



- 2.5 Non-availability of original documents due to them being out to record copying – JL to look into providing figures at the next forum. **JL**
- 2.6 (4.1c) It had been decided that it was not appropriate for the Security staff to hand out feedback forms to readers on their exit.
- 2.7 (4.1d) It was thought that the hazard tape on the glass entrance tunnel to the RER was not sufficient and changed from day to day. No firm decision has been made on what will happen to these panels; if they remain the size will probably be reduced. CC will look into the adequacy of the tapes. *Post meeting update: the glass panels have now been reduced in size.* **CC**
- 2.8 (4.3) Due to NC's presentation Helen Pye-Smith (Head of Resource Centre and Library) will be invited to next months meeting. *Post meeting update: Unfortunately Helen Pye-Smith is on leave during the February Users Forum. Sarah Abbott (Librarian) will attend in Helen's absence.*
- 2.9 (4.5) Colour-coded badges – discussions were being held with our Marketing and Communications departments.
- 2.10 (4.7a) Asking those who have finished for the day to 'swipe-out' and release their seat: this was going to be encouraged when the building re-opened on 28<sup>th</sup> January. It was suggested that staff could remind readers to do this when they were returning their documents.
- TG had looked at the figures and discovered that releasing seats had not been an issue and that the present system works well. (Overall seat management to be discussed later)
- 2.11 (4.8b) Although the front page of the website had been amended to take into account the disruptions it was felt that the message was still not prominent enough. CC offered to speak to the webmaster **CC**
- 2.12 (4.9) Concern was again expressed about asbestos. Although we have not disturbed any walls where asbestos is present, air monitoring is continuing and everything is being done to comply with legislation. We are in constant discussion with the contractors and our Estates Manager.
- It was asked if there were a register: this will be looked into and we will report on this at the next meeting. **JL**

## **Monitoring Seat Allocation during refurbishment period (TG)**

- 2.13 Over the period there had been between 12-50 people waiting for seats for between 15 minutes and two and a half hours. Up until about 11.30 there are usually seats available.

It was noted that document production had not changed significantly from this time last year. On a Tuesday in 2007, 1788 documents were produced; on the same day this year 1729 documents had been produced.

There was an increase in those holding documents over (33%). The normal advanced ordering service has been suspended. It is still possible to make advanced orders in exceptional circumstances with 5 days notice.

It was asked if there was an issue with readers holding over documents and not arriving until the afternoon – TG confirmed that at present this was not a significant problem and well within our contingency plans.

There had been three occasions when reader tickets had been withdrawn due to deliberate abuse of the system – the situation was being monitored.

NC noted that the situation regarding availability of seats during this period is not ideal, adding that the decision to remain open and work through with the seat reduction as best we could was felt to be a better solution than the alternative of closing the reading rooms entirely for the period of refurbishment. NC thanked the group for their patience during the disruptions.

## **3 What TNA does and how we spend tax payers' money**

- 3.1 Printed copies of the presentation were handed out and the presentation is also available with these minutes (see separate document).

A number of questions came up during the presentation:

The 30-year rule review was mentioned and the problem of transferring electronic files to TNA. Electronic files need to be transferred regularly to ensure that they are still readable.

If the 30-year rule is reduced (probably to 20 or 25 years) – it will mean a lot of extra work for TNA staff; should it go to 20 years, 5 kilometres of documents will have to come to us and it would help the transfer of records if the new rule were phased in.

NC encouraged the group to visit the 30-year rule review website at: <http://www.30yearrulereview.org.uk/default.htm> and have their

say.

It was also stated that documents are not actually our property and that we hold them for government offices: they can recall them at any time.

- 3.2 A reader asked if TNA are restricted from charging for our services. NC said that we would not charge for access to the TNA site; this includes reader tickets as a matter of principle. Areas where we do charge – photocopying, and access to records online basically just pay for themselves and cover costs.
- 3.3 We are investigating funding projects and are looking for grants to do more cataloguing projects and transcriptions.
- 3.4 There was a complaint about the quality of the scanning machines and it was stated that should funds become available this was one of the things on our wish list.
- 3.5 It was suggested by a reader that TNA had not achieved the target set for responding to FOI enquiries. NC responded that we are expected to achieve 95% within the statutory target, noting that TNA are currently achieving better than any other government department in this area.
- 3.6 It was asked what the plan was to reduce the staff sickness figures. It was pointed out that these figures included long-term sickness and that this coloured the report. It was stated that we are encouraging managers to take an interest in their staff's well being and hopefully avoiding any unnecessary problems or illnesses.
- 3.7 It was asked if we had a bullying policy, and if so, why was it not included in the annual report. NC responded that we do have a bullying policy but that we are not required to report on this in the annual report (we receive clear instructions from government on which of our activities we are expected to report on).
- 3.8 It was asked if TNA would be creating an FOI Disclosures Log (a log of disclosures made under the FOI act) for 2007. A log for 2007 is currently being created and will be made available on the TNA website at: <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/foi/log.htm>  
A news item entitled Highlights of new Freedom of Information releases and covering records released during 2007 can be accessed on the site at:  
<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/releases/2007/default.htm>
- 3.9 It was asked why the directorate responsibilities had changed. One director's workload was over-expanded and it was decided that with more directors it was the logical time to reallocate certain

duties.

- 3.10 We have five directors Jeff James and Dan Jones (Public Services & Marketing - jointly covering for James Strachan), David Thomas (Technology & Chief Information Officer), Erica Stoddard (Corporate Services & Finance), Carol Tullo (Information Policy) and Mark Lamb (HR and Organisation Development) – these form the Executive Team. There are also five Non-Executive Directors (each of whom are paired with a director) who spend two days a month here, one day at board meetings and one to support and advise their director.

**4 Programme for improvement to TNA's public services at Kew (Kew 2008) (CC)**

CC stated that the programme was going well, and on track for completion by spring. Frontline staff are grateful for the understanding from the public whilst refurbishment is continuing and we thank our readers. See separate document for more detailed information.

**5 Staff development hour and TNA opening hours from April 2008**

Held over until February's meeting

**6 TNA's public service performance against our targets**

See separate document.

**7 Open discussion**

Concerns had been expressed at previous forums regarding the lack of a Security presence at the main entrance from April. JJ reported that there had been a meeting between JJ, TG, Jack Lincoln (Head of Security) and Erica Stoddard (Director, Corporate Services & Finance) where it was decided that there would be a permanent security presence in the main entrance foyer.

The group was asked how they felt about allowing pens into the new open reading room (i.e. not where original documents are produced). There was an overwhelming vote against.

**The next meeting will be on Thursday 21 February 2008**