

## Libraries And A New Heritage Organisation For Suffolk

SALC has received the information below from Suffolk County Council. It concerns the future of the library service and potential changes to the way it deals with its archaeology and archive services. Local councils deposit archive information with the Suffolk Record Office and will have an interest in how they will deposit and access records in the future. There are a number of items going forward for Cabinet decision on 8 November which will be of interest to councils, not least one on the future of the library services. The list of papers is provided below as are two emails from Service Director, Guenever Pachent about the changes to archiving and libraries:

- Agenda Item 3 - Unconfirmed Minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2011  
(<http://committeeminutes.suffolkcc.gov.uk/LoadDocument.aspx?rID=09002711804df1c4>)
- Agenda Item 5 - Library Services for the Future  
(<http://committeeminutes.suffolkcc.gov.uk/LoadDocument.aspx?rID=09002711804df1c6>)
- Agenda Item 5 – Appendices  
(<http://committeeminutes.suffolkcc.gov.uk/LoadDocument.aspx?rID=09002711804df1c8>)
- Agenda Item 6 - Procurement of Highways Services  
(<http://committeeminutes.suffolkcc.gov.uk/LoadDocument.aspx?rID=09002711804df1ca>)
- Agenda Item 7 - Developing an Investment Fund to Achieve Social Outcomes in Suffolk - 'The Transforming Suffolk Investment Fund'  
(<http://committeeminutes.suffolkcc.gov.uk/LoadDocument.aspx?rID=09002711804df1cb>)
- Agenda Item 8 - Creation of a New Heritage Organisation  
(<http://committeeminutes.suffolkcc.gov.uk/LoadDocument.aspx?rID=09002711804df1cc>)
- Agenda Item 8 - Appendix  
(<http://committeeminutes.suffolkcc.gov.uk/LoadDocument.aspx?rID=09002711804df1cd>)

### **Libraries - Guenever Pachent**

I am pleased to say that the Council's cabinet will be considering proposals for library services, when it meets on 8 November. Thank you again for all your help and advice. I should be most grateful if you would share this message with town and parish councils.

All 44 of Suffolk's libraries will remain open and be helped to flourish by a new, slim line and cost-effective organisation, if councillors approve plans put before them next week and then in December.

The proposals would see Suffolk County Council create an Industrial and Provident Society (IPS), an organisation working with, but independent from, the county council and free from council bureaucracy, to support the county's library network.

The IPS would hold charitable status, be able to benefit from an 80% reduction in property rates and apply for external funding.

It would predominantly be funded by a grant from Suffolk County Council, and use its resources to provide central support to all of Suffolk's existing, and future, libraries.

The new model would cost a maximum of £652k to set up but would be 27.6% cheaper to run than the current arrangement. It would mean library services in Suffolk would cost £6.487m a year, as opposed to their £8.961m running cost in 2010/11, without any library closures.

Much of the savings come from reducing management tiers and central staffing costs which would no longer be needed in the more slim line organisation. Staff currently working in libraries would be transferred into the IPS under TUPE employment rules.

Eventually, every library will have a community group involved and having a direct say in its day to day running. Supported by the IPS, community groups will be able to opt for a level of responsibility they feel able to take on. Seven pilot projects are currently being developed and will, from April 2012, be the first of these arrangements in action. Organisations running local libraries would become members of the IPS and elect its board.

Some of the pilot projects have demonstrated that it would be possible for libraries to raise a small amount of money through activities like fund raising, membership schemes and generating income. Local library organisations will therefore be asked to contribute just 5% of the direct running costs of their library, £100k a year in total, significantly less than the financial contributions being discussed at the beginning of the year. Through the IPS, the county council would fund 95% of the direct costs of running the libraries.

Suffolk County Council Cabinet members will also be asked to decide on the future of the county's mobile library service. The service costs £600k a year to run with six mobile libraries (plus a back up) serving approximately 7000 people in 361 communities across Suffolk. Over the last decade, mobile library customer visits have reduced by 32% and loans have decreased by 37% - even though customers can borrow up to 20 books at a time.

Following a six week consultation in which 1237 people shared their views, councillors will be recommended to reduce the frequency of mobile library

visits from fortnightly to four weekly (as is the case in Norfolk and Cambridgeshire) and stop visiting towns and parishes that already have a library building serving the community. The majority of people who responded said the changes would not stop them using mobile libraries.

No one currently using the mobile library service would be left without access to library services as Suffolk County Council would offer alternatives (such as the At Home Library Service and outreach services) for those who say they would no longer be able to get to a library.

If the main library proposals are supported by Suffolk County Council's Cabinet on 8 November, they will then go before the next meeting of the Full Council (15 December) for final decision. Cabinet will take a decision on mobile libraries on 8 November.

The council would then work to set up the IPS by spring 2012.

The full report is available here:

<http://committeeminutes.suffolkcc.gov.uk/meeting.aspx?d=08/11/2011&c=The%20Cabinet>

If you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to get back to me.

With all best wishes, Guenever

### **Archives - Guenever Pachent**

I am pleased to say that the Council's cabinet will be considering proposals for its archaeology services and the Suffolk Record Office, when it meets on 8 November. I should be most grateful if you would share this message with town and parish councils, since they deposit their archives with the Suffolk Record Office.

The future of heritage services in Suffolk will be discussed by Suffolk County Council's Cabinet when it meets on Tuesday 8 November. You can find the papers at:

<http://committeeminutes.suffolkcc.gov.uk/meeting.aspx?d=08/11/2011&c=The%20Cabinet>

The proposal relates to the development of a new organisation with The Museum of East Anglian Life (MEAL) which would run the archaeology and archive services currently provided by the council.

Research shows that larger heritage services can respond more effectively to challenges and opportunities. Working with MEAL will bring together collections, facilities and staff expertise to create a larger, more integrated and sustainable organisation. The new organisation would work in partnership, not

competition, with other Suffolk organisations to make Suffolk's rich heritage more accessible.

MEAL's board will consider the proposal in November. If both Cabinet and MEAL agree to continue develop this proposal, a Full Business Case would be considered by both parties in spring 2012. It is hoped that the new organisation could be established in April 2012 with services and staff transferring to the new organisation by September 2012.

In addition, investigative work is proposed into the feasibility of developing a main heritage centre for Suffolk's archives, finds and artefacts. This would greatly assist in the development of an integrated approach to heritage and making services more accessible for customers and the public in general.

As part of preparing a Final Business Case, discussions would take place between Suffolk County Council, MEAL and the Heritage Lottery Fund to see if funding would be available for this.

If you have any comments or questions, don't hesitate to ask.

With all best wishes, Guenever

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