

**MINUTES OF BRANCH HEADS' MEETING  
TUESDAY 23 OCTOBER 2007 at 10:30am  
MEETING ROOM, THOMAS THOMSON HOUSE**

**Present:** George MacKenzie, Peter Anderson, Dave Brownlee, David Brown, Jim Grady, Ian Hill, Bruno Longmore, Rob Mildren, Laura Mitchell, Linda Ramsay, Joanna O'Rourke, Jenny Cutts (secretary).

**Apologies:** Bob Phillips, Alison Horsburgh.

**1. Minutes of the Meeting of 26 September 2007**

1.1 The previous minutes were approved.

**2. Matters arising**

2.1 [4.8.3] It was agreed that Alison Diamond be attached to Court and Legal Records Branch in her forthcoming post relating to the Register of Tartan. It was noted that this post would commence in January 2008 and acknowledged that work towards the establishment of the Register of Tartan now takes precedence over educational projects relating to the Dalhousie collection (GD45).

2.2 [3.2] Bruno Longmore reiterated the written report he had submitted to senior management regarding progress towards distance learning archive qualifications. In respect of the progress and commitment demonstrated and the likely completion dates of others undertaking courses, it was agreed that Neil Miller's archive qualification studies be supported by NAS from April 2008. It was suggested that Pete Wadley be encouraged to submit application for a post graduate archives studies course to begin in autumn 2008.

2.3 [3.9] Dave Brownlee reported that Arlene Chalmers had agreed to attend a Branch Heads meeting in early 2008 in order to brief attendees about the performance appraisal system requirements, in particular Skills for Success. The application of this component for NAS staff, particularly specialist professional staff, was discussed. Ian Hill reported that a Skills for Success training course had been cancelled and that further guidance would be appreciated. Consideration was given to the use of professional competencies for conservators, archivists and ICT professionals within the current appraisal system. Linda Ramsay explained that she had identified specific basic criteria for competence in archive attendant posts for appraisal purposes. It was noted that a training module concerning A band staff wishing to progress to B band will be advertised by the Development Centre in due course. It was also agreed that A band staff should be encouraged to undertake the European Computer Driving License (ECDL) modules offered by the Development Centre.

2.4 The likely involvement of the newly appointed non executive directors in the day to day management and operations of NAS was discussed. George Mackenzie explained that their role concerns strategic planning and that although they would be expected to familiarise themselves with operational matters, they would not be giving managerial direction to NAS staff. Questions were asked concerning the potential influence of non executive directors with regard to NAS recruitment policy and procedures, with particular regard to advertising posts externally. It was made clear that NAS must continue to follow Scottish Government recruitment policies and that while the non executive directors may advise the Management Board, operational decisions will continue to be made by NAS senior management. It was

added that good practice and Scottish Government guidelines stipulate that Audit Committees be comprised solely of independent members. For this reason it was likely that NAS may appoint additional non executive directors in future.

2.5 Details were sought regarding placement of MPhil Information Management and Preservation students from the University of Glasgow. It was explained that a group visit to GRH and TTH was scheduled to take place in November, but that no further details regarding individual student placements with NAS were available. It was noted that Glasgow University have approached NAS at very short notice to host student placements in the past and that little indication of requirements, expectations and feedback procedures had been supplied. It was agreed that the course organiser be proactively approached in order to plan the IMP student placements.

Action: David Brown to approach Adele Redhead, Deputy Director, IMP MPhil, HATII, to arrange student placements at NAS.

### **3. Staffing issues**

3.1. If Alison Lindsay were to decide to extend her maternity leave, the plan is first to offer the Head of Historical Search Room post to existing B3s. If there were no takers for a managed move, we would then invite applications from existing B2 staff to fill the post on temporary responsibility supplement (TRS), pending Alison or Joanna's return. Alison Horsburgh will initiate this. It was noted that filling this post will be a catalyst for other B2 archivist staff moves and could create an additional temporary vacancy.

3.2 Peter Anderson explained that B3 archivists may also change posts at the beginning of next financial year and that dialogue about such moves had been started. Senior management agreed that vacancies remaining after curatorial staff moves may be filled through the engagement of temporary B1 staff, but recruitment of further permanent B2 archivists would not be possible. George Mackenzie reiterated the need for giving all staff sufficient notice of forthcoming moves and suggested that such moves would likely be effected in early 2008 and would best tie in with corporate planning if made around the start of the reporting year 2007/8.

3.3 It was reported that the successful candidates from the ICTB B1 Assessment Board had confirmed start dates. Aileen Gardner will start on 24 October 2007 and Gordon Dixon on 29 October 2007.

3.4 Linda Ramsay explained that the job description of one B1 member of CSB will require review as the leather bindings work they are engaged in will cease by January 2008.

### **4. Branch Reports**

#### **4.1 Conservation Services Branch**

Linda Ramsay reported that Gloria Conti still awaited Disclosure Scotland certification and in consequence no start date had yet been determined. It was hoped that she may be in post by the end of November 2007. It was reported that the branch were busy working on Treaty of Union documents and assisting Private Records Branch with Montrose papers. CSB have been contacted regarding a fire at Uppat Hall and had redirected enquirers to the National Library of Scotland (custodians of the Sutherland papers) or towards approaching the NRAS. Linda Ramsay explained that work is progressing towards developing the box making service for external customers. It was reported that the Electronic Ordering System (EOS) is being

interrogated for information regarding planned record moves into the Mathieson Dome at GRH. For health and safety reasons loading the shelves there must be done in a certain sequence and CSB will work with ASB to manage this. Investigation into replacement shelving for the Dexion Room, WRH and for TTH 2C have been undertaken in conjunction with FAB. It was noted that there is an option to extend the current shelving contract with regard to fitting out TTH 2C. George Mackenzie explained that Ministerial agreement regarding long-term accommodation plans for NAS would be required before we could settle on shelving plans for TTH2C. He explained that there is no fixed date when the Ministerial decision may be expected, though the business case should be ready for submission by the end of this month. It was noted that WRH is expected to be retained for the next 5 years at least and that reshelving the Dexion Room was therefore feasible.

#### 4.2 Private Records Branch

Ian Hill reported that the Document Security Sub-Committee was scheduled to meet on 2 November 2007 and that work was progressing toward the development of the replacement OPAC system. PRB cataloguing targets are being met. Clarification is being sought about the status of the papers of the Scottish Constitutional Convention held by NAS as GD489. The NRAS are also to visit Inverary to assist staff from TNA in carrying out an inspection of the papers held there in respect of a claim for tax exemption. These papers and the associated NRAS survey (no.1209) have been the subject of long-term closure and include many important historical items, whose opening up to approved applicants via the NRAS would be of great potential benefit to researchers. It was reported that TNA have been contacted concerning conditional closure exemption to catalogue and papers of the Dukes of Argyll. Discussion of the Post Graduate Training Visit to Edinburgh Repositories (PTVER) was held. It was noted that NAS had not participated in this event this year due to an administrative error on the part of the PTVER organisers but that NAS fully expects to participate in this annual event in 2008. It was further noted that the Forth Bridge exhibition featuring prints of Evelyn Carey photographs from NAS collections had opened at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery on 9 October 2007.

#### 4.3 Reader Services Branch

Joanna O'Rourke reported that the Public Services Quality Group (PSQG) national survey consists of customer completion of an 8 page booklet and would be held 19-30 November 2007. Eighty participants from HSR and 60 from WSR will be sought. It was reported that certain changes were planned for the Online Central Enquiries System (OES) to provide more, and more specific, categories for classifying enquiries. These amendments were designed to facilitate use by all branches of NAS. It was explained that the existence of partial images of sasinés on the Virtual Volumes system required a great deal of staff intervention and assistance and involve staff overriding the electronic ordering system (EOS) to enable readers to order out the required documents. Rob Mildren commented upon a scheme whereby partially imaged volumes should be flagged as such within EOS and the opportunity to order out the original volume should be offered. It was noted that many comments, complaints and enquiries have been received concerning the slowness of the OPAC and that the website features a statement giving notice that it is not operating satisfactorily at present. A standard response was provided to complainants, modified as required. Indications that OPAC is not returning results for known records have been noted. Rob Mildren reported that the current contract with DS for OPAC hosting expires on 31 March 2008 and the replacement system must be operational by then. It was suggested that an interim solution to improve the current OPAC be implemented before April 2008 and that DS be invited to use a more powerful server in the meantime. Discussion of the frequent

incapacity of the GRH east lift was held. It was noted that increased usage of the lifts was consequent to the building works in GRH and that document traffic through GRH once the centre is open must be considered. Questions relating to the formulation of digital policy were asked and it was confirmed that Alison Horsburgh would report on the digital policy working groups' findings at the next branch heads meeting.

Action: Senior Management, RSB and ASB to consider preferred routes through GRH in relation to the family history centre.

#### 4.4 Outreach Services Branch

David Brown reported that progress with the Image Library project may be hindered by the Digital Imaging Unit's incapacity to meet its digitisation demands. A small proportion of the images required for launch in March 2008 have been produced so far. The former GRH non-smoking tea room was discussed as a potential site for video-conferencing. It was agreed in principle that this could be transformed into an education room and could double as an additional meeting room and video-conferencing facility for use by all NAS staff. This last would contribute to SG policy by reducing the need for staff to travel to London and elsewhere for meetings. Liaison with local authority archives continued, specifically with East Lothian Council and Dumfries and Galloway. It was agreed that in regard to Dumfries and Galloway Council archives NAS must insist that "proper arrangements" require the employment of a professional archivist. Linda Ramsay explained that deterioration of the archives at Dumfries and Galloway was apparent from visits made. George Mackenzie instructed that further visits be made specifically to assess whether "proper arrangements" were in place and to clarify whether Charge and Superintendence arrangements can be continued. It was noted that a complete list of all Charge and Superintendence records held by Dumfries and Galloway should be compiled. The difficulties in achieving this were acknowledged. It was noted that local authority archivists accept the definitions outlined in the draft document concerning "proper arrangements" but that this was not always true of their employers.

Action: David Brown to discuss arrangements for fast-tracking ScotlandsImages digitisation with Grayham Mount.

Action: George Mackenzie and David Brown to meet for further discussion of proper arrangements for local authority archives.

#### 4.5 Court and Legal Records Branch

Laura Mitchell explained the immanent unification of central and local courts effected by the replacement of local authority District Courts with centrally administered Justice of the Peace courts. It was explained that CLRB are developing retention schedules and selection policies with regard to these changes. It was noted that liaison with local authority archives concerning the records in district court custody was also required. It was reported that meetings concerning records management and improved transmissions to NAS had been held with the High Court and Crown Office and that the use of electronic lists would be useful for cataloguing purposes. Plans to establish a Lord President's expert group on recordkeeping are progressing slowly and information gathering with regard to ingest of Scottish Courts Service electronic records into Digital Data Archive is being undertaken. It was reported that CLRB are currently unable to do much legacy cataloguing but that a volunteer will assist in that respect contingent upon Disclosure Scotland certification.

#### 4.6 Finance and Administration Branch

Jim Grady reported that the Scottish Government Spending Review is ongoing and that NAS budget planning would follow SG apportionment. An invitation for Branch Heads to mark potential spending pressures had been issued. Funds for imaging and indexing valuation rolls have been received but may not be fully spent before the end of 2007-2008. It was noted that ideas for transporting the valuation rolls (VRs) incorporating CSB specified standards had been proposed and agreed that supplier's samples be obtained. The VR indexing contract had been awarded in conjunction with GROS and it was explained that the census indexing would be undertaken first as the VRs have not yet been imaged. The VR imaging contract has been prepared and is undergoing quality assessment. It was noted that only a proportion of the VRs may be processed before the end of the financial year, but we are confident that funding will be in place next year to continue with the digitisation programme.. Questions were asked about the time spend on the procurement stages of this project. It was considered unfortunate that the procurement period appears disproportionate to the time available for imaging and indexing. Jim Grady explained that this is an EU process and as such may not be circumvented or condensed. It was further explained that all the tendering companies have limited capacity for this work and speed will also be restricted for this reason. Progress with procurement of ScotlandsImages software was also reported. It was explained that software evaluation was jointly undertaken by NAS and project partners and that recommendations for purchase had not yet been agreed. Tendering for the branding and logo elements of this project were almost ready however. Other procurement work recently undertaken by FAB has been for SFHS café, uniforms, till and finance systems.

#### 4.7 Government Records Branch

Bruno Longmore explained that GRB have recently taken on a volunteer. It was also reported that submission to SRAC concerning the selection policy regarding SG ERDM file plan had been made and that a decision regarding access requirements for SG electronic records was also required. The findings of the SG Historical Abuse Systemic Review (HASR) were reported and discussed. It was explained that the remit of this investigation covered abuse within institutional care from 1950's to 1995 and that GRB had cooperated with the researchers with regard to historical records. Three inter-related reports have been produced by the reviewers and included recordkeeping recommendations. Calls for public records legislation were amongst these recommendations and it was agreed that NAS should establish a dialogue with SG concerning recordkeeping initiatives arising from the Review. Bruno Longmore further reported that the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual FOI Conference had taken place on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2007 and was attended by GRB staff. OSSE advice concerning the transmission of AF29 records to Shetland Archives under Charge and Superintendence had been obtained and concluded that Ministerial approval was not required. Transmission of these records may therefore proceed in concert with Brian Smith, Shetland Archivist.

#### 4.8 Information and Communications Technology Branch

Rob Mildren explained that the website public feedback exercise would conclude at the end of November 2007 and that participating archives would meet to review the future of the SCAN website. A tender regarding Joint Telephony System (JTS) is expected to be issued at the start of November. The expectation that NAS rationalise its phone numbers was discussed. It was explained that staff members might be allocated numbers which transfer as individuals move posts, offices and buildings. As TTH phone numbers would be affected by JTS proposals the effect of changing CSB contact details again were discussed. It was noted

that these contact numbers are in circulation both nationally and internationally and have been changed a number of times in the recent past.

Action: George Mackenzie to consider issues regarding JTS.

### **5. Long term accommodation**

Dave Brownlee explained that the business case was nearing completion. We had to move quickly to consider other options once the capital funding bid for a high-spec TTH2 had been turned down. It was apparent that WRH would have to be retained for the next 3-5 years at least. Re-cabling the building to improve network performance would now be reconsidered, but the presumption is that we will press ahead with this. Surface cabling would be implemented to avoid exposing asbestos and to minimise cost and disruption. It was explained that Ministerial decisions on the Business Case were required before any long term accommodation plans could be implemented. From emerging findings of the Business Case, however, it seemed unlikely, certainly on economic grounds, that WRH would be retained in the long term. Complete refurbishment of WRH would prove very expensive, closure for around two years being required along with the associated decant of records.

### **6. DDA Access Requirements**

It was reported that the access phase of the Digital Data Archive project required access requirement definitions to be agreed. Methods of agreeing specifications were discussed. It was agreed that a planning away day be held involving stakeholders from all areas of NAS in order to formulate direction and a timetable for progressing the DDA Access phase. It was further agreed that customers be included once the definitions and feasibility had been agreed internally. George Mackenzie expressed support for such a planning meeting to be held before the end of 2007.

Action: Bruno Longmore and Laura Mitchell to determine participants required.

### **7. Any other business**

7.1 The likely future of the Ballast Trust was anticipated. It was considered whether the Trust would require reconstitution following the death of Bill Lind or whether contingency arrangements were in place. It was noted that a review of continuing arrangements with the Ballast Trust might be made and an audit of loaned NAS material be undertaken.

7.2 A question was asked whether dates for the NAS Away Days had been set. Dave Brownlee explained that although they would take place during January 2008, the specific dates would be fixed in discussion with Arlene Chalmers.

7.3 It was noted that the GRH tea room was getting more use as eating within offices was discouraged. It was suggested that the computer located in the GRH tea room which had been removed should be replaced in order to provide computer access to archive attendants. Linda Ramsay explained the need for notices to alert digital imaging backshift staff to the necessity of not eating or drinking around the records and the rules on eating and drinking within offices were debated. It was apparent that practices differed between branches and that there was confusion about these rules.

Action: Senior Management to issue staff notice concerning eating and drinking rules.

7.4 Bruno Longmore raised the issue of the appropriate siting of NAS Copyright Officer within branches. It was noted that Susan Corrigan is Copyright Officer at present but that this role is not best suited to Government Records Branch. The extent of the Copyright Officer duties was explained and it was agreed that broadening out this role across different posts would be preferable and that RSB and OSB would be the branches most apt for copyright expertise. Staff would also be expected to use the intranet guidance on copyright as necessary rather than refer all copyright related enquiries to the Copyright Officer. It was agreed that this issue be resolved by the end of 2007-2008.

#### **8. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled to take place on 22 November 2007.

Jenny Cutts  
30 October 2007