

Minutes of the LHSA Advisory Committee Meeting held Monday 11 December 2006 at 10.00am in the Meeting Room, Wolfson Technology Resource Centre, EUML

In attendance

Dr Charles Swainson, Medical Director, LNHSB (Chair)
Professor Roger Davidson, Economic and Social History, UE
Professor Andrew Calder, Head of Reproductive and Developmental Sciences, UE
Mr George Mackenzie, Keeper of the Records of Scotland, NAS
Ms Jenny McDermott, LHS Deputy Archivist, EUL
Mr Bob Martin, Head of Corporate Reporting & Corporate Governance, LNHS
Dr John Scally, Director of University Collections, EUL
Dr Steve Sturdy, Science Studies Unit, UE
Ms Alison Gardiner, LHS Assistant Archivist, EUL (Secretary)

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Dr Barfoot, Mrs Cannell and Dr McCallum.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting of 20 February 2006

The minutes were accepted as a true record.

3. Membership and future of the Committee

Mr Martin was welcomed to the committee and Professor Calder agreed to stay on as the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine representative.

Dr Swainson reported that he and Mrs Cannell had been discussing a new Memorandum of Understanding and SLA and a draft was being prepared. The University would look after the collection on the Board's behalf, whilst the Board retained certain rights and responsibilities in relation to it. The University would manage it within existing legal and other frameworks.

In view of this it was decided that the role of the committee should be discussed. Dr Swainson said that most of the business between the University and the Board including payments, the SLA, etc. was conducted outside the Committee and suggested this should be separate along with the professional advice the Board received from the NAS. Dr Swainson said Dr Barfoot had suggested that a smaller professional committee be formed to shape the archive to meet the needs of researchers and users. Mr Mackenzie suggested the Committee get more buy-in from the various bodies of NHS Lothian and try to develop a sense of ownership. Dr Swainson agreed and said this would also give the Archivist useful contacts within the organisations when it came to taking in records. Professor Davidson said that it was important to retain the academic input from users. He said he was not convinced that dividing issues of funding and management from issues of access was practical in that the former usually affected the latter. Dr Swainson re-iterated that the Board and University tended to deal with structure outwith the Committee. Professor Davidson said that if there were to be a separate committee of archive users then issues of funding and management should be reported at the very least. Professor

3. **Membership and future of the Committee** cont.

Calder suggested having an annual meeting of a group similar to the Advisory Committee to keep people informed of what was going on and having a sub-group of archivists and users. Dr Scally suggested that the user group should have a Special Collections representative to discuss joint projects, related collections, etc.

4. **Matters Arising**

i) Service Level Agreement

Dr Swainson reported that what had been done this year was being rolled forward and he hoped to have something in place for next year. He said the overall financial underpinning was unlikely to change greatly. Roughly one third would come from Exchequer funding and two thirds from Endowments. Dr Swainson said he hoped to get a longer-term agreement than the current year. He hoped that, once the SLA was signed and the University and Board had committed themselves to a long-term financial relationship, a rolling budget of as much as ten years could be arranged. Professor Davidson welcomed this suggestion saying it would allow whoever was running the archive to make strategic decisions. He added that, particularly during the period of the decant, important decisions would have to be made to protect the quality of user access which might involve extra expenditure. Dr Swainson mentioned the amount of external funding raised in the past few years and said it was very important for funders to see a long-term commitment from the Board.

Action: CS and SC to continue working on SLA

ii) Forward Budget

Covered in Item 4 (i).

Action: CS to try to arrange a longer term budget cycle.

iii) Management Arrangements

Covered in Item 3.

(iv) Main Library Redevelopment Project

Ms McDermott stated that the move had finished on Monday 4 December and summarised her report. She mentioned that the standard of shelving was much better for archival material than before. Dr Scally said that Miss McDermott and the rest of the LHSA staff had done a great job in moving the collections within a very tight timescale and the project was a good example of co-operation between LHSA and Special Collections. He emphasised that LHSA had been given space within the Main Library to store the most used collections in order to try to reduce the impact of the move on readers. Ms McDermott confirmed that people wishing to see material held in the annexe would generally be asked to go there.

Miss McDermott was asked whether much damage had been caused by the shelving collapse. She stated that the Conservator would be producing more detailed information

(iv) Main Library Redevelopment Project cont.

but the consensus was that there was relatively little major damage. There was damage to boxes, some of which would need replaced, but these had protected the items inside.

Professor Davidson asked it to be minuted how impressed he had been with the way the staff responded to the crisis. He expressed concern at the criteria used for the decant saying that case notes were absolutely critical to the future of several of the students he supervised. He wanted it put on record that there were people whose research careers were dependent on access to case notes. Ms McDermott reassured Professor Davidson that the records which current researchers needed to see had been found space within the Main Library. She also said that future projects would be reviewed on a case by case basis and if it was proving problematic to access the case notes at the annexe then it might be possible to bring a particular collection into the library. Professor Davidson said that the transparency of LHSA's actions to date had been hugely reassuring and he hoped this would continue. Ms McDermott confirmed a member of LHSA staff would have to be at the annexe when LHSA material was being used so appointments were essential. Ms McDermott stated there would be a more detailed report forthcoming which Dr Swainson said he would give to the Endowments Committee.

Action: J McD to produce final report and **CS** to pass on to Endowments Committee

(v) Reward Modernisation

Dr Scally said the results were out and there was a fairly robust process in place for dealing with "red-circled" posts. Professors Davidson and Calder expressed their astonishment that three out of seven of the LHSA posts had been red-circled. Professor Davidson said his understanding of previous SLAs and negotiations was that LHSA posts were to be graded at a certain level and he was dismayed to find this being eroded. Dr Swainson said he had written to the University about it but there was no means of him influencing this matter. Professor Calder said he felt the Committee should offer its full support to the individuals involved to help them try to regain their grades over the three year protected period by better reflecting the huge contribution they make to the archive. Professor Davidson requested that it be minuted that the Committee were dismayed and dissatisfied at the result of the Pay and Reward Modernisation process. The Committee agreed.

5. LHSA Report and Presentation at LNHSB Meeting 26.07.06

Dr Swainson reported that the minute of the above meeting had been approved by the Board at their last meeting. Dr Swainson said he had written to colleagues in Aberdeen, Dundee and Glasgow about the possibility of combining Health Service Archives but the replies he had received suggested this would not be practical.

The Board had been given the report and Fact Sheets by Julia Sheppard but some academic members felt the former wasn't sufficiently critical in an academic sense. Dr Swainson said he had found it very helpful in terms of history and context and a record of work carried out. Dr Scally suggested it could have gone a bit further in suggesting how cataloguing could be developed using EAD and ISAD(G), etc. but added that it reminded people of how vital the archive was to research in this area. Professor Davidson

5. LHS A Report and Presentation at LNHSB Meeting 26.07.06 cont.

welcomed the fact it had been written by someone from the Wellcome Library.

Dr Swainson reported that there had been progress with the objects. Dr Barfoot had produced a schedule of those which have an historical interest and was writing a paper for the Endowments Committee on that with options for what to do next. Some objects would be recommended for destruction or disposal.

Dr Swainson said Mr Mackenzie's presentation had been very worthwhile in informing the Board of the archive's work and ensuring their continued support particularly when a longer-term funding arrangement was being sought. Mr Mackenzie suggested inputting to the Board on a fairly regular basis. Dr Swainson agreed and added that the Board wanted to see the archive being used more and having a greater interaction with the public, schools, etc. Mr Mackenzie offered advice from the NAS in this. Dr Scally suggested joint projects with Special Collections could be looked into in the future.

6. Re-alignment of Information Services

Dr Scally reported that LHS A remained within University Collections which is part of a new realigned grouping called Library and Collections.

7. Archivist's Report

This had been sent out prior to the meeting. Professor Davidson asked about whether decisions had to be made about the various posts in the archive such as the FOI post which Dr Barfoot had recommended be extended for at least a year. Dr Scally said he and Dr Barfoot had begun discussions on the best possible way forward given the Deputy Archivist's resignation and the archive being split between three locations. He said that this was a management matter and would be reported to the Committee at a suitable juncture. Professor Davidson expressed a concern that the Assistant Archivist FOI's contract, which was due to end in April, should be made more permanent. Dr Swainson said the Committee would want to support that because LHS A was in a transitional period. Professor Davidson said he would not like to see any erosion of the staff complement. Dr Swainson said there was no intention of that. Dr Scally said that he had been talking last week about making the Assistant Archivist's post an eighteen month or two year one to see things settle, retain the staffing complement and perhaps redeploy it in a slightly more flexible way. Professor Davidson said he was seeking reassurance and Dr Scally said that his reassurance could be minuted.

8. AOCB

Ms Gardiner reported that the next meeting would be Monday 26 March 2007 at 2.30pm*.

*Postponed – next meeting taking place on Thursday 7 June 2007 at 9.00am