



Report on progress for move from provisional to full Archive Service Accreditation

Name of Archive Service:	Suffolk Archives
Accreditation number:	2019-03
Date of award:	07/03/2019
Period of provisional award:	2 Years

Please use the template below to describe how your archive service has made progress against those required actions identified in your outcome letter for Archive Service Accreditation, in support of the move to full accreditation.

As part of the reporting, you may also wish to submit supporting evidence, where this exists, of progress against identified actions. This may include refreshed documentation such as new policies or plans, activity reports produced for other purposes, environmental monitoring reports. Please note details of any evidence submitted in table (2).

1) Progress against required actions identified in Accreditation award letter

Required Action	Requirement to which it relates	Progress against the action
1. Complete The Hold building project and move collections from identified stores to improved accommodation.	1.4, 2.4	<p>The Hold building was handed over to Suffolk Archives Service (SA) on 20 July 2020. Since then, the drying out of the new passive strongrooms has been closely monitored. These new stores meet BS4971/EN16893, providing capacity for 20 years accruals from across the county. Collections are currently being moved in removing them from the risks associated with Lowestoft basement strongrooms, Bury Outstore on the floodplain of the rivers Lark and Linnet and Ipswich strongrooms. The removal of the collections from Gatacre Road, Ipswich was completed in the middle of April, Lowestoft on 27 April and Bury is due to be completed before the end of July.</p> <p>Once the move is completed c85% of Suffolk's archives collections will be in The Hold, 14.4% in the Bury Main Building strongroom and 0.75% of printed material that has been reclassified as Local Studies will remain in a</p>

new store located off the Searchroom on the first floor of Lowestoft Library, so productions can be managed safely without taking them through the library building.

The adjacencies of rooms have been meticulously planned at The Hold, so the archives quarantine, cleaning, drying, accessioning, cataloguing, conservation, digitisation, secure storage, and productions all happen at one end of the building. The public come in via a different flow and the two meet in the middle in the Invigilated Searchroom.

The visitor experience at The Hold is greatly enhanced with:-

- A 200-seat tiered auditorium and 2 seminar rooms, which SA uses for its outreach programme outside University of Suffolk (UoS) core teaching hours. These are also available for community and corporate hire to generate income towards the future sustainability of the service.
- The Wolfson Room - a flexible purpose-built learning space for adults, children, and students.
- An Exhibition Gallery supporting 4 shows per year, enabling SA to borrow objects from national institutions such as British Library, National Maritime Museum, and The National Archives to showcase alongside Suffolk's own collections. (UKRG paperwork for The Hold has been fully completed and approved by [REDACTED], Arts Council Security Advisor, as suitable for loans under the Government Indemnity Scheme for the next three years and upgraded insurance cover arranged with Suffolk County Council's (SCC's) specialist collections insurers.)
- A state-of-the-art Searchroom and adjoining John Blatchly Local Studies Library for those studying original archives and printed material, with an Audio Room off the Searchroom.
- A Café to encourage families to meet and explore the semi-permanent (and temporary community) exhibitions in The Street and to support themed events and activities (e.g., past-inspired food and drink evenings).
- A Shop selling merchandise inspired by the collections and/or created by local artists to help generate income.

The SA has refreshed and remodelled the Searchroom area within Lowestoft Library to offer a brighter, more visitor friendly and flexible space for research, school, and community visits etc – see also 10 below.

	<p>The Bury downstairs Searchroom has been remodelled to include improved research space for those who cannot get upstairs and an enhanced display area. The heating in the building has also been upgraded. Plans are also being developed to move the current upstairs Searchroom downstairs.</p> <p>Progress has been slower with digital preservation capacity, due to the major NLHF transformational project - The Hold: a Suffolk Archive Service for the 21st century. The Preservica and Orangeleaf contacts have been renewed and the Orangeleaf website is currently undergoing redevelopment. The staging site is due to go live during Summer 2021 and will include improved exhibition, map interface, GIS, and WooCommerce functionally. During lockdown more catalogues have been added to CALM and uploaded to the website improving collections management and accessibility. SCC IT have recently agreed to review the SA longer term IT requirements.</p> <p>As part of the preparations for the move of collections an extensive boxing and protective packaging programme has been undertaken especially at Gatacre Road using long-term conservation grade materials (rather than just temporary protective packing for the move) e.g., c430 rolled items have been rerolled around inner protective cores and had an outer acid-free wrapping – many were also removed from their wooden hanging bars to which they had been attached by rusting tacks. This supports the Conservation and Collections Management Plans. Once the move is complete this programme will continue, and other aspects of these Plans can start to be implemented.</p> <p>The Conservation and Management Plans include options for applying for additional funding for a range of projects. Sponsorship packages for conservation and exhibitions have been investigated, checked by SCC Legal and put in place.</p> <p>The Exhibitions and Interpretation Officer (EIO) has 7 years' experience of preparing material for and staging exhibitions and has been ably assisted by 2 Heritage Trainees in staging exhibitions taking some of the pressure off the Conservator. She also activity monitors the environmental conditions in the Exhibition Gallery. New roles of Zero Hours Conservation Assistant and Conservation Apprentice to help with projects and exhibitions were discussed as part of the service transformation but have not yet been implemented.</p>
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		<p>Collections care and preservation facilities have improved with the introduction of the fully equipped new north facing Conservation Workshop, and Cleaning and Drying and Quarantine Rooms at The Hold. These facilities include a new walk-in freezer, backlit map wall board, fume hood, large sink, vacuum trunk, worktables, shelving etc.</p> <p>There has also been investment in Clicknetherfield exhibition cases meeting Government Indemnity Scheme standards at The Hold and in Lowestoft.</p>
<p>4. Develop and deliver the service transformation element of The Hold project, ensuring that staff are supported to understand the new roles and ways of working that will make the reshaped service successful, and that capacity to manage and preserve collections is sustained.</p>	<p>1.6</p>	<p>A formal staff consultation began on 22 May and concluded on 5 July 2019. The new structure aimed to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • retain knowledge, skills, resources, and experience. • minimise disruption to the service. • keep any reduction in roles to an absolute minimum. • create generic job profiles with a wide skills base to ensure a multi-skilled workforce providing flexibility and an improved service to the public. • enhance skills to provide more information, learning resources and services online, carry out digital preservation, create digital surrogates, and deliver outreach programmes, etc. • provide continuing opportunities for service and individual growth, creating career paths including the development of apprenticeships for existing staff in areas such as Conservation. • continue to offer flexible working and job shares in line with the extended needs of the service. • provide a single robust focused management structure, across the service developing unity of strategic, commercial, and operational delivery, by breaking down silos. • ensure resources, skills, experience, and knowledge are focused in the right areas to meet current and future needs and demands. • give a strategic focus to driving revenue streams and publicity for SA. • emphasise the importance of growth and commercialism to continue to fund and expand the existing heritage collections. <p>Nearly all roles, excluding the NHLF funded posts, were considered “in scope” for the restructure and, following relevant recruitment processes, senior staff took up their roles in September 2019. Searchroom Assistants were also required to go through a presentation and interview process that asked them to consider how they would operate in a transformed and different service in the future and contracts were transferred to Archive Assistant roles in November 2019, although the revised hours did not start until February and March 2020.</p>

The restructure did initially have a negative impact on morale and productivity. It became clear during the process some staff did not feel connected to the Activity Plan or indeed the project. Part of this was due to a geographical disconnect, not being able to get them on the building site and a view that more information could be shared.

Moving to their new hours in February and March alleviated some of the concerns raised by the Archive Assistants. The temporary closure and revamp of the Lowestoft Archives allowed the team to work closely together and develop new working relationships. This was particularly important following the departure of 2 of the more longstanding Searchroom Assistants.

The Service Manager (SM) and Senior Archive Assistant successfully negotiated with Corporate Property for some much-needed redecoration work to be carried out at the Bury branch. This was welcomed by the team as evidence the service and SCC are still investing in both Bury and Lowestoft.

Although the Ipswich branch closed for decant work in March, staff implemented their new hours, including Sunday working but excluding the late nights on Thursdays. The main advantage of this was they started to work in the daily teams that would be delivering the service in The Hold post opening. The new Hold team includes staff previously based at Lowestoft and Bury so this helped staff to get to know each other, without the additional pressure of delivering a public service.

All the NLHF and professional staff started reporting to the Operations Manager allowing a much more cohesive team to develop. The Operations and Steering Team is now well established with sub-groups reporting progress back to O&ST. This has removed some of the silo working ensuring service delivery is efficient and joined up.

The 2 new Community Learning Officers East and West (CLO), EIO, Volunteer Engagement Co-ordinator (VEC), Marketing and Communications Officer (MCO) and Commercial Officer (CO) have greatly enhanced the skills, knowledge, and experience of the existing SA team. There has already been a considerable amount of learning exchange.

Covid-19 and the subsequent closure of the branches obviously had a significant impact on service

transformation. Rapid planning by the Strategic, Operations and Service Managers meant initial difficulties in sorting out IT equipment and allocating appropriate work were resolved within the first 2 weeks of lockdown.

Archive Assistants were most affected by the shutdown as some had only just started their new roles at the beginning of March 2020 and 2 weeks later were being asked to work from home. They only started to go back in to branch in very small numbers at the end of July 2020 in Ipswich and later in Bury and Lowestoft.

They and other staff have enjoyed working alongside the NHLF funded posts advising on and conducting research to help develop exhibition content, for in branch, travelling and online exhibitions, teaching and learning resources, delivering student workshops, schools loan boxes etc. The CLOs and EIO have greatly valued their involvement and it has certainly allowed the teams to feel more engaged with the Activity Plan.

Communication has continued to be a challenge. Measures introduced to improve it included: regular catchups between the Strategic, Operations, Service Managers and the MCO and CO; regular MS Teams briefings, incorporating Q&As, to all staff using a mixture of work and private email accounts; monthly service meetings and social catchups using MS Teams; continuation of branch and specific team meetings remotely; online supervisions and appraisals. The SA MS Teams site has been used by all staff as a way of keeping in touch, asking for help with IT issues, suggesting useful archives, those with SCC access are searching the catalogue and digitised content for colleagues using their own IT and generally allowing the entire team to develop closer links. This site was set up by the SM but has since grown organically and appears to be successfully meeting the needs of many in the wider team. Its use has continued since staff have started to return to branches. The new MCO has helped the Management Team with staff and volunteer news updates and requests for staff involvement e.g., in the development of the signage designs and possible quotations for The Hold external Fore Street wall. Despite this work to try to enhance communication, the results of October 2020's SCC Staff Survey show some still do not feel engaged and empowered.

They have nevertheless greatly enhanced their gained digital skills, knowledge, and confidence right across the service. The Archive Assistants have also gained a greater understanding of the structure of catalogues as a result of

data inputting. Some team members have received training in the delivery and management of webinars, increased their WordPress, and social media skills and experimented with online platforms to generate digital jigsaws, an advent calendar, GIFs to animate still images etc from SA collections. A virtual online tour of the first exhibition at The Hold was developed and launched by the team in November 2020 on the SA website. This included examples of images, audio, and video from the exhibition, as well as video clips of walking around the exhibition focusing on key items See [Global Events: Suffolk Stories - Virtual Tour - Suffolk Archives](#)

32 specific training opportunities for staff and volunteers were identified in the Activity Plan. A considerable amount of staff and volunteer training has occurred since March 2019, (mainly online from March 2020), to help everyone develop their knowledge of collections right across the county, especially those featured in temporary and more permanent exhibitions. Other areas training was delivered in include: induction to The Hold and its systems, information security, Covid-19 procedures, customer care, improving the visitor experience, challenging visitors, safeguarding for working with vulnerable groups, working with 18–24-year-olds, merchandising, display techniques, upselling, volunteer supervision, development, giving feedback and support, oral history recording, wellbeing etc. MS Teams training sessions have been recorded so they are available for all staff and volunteers. As SA begins to open recording MS Teams meetings has enabled those maintaining frontline services to catchup in full later.

Archive Assistants and volunteers gained more knowledge, skills, and experience in Preventative Conservation as a result of their contribution to the repacking project.

The Archivists in particular have benefited from the NLHF roles' significant contribution to the outreach programme. They have relished and used to advantage the new broader links made with the academic staff at the UoS and with other arts and cultural organisations, and communities e.g., the Suffolk African History Collective, Suffolk Black Community Forum, Creative Curve, High tide theatre group etc.

The service and staff have also benefitted from the more sustained input of the 2 12-month Heritage Trainees, 4 8-week 16+ Summer Placements from local schools and 8 UoS 12-week Summer Interns. We also are looking

		<p>forward to the arrival of our first 6-month KickStart Events Apprentice.</p> <p>To ensure volunteer managers make time for planning for their volunteer's activities, the VEC has set up quarterly volunteer planning sessions. These planning sessions can be done 1:1 or as a service , depending on what works best for the volunteer managers. Action points are followed up and support given by the VEC to colleagues. The sessions also help the VEC prioritise and plan volunteer recruitment more effectively.</p> <p>Staff from right across the service have submitted suggestions to the VEC for help required whether this is physically in branch on a longer term-basis or a shorter quick one time only online ask. The range of volunteering roles as gradually developed supporting both collections management and front of house activities as well as research, gardening, and exhibition, and historic walk guiding as has the diversity of our volunteers. The Social Justice Manager and Disability Employment Adviser Leader from the Suffolk Job Centre is interested in promoting SA volunteering opportunities to his clients. The VEC is working closely with Suffolk Refugee Support, which is based in Ipswich. They are looking for volunteering opportunities for their clients, and we are working with them to ensure the opportunities we are offering are accessible for refugees.</p> <p>2 volunteer surveys have been taken place which have helped us to identify improvements needed. Their Newsletter has moved from being 6-monthly to quarterly.</p> <p>Staff and volunteers have also contributed to the development of new systems, procedures, and paperwork to help transform the service. The Volunteer Policy was reviewed https://www.suffolkarchives.co.uk/about-suffolk-archives/policies/ complete with a new recruitment flow diagram. A new Volunteer Handbook has been written, proofread and peer reviewed by a select group of volunteers. The volunteer induction process was reviewed and improved with the addition of an introduction to research for those starting on Sharing Suffolk Stories (SSS) and similar projects. This introduction/induction was written by an Archive Assistant and reviewed by the VEC and SM.</p> <p>In November 2020 CO learnt SA's application for a Premises Licence for The Hold had been approved, so SA can offer a broader range of interactive events such as plays, dance performances, live or recorded music, and age certificate film screenings some led by the SA or UoS</p>
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		<p>teams, and some arranged by local community groups and organisations. Screen Suffolk were invited in November 2020 to take a series of photographs of The Hold to put on their website to promote it as a possible filming location see https://suffolk.reel-scout.com/loc_detail.aspx?parent=loc_results.aspx&id=10162657&cid=99 SA hopes these initiatives will help the future sustainability of the service and it to contribute positively to the economy of the Waterfront area of Ipswich and the UoS offer.</p> <p>Charges were reviewed and a discount policy and strategy are being finalised. These include venue hire discounts, concession prices for events and tickets and in-kind discounts and will define the difference between venue hire, partnership/co-produced events and SA produced events. The CO has created new web pages and a PowerPoint presentation to promote the spaces to prospective clients. A new group email address archives.events.hire@suffolk.gov.uk has been setup for events hire enquiries.</p> <p>SA has introduced new branding, which is simple, bold, modern yet retains a traditional feel being recognisable to users as a family tree device to join up the service. A series of new templates and guidance assist staff in the production of posters, web pages, PowerPoint presentations etc. There are also 3 specific colour variants for use in Bury, Ipswich and Lowestoft.</p> <p>CO and the Programming Group have developed a basic Public Events Programme Framework using exhibition topics and subjects as the backbone. A new What's On - Public Events and Activities Brochure has been designed and the first one covering July 2021-January 2022 issued. The first season's events are also live on the website: Public Events Programme - Suffolk Archives SA has standardised the way rooms and spaces are booked across the branches and new Function Sheets have been successfully piloted to keep external and in-house event logistics and operations organised alongside BAU.</p>
<p>10. Develop and confirm the public service delivery plans for the north east of the county once The Hold opens</p>	<p>3.2.2</p>	<p>The process of finding a more sustainable long-term solution to look after archive collections in NE Suffolk has been ongoing since 2010. The issue has been explored with TNA, East of England Regional Archive Council, partners, stakeholders, depositors, and users since then. SCC has sought to facilitate the safety and security of collections, deliver effective services, increase digital access and work to attract new audiences.</p>

		<p>The Lowestoft Archive Service Searchroom was transformed during 2019 and early 2020 and the newly refurbished space was opened at the end of February 2020 ahead of the archives moving from their basement storage to The Hold. The transformed space now includes:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a dedicated audio/visual area with a large screen for people to view digital images with friends and family.• a more flexible space and furniture that enables more traditional users to carry out their research in core hours whilst providing an improved space for running talks, courses, workshops and other activities and outreach events with local groups and communities, and interactive learning opportunities for schools including take over days etc on other days. These activities will include crafts for families, trails, small pieces of drama, songs, poetry, or music, and oral history recording sessions.• a more flexible office space for staff and volunteers to work and where teachers CPD workshops and other training sessions can be run.• a new Government Indemnity Scheme standard display case that acts as a centre piece for exhibitions including ones created by partner organisations, local projects, touring exhibitions, pop-ups etc. Exhibitions will include original archive material stored at The Hold, and items borrowed from other collections relating to NE Suffolk.• new archival standard metal racking to house the collections that require more protection than the open Searchroom shelves e.g., the Port of Lowestoft Research Society Collection.• improved computer facilities for access to online catalogue information, exhibitions, digital stories etc.• enhanced CCTV. <p>The Branch continues to provide access to a wide array of material covering the whole of the Waveney area including popular local and family history research materials such as:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• printed local studies books, journals, ephemera, maps, newspapers and cuttings, trade directories, parish magazines, photographs, prints, engravings etc.• transcripts and indexes e.g., of parish registers, monumental inscriptions, and wills.• various types of copies microfilm and fiche, typescripts, printouts, photocopies which are increasingly being replaced by digital copies including of:-<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ oral history recordings○ images from the North East Suffolk Photographic Survey and other photographs and postcards○ Archdeaconry of Suffolk Wills and Marriage Licences○ Beccles Gaol Books.
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- prints and engravings,
- fishing boat agreements etc.
- Port of Lowestoft Research Society Collection – including nearly 13,000 digital images of their photographs of Lowestoft Registered/Built Vessels
- collections of Sale Particulars, Electoral Registers, Ephemera, Posters, Copy Tithe Maps, and research notes compiled by local historians.
- free access to Ancestry and FindMyPast (including 2,863 digital images from 46 NE Suffolk School admission registers).

SA hopes the new offer in Lowestoft balances the original need to protect and preserve the archival records held, with local community desire for a staffed service in Lowestoft. The new space is normally open for 5 hours a day for four days in the week, including each Saturday. These core times allow researchers to continue using the Branch at what have traditionally been the peak usage hours and most popular days, whilst leaving 2 days per week (Monday and Wednesday) when community and outreach activity can take place.

Tues	10.00- 15.00
Thurs	10.00- 15.00
Fri	10.00- 15.00
Sat	10.00- 15.00

Unfortunately, Covid-19 has impacted on the delivery of this new service which has had to be further limited and is by pre-booked appointment only.

The CLO East covers the whole of the Eastern side of the county and regularly works with groups in NE Suffolk. She attends the Lowestoft Cultural Leadership Group and Lowestoft Cultural Education Partnership meetings on behalf of SA.

SA is supporting the Lowestoft Cultural Strategy and Lowestoft Heritage Action Zones (HAZ) working with East Suffolk Council, Lowestoft Town Council, and others. On 21 May 2021 we held a very successful Lowestoft High Street HAZ induction session. This was the first time many of the attendees had seen and used the transformed Searchroom space due to Covid-19 restrictions and a number of favourable comments were received.

It has also supported the Reimaging Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft Making Waves Together, East of England Park Lowestoft Ness/North Denes Regeneration, and Suffolk

Artlink and Lowestoft Museum – Lowestoft Folk display Cabinet of Curiosities projects.

SA continues to work in partnership with local museums:

- loaning archives for annual exhibitions to Beccles Museum.
- helping Southwold Museum with the selection and digitisation of key items.
- and in a partnership project with Halesworth Museum and Suffolk Artlink to encourage literacy and promote writing skills in young people using historic letters.

Other key partners have been the LCEP – Lowestoft Rising – NessFest. SA helped develop and run a Youth Arts Festival Treasure Hunt around Lowestoft Library including the Lowestoft Branch of SA for young people and families in October 2019. In 2020 we teamed up with them again for the Big Draw Festival to run a competition during the October half-term break. called 'Capturing your local area', See <https://www.suffolkarchives.co.uk/big-draw/ness-fest/> This was open to young people aged 11-19 who were encouraged to draw their favourite place, or somewhere familiar passed every day, or a new local place discovered during lockdown. The competition was inspired by a sketchbook in SA depicting 19th century Lowestoft compiled by Richenda Cunningham, a member of a prominent Lowestoft Quaker family. Her sketches have now been digitised so they are more accessible.

Work with locals schools has involved running local history sessions at Oulton Broad Primary School as part of the Time Capsule project

<https://www.suffolkarchives.co.uk/time-capsule-2019/>

Volunteers from the NE have been involved in SA countywide Activity Plan projects that are part of the Sharing Suffolk Stories initiative See

https://www.suffolkarchives.co.uk/the_hold/sharing-suffolk-stories/ Their work includes research on *Soil Sisters – Putting the Women's Land Army on the Map*, *Pride in Suffolk's Past* and *Land and Shore – The Beach Village, Lowestoft* See

https://www.suffolkarchives.co.uk/the_hold/sharing-suffolk-stories/land-and-shore-project/ Following research by volunteers the professional production company – Voice cLOUD, worked with them to develop a play – 'Ancestors' incorporating the authentic voice from the archives, sea shanties and music to share the stories uncovered centred around the home lives' of women living in the Beach village and around Lowestoft which was performed at 2 retirement homes, The Seagull Theatre, Sam's Coffee House and Dunwich Reading Rooms.

		<p>SA has also supported the Access Community Trust with their NLHF Memories carved in Stone and CWGC projects and engaged with East Coast College by providing work experience opportunities. It is also assisting the new Lowestoft Third Crossing – Gull Wing large construction project with investigations into and capturing the long history of the desire to have another crossing of Lake Lothing for use on their website, in social media, and with schools and other sectors of the local community https://gullwingbridge.co.uk/</p> <p>The SA Archives on Tour Caravan/Trailer is under construction and SA is working on the AV content and hardware, the finish and colours for the interior, and the operational processes. This will enable the service to reach people in their local communities rather than expecting them to travel to us. The Rural Coffee Caravan have agreed SA caravan can join them on their normal schedule to help build an audience in the rural communities who already use the coffee caravan regularly including in NE Suffolk. The first touring exhibition on <i>Class of '82: Following Ipswich Town to UEFA cup victory</i> will also visit Sporting Memories reminiscence sessions etc.</p>
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2) Please list details of any supporting evidence submitted:

Required action	Requirement (s) to which it relates	Title or nature of evidence
1, 4 and 10	1.4, 2.4, 1.6, 3.2.2	PDF Suffolk Archives Update providing images of new building – The Hold, Lowestoft Searchroom Transformation and service outreach events and activities.

3) Accredited archive services are asked to inform their assessor body of any material change as a requirement for Archive Service Accreditation. Examples of material changes include loss of accommodation, planning for a new building, moving to a new type of governance, cuts in staffing, change to budgets of more than 5%.

Please let us know of any material changes to your archive service since the initial award of Accreditation and that are not covered elsewhere in this report.

The major change to the SA apart from the move into the new building already discussed as been the loss of income due to:-

- delays to the completion and handover of The Hold
- Covid-19 repeated lockdowns

Which amounted to [REDACTED] based on the projected business case expectancy once The Hold was open and functional and the service offered from the other branches and around the county transformed.

Discussions with NLHF on the implementation of outreach and engagement activities in this situation resulted in an extension to the project completion date from 31 May to 30 September 2022 to give a much-needed additional Summer in which to deliver another exhibition, and events physically as well as virtually to develop the sustainability of the service. SA has also agreed with NHLF to review the Business Plan for the project in early 2022 after the first 6-month Public Programme.