

COMMUNITY ACCESS TO ARCHIVE OFFICES

Thank you for taking the time to look at this questionnaire, which is part of an English Heritage project titled **Expanding the Neighbourhood Plan Evidence Base**.

The Questionnaire

The questionnaire is structured into 3 sections. **Please complete multiple choice questions using the letter 'x'**. Each question has a short explanatory sentence indicating whether one or multiple boxes should be checked. For free text questions we welcome as much concise detail as you can supply. We would be grateful if you could avoid the use of 'jargon' in your replies. A brief glossary of terms is included in a separate document to help in the interpretation of some questions.

We hope you'll find everything straightforward. We've attached some explanatory notes about the questionnaire, which we hope will enable you to complete the questionnaire as fully as possible. However if you do have any problems please don't hesitate to give us a call on the numbers below, and we'll gladly talk things through. Thank you again for sharing your information with us.

Submitting the Questionnaire

Completed questionnaires can be emailed to answers@locusconsulting.co.uk. Or, if you prefer, they can be printed off and sent in the post to:

Archive Questionnaire
Locus Consulting
Park Lane House
5 Park Lane,
Donington
Lincolnshire
PE11 4UE

**PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR
QUESTIONNAIRE NO LATER
THAN THE**

15th MARCH 2013

CONTACTING US

Please do not hesitate to contact us using the information below if you require any assistance or advice on filling in the questionnaire.

Email: adam.partington@locusconsulting.co.uk alastair.macintosh@locusconsulting.co.uk	Telephone: 01775 821402 07882109149 (Adam) or 07557375400 (Alastair)
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PLEASE PROVIDE US WITH YOUR CONTACT DETAILS:

Organisation: Dorset History Centre	Position:
Date: 28 February 2013	Email:
Author:	Telephone:

SECTION 1: AVAILABILITY

This section aims to find out about the types and formats of heritage information that you hold and how that information is made available to a member of the public. The format of the questionnaire is multiple choice. Please check one or more boxes for each question where relevant.

This first section comprises 3 questions and is completed on the chart on the following page:

1: HELD	Question: <i>Do you hold this type of information?</i> Response: Yes <u>or</u> No Aim: To find out the types of heritage information held within your archive.
2: ACCESS	Question: How can information be accessed? Response: Mark <u>one or more</u> boxes Aim: To understand if and how members of the public can physically access the information.
3: FORMAT	Question: What formats is information held in? Response: Mark <u>one or more</u> boxes Aim: To understand the different formats that heritage information is held in.

SECTION 2: ACCESSIBILITY

As well as finding out the types of information held by your archive, we are interested to know the ways in which it is being made available to the public. This section is divided into three parts, investigating online access to holdings, remote enquiries and requests for research, and physical access by a member of the public.

> ONLINE

A growing number of archives are providing information online, including via third party websites (e.g findmypast, ancestry). The styles of website vary considerably, particularly according to the information displayed, the different structures in which information is held, and the resources available. The questions below seek to understand the different types of heritage information held online and the often individual ways in which it is presented and structured.

If none of your heritage information is available online please go to Question 2.6

2.1 How is heritage information hosted online? (Mark either 'Yes' or 'No'. Please add the address of your website in the appropriate box.)

TYPE OF SITE	Yes	No	Website address:
Third party website	X		www.ancestry.co.uk
Local authority web pages	X		www.dorsetforyou.com/dorsethistorycentre
Bespoke site or sub-site		X	
Mobile phone site		X	
Mobile phone app		X	(name)

2.2 Approximately when did your online service become available to the public? (Month/Year)

*Answer June 2011

2.3 Can users upload information to your website?

(NO) (Delete as applicable)

2.4 If 'YES' what types of information, and can users see each other's contributions? (Free text answer)

Answer:

> REMOTE ENQUIRY

Remote enquiries are a common way of providing heritage information. This section seeks to understand what protocols are in place to supply information remotely and the different methods in which it is made available.

2.5 Do you provide a remote search/enquiry service? YES (Delete as applicable)

2.6 What material and/or data can be supplied remotely for each heritage information type (free text), and in what format can this be provided? (Multiple choice)

(e.g. Holdings list, copy of specific document, publication)

	Material/data/information	FORMAT			
		Photocopy	Printout	Scan/Photo	Other*
Maps	Full maps or sections	X	X	X	
Lists & Registers	Transcript of entries and/or copies of entries	X		X	
Records	As above	X		X	
Wills & Probate	As above			X	
Plans	As above	X		X	
Images & Media	As above	X		X	

*Please give details if 'Other'

> VISIT

It is likely that the most effective way of accessing the information held by an archive is to visit it in person. For the user, this represents an opportunity to tap into the knowledge and experience of archive staff. This part of the questionnaire aims to find out what heritage information is accessible through a visit, along with the practices, facilities and resources available to help access archive holdings.

2.7 What are the opening arrangements of your archive? (Please include days, times and any access restrictions in operation) (Free text).

*Answer

<http://www.dorsetforyou.com/dorsethistorycentre/visiting>

2.8 What facilities are available to members of the public visiting your Archive? (Mark either 'Yes' or 'No')

FACILITY	Yes	No
Dedicated workspace	X	
Computer with catalogue access	X	
Computer with internet access	X	
Library/search room	X	
Other*		

*Please provide more information here

2.9 Can you provide visitors with assistance in any of the following areas? (Mark one or more boxes)

	Computer/IT skills	Officers' local knowledge	Manual searching	Interpreting information	Other*
Maps	X	X			
Lists and Registers	X	X			
Records	X	X			
Wills and Probate	X	X			
Plans		X			
Images	X	X			

*Please provide more information here: Staff are able and willing to assist the public with a wide range of enquiries. However, the emphasis is on 'self help' wherever possible – resources are becoming ever more stretched and therefore a lot of effort goes into making the facilities and the means of accessing the records as intuitive as possible. As regards 'interpreting information' – the role of the archive staff is to assist, but where a matter of

legal or other detailed interpretation is required, we do not offer an opinion – it is for the user to source their own expert opinion rather than for us to suggest one.

2.10 How can information be viewed by a member of the public? (Mark one or more boxes)

	Original Document	Photocopy	Microfiche /Microfilm	Digital image	Transcription or Translation	Other*
Maps	X		X	X		
Lists and Registers	X	X	X	X	X	
Records	X			X		
Wills and Probate			X	X		
Plans	X					
Images	X			X		

*Please provide more information here

2.11 What criteria can visitors use to search information? Does this require staff assistance? (Free text)

	Geographical location search	Topic/type criteria search	Requires staff assistance?
Maps	X	X	Possibly
Lists & Registers	X	X	
Records	X	X	
Wills & Probate	X	X	
Plans	X	X	
Images & Media	X	X	

2.12 Bearing in mind your answer to Question 2.6, what additional material and/or data can be supplied or accessed during a visit (free text), and in what format can this be provided? (Multiple choice)
 (e.g. Photocopy, digital image, transcription, report)

	Material/data/information	FORMAT			
		Photocopy	Printout	Scan/Photo	Other
Maps					
Lists & Registers					
Records					
Wills & Probate					
Plans					
Images & Media					

SECTION 3: ENABLING ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND APPLICATION

Much of the information held by archives is in a raw form (e.g. original documents and maps). This section aims to find out what processes and resources are in place to assist a member of the public in the interpretation and application of information acquired from an archive office.

3.1 Please give details of any methods and materials available to help users in the interpretation of heritage information, such as user guides to your archive. (Free text)

Answer:

<http://www.dorsetforyou.com/403881>

Staff provide a huge amount of information to enquirers and we employ 'self help' guides to such things as using Ancestry.

3.2 What guidance do you have to help guide members of the public in undertaking heritage-related projects in your area? If you don't provide any guidance of this kind please enter "n/a".

<http://www.dorsetforyou.com/dorsethistorycentre/townguides>

We employ a p/t community engagement officer and a p/t learning officer whose roles it is to encourage understanding and use of the archives. The former role particularly is about getting communities to take an interest in their heritage and to use historic sources to support their work.

(These might include guidance on how to produce village design statements, organise local history projects, or inform building restoration projects.)

Historical research	
Conservation (e.g. buildings)	
Architecture and design	
Education and outreach	
Planning-related matters	
Landscape history	
Other	

3.3 Are you aware of any *specific* community-led plans (e.g. parish plans, village design statements, neighbourhood plans etc.) that have used information from your archive in the past 5 years?

Answer: YES/NO (delete as applicable).

3.4 If 'YES' please give some specific details where possible (Free text)
(e.g. location, type of plan and basic aims)

Type of Plan	Details
	Can't give precise information, but we know that many parish plans have been generated using data held here – we know this because of contact with Dorset Community Action, the body which works with parish councils and other local bodies.

This concludes the questionnaire. Thank you for taking the time to share your information with us.

END