

REPORT OF BRANCH HEADS' MEETING
10:00AM, THURSDAY 22 JUNE 2006
LORD CLERK REGISTERS ROOM, GRH

Present: George MacKenzie, Peter Anderson, Dave Brownlee, David Brown, Jim Grady, Ian Hill, Alison Horsburgh, Bruno Longmore, Rob Mildren, Laura Mitchell, Bob Phillips, Mary Robson (for item 2) and Morag Fyfe (secretary)

Apologies: Linda Ramsay

1. Minutes of Meeting of 16 May 2006 and Matters Arising

The previous minutes were approved.

2. HR (*Mary Robson, NAS HR Business Partner*)

Mary Robson gave a presentation, updating the meeting on HR service delivery and the changes which are taking place in HR. Following questions from the branch heads, Mary agreed to supply high level aggregate data for the allocation of performance markings across the Scottish Executive. She also agreed to speak to Christopher Preston, who is managing Skills for Success and Professional Skills for Government, to ask him to liaise with Peter Anderson over our specialist needs in this area. Branch Heads were also assured that a case management system has been brought in so that information can be logged by the Professional Advisor assigned to that case. This will provide a pipeline of information should that advisor be off. Mary also agreed to investigate the involvement of HR in absence management following concerns from the branch heads.

3. Staffing Issues

A number of issues were discussed. The Keeper informed the meeting that we will be externally recruiting for archivist staff. The advert will be generic, which will keep open options for placing any newly recruited staff and how many are recruited. It was requested that managed moves are looked at either before or in conjunction with the corporate planning cycle to tie these in with coming objectives. The two A4 team leader posts have been advertised and are open for all band A staff to apply. Rob Mildren asked the other branch heads what they do in regards recouping excess flexi debits, with Alison Horsburgh responding that in RSB staff stay on managed flexi – working more hours than a normal day to make up the debit.

4. Reports

4.1 Accommodation

Bob Phillips reported on the latest developments:

ScotlandsPeople Centre – the Reid Room is now more or less finished and is currently acting as a store room for the furniture for the rest of the centre. Tenders will open on Monday for the urgent external work, plus the remainder of work on the Dundas Room and the Café.

TTH – the new door access system is now operational and appears to be working smoothly.

TTH 2A shelving – the shelving is now being manufactured and work to install it will commence in August.

WSR – the search room re-opened on Monday 22 May following the completion of the refurbishment work. Feedback from readers so far has been positive

Fire Marshalls & HSLOs – there have still been no volunteers to take up the vacant positions and branch heads were requested to encourage their staff to volunteer.

4.2 FOI

A number of items were reported. A request for review for information from an SE file which we hold will result in the requester making a submission to the Scottish Information Commissioner. Following on from a meeting held recently with Kevin Dunion, the Keeper received a letter highlighting a recent case where OSIC expressed concerns over the record keeping of a local council. The Keeper and Ian Hill agreed to take this up with the council. GRB will be attempting to embark on a rolling program of news about recently released information and opened files, to highlight the FOI review. Staff were also warned that anyone acting in the capacity of advisor to the HLF should be careful to justify any opinions, as details of advice given to the HLF is most commonly asked for in FOI requests to them. CSB staff are vacuum sealing files of exempt material today at WRH as a further safeguard against inadvertent release.

4.3 ICT

Rob Mildren reported on the latest developments:

Electronic ordering system – the new EOS has now settled down in the HSR and WSR and it is intended to go live with the system for staff and the public in the LSR a week on Wednesday. It will then be made available to the legal search firms. ICT will then look at possibilities for integrating the system with the OPAC and possibly CALM.

DIU – the DIU team have been having problems meeting their targets, but changes have been made which are beginning to have positive effects.

RAC project – ½ million images have now been captured for this project. Parallel testing of the new search tool with the legal search companies has recently started. Erlend Greg will be asked to come and see the system as it works here, however, as we are not experiencing the same service as he is at ROS.

CH digitisation – ORT are now looking at using ScottishDocuments.com as the means of providing access to the bulk of the images to Local Authority Archives which hold CH material on Charge and Superintendence and the Churches themselves. The team are now reaching the final stages of digitisation with the final intake of records from Glasgow. ICT wishes to thank CSB for all their help and hard work during the project.

CALM – the CALM system briefly stalled 3 weeks ago, refusing to complete the indexing. Neither ICT nor DS Ltd know why the stall happened. Version 7.1, which includes diagnostic tools which should help identify such problems, is due to be installed in September.

5. Any Other Business

5.1 Solemn Database

The provision of copies of the solemn database was discussed following a request from a researcher for a copy. It was agreed that a strategy will need to be developed in regards the database. As it is not considered to be complete, only limited release of

information from the database should be considered, extracting information relevant to the enquirer, rather than providing them with a complete copy.

5.2 Copyright and Digital Images

The Keeper raised the question of whether or not this issue needs to be looked at again and a policy statement developed. In the meantime, Susan Corrigan will be asked to look at what other institutions do.

5.3 Branch Meetings & Branch Heads away day

The staff survey working group advised that branches should hold meetings regularly and should invite the Keeper and the relevant Deputy Keeper to these meetings. They also suggested that the branch heads should have their own awayday. The Keeper asked if this would be worthwhile, and it will be put on the agenda for the next branch heads meeting.

6. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place in July/August and Morag Fyfe will canvas for dates.