

Case Study: Gloucester Record Office

For The Record Project

Gloucestershire Archives is leading a £2.8 million project called 'For the Record' to transform its service and develop sustainable access to archives in Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire. Building on existing joint-working arrangements with partner organizations and volunteers 'For the Record' involves both capital and service development activities. It has three elements: developing a Heritage Hub; preserving and improving access to records that are 'born digital'; and building new strongrooms.

The project partners

Gloucestershire Archives is part of Gloucestershire County Council and provides an archives service for Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire. The other organisations supporting this project are: Gloucestershire Family History Society, Gloucestershire Constabulary, which is relocating its archive collection to strong rooms at the Archives, and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Gloucestershire; the Diocese of Gloucester; South Gloucestershire Council; Gloucestershire Local History Association; Messier Bugatti Dowty; and the Friends of Gloucestershire Archives, which is leading on fundraising.

What the project will achieve

Gloucestershire Archives is the heritage heart of a very special region of the UK. The archive treasures it contains are vital pieces of the jigsaw of local memories, experiences and achievements. By expertly safeguarding and adding to these precious resources, and helping local people and organizations do the same with their own documents, we will secure rich collections for future generations and preserve the ongoing story of how we live. Supporting ground-breaking partnerships and lasting volunteering opportunities, we will work with individuals and communities across Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire to inspire and sustain them. We will create a unique and inclusive meeting place where people will be supported to document, care for, interpret and celebrate their personal and shared history.

The on-site Heritage Hub will be based at Gloucestershire Archives. It will support local people and organizations to gather, keep and share historic documents and help them use these documents, primarily to discover their family, local or house history. It will become the official home of Gloucestershire Family History Society, Gloucestershire Registration Services' copy certificates service and Gloucestershire Constabulary Heritage Group. We want local people and organisations to think of it as their heritage home too.

We will be developing the Archives' public research room and adjacent accommodation to create new spaces for volunteers, community groups and organisations to work together and help the public. Key spaces are: a welcoming reception area in an open plan multi use space; open access research rooms for customers who are new to family, house or local history or who want to use reference books and other published resources; a secure research room with integrated project workspace where people can use original documents dating back to the 1100s; a meeting room that

will also be home to volunteers working on Gloucestershire Constabulary material; a purpose built training room for up to 70 people; a garden area; and visitor parking.

We will be developing a Heritage Hub community website that will act as a portal for information about gathering, keeping and sharing archive collections in Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire. Linked content will include a Heritage Hub events programme, training podcasts and news feeds via social networking platforms. Partners will also be running events in the Heritage Hub training room and at locations across Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire, and we will be inviting local people and organisations to include their archive-related events in the Heritage Hub listings.

Supporting these activities and facilities are more technical developments. We want to make sure we can **preserve and access digital material** for current and future generations to enjoy, and we want to help local people and organisations to do the same. We are also planning to build three **new strongrooms** on our Alvin Street site, to provide specialist storage for new collections and ensure the sustainability of our preservation service.