

West Wight Discovery Centre (working title)

Project Summary

The West Wight Discovery Centre is a project to extend Freshwater Library facilities to include a digital archive studio, a learning space for workshops/lectures and a gallery/exhibition space for local heritage exhibitions and interactive archive terminals. The project will also include further expansion of the library facility to include offices and facilities to house Freshwater Parish Council.

The aim is to create a series of mixed-use spaces that are flexible and adaptable to accommodate a whole host of events, workshops, meetings and exhibitions for Freshwater Parish Council (FPC), the Friends of Freshwater Library (FoFL) and Freshwater & Totland Archive Group (FaTAG) alongside the existing Library provision.

At the heart of the project is the idea of creating a hub of community facilities centred on Moa Place at the heart of Freshwater. The redeveloped library facility would provide a cultural, learning and information hub that would compliment the existing West Wight Sports & Community Centre facility, the West Wight Medical Practice, the Skate Park & MUGA and Jubilee Field/Stround Recreation Ground. As a result residents would have full access to a complete range of community services and facilities in one central location.

A detailed search and analysis has been undertaken to identify funding streams to support the redevelopment/expansion project. A number of suitable library centred schemes were initially identified (Foyle & Wolfson Foundations) however these are restricted to charity-based organisations excluding FPC from the application process. It was then identified that if the project were given a strong heritage focus the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) would be applicable alongside capital funding via the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB).

A project enquiry application has been submitted to the HLF and a response to proceed with a full application has been received. The initial feedback from the HLF has been that the project fits within the scope of its Heritage Grants funding programme, however the application needs to be balanced in terms of revenue and capital expenditure and ideally they would prefer to see a partner sharing some of the capital expenditure costs.

A full HLF application has been drafted and is undergoing refinement with HLF guidance with an expected submission for their August 2017 window. This application will be assessed and a decision will be made by November 2017.

The HLF Heritage Grants programme is split into two phases – the development phase and the delivery phase. The HLF state that it will take 18 months (including the development phase) to complete the application process. If successful this would see the project breaking ground at the beginning of 2019.

The current estimate for the overall cost of the HLF side of the project is around £400,000. A 5% contribution (£20,000) to the overall project costs (both development and delivery phases) is required. A full detailed breakdown of HLF costs will be completed by the end of June.

A summary of the HLF Project

The HLF funded side of the project is focused on the development of a central West Wight Community Archive in conjunction with the Freshwater & Totland Archive Group. The project has been broadened to cover the 'West Wight', including the parishes of Freshwater, Totland, Yarmouth, Calbourne, Shalfleet and Brightstone. This is to give it a broad enough coverage to make the HLF application viable.

Project Structure

Project Lead: Freshwater Parish Council

Project Partners: Totland Parish Council, FoFL, FaTAG, IWC Libraries Service

*Potential Supporting Partners: Yarmouth TC, Shalfeet PC, Calbourne PC, Brighstone PC,

*Potential Supporting Organisations: Dimbola Museum & Galleries, Yarmouth Society, Freshwater Circle, Robert Hooke Society, The Farringford, The National Trust, English Heritage, Sunken Secrets, IWC Archive Service, Yarmouth Harbour Commission

*None of these organisations have been formally approached yet (to be completed by the end of July).

Freshwater Parish Council is the lead partner and 'owner' of the project. The project partners are those directly involved with shaping the project and the supporting partners and organisations are those that if successful and capital works completed, would potentially be involved in the development of the archive content.

The Project

The project will bring together multiple archives and heritage content from local parishes, the local archive group, private collections, personal collections, local businesses, heritage attractions and individuals and digitize them to create an extensive central archive of the heritage of the West Wight community.

The material will be processed through a professional digital archive studio, catalogued to national standards and archived in long-term secure microfilm storage. The content will be concurrently uploaded to system called pastview that will provide multiple levels of access to content. Primary access (all archive content) will be through interactive terminals at the Discovery Centre facility, secondary access (limited restrictions) via a FaTAG member's login and tertiary open access (significant restrictions) via the Internet. The multiple levels of access are due to differing IP/copyright designations required for the varying content.

The proposed content management system (pastview) incorporates functions such as people and building/place 'tagging' which will allow users to instantly access very specific search content. For example a 'surname' search would bring up all documents related to that name – photographs, civic records, parish records, plans, maps etc. This will allow users to make instant connections with their or their family's past – helping them to make much more sense of their heritage and place in the community.

The facility will house an exhibition space where themed shows of the archive content can run throughout the year to showcase the archive material and engage the community in the project. It will also house a 'learning' space where workshops and lectures can be held.

The project aims not only to digitize significant public records and documents but also to provide a facility for the local community to digitize their own personal material and catalogue and add them to the central archive.

There will be an extensive range of activities to engage both the local community and visitors to the area in our local heritage. These will be split into three broad groups:

1. Developing the Archive

- Town & Parish Digitization Project – working with parish clerks, councilors and volunteers to digitize their archives and collections
- Local Archive & Heritage Group Digitization Project – working with local community groups to digitize their archives and collections
- Local Schools Archive Project – working with local schools to archive both historic and contemporary material
- Community Content Project – working with individuals to identify relevant personal/family items to add to the archive
- Community Memories Project – documenting memories of the local community through oral history recordings
- Heritage Attractions Project – working with the National Trust, English Heritage, The Farringford (Tennyson's former home), The Julia Margaret Cameron Trust, The Maritime Archeology Trust and other local organisations to digitize relevant local content and add to the archive
- Local Sports and Social Clubs Archive Project – working with a range of local sports and social clubs to digitize their archive material
- Local Business Archive Project – working with local businesses to identify and digitize relevant material and content
- Tomorrow's Archive – contemporary archiving project documenting

2. Exploring the Archive

- General Public Access – open access for the public to come to the facility and search through the pastview system
- Online Archive Project – opening up content without IP/copyright restrictions to a broader online audience
- Weekly Archive Workshops – engaging the local community to get involved with developing the archive content, sorting content, learning the workflow process etc.
- Local Schools Programme (KS1&2) – developing a learning programme tied into KS1&2 for local school children to interact with the archive
- Lecture Programme – ongoing programme of lectures related to the archive content
- Exhibitions Programme – rolling programme of exhibitions showcasing the archive content
- Dementia Workshops – working with dementia support groups utilise the archive to stimulate memories
- Generation Workshops – bringing young and old people together to explore the archive

3. Skills & Training Programme

- Digital Archive Workflow Training – training for FaTAG members in how to process and catalogue content to national standards
- Archive Care & Handling Training – training for FaTAG members in how to handle, care for and restore archive material
- Young Archivists Programme – a specific programme to engage young people in the archive process
- Exploring the Archives Workshops – open workshops for the local community to learn how to get the most of the archive and its content

Next Steps

1. Finalise costings for HLF capital (build and equipment) and revenue (activity programme) expenditure (completed by end of June).
2. Refine overall application alongside HLF guidance (completed by end of June)
3. Approach 'supporting' partners and organisations for letters of support (completed by end of July)
4. Application Submission (August)