



Archives & Records
Association
UK & Ireland



Consultancy Brief – Community Archives Directory

Archives and Records Association (ARA)

ARA is the lead professional and membership body for archivists, archive conservators and records managers in the United Kingdom and Ireland.

The ARA aims to support its membership through training, continuous professional development, professional help and advice, and by providing a community to which the membership can belong and from which they draw benefit through open discussion and debate, as well as through gathering of information and advice.

Our strategic aims and further information about ARA is available in full on our website www.archives.org.uk.

Community Archives and Heritage Group

The Community Archives and Heritage Group (CAHG) is a group within ARA which aims to support and promote community archives in the UK and Ireland. It brings together bodies and organisations concerned with community archives and provides a forum for the regular exchange of views and information. To find out more about CAHG, see the website at: <https://www.communityarchives.org.uk/>

Community Archives directory

One of the core functions of CAHG and its website is to provide a listing of community archives around the UK and Ireland.

Community archives are typically small volunteer-run organisations with a local focus. They operate under their own steam. Many of them, but not all, seek support or guidance from a local record office and museum. Some of them apply for funding from the Heritage Fund or other sources.

Accordingly, though it is estimated that there are thousands of community archives around the UK and Ireland, creating a comprehensive listing of them is very difficult. The Community Archives website currently has over 750 archives listed in its directory at <https://www.communityarchives.org.uk/archives>.

These archives can be viewed on a map at <https://www.communityarchives.org.uk/interactive-map> and can be searched here: <https://www.communityarchives.org.uk/search-for-an-archive>

We are very conscious that, though the CAHG community archives directory is the single best listing of community archives in the UK and Ireland, and is envied by other countries, it still only represents a fraction of the community archives in existence. The directory grows through groups submitting their own details to the directory, but naturally many are too busy to get round to doing so, and many others have not heard of the CAHG in the first place.

Also, while the CAHG website gives groups the facility to keep their own details up to date, inevitably some community archives have gone out of existence and others have out-of-date details.

Community Archives directory project

The aims of this project are to:

1. Significantly increase the number, diversity and inclusiveness of the community archives listed in the CAHG directory by contacting new groups and helping them to create an entry.
2. Update the current details of community archives in the CAHG directory, particularly with a view to removing the broken links which arise when groups no longer exist, or their website address has changed.
3. Increase the awareness and profile of CAHG among community archives as a result of the project.

Scope of the project

The consultant will be required to:

- Create as many new community archives entries in the CAHG directory as possible in the time available.
- Update the current entries, particularly when out-of-date information has resulted in a broken link

It is anticipated that this work will involve:

- Contacting as many community archives as possible. One obvious starting-point for this work is regional and sector-related organisations (such as county record offices), who often have contacts with community heritage groups in their area. The CAHG committee can help provide a list of these organisations and may get involved in the initial liaison with the organisations.
- Liaising with these community archives to secure their permission to create an entry in the directory.
- In many cases, helping them create an initial draft entry – perhaps by copying text and images from the group's website

- Running an audit on the existing information in the Community Archives website to check for broken links and out-of-date information. An automated link-checking service could be used to support this process.
- Possibly, updating the entries in the Community Archives directory in other ways, such as adding new keywords for searching.

Training will be given in how to create and update a directory entry on the Community Archives website.

Goal of the project

The CAHG directory currently contains 766 published entries. The aim of this project is to create another 240 new entries. The directory should also no longer contain any broken links.

Budget

Please outline the proposed project costs in your proposal. The budget for this project is £4,700 (inclusive of any VAT). We estimate that the project will take 18-20 days to complete.

Timescales

The work needs to be completed by the end of March 2024.

Methodology

Please tell us in your proposal what your methodology will be, including research methods, and how you envisage any working/steering group will be involved in the work.

Contractor Personnel

Please include in your proposal details of who would be working on the project with a clear indication of who will be leading.

Monitoring

The project will be managed by representatives from the CAHG Resources sub-group, the Chair of CAHG and the ARA Chief Executive.

Quotations and timings

Completed proposals should be sent by e-mail to enquiries@communityarchives.org.uk by 5:30pm on Friday 12th January 2024.

Interviews, by Zoom or Teams, will be held on Wednesday, 24th January 2024.

The appointed consultant is expected to start work at the beginning of February 2024, with a completion date of the end of March 2024.

For an informal discussion contact: enquiries@communityarchives.org.uk

Person Specification

We anticipate that this project will be undertaken by a single individual, though we are open to other suggestions. This is a specification for the skills that are required by the supplier.

	Essential	Desirable
Experience	Experience in a communication role	Experience of community archives and community heritage
	Producing content for online or print and multi channels	
Skills	Excellent written communication skills. Demonstrable ability to write engaging and friendly and clear e-mails.	
	Excellent interpersonal skills and ability to build relationships with community groups and professional organisations.	
	Proven effective copywriting, editorial and proof-reading skills.	
	A high level of IT and digital skills, including the ability to download, edit and upload images.	Specific technical knowledge of creating websites is not required, as training will be given. However, editorial website experience would be desirable.
	Ability to be self-motivating and self-managing and deliver to deadlines	
Knowledge	Knowledge of the heritage sector.	Familiarity with the archive sector in the UK and Ireland.
	Awareness of copyright and GDPR issues related to online publishing	

