

**MINUTES OF BRANCH HEADS' MEETING
THURSDAY 14 DECEMBER 2006 at 10.00am
LORD CLERK REGISTERS ROOM, GRH**

Present: George MacKenzie, Dave Brownlee, Peter Anderson, Jim Grady, Ian Hill, Alison Horsburgh, Bruno Longmore, Rob Mildren Laura Mitchell, Linda Ramsay, Alan Borthwick, Jenny Cutts (Secretary)

Apologies: Bob Phillips

1. Minutes of the Meeting of 25 October 2006 and Matters Arising

1.1 The previous minutes were approved.

1.2 Bruno Longmore noted that point 5.4 of previous minutes, the suggestion to dispense with paper records management acknowledgement forms, is under investigation.

2. Staffing Issues

2.1 It was noted that the recruitment of B2 archivists nears completion. Three applicants have accepted job offers, two of whom have agreed start dates. NAS is waiting to hear the decision of a further applicant who has received a job offer.

2.2 The duration of this recruitment process was discussed. It was noted that the period from initiation to having new members of staff in post would be approximately 6 months. Points have been raised with HR concerning the quality of letters issued to applicants as part of this process, as well as the general administrative arrangements for the Assessment Centre.

2.3 The West Register House reception post was discussed. A job description has been prepared for recruitment to this post. There is an issue regarding relief for the receptionist's annual leave and sickness absence which requires resolution. Suggestions were made for possible members of staff to fulfil the relief role and it was agreed that further discussion is required by the Branch Heads directly involved.

2.4 Alison Horsburgh expressed thanks for staff members being provided from other branches for the continued provision of relief to cover the B2 archivist vacancy in the West Search Room.

2.5 It was noted that six nominations for the Special Bonus Scheme had been received, that all had been approved and that the staff members had been notified.

2.6 Sickness absence management was discussed. HR have agreed to provide quarterly reports of all staff members who have reached the trigger point, who have breached that trigger point in the previous quarter and all whose attendance is being formally monitored. It was noted that Occupational Health Service reports have been found to be unsatisfactory. Ideas were invited for incentivising staff to avoid sickness absence.

2.7 Ian Hill reported that a 'A Union for a' that' project officer had been appointed who will be accommodated within GRH, although not employed by NAS.

3. Reports

3.1 Conservation

Linda Ramsay reported that CSB continue to support the church records digitisation project, with recent emphasis on those records held by Glasgow City Archives. It was noted that the reshelving of valuation rolls has been completed, that the CSB box making facility has been successfully established and that the suffragettes exhibition opens at Holyrood on 15th December 2006 and has been publicised by the Scotsman and Herald newspapers. Linda reported that requests for exhibition loans have increased due to the availability of information through the online catalogue and suggested that there is a need for an exhibition loans officer to co-ordinate loans for exhibition. It was agreed that CSB and OSB would discuss this further.

3.2 Accommodation

In Bob Philips' absence George Mackenzie and Dave Brownlee reported that Rok Ltd had been appointed contractors for the remaining work on the Scottish Family History Centre, that the centre is due for opening in January 2008 and that GRH reception will be closed for a period of four weeks at the end of May 2007, during which time the sasine office entrance will be used for public access. It was also noted that the lunch room situated within NRH has been completed and will open on Monday 18th December 2006. The Adam Dome will be vacated by the legal searchers by end April 2007. George Mackenzie reported on a visit by John Brown, current Head of Tourism, Culture and Sport Group, to see the digitisation system at TTH and to discuss potential plans for TTH2 in the context of plans for developing a cultural centre at Granton. In the light of this, NAS will prepare a submission to the minister asking her to note our plans to continue developing a plan for TTH2. It was noted that NAS has about 7 years worth of storage space left, based upon accession levels over the past 2-3 years.

3.3 FOI

Bruno Longmore reported that the decision made by the board convened to review an FOI appeal had been communicated to the requester who has not made further contact with NAS on this matter. Bruno reported that he had attended the FOI conference held in Edinburgh and that OSIC currently have a one year backlog in processing FOI appeals. It was noted that SE have taken a Court of Session action against the Information Commissioner concerning FOI appeals and decisions. It was reported that GRB had encountered a problem with a misspelt email address causing an FOI request to be lost in the system and not acted upon immediately. It was also reported that a Records Management Code Compliance Report for the Scottish Executive had been presented to the Information Management Unit, SE, and that the Records Management Society Scotland have taken great interest in the assessment tool used. It was agreed to publicise the completion and submission of this audit report.

3.4 ICT

Rob Mildren reported that the micrographics unit will recommence operations in January 2007 and that the future of that unit will be considered in terms of preservation media, operating cost, customer demand, equipment obsolescence, staff training, digital surrogates and income generation. Rob Mildren is to present options to the ISPG and will report on them

at a future branch heads meeting. Upgrade to Calm version 7 has been postponed due to ongoing problems experienced. Investigation into NAS developing in-house an OPAC based on Sequel Server software for use with Calm and with the potential to integrate with the ordering system, with information available on the website and to include an indication of records location, is scheduled for next calendar year. It was also noted that the electronic ordering system will be integrated with the Records Archive Conversion search tool for use externally by legal search firms. Both anti-spam and remote access systems are in place and NAS is meeting with GROS regarding a joint telephone system. Problems experienced with inter-building communications links and continuing use of the current service provider were reported and discussed.

3.5 Finance

Jim Grady reported noted that the revaluation of GRH following building work undertaken had been received and the implications of this for our Operating Budget will be addressed with SE Finance.

4. Employee Survey 2006

It was noted that senior management have recently received the results of the 2006 NAS employee survey for consideration. It was noted that there had been a 61% return rate and that the results would be considered in further detail. It was agreed that these would be published before Christmas 2006. It was further noted that the SE Employee Survey and Taking Stock Review results had been published on the SE intranet with a statement by John Elvidge.

5 Away Days

Dave Brownlee reported that notification of dates and venue for 2007 Away Days had been sent out to all staff via email with an invitation for branches to suggest improvements for NAS. Branch Heads were urged to encourage their staff to contribute towards this.

6. Funding for Capital Projects

It was reported that NAS was successful in bids for capital funds for three projects: the purchase of the Dalhousie Muniments; to develop educational resources for family and local history and to provide digital access to valuation rolls. It was noted that no permanent staff may be recruited in relation to these projects although project staff may be recruited on short term contracts. The need to physically accommodate any extra staff was raised.

7. Public Holidays 2007/2008

Dave Brownlee reported that the dates of next year's public holidays have yet to be determined consequent to SE deciding upon the status of St Andrew's Day as a public holiday and inclusion of this in the public holiday calendar.

8. Any Other Business

8.1 Linda Ramsay explained that records handling sessions would be held in each building throughout January 2007 and that these would include guidance on statistic generating measurements.

8.2 It was noted that a report of the group led by Dee Williams concerning 'Scotlands People 2' would be available shortly.

8.3 Flexi updates procedures regarding medical appointments were discussed. It was agreed to consider this issue further.

8.4 It was suggested that in addition to reports on FAB, CSB, ASB, FOI and ICT, reports from record services branches should be included on the agenda. It was agreed that Peter Anderson would arrange for this inclusion on a rotational basis.

8.5 The Culture Bill was discussed. It was noted that RCAHMS have suggested that they be renamed the National Record of Scotland and that NAS have indicated our objection. The status of NAS is not changed by the draft bill, but the question was raised whether our name appears in it. It was noted that there will be a standard two month consultation period on the draft Bill which will allow further comments to be made.

9. Date of Next Meeting

Margaret Millar will canvass for dates for the next meeting to be held end January 2007.

Jenny Cutts
14 December 2006