



The National Archives

Press Release

30 June 2009

Changes to public services at The National Archives

Today, The National Archives proposes a number of changes to its operations and public services. The proposals include closure of the Kew reading room to the public on Mondays, and a new daily charge for car parking on the Kew site. These changes to our Kew service reflect the growth in demand from our online customers, who account for over 90% of our usage, and are unaffected by these changes

The National Archives has taken a strategic approach and identified changes that will put the organisation in a strong financial position.

Chief Executive, Natalie Ceeney says, 'The demand for our services is increasing significantly and so we need to make choices. We are committed to maintaining quality, and will continue to offer great onsite and online services while adapting to our customer needs. We believe this approach will keep The National Archives world-class and will continue to secure access to our unique collection for generations to come.'

More and more customers expect to access services online and The National Archives will always need to evolve to meet its customers changing needs. In fact, over 170 documents are now downloaded for every one original document seen by a visitor to the reading rooms. Investment in the website will continue as The National Archives constantly improves access to its records and expertise online, for example, developing the catalogue and digitising popular records such as the 1911 census.

Staff and trade unions were informed of the details on Monday and will now enter into consultation over the next couple of months. The public too are being given the

opportunity to voice their views and are invited to attend a number of open public meetings in July. We anticipate that the changes will be implemented from early September 2009.

Ends

For further information, please contact:

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Notes to editors

The Public meetings will be held at The National Archives at Kew on Thursday, 2 July, 12.15 pm and Saturday, 11 July 10 am in the Talks Room, First Floor Reading Room

Further details on the proposed changes:

- **Closure to the public on Mondays**
Reading rooms will open from Tuesday to Saturday only. Closing on a Monday will allow us to reduce our ongoing running costs whilst continuing to provide a high-quality service.

Monday is already one of the quietest days so will have a lower impact on the public than any other day of closure.

- **Introducing car parking charges**
Introducing charges for the use of the public car park will allow us to cover the costs of providing onsite parking and bring us in line with the Government's green agenda. There will still be free parking available for visitors with a disability.

The National Archives is relatively unusual in providing free onsite parking for both visitors and staff (for example there is no onsite parking for staff or readers at the British Library's St Pancras site or the National Archives of Scotland, while our neighbour Kew Gardens charges £6 flat rate for a day's parking).

About The National Archives:

The National Archives, www.nationalarchives.gov.uk, is a government department and an executive agency of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). As the official archives of the UK government, it cares for, makes available and 'brings alive' a vast collection of over 1000 years of historical records, including the treasured Domesday Book.

Not only safeguarding historical information, The National Archives also manages current digital information and devises new technological solutions for keeping government records readable now and in the future. It provides world class research facilities and expert advice, publishes all UK legislation and official publications, and is a leading advocate for the archive sector.

At the heart of information policy, The National Archives sets standards of best practice that actively promotes and encourages public access to, and the re-use of information, both online or onsite at Kew. This work helps inform today's decisions and ensures that they become tomorrow's permanent record.

The National Archives brings together the Public Record Office, Historical Manuscripts Commission, the Office of Public Sector Information and Her Majesty's Stationery Office. See also www.opsi.gov.uk