

**MINUTES OF BRANCH HEADS' MEETING
THURSDAY 17 MAY 2007 at 10.00am
MEETING ROOM, TTH**

Present: George MacKenzie, Peter Anderson, Dave Brownlee, David Brown, Jim Grady, Alison Horsburgh, Bruno Longmore, Rob Mildren, Laura Mitchell, Bob Phillips, Linda Ramsay, Jenny Cutts (secretary)

Apologies: Ian Hill

1. Minutes of the Meeting of 15 March 2007 and Matters Arising

1.1 The previous minutes were approved.

2. Matters arising

2.1 Bruno Longmore provided an update regarding staff progress with distance learning courses. Senior management reported that NAS will continue with the policy of funding two members of staff to undertake distance learning archives courses. It was reported that the two members of staff currently undertaking such courses will have completed by end 2008 and funding will then be available for Neil Miller and Pete Wadley from financial year 2008/9 onwards. Merits of the Dundee University Centre for Archive and Information Studies course on MLitt in Archives and Records Management were discussed and it was agreed that this course would be recommended rather than the Aberystwyth equivalent.

2.2 Jim Grady noted that the action points under paragraphs [1.2] and [6.6] had been superseded. He explained how Branch Heads may interrogate the sick leave statistics for their branch via the Oracle and produce their own reports regarding attendance management within their branches as required. He reported that the flexi credits for medical appointments issue had been discussed at the Local Partnership Board meeting on 8 May 2007 and that Dave Brownlee had reissued guidance on this in consequence. George Mackenzie asserted that this will be kept under review and welcomed feedback regarding these rules.

2.3 Jim Grady raised the issue that Audit had noted a discrepancy between HR and NAS records of special leave. It was confirmed that all requests for special leave should be approved by branch heads and a record passed to HR. It was noted that the guidance on approving or rejecting special leave applications is vague and open to subjective interpretation. A discussion was held regarding consistency of approach. Linda Ramsay reported that unpaid parental leave is also available to staff but must be taken in one week blocks.

3. Staffing Issues

3.1 Dave Brownlee reported that he is pursuing the issue of basic entry requirements with HR as this causes difficulties with recruiting cleaners and archive attendants and a degree of flexibility is required. Linda Ramsay noted that difficulties relating to recruitment are still experienced with OneHR.

3.2 Retirement policy was discussed. It was noted that there is now no formal age limit for retirement and employees are entitled to continue working regardless of age, subject to satisfactory performance, conduct and attendance. Employees need only give HR at least 3

months notice of their intended retirement date in order that preparations for payment of pension etc., may be made. This means that should a line manager consider an employee is no longer capable of working effectively, this must be tackled through the performance management system. Age of the employee is no longer relevant.

3.3 Bruno Longmore reported that a replacement for Steve Bruce, Records Management Assistant, had been identified and he will take up the position at the end of May 2007, after which time there will be a two week handover period before Steve moves to the Scottish Family History Centre team.

3.4 It was reported that the B3 Scottish Family History Centre Business Development Manager post had been advertised internally and that interviews for the WRH reception post are currently underway.

4. Digital Policy

4.1 George Mackenzie invited a discussion of NAS digital policy with the aims of clarifying issues and determining priorities. He suggested that there were four areas for consideration: creating digital surrogates; making digital images available; dealing with born digital archives and electronic records management. A discussion was held which covered a variety of issues and focussed mainly on the first two areas. The following topics were covered: using legacy images, maintaining an accurate and complete record of the images available; copyright; resources; prioritisation of digitisation work; digitisation on demand; customer charges; electronic access to document surrogates; completeness of surrogates; image capture; copy production; self-service digital copying; electronic ordering system; microfilm and unfinished digitisation projects.

4.2 Based on the discussion, it was agreed that the Keeper would set up a small group to look further at the issues, in particular the following four aspects:

- Services to customers of digital copies – how can we make them more consistent, faster, better, and does self service have any role?
- Charges for copy services – can we make these simpler, should there be a standard cost?
- Linkages between the catalogue, ordering and other systems – how can we ensure that information about our digital surrogates is consistent and accurate, and available to customers and staff?
- Priorities for digitisation – in the light of demand for digital images, should we add to or alter our priorities for programmes of image capture?

4.3 Reader Services would clearly have a leading role in this and the group would also need representatives from ICT including DIU, Conservation, and Outreach (for the Image Library) and FAB.

4.4 It was agreed that the remaining digital policy areas – born digital archives and electronic records management- will be discussed at the subsequent Branch Heads meeting in June 2007.

5. Non Executive Directors

It was reported that senior management have drafted the role and person specifications and the advert for non executive directors, and have submitted these to the Public Appointments Team for approval. It was explained that the appointment process is similar to staff

recruitment although the appointed non executive directors will not be actual members of staff. The appointees are expected to be in place by the Management Board meeting in January 2008.

6. Any other business

6.1 Branding

It was reported that an external contractor will be appointed to progress NAS branding and that Joanna O'Rourke had been tasked with preparing a specification concerning this.

6.2 Cost of storage

Laura Mitchell explained that it would be useful to have a figure representing the cost of storing records in NAS per metre and a discussion was held regarding this. An indicator of cost of selecting and preserving and making available records had been used in the past, but had been found to fluctuate depending on current number of records within NAS custody. It was noted that this indicative figure was approximately £90 per metre. It was asked whether the costs of storage and costs of making records available might be separated. It was noted that the location system must be up to date regarding volume of records for determining such an indicator. It was suggested that it might be better to calculate this cost based on storage capacity.

Action Point: Jim Grady to investigate.

6.3 Performance Appraisal Forms

It was noted that the performance appraisal forms for 2007/08 had been changed and that the skills for success and career aspirations sections had been dropped.

6.4 Photographic report

A report by Susie Clark, ACR MIPC, including recommendations, on the care of photographs at the National Archives of Scotland, was circulated.

6.5 Electronic Ordering System

Alison Horsburgh reported that a meeting to discuss EOS had found increasing user satisfaction with the system.

6.6 Box making machine

Attendees were invited to a demonstration of the box making service following the meeting.

7. Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 21 June 2007.

Jenny Cutts

23 May 2007