

HAWKES BAY DIGITAL ARCHIVES TRUST

(THE KNOWLEDGE BANK)

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 March 2023

Background

The Knowledge Bank is a Hawkes Bay community-based organisation, established in 2011 to create a living record of Hawke's Bay and its people through the creation and development of a digital archive.

Using a team of volunteers, old family photographs, film, letters, diaries, community group records and business archives are digitised. This material is returned to donors once processed. The Trust also has an active program of archiving oral interviews. These electronic copies are made available on the Trust's website www.knowledgebank.org.nz.

The Trust is located in the historic Stoneycroft historical building at 901 Omahu Rd, Hastings. These premises are owned by the Hastings District Council and are provided to the Trust at a nominal rental, with the Council assuming some other ownership responsibilities and the Trust meeting most operating expenses.

Introduction

Notwithstanding the ongoing influence of COVID the Trust processed and added a record amount of material to the website, thanks to the efforts of our many volunteers, who worked both at Stoneycroft and from home during this period.

The Trust has developed to become a well-known and respected feature of the Hawke's Bay historical and cultural scene, as described later in this report. However, there is scope to further develop its impact in the region including our connections with Napier, Wairoa District and Central Hawke's Bay, as well as with local Iwi and our Maori community, as discussed at the end of this report.

Governance and Management

The Trust has a board of five trustees - Peter Dunkerley (Chair), Barry Cole (Secretary), Kevin Atkinson (MNZM, FInstD) (Treasurer) Helen Walker (QSM) and Ronda Chrystal (Napier City Councillor – Taradale Ward).

The Board is assisted by a seven-member advisory committee (chaired by Grant Nicholson) which oversees the evaluation, acceptance and processing of materials by our many volunteers and advises the board on administrative matters such as equipment, operational and premises issues.

The Trust has an office administrator and an IT administrator working a total of 30 and 20 hours per week respectively. The Trust also has the services of a technical advisor on website issues who provides his services free of charge. There is a need for further part-time administrative support but this will require additional operational funding.

To guide its planning and operations over the next three years the Board has adopted a three-year business plan (2021-24). It has also adopted a risk management plan focused on protection of the Trust's financial sustainability, reputation, data base, equipment and other assets and adherence to legal requirements, including health and safety and copyright issues.

The Website

The Trust recognises the need to protect copyright which it holds over website content and has developed and publicised on the website appropriate conditions for the non-personal use of any website material. It is also conscious that material on the website should not breach any privacy requirements.

During the year the Trust received some 98 new collections of which approximately 25 were placed on the website and 409 collections, which include some received in previous years have been processed for uploading to the website. The website now contains around 8,762 text documents 26,937 still images, 488 oral history interviews and 98 videos, over a total of 250 collections.

During the year the website was accessed an average 9345 times a month over the past twelve months, up 7.1 per cent on the previous year, while the average number of users per month is 6750, which is an increase of 7.3 per cent.

During this period volunteers completed transcribing 45 collections and uploaded several large collections to the website. This has provided an opportunity to learn to work more collectively on projects rather than as individuals and as a result output has increased considerably.

We continue to work on the Russell Spiller Collection, which contains approximately 1,000,000 images taken between 1946 and 1981. These images from this collection are being uploaded to the website as soon as they have been processed.

New collections received in 2022-23 include the Daily Mail, which was a Hastings based daily newspaper published between 1938 and 1941. These bound copies were discovered in Hastings District Council's archive building and are believed to be one of the few remaining copies in existence.

The turn-around time for scanning materials was able to be reduced to approximately 3 - 6 months, depending on the size of each collection, having previously been up to 2 years. This reduction in the backlog of material for processing reflects the excellent work of our volunteers. However, the uploading of processed material to the website will always be a slower process. The transcribing is now covering material completed in 2019-20.

The Trust recognises that its website should complement and not duplicate material held by other organizations. Accordingly, it is developing a collections policy to guide the evaluation and prioritisation of material offered to the Trust.

Volunteers

The Trust's work relies on the efforts of its 105 volunteers, who undertake digital processing, scanning, data entry and research as well conducting oral history interviews. The Trust records its grateful thanks to all these people for their commitment and professionalism. We have volunteers working from Australia and other parts of New Zealand. Many are students who are undertaking the volunteering requirement of their study.

Logging into Stoneycroft by volunteers reduced to an average of about 768 hrs per month due to ongoing issues with Covid-19, with off-site proofreading and transcribing averaging around 300 hours per month.

Outreach

The Trust seeks to keep its supporters and the public aware of its activities, so that collections are donated, use of the website increases and fund raising is improved. Recognising the importance of outreach activities, the Trust has adopted a communications strategy to strengthen this. The Trust is grateful to Diane Joyce of Joyce Communications for her invaluable assistance in our outreach program.

The results of this strategy have already been reflected in a number of ways, including press coverage of a number of events. A monthly newsletter was sent out during the year to the Trust's 1,200 members and supporters. The use of social media is also important and the Trust has its own Facebook page which includes Trust activities and information on some of the material which is available on the website.

Unfortunately, the proposed open day in March had to be cancelled due to Covid-19.

Community talks explaining the work of the Trust are an important part of outreach and visitors are welcome and encouraged.

Information Technology

A well-functioning and efficient IT system covering the Trust's servers, scanners, computers and associated software is a key component of the Trust's activities. It is also an important factor in maintaining volunteer morale and productivity.

The current level of funding has enabled the Trust to embark on a scheduled replacement program for computers / monitors / keyboards. This will minimise any on-going problems with the serviceability of our computers and monitors.

A prioritized, five-year equipment replacement plan is being developed, which will enable the Trust to put in place a long term budget for capital expenditure.

Finances

The financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2023 are attached to this annual report. They show an operating deficit for the year of \$44,254 and working capital (current assets minus current liabilities) of \$12,436.

The Trust operates with a modest cash operating budget (that is, excluding depreciation cost of around \$21,300 per annum) of about \$5,750 per month. Covering these operating costs has been a major concern over the years, although revenue during the year largely covered these cash costs. But greater funding for operational costs is needed for the Trust to be fully viable in the medium term.

In this respect we gratefully acknowledge the \$30,000 grant from the Hastings District Council for annual operating costs (as part of a three-year funding agreement) and a grant of \$15,000 from the NZ Lotteries Commission, also to assist in funding operating costs. Unfortunately, the grant from the NZ Lotteries Commission was considerably less than what was applied for, leaving the Trust with a possible funding shortfall.

As a community-based organisation the Trust also receives income from its 120 members who pay an annual subscription of \$30 plus additional donations from these members and other supporters and from various community activities. The Trust is most grateful for the generosity of those who contributed and pleased at the extent of community support for the Trust which this assistance demonstrates.

The Trust also received a further grant of \$5,000 from the Hastings District Council's Community Grants Scheme for the purchase of overhead camera equipment, to be used as part of a project to archive The Daily Mail newspaper.

Significant upgrading IT equipment is dependent on such specific funding from Trusts and Foundations. Apart from the support from Hastings District Council Community Grants Scheme the Trust gratefully acknowledges grants from the First Light Community Foundation and the Eastern & Central Community Trust – these being used to purchase an overhead camera system.

The Trust had modest working capital of \$12,436 at the end of the year, sufficient to provide a minimal buffer against any downturn in revenues or unanticipated increases in operating costs. It should also be noted that this amount includes a balance of \$7,500 from Hastings District Council Annual Plan Funding for operating expenditure in the 2023/24, but does not include the \$15,000 from NZ Lotteries Commission, which was treated as Grants Received in Advance and was reconciled in XERO in the 2023 / 24 financial year.

Maori History

The Board is conscious of the need to recognize the history of Hawkes Bay from a Maori perspective. While some general discussions have previously been held with some local iwi, it will develop an engagement plan to further discuss with iwi and other local Maori institutions how a Maori perspective and content may be incorporated in its work.

Summary

The Trust continued to make significant progress during the year notwithstanding the effects of the Covid-19.

- Through its outreach activities it is becoming increasingly well- known and appreciated across Hawkes Bay.
- This will grow as it receives more and more useful material for adding to the website.
- In order to support its increasing presence in the community the Trust will need to expand its infrastructure, including ongoing upgrading of its IT equipment.
- Thanks to the great work of volunteers, processing times and the backlog of material for processing have been reduced.

- While it is now able to just cover cash operating costs, thanks to generous assistance during the year from Hastings District Council, the NZ Lotteries Commission and its members and supporters, the Trust continues to operate on a modest budget and has only modest financial reserves.
- Recognizing Maori history in Hawkes Bay is an important issue to be addressed in the coming year.

Acknowledgements

The Trust gratefully acknowledges

- the work of its volunteers and the oversight provided by its advisory committee
- the hard of work of its administrator and IT support and technical personnel

On behalf of the Board

Peter Dunkerley

Chairperson

29 September, 2023