to benefit older people and young men with mental health disorders) were stalled. The JAS's older people's group and shared reading sessions also stopped. The wonderful correspondence researched for the cancelled performances of 'Letters Live' is being used to make an enriching, curriculum linked resource for schools to be part-funded and distributed via the Cultural Hub for Poole and Bournemouth (Wave and Soundstorm).

- 5.3 The JAS's Community Engagement Officer is working hard to maintain partnerships which will enable us to benefit local people through access to our stimulating materials. We are in the process of supplying archive inspired activities to partner platforms with good reach including Stepping into Nature's 'Picnic in the Park' AONB / Big Lottery) and AGE UK.
- 5.3 Volunteers have continued to contribute to the JAS's work, with some of them moving to Microsoft Teams. The new software arrived just in time for us to explore its potential for remote volunteering during these months of restrictions. We have found it an enormously efficient and friendly way to keep in touch with some volunteers and look forward to enlarging our use of Teams as a volunteer management and engagement tool. We are looking forward to showcasing this aspect of the year's work when we are assessed in May 2021 for the continuation of our Investors in Volunteering status.
- 5.4 Staff and volunteers have completed the transcription of the LGBT+Speakout project oral history interviews, and a piece is being prepared for publication. The collection has been added to the British Library's index of LGBT+ resources.
- 5.5 The service is beginning work with two young people referred by Ansbury Careers Guidance. This supported placement continues our offer of three placements a year for young people facing additional challenges accessing work, education or training.
- 5.6 The JAS's Community Engagement Officer is supporting the Chair of Kushti Bok (the local charity for raising awareness of our Gypsy, Romany, Traveller community) with partnerships and funding applications to help develop organisational resilience. In addition, the service is currently supporting a further three community groups in the process of contemporary collecting, including the Cranborne Chase AONB.
- 5.7 DHC is about to commence hosting a telephone friendship group for those with a special interest in Dorset's past via Pramacare's new system, which holds further possibilities for telephone engagement with older people who don't use computers - an otherwise very hard to reach group.
- 5.8 During 2020 we accessioned several oral history collections reflecting aspects of Dorset life from community groups including those benefitting people with learning disabilities or homelessness. Each of these accessions reflects a period of friendly support to the project and a group of people's pleasure and dedication in representing and finding out about themselves and their histories.
- 5.9 The JAS will review its digital engagement strategy and set new parameters and a pathway for the year ahead. The landscape is going to be fast-changing, with the balance between virtual and real-life engagement changing again, but this is an opportunity to forge new partnerships, experiment with new ways of working and develop our digital offer.

6. DHC Repositories: Environmental Improvements

- 6.1 The work on DHC's strongroom repositories to introduce passive environmental control completed in October 2019. The period since then has allowed the service to review the benefits of the c. £200,000 of investment. The purpose of the work was to reduce the reliance upon mechanical air conditioning, but not to compromise the quality and integrity of the preservation environment achieved. The service has saved around 90 tonnes of CO₂ and £20k in energy costs each year, reducing its electricity energy consumption by around 80%.
- 6.2 The project has prompted considerable interest within the wider archive sector and staff have presented information on the project to the archives sector's professional body. Low Carbon Dorset are publishing a case study on their website. The archive service of the Tank Museum is now also following this approach. The JAS is considering other potential grant-aided improvements to the DHC building which if successful will further improve energy efficiency.

7. Records of Dorset Council and BCP Council

- 7.1 Following the establishment of the two new unitary authorities, there remains a great deal to be done in terms of identifying the key records of the nine predecessor councils – those that need to be retained for legal, evidential or cultural reasons. It is critical that the JAS is able to collaborate with services and staff across Dorset and BCP Councils to ensure that the corporate memories of nine are safeguarded. This work will help to bolster compliance, aid efficient decision-making and support the review of estates that is currently going on across both councils.
- 7.2 Within BCP, the move from three to one central civic buildings will lead necessarily to the displacement of large quantities of paper records. The JAS is working with colleagues in BCP to ensure that the key elements of the corporate memory are identified, retained and transferred to DHC to sit with the earlier corporate records of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole borough councils respectively. Work has been interrupted due to Covid and much remains to be done, but regular liaison is helping to clarify how this work will develop. The JAS has also stressed the need for digital records to be considered within this programme and ideally transferred into Preservica.
- 7.3 Dorset Council is also engaged in a major programme of work to reduce and re-purpose its estate. Similarly, this will lead to the displacement of significant quantities of paper records, some of which will need to be transferred to DHC for permanent preservation. This work has also been slowed by the pandemic, but regular communication with Estates and Records Management colleagues is taking place. The JAS is in dialogue with a number of service areas (Planning, Democratic Services, Coroner, Adoption) about their digital records and how they can be migrated from their originating system into Preservica and thereby safeguarded against loss, corruption or misuse.

- 7.4 The JAS is working with colleagues in Children's Services to ensure that continuing work they are doing to identify, digitise and transfer into Preservica historic adoption records proceeds smoothly. The JAS is involved in a piece of research taking place at the national level to examine the long-term preservation of care records.
- 7.5 On a related but pertinent note, the transfer of what is likely to be significant quantities of records to DHC from both councils will reduce the already limited storage space remaining within the service.

8. Digital Preservation

- 8.1 The JAS has continued to develop and enhance its digital preservation offer. Key outcomes have been:
- 1TB of data ingested to the JAS's digital repository, Preservica between December 2019-January 2021.
 - The capture and ingest of DC and BCP webpages relating to coronavirus; this work was recognised by [The National Archives](#) in their annual review of the sector
 - Secured key documentation from Dorset Council's Community Shield project (response to coronavirus pandemic)
 - Liaison with representatives from DC Children's Services; DC Democratic Services; Dorset Coroner's Office; and various BCP departments regarding potential future transfer of digital records.
 - Making available certain digital content to view or listen to online via our archive (Epexio) catalogue.
- 8.2 The JAS's new digital preservation trainee (see section 3.2) will add capacity to this vital area of work and help the service to improve the transfer and preservation of digital content.
- 8.3 Currently, BCP Council does not contribute to the costs of Preservica and is therefore unable to benefit from its ability to ingest and preserve digital content. It would make every sense for the new larger unitary council to consider joining in the process, benefit from the reduced costs of Preservica (derived from the consortium led by Dorset) and thereby safeguard its digital corporate memory. There is a significant and growing risk to the digital corporate memory the longer this situation persists.

9. Collections Management and Conservation

- 9.1 DHC continues to receive regular, significant accessions of hard copy archives, alongside a growing number of digital records. At the current rate of accession there remains less than three years' expansion space. It is already the case that the transfer of at least one large collection (Bournemouth and Dorset Echo newspapers) has had to be deferred to the inability of the DHC repositories to accommodate it.
- 9.2 The JAS acquired a new 'front end' for its online catalogue. The new system 'Epexio' is a great improvement on the previous version. Epexio offers significant additional functionality including the potential for online galleries and

narratives, remote volunteering and the geo-location of content on digital maps. Work is underway to expand this new range of digital features.

9.3 In the last 12 months, 200 separate accessions of hard copy material have been received. Key amongst them were:

- The transfer of the literary archives of Thomas Hardy, William Barnes and Sylvia Townsend Warner from Dorset County Museum.
- The archives of Beales of Bournemouth which were rescued from the store just prior to Lockdown coming into force.
- The archive of environmental charity Common Ground.

9.4 As the JAS is now the key custodian of the archives of Thomas Hardy, the service led on a fundraising campaign to purchase a collection of Hardy's manuscripts and printed material which was offered for sale via a London dealer. Thanks to two grants of £25,000 and £20,000 and a crowdfunding campaign led by Dorset Archives Trust, the full asking price of £50,000 was raised and the collection acquired in December. The material is of great significance and its purchase attracted national interest.

9.5 The JAS's conservation service had another successful year, generating 40% of its costs via external grant aid and private commissions. Principal amongst these were:

- Work for Dorset County Museum– condition assessing and conserving items for display in their new galleries. Documents included original manuscripts by Hardy, Barnes, Townsend Warner and Anning.
- Herrison Hospital/Wellcome Trust – conserving and repackaging documents such as patient registers, medical journals and architectural plans of the building (see 11.2).

10. JAS and Higher Education

10.1 The JAS has developed strong relations with several Higher Education providers and projects regularly involve academics and students. To underline the mutual benefits and collaborative nature of this work, the JAS signed two separate memorandums of understanding with the University of Exeter and Bournemouth University respectively. These documents will support and promote future joint working in a range of areas and demonstrate the perceived value of the JAS and its collections to large institutions.

11. Herrison Hospital archive and the Wellcome Trust

11.1 In late 2018, the JAS was successful in the highly competitive second round of the Wellcome Trust's research resources grants scheme. The award, for over £56,000 was to fund the employment of an archivist for 12 months to arrange and catalogue the archive of Herrison Hospital, the Dorset Asylum. The archive dates back to 1832 and contains thousands of patient records as well as a wide range of material relating to the operation of the hospital.

- 11.2 The cataloguing of the archive was completed in March 2020 with the archivist finishing their contract just before Lockdown. The conservation element of the project was however significantly disrupted by the pandemic. Work on this aspect of the project will now complete in March 2021. Wellcome has generously offered supplemental funding to cover the time lost due to Covid, so additional external project budget will be available.
- 11.3 A third element of the project has been engagement with both the University of Exeter and Bournemouth University. The project benefitted significantly from the engagement and support of an Exeter PhD student whose work has advanced our understanding of how the hospital operated and how it was unique in terms of the system of Victorian asylums established countrywide.

12. The Archive of Dame Elisabeth Frink

- 12.1 Work on the externally-funded Frink project was badly disrupted by Covid with at least two months' of the project lost. The archivist employed on the project left in August, three months before the end of their contract. Since then, the project delivery has been adapted and roles shared between the Archivist (Collections), a part-time Collections Assistant and the external project mentor. Momentum has been restored and it is anticipated that the full [catalogue](#) will be completed in the first half of 2021.

13. Capital Project

- 13.1 Constructed in 1991 and after 30 years of collection growth, DHC is approaching full capacity as an archive storage facility. There has been no further work on a capital scheme as we await the consultants' report and the clarification of the service's future priorities and direction of travel.

14. Conclusion

- 14.1 The JAS continues to work hard to deliver its service plan priorities and to balance its commitments and aspirations against the available resources. It continues to lever substantial external funds in order to add value to its core activities; safeguarding our corporate memory and cultural heritage. It makes collections available to audiences and promotes the use of archives as an important element across business, education and leisure.
- 14.2 The service is acutely aware of the challenging funding environment in which the two councils are operating. However, a prompt decision on how its future storage needs are to be addressed would be of great benefit as the ability of the JAS to manage incoming collections becomes more challenging over the next 24-36 months.

Sam Johnston
Service Manager for Archives

Reviewed January 2021

January 2021

Joint Archives Service Service Plan 2018-2021



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Purpose: This service plan is intended to fulfil certain key functions and will:

- Describe planned workstreams over the period 2018-21;
- Demonstrate how the service contributes towards the corporate outcomes of the three funding authorities;
- Provide key information about the service to enable evaluation and analysis of its performance².

² **Note:** This service plan has been prepared at a time of significant and sometimes unpredictable reductions in the financing of public services. The delivery of the Plan has therefore been predicated upon a capacity commensurate with that present at the time of revision (January 2021). Any future budget reductions would therefore clearly impact upon the JAS's ability to deliver some of the work detailed within the Plan.

1. Service Description

The Joint Archives Service (JAS), based at Dorset History Centre (DHC) is operated on behalf of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council and Dorset Council. Partnership between the two authorities as delivered through the joint service sits at the heart of JAS activities and underwrites all aspects of its operation as detailed in the service plan.

DHC is the only Accredited archive service within the county with Approved Repository status as designated by The National Archives. Local studies library services are operated on behalf of Dorset County Council.

2. Vision, Mission and Goals

Our Vision

That Dorset History Centre is the physical and virtual hub for the archival heritage of Bournemouth, Christchurch, Dorset and Poole in both hard copy and digital formats.

Our Mission

To acquire, preserve and make accessible the archives of Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole and so promote cultural, economic, educational and social well-being; to act as the corporate memory for the two funding bodies.

Our Goals

We will:

- Be an open and innovative organisation, known and trusted by all;
- Lead in developing systems and services which enhance the management and care of archival heritage and local studies;
- Increase the use of archives and other heritage assets through a wide range of public engagement activities;
- Constantly improve what we do through partnership and entrepreneurialism.
- Promote equal access to services and collections through excellent customer service.

3. The key priorities of the JAS are to:

Priority 1: Actively acquire archives relating to Bournemouth, Christchurch, Dorset and Poole and to work through all available means to preserve them to optimum effect;

Priority 2: Provide efficient, innovative and quality services which deliver rewarding customer experiences for all DHC customers and value for money for the two funding authorities;

Priority 3: Work with a wide variety of audiences and through education, community engagement and marketing to raise the profile of DHC, so encouraging access to and appreciation of the archival resource;

Priority 4: Increase and sustain volunteering at Dorset History Centre and elsewhere so adding value by delivering targeted programmes of work;

Priority 5: Seek, with a range of partners across the three authorities and beyond, project opportunities which both enhance funding to the JAS and deliver positive outcomes and mutual benefits to all parties;

Priority 6: Manage the DHC building with all possible efficiency, so increasing the benefits for customers, collections and staff;

Priority 7: Create, implement and embed a digital preservation strategy.

Selected corporate priorities of the funding authorities to whose outcomes the JAS contributes:

Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council – Council Plan (2019):

- Sustainable environment
- Dynamic region
- Connected communities
- Brighter futures

Dorset Council – Council Plan (2019):




- Unique environment
- Strong, healthy communities
- Staying safe and well
- Economic development

4. Action Plan

Red Amber Green (RAG) Summary

The total number of workstreams within the current review of the 2018-2021 service plan is:

Red	3
Amber	4
Green	21
Total	28

Key: ✓ = completed  Green = On track  Amber = Some minor slippage
 Red = Delays/Serious Problems/Not being Achieved **DF** = Deferred

Key to officers involved in specific workstreams:

SJ – Sam Johnston, Service Manager for Archives

JH – Jacqui Halewood, Principal Archivist

CMA– Collections Management Archivist (currently vacant)


CP – Cassandra Pickavance, Digital Preservation Archivist





MG – Maria Gayton, Community Engagement Officer

JB – Jenny Barnard, Archive Conservation Officer





LD – Luke Dady, Public Services Archivist

Priority 1: In partnership across Bournemouth, Christchurch Dorset and Poole to actively acquire archives relating to those areas and to work through all available means to preserve them to optimum effect;



	Workstream/Project	Lead	Outcome(s)	Timeframe	Current progress	Rag Status
1.1	Development of proactive acquisition strategy for the corporate records of DC and BCP	SJ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficient acquisition of records so adding to the corporate memory • Supports legislative compliance. • Value for money for funders. 	Ongoing - but with LGR there is a real need to identify at risk material to avoid its loss during reconfiguration of councils.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-going attempts made to engage with services within both authorities. • Work with DC Records Management to facilitate transfer of records • Discussions with BCP officers over the council's estates moves and the likely transfer of records. • No uptake in digital preservation by BCP – urgent need to address this. 	




1.2	Maintain current level of collecting together with the targeted acquisition of archives especially from the business, legal and arts sectors	SJ/ CMA	Ensure statutory legal compliance re: Public Records Acts, FoI and GDPR legislation. Building up the collection in areas of identified weakness within the DHC holdings. Adding to the publicly accessible cultural heritage of the county.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement over hospital records – especially Poole but still very little material transferred. Notable artistic archives deposited. <p>Depositors strongly encouraged to help fund costs of storage.</p>	
1.3	To increase the quantity and enhance the types of data available online relating to DHC-held collections.	JH/ MF	More publicly available collections-related data. Links to Preservica, DHC's digital preservation platform.	Steady upload of material.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteers creating more content through digitisation and cataloguing projects. <p>Acquisition of new digital front end (Epexio) will open up opportunities through new functionality.</p>	
1.4	Selected purchase of documents (auction etc) using the DAT purchase fund	SJ	Acquiring for public ownership items that would otherwise be sold privately.	Ongoing steady stream of material acquired.	Steady stream of purchases. Major success in raising £50k to purchase a collection of Thomas Hardy's papers in association with Dorset Archives Trust.	
1.5	Deliver a prioritised programme of document preservation and conservation.	JB	Rendering damaged/unusable documents available for digitisation and public access.	Ongoing (Archive Conservation Officer 1.0 fte)	Volunteer programme of cleaning, repackaging and re-boxing. Healthy body of project funding and external clients through to autumn 2021.	




Priority 2: Provide quality services which deliver rewarding customer experiences for all DHC customers across the three authorities;

	Workstream/Project	Lead	Outcome(s)	Timeframe	Current Progress	RAG status
2.1	Participation in Public Services Quality survey of archive services	LD	Score of at least 90% 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied'	2018 (biennial)	96% approval in results from May 2018 with an average dwell time per visitor of 2.6 hours. There was no survey in 2020 due the Covid-19 pandemic.	
2.2	Participation in CIPFA statistical returns for archive services	SJ	To appear in top quartile of services using value for money criteria	Annual	Dorset Council no longer participates in CIPFA returns.	
2.3	Deliver excellent customer service to all users of the JAS, whether on-site or remote from DHC	JH/ LD	Meeting the needs of all audiences – both established and new.	Ongoing	High satisfaction levels (both quantitative and qualitative) in terms of public service delivery. Staff are keen to engage new audiences and are pro-active at engaging with service users. Exploring how the service can deliver more digitally will lie at the heart of future service planning.	
2.4	Archive Accreditation	SJ/AI I	Completion of application and successful meeting of the Accreditation standard (5 year renewal interval)	2018	Successfully accredited in March 2018. A light touch review will take place in March 2021 with a full re-submission in 2024.	



Priority 3: Work with a wide variety of audiences and through education, community engagement and marketing to raise the profile of DHC, so encouraging access to and appreciation of the archival resource;

	Workstream/Project	Lead	Outcome(s)	Timeframe	Progress	RAG status
3.1	Dorset Content Online with Ancestry.co.uk	SJ/C MA	500,000 pages of Dorset content online; Eventual source of revenue income to the service; Free on-site access. Over 2 million page views annually.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future additional content to Ancestry is an aspiration; • Continued high levels of usage, particularly during the pandemic. • Small but useful income stream for JAS. • Confirmed its value during pandemic with significant increase in activity. 	
3.2	Online resources for schools	JH/M G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test resource requirements with teachers focus group. • Develop template for resources. • Define scope for on-line resources. 	Not active	Recent employment of a fixed term learning officer post has resulted in some great resources for teachers: Future resources are only likely to be produced as the result of externally funded project opportunities. Resources for B&P Cultural Hub in preparation.	



3.3	Investigate linkages with academic institutions to better exploit DHC-held collections.	SJ/C MA/J H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PhD studentship(s) with Exeter • Possible collaborative projects • Opens up new potential sources of funding through external grants. 	Ongoing	<p>Positive activities:</p> <p>(i) Building relationship with MoU with Bournemouth University through the capital scheme and library.</p> <p>(ii) Links with AUB re: Poole Pottery</p> <p>(iii) Opportunities emerging with Bournemouth University and its BA in Public History – work experience and extended project placements.</p> <p>(iv) MoU recently signed with University of Exeter.</p> <p>(v) Student travel fund (DAT).</p>	
3.4	Long-standing aspiration to mount major mapping resource online – electronically pinned to Ordnance Survey base map	SJ	Enhanced access to collections. Potential to link to other SW resources	Linked to capital project – currently not active.	Acquisition of Epexio should help to precipitate this work. Potential to form part of capital project public engagement programme or to be actioned as a standalone project for which external funding could be sought.	
3.5	Community engagement - support and facilitation for a range of groups and projects to enhance access to and enjoyment of archival heritage.	MG	<p>Positive engagement with a range of groups and subject matter.</p> <p>Value of archives as source material for a wide span of uses.</p> <p>Work badly interrupted by Covid-19 and dislocation in staffing and funding opportunities.</p>	Ongoing	<p>Community engagement work is at full capacity with a wide range of groups and organisations.</p> <p>Groups include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspired by Archives • Bournemouth and Poole Cultural Hub • Age UK carers' group • Poole Lighthouse 	




					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bournemouth Jewish population LGBTQ+ oral history project Gypsy, Romany, Traveller cultural group 	
3.6	Commissioning of archive services	MG/S J	To provide positive outcomes for people, often with additional needs, who would be unlikely to engage with the JAS and its collections through additional commissioned services.	Ongoing	This has proved very difficult to achieve with social care and other agencies proving difficult to engage with. It remains something that the JAS would like to pursue if and when the time is right to do so.	
3.7	Creation of holistic marketing and promotional strategy for the JAS with in-service capacity to: create promotional literature, update websites, generate press releases and liaise with DAT	LD/J H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise the profile of DHC to customers and stakeholders Attract new audiences Demonstrate value for money <p>Help to sell services and generate income.</p>	Ongoing	The pandemic has stimulated a major increase in digital engagement through blogs, social media and newsletters. It is something that the JAS intends to increase with the new functionality provided by Epexio.	
3.8	Review of web presence and content on other sites to expand variety of means by which information about the service can be maintained.	MG & All	Web presence on all funders' websites to act as a first point of contact; Raises the profile of DHC with staff and customers alike.	Ongoing	Review of BCP web pages and improve the range of content and links back to DHC site.	

Priority 4: Increase and sustain volunteering at Dorset History Centre and elsewhere so adding value by delivering targeted programmes of work



	Workstream/Project	Lead	Outcome(s)	Timeframe	Progress	RAG status
4.1	Volunteer activity at DHC.	CMA /JB/ MG/ CP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivering critical 'added value' capacity, sorting, repackaging and listing collections; Involving the community in the life of DHC and its collections. Includes work experience opportunities for young people. Wider range of projects for volunteers to engage with (digitisation, research, oral history, conservation). 	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accreditation achieved under the Investors in Volunteers standard using HLF funding (May 18). Volunteering has been badly hit by Covid-19. Limited volunteering in the searchroom was possible between July and October, but is currently suspended. Epexio will offer remote volunteering opportunities. 	
4.2	Dorset Archives Trust www.dorsetarchivetrust.org	SJ/J H	<p>To support the effective development of DAT as a support mechanism for DHC with its 3 key priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fundraising Collections development Advocacy 	Ongoing	<p>Useful support provided for JAS with steady membership. Events programme based around archive collections. Successful funding bids on behalf of DHC priority projects Will be important in terms of fundraising for a capital project.</p>	

Priority 5: To seek, with a range of partners across the three authorities and beyond, project opportunities which both enhance funding to the JAS and deliver positive outcomes and mutual benefits to all parties



	Workstream/project	Lead	Outcome(s)	Timeframe	Current progress	Rag Status
5.1	Seek funding and extra resources to catalogue and selectively digitise key collections from within the DHC holdings	SJ/JH	<p>Make large quantities of new material available; Assist preservation through digital facsimiles; Increase the JAS's online presence; Collections requiring investment include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fox-Strangways archive • Goodden archive • Quarter Sessions 	Ongoing	<p>Reliant upon opportunities to seek funding through either public or private sources.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Herrison Hospital project - £56k grant from the Wellcome Trust – will complete in March '21. 2) Frink archive project - £45k of external funding – work still to complete. 	
5.2	Archives South West	SJ/C P	Consultancy-led research into the collections of historic newsprint held by services and the potential for digitisation to enhance access.	Due to complete in April 2021	On schedule.	

5.3	Local authority consortium using Preservica software. Led by DHC, now includes 8 members	SJ/C P	To deliver cheapest possible price for access to preservation software and to share skills and knowledge.	April 2019-present	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successfully signed in 2019 and other potential partners interested in joining. • Encouraging BCP Council to adopt its use. 	
5.4	Windrose film archive project	SJ/C P	Seek HLF funding (in role as principal project partner) for digitisation, cataloguing and engagement activity associated with this major film heritage resource.	Successful application to HLF with DHC as partner; £67,000 grant.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Now complete. Follow-on project potential. 	
5.5	'Dorset Authors' project	SJ	Exploring a potential project to catalogue and conserve the archives of Thomas Hardy and William Barnes. Would involve a range of partners.	Looking at potential external funders to identify the best approach.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In development. 	

Priority 6: To manage the DHC building with all possible efficiency, so increasing the benefits for customers, collections and staff;

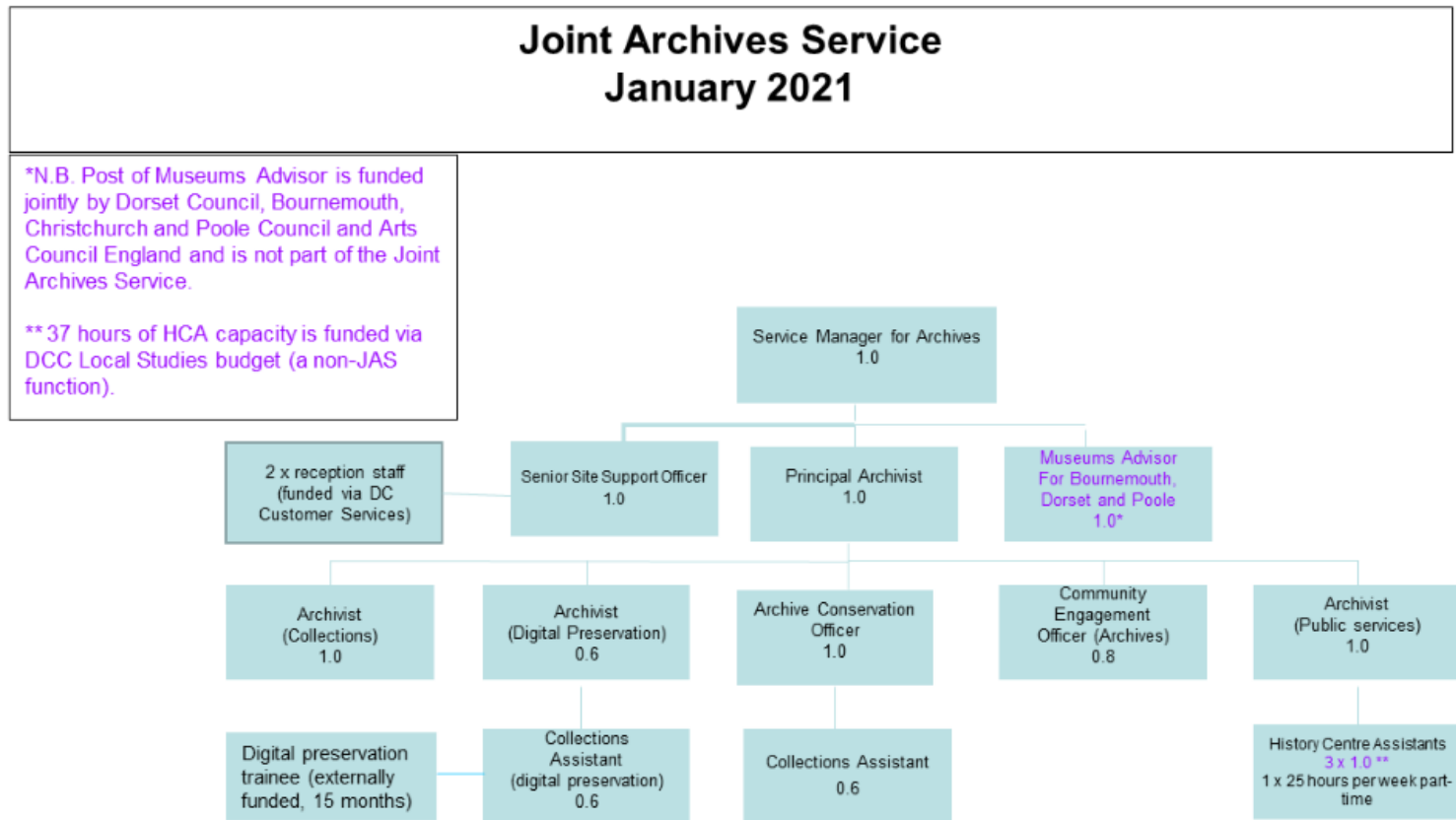
	Workstream/project	Lead	Outcome(s)	Timeframe	Current progress	Rag Status
6.1	Maintenance of PD:5454-compliant preservation environment	SJ/MF /JH/J B	Optimum preservation and security environment for collections Reduced energy costs re: management of environment. Greener building	2019	£200,000 project to seal the repositories and with minimal mechanical intervention deliver largely passive environmental controls now complete Significant savings in energy costs. Interest from other services. Replacement of Inergen gas suppressant Jan 2021 (£60k) to ensure preservation functions are fully maintained.	
6.3	Capital project; extension of DHC building to ensure adequate space for collections.	SJ/JH /CP/M G/Vd W	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure appropriate storage is available for the next 25-30 years of archive acquisition. • Ensure that the lowest cost 'full life' solution is agreed. • Wide programme of public and community engagement across the county 	HLF project rejected Dec 17; consideration being given to next steps.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently awaiting steer from the two funding councils. 	

Priority 7: Create, implement and embed a digital preservation strategy.

	Workstream/project	Lead	Outcome(s)	Timeframe	Current progress	Rag Status
7.1	Fully resourced JAS digital preservation strategy resulting in robust digital continuity for JAS and its clients: http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/information-management/understanding-digital-continuity.pdf	CP/SJ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the accessibility of digital content in the future. • Reduction in risk and guarantor of the corporate memory • Possible chargeable model for 3rd party organisations • Collaborative opportunities with other local authorities. • Work with DCC IT and RMU colleagues over complementary Sharepoint roll-out. • Platform for access to DHC-held images. 	Ongoing;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DCC funding to support the trial of a digital preservation platform secured. Preservica software installed in Autumn 2013 • Colleagues in BCP apprised of activity with offer to opt into the platform asap. • Development work with Preservica is ongoing and consortium model established 	
7.2	Digital content strategy	SJ/CP	Much clearer understanding of what digital content DHC should be seeking to mount online – tailoring resources to public demand and need.	2017	Report completed and mounted on TNA website: http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/document/s/archives/dorset-history-centre-digital-content-report.pdf New Epexio system offers great functionality in terms of digital engagement.	

5. *Service Budget and Capacity*

JAS Capacity	2016-17 Budget	2016-17 Actual	2017-18 Budget	2018-19	2019/20	Comment
Staff numbers	15.36	17.86	19.42	15.15	11.68	The 2017-18 actual is based on staff in post as at 31 March 2018 and includes staff on fixed term contracts for current projects. Staff numbers also include Local Studies provision.
Income £	73,700	244,846	74,200	74,200	76,500	Actual includes grants received for specific projects
Expenditure £	615,100	784,068	615,600	624,200	627,300	2016-17 budget includes a £25,000 saving on previous year's budget.
Net £	541,400	539,222	541,400	550,000	550,800	
Any other resource measures			•	• DCC funds all capital works to the Dorset History Centre outside of and in addition to the funding arrangement detailed in the Joint Archives Agreement, 1997		



JAS funded staff: 11.67

DCC funded: 1.0**

6. Risk Register

January 2021
Archives Service Strategic Funding
(Risks have been listed in order of severity)

Risk Scoring	Impact	H	6	8	9
L = Low		M	3	5	7
M = Medium		L	1	2	4
H - High			L	M	H
			Probability		

Risk No.	Risk Description	Likely Impact if Risk Occurs	Impact H/M/L	Probability H/M/L	Score	Counter Measures	Comment
1	Core Funding: continued risk to local government funding from 2021/22. This will need to be factored into the JAS's ability to maintain current levels of service delivery.	Further reductions in standard, levels and capacity of service - potentially taking it below the minimal effective level through the loss	H	H	9	Greater dependence on successful new income generation. Ensure understanding of value for money through CIPFA benchmarking and TNA Accreditation.	Standstill budgets in 6 of 7 years. Inflationary pressure specifically from national pay agreement and business rates rise. Important to gauge the views of the two unitary councils on the role and priorities

Risk No.	Risk Description	Likely Impact if Risk Occurs	Impact H/M/L	Probability H/M/L	Score	Counter Measures	Comment
		of distinct functions				Importance of digital preservation in supporting business continuity.	
2	Failure to develop preferred option to provide extra space for JAS collections	Finite and diminishing space within repositories. DHC would, in time, have to start refusing material. Failure to preserve corporate memory or Dorset's heritage. Potential revenue cost implication if space has to be rented.	H	H	9	Discussions between BCP and DC to establish the terms on which a capital project might be undertaken. Full life cost of DHC extension is the cheapest solution. External storage would be much more expensive in the long term.	Project will be pursued once clear trajectory is established.
3	Funding for digital preservation is not continued and work concludes without long-term sustainable solution.	Failure to provide digital preservation services for funding authorities and wider community.	H	M	7	Prove the long-term benefits of digital preservation and the risks and consequences of not having such a system. DC finance in place until 2021.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The JAS is leading the local authority sector in working on digital preservation.

Risk No.	Risk Description	Likely Impact if Risk Occurs	Impact H/M/L	Probability H/M/L	Score	Counter Measures	Comment
		Information loss and/or data corruption. Potential legal implications.				Consortium model has halved costs to each member. Need BCP Council to adopt digital preservation via Preservica.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information loss/corruption is a major risk to the corporate memory of both authorities. Evidence of growing understanding of digital preservation and its benefits.
4	Dorset Archives Trust: failure to sustain Dorset Archives Trust due to lack of external interest and low capacity to support from within DHC.	No revenue impact; loss of support in communities, harm to reputation and loss of potential for special projects and funding to benefit Dorset's archives.	M	L	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultivate new trustees to strengthen body. Ensure alignment of DHC activities and those of DAT. 	Body increasing in confidence and understanding. Very positive results in terms of fundraising.