

22 January 2024

Lowestoft Town Council

We are the Lowestoft Group of the Suffolk Family History Society. We hold monthly meetings in Lowestoft, encourage members' research and make full use of both on-line and local facilities to further such activity. We see ourselves as a part of the community.

You will not be surprised that we are appalled by the proposal to close Lowestoft Archives and move all records including the Local Studies Library to Ipswich. This letter is spelling out why such a closure will be devastating.

If this proposal goes ahead, travel costs will be a major issue. A Lowestoft resident will have to use either the railway or drive as there is no bus service from Lowestoft to Ipswich. This means either a

Return train fare costing £22 taking over 1hr 30min in each direction, or a  
Car journey costing £20 approx. for a 90-mile round trip including parking taking 1hr 25min in each direction

A hefty parking bill might be avoided by taking the park and ride bus from Martlesham, but there is the added cost of the bus fare and the additional waiting time. We must also consider SCC's aspiration to be the greenest county and any car journeys will mean additional vehicles on the road for those wishing to use Suffolk Archives from the north of the County.

The County needs to reaffirm its aspiration to be the greenest county, not getting people to travel to access resources centrally, but devolving resources to be closer to people, thus promoting the coherence of SCC's policies.

As part of the Hold's funding application, it was stated that the Hold would give county wide benefits – how does this proposal to close Lowestoft [and Bury St Edmunds] meet that statement?

In fact, this proposal will “withHOLD” access to records from many people in the Lowestoft area

The Hold's procedure requires that any records/documents required from the strongroom have to be ordered a week in advance and should any further documents/records be required to be researched on the day, cannot be accessed on that visit and have to be ordered. This means another visit, and another journey resulting in more cost and emissions.

We urge you to lobby to reject this centralisation.