SHARED HERITAGE
The Future of Hertfordshire’s Past 2016 – 2026

A new strategy for Heritage Services

Heritage Services brings together archives, local studies and museum development services. Our shared mission is to preserve and promote resources for the study, use and enjoyment of Hertfordshire’s unique heritage for the personal, community, social and economic benefit and wellbeing of Hertfordshire’s residents and visitors.

Our vision

Heritage Services enjoy a strong reputation for quality and professionalism. In order to respond to the changing needs of our customers, technological challenges and opportunities, and to meet the requirements for archive preservation within the context of continuing pressure on local government budgets, our Shared Heritage strategy sets the vision and direction for vibrant and sustainable Heritage Services over the next ten years.

Our vision can be summarised by three themes:

Ensure preservation - caring for Hertfordshire’s archives and historic collections, preserving them in accordance with required legislation and standards, to make them fully available for current and future generations to use and enjoy, in modern, welcoming, premises.

Exploit technology - to improve services and meet customer needs, through online services, increased access to digitised records and preservation of digital archives.

Embed heritage in the life of the community, working in partnership to extend opportunities for access, learning and involvement in ways that support residents to live healthy fulfilling lives in thriving communities.
Who we are

We deliver services in accordance with legislation, standards and policies for preservation and access to heritage. HALS cares for and preserves archive collections on behalf of many different organisations, institutions, groups and societies and is appointed as a Place of Deposit for Public Records by The National Archives. As Diocesan Record Office, HALS has a responsibility for parochial records. As the corporate archive service, HALS preserves the ‘corporate memory’ for the county council, supporting the work of teams within HCC and its statutory responsibility for the Council’s own records and records of other local authorities within Hertfordshire. HALS facilitates democratic accountability and provides a gateway to historic records.

Through Local studies collections in Libraries across the county, we provide access to books, maps, newspapers, ephemera, images, information and online resources, events and activities such as family history tasters, which complement central resources and services at HALS. The team at HALS provide specialist advice and support for these local studies collections.

The Museums Development Service supports and promotes the interests of museums and heritage organisations across Hertfordshire, through the work of the Museum Development Officer and Hertfordshire Association of Museums, sharing best practice, raising standards, and enabling museums to access funds, training and networks.

The Herts Memories community archive website and network of associated sites collect photographs, memories and research, overseen by volunteer editors. These online community archives complement the formal archival records, saving more recent and informal histories that would otherwise be lost and empowering individuals and communities to tell their own stories.

Online Heritage resources include the archive catalogue (Calmview), Hertfordshire Names Online (indexes), online Heritage shop/services and the Hertfordshire Museums website. Parish and school registers are available online through the commercial Find My Past website. Social media includes HALS Twitter account and Historypin.
The Heritage Services Offer

**Preservation** of archives in accordance with Archive Accreditation standards in secure, high quality physical storage that meets the requirements of PD5454 and secure digital repository to meet increasing needs for long term digital preservation.

**Online access** to digital resources and services that are easy to use and offer convenient self-service for remote customers

**Onsite access** - making archives and local studies materials freely accessible in modern, welcoming, premises that are flexible and tech-enabled to meet the needs of our visitors.

**Expertise** - enquiry, advice, copying and reproduction rights services provided by knowledgeable, trained staff.

**Community archives** - support for community history projects and partnerships, with updated design and modernised community archive websites.

**Volunteering** - a varied and well supported volunteering programme to support learning, skills development and participation.

**Conservation and digitisation services** to support those looking after their own historic collections.

A strong **Museums Development Service** that supports the Hertfordshire Association of Museums to continue to meet the changing needs and aspirations of its members and explores opportunities for joint working and partnerships.
Delivering Heritage Services

In order to ensure the delivery of thriving and sustainable Heritage Services over the next ten years, we will:

- Accelerate our digitisation programme, seeking to digitise popular sources such as wills and images and enhancing digital and online services, including the online archive catalogue. We will do this by refocusing resources to meet the increasing needs of remote and online customers and reviewing opening hours at HALS.
- Apply for Archive Accreditation in 2016/17 and take a strategic approach to collections care (conservation, cataloguing, and document retrieval service) to ensure this status is achieved and maintained.
- Investigate opportunities for relocating the whole service into more modern and flexible accommodation, including through the development of strategic partnerships.
- Raise income through new and existing income streams and seek to diversify the sources of our external funding. For example, we will offer additional services such as conservation and digitisation of customers’ own records. We will seek grant funding from a wide range of funders.
- Develop a fundraising strategy and explore suitable models to support fundraising and income generation, such as the potential for setting up a development trust.
- Continue to maximise the flexibility of our existing premises to ensure services are cost effective, sustainable and modernised to meet the needs of customers.
- Extend opportunities for access and community involvement through co-creation of learning activities and events, delivered in partnership and through volunteering programmes.
- Establish a clear corporate archive strategy that supports the work of teams across Hertfordshire County Council and ensures the council meets its statutory responsibilities.
- Improve promotion and marketing to ensure residents and visitors are aware of the wide range of services and resources available to them.

Next steps

We will use this strategy to direct and guide the sustainable development of our services over the next ten years, identifying and taking advantage of opportunities as they arise. As we communicate this new strategy, we will be seeking to develop a shared vision with our customers, depositors, partners and other stakeholders through informal discussions and through more formal consultation when any significant change to existing services (e.g. changes to our opening hours or location) is proposed.

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