

# Report of Supporting Norfolk's Archive Ecology Consultation Event Regarding Oral History

**Norfolk Record Office - 26 July 2018: 18:30-20:30**

## Attendance

The event was hosted by the Norfolk Record Office ('NRO') and was attended by 15 people representing the following organisations: Attleborough Heritage Group; Carleton Rode History Group; The Friends of St Benet's Abbey; Neatishead, Irstead and Barton Turf Community Heritage Group; Newton Flotman and Saxlingham Thorpe Heritage Group; The Reepham Archive; St Nicholas' Church in Wells-next-the-Sea; Waveney Heritage CIC; Wells Local History Group; and The Wise Archive. Two people attended in a private capacity, one of whom is an author of biographies. The event was advertised using the NRO's mailing list and social media.

## Timetable of the event

After the County Archivist introduced the *Supporting Norfolk's Archive Ecology* project ('SNAE') attendees were invited to introduce themselves and to describe their activities, aspirations and issues regarding oral history. This developed into a discussion of what the attendees wanted from the NRO in terms of advice and actions. Where appropriate, the NRO commented on their approach.

## Details of attendees current situation regarding oral history

In all but one instance, the attendees were generally not currently active in the collection of oral history recordings. Some groups had carried out some recording in the past and were wanting to re-start a recording project, whilst others wanted to begin from scratch. The groups represented varied from well-established groups to those who had only been in existence for a few years.

Most of the groups, were concerned with recording life stories of elderly members of their community, though one group concentrates on interviewing people about their working lives, whilst another wanted to focus on interviewing their local business community. Another group expressed a desire to record shorter interviews which related to single events, such as the floods of 1953.

The main motivation for carrying out oral history recording was to create a resource which could be used by future generations and to capture stories whilst there was chance to do so. A few groups talked about using the recordings as the basis of publications and one group mentioned a desire to use oral history recordings as the basis of a theatrical production.

The attendees requested advice and support of various aspects of oral history. These included advice on:

- equipment and file formats (most)
- interview techniques (most)
- writing summaries and transcripts (most)
- recording group interviews (few)
- sound editing to create and use clips from longer interviews (most)
- advice on depositing recordings with NRO or similar (some)
- finding interviewees (some)
- data protection and copyright (most)
- how to share recordings with the local community, including publishing on the Internet (most)

- voice recognition / auto-transcription  
/ crowd-sourcing software (few)

Most attendees favoured practical advice over theoretical. They wanted help with purchasing equipment but there was less support for the ability to borrow equipment, due to impracticalities of moving kit from one place to another. In addition to face-to-face training, there was demand for concise YouTube videos on technical aspects. Basing training around the same equipment was also mentioned.