Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire Family History Society

Research Strategy

1 Context

Research is central to family history, and the ability to provide guidance and results to less experienced people is a key part of work of the Society. This strategy is intended to identify what enquirers can expect; to set limits to the amount of time spent on initial research; and to provide a more detailed investigation after payment to the Society.

2 Initial enquiry

The initial enquiry may come at a surgery meeting, by e-mail, or occasionally by letter or phone call. The Society member staffing the surgery will provide guidance and results from the information they have available. The enquiry may then be passed on to the Research Officer, or another committee member where this is necessary, for reasons including expertise, non-availability. In many cases, the enquirer will have looked carefully at basic resources, so the enquiry can then involve considerable time on follow up research. Past experience suggests that both members and non-members may expect many hours of research and a high level of expertise to be provided without cost.

The Society will provide an initial report by e-mail free of charge after spending up to 30 minutes on enquiries from non-members, or one hour on enquiries from members. The Research Officer will use their judgement in applying these timescales.

3 Follow on work

Where the enquiry cannot be completed within the initial timescales, the report will suggest further work that can be undertaken either by the Society or the enquirer. For work done by the Society, an hourly research charge will be made of £25.00. Charges are based on the lower end of market rates, reflecting the professional expertise of the Research Officer. Any chargeable items including downloads and certificates will be charged at cost, and follow up work will be undertaken in liaison with the enquirer depending on the information found at each stage of the research. It is suggested that the enquirer authorises the Society to undertake research for an agreed period of time, and the results are then reviewed before further time is authorised and paid for. Payment must be made in advance.

4 Results

The information found through research will depend on a variety of factors including the accuracy of the briefing from the enquirer; the completeness and accessibility of records. The research results from both an initial free search and paid follow on work will list the sources that have been consulted. The Society cannot guarantee that answers will always be found as the information may not be available. The Society will encourage all enquirers to become members, especially where significant research has been undertaken.

5 Publicity

The Society will use all its publicity streams including website, newsletter, journal, blog, to aim to increase the volume of research by making potential members more aware of our work.

6 Response timescales

The Society will respond to initial enquiries within a maximum period of three weeks; responses will normally be within a shorter timescale. The Society will suggest response times where in depth paid research is required that are appropriate for the amount of work needed. If there are any changes from the timescale given, the Society will keep each enquirer updated.

7 Disclaimer

The Society will include the following disclaimer in all paid research and, where appropriate, in other research.

This report (including any enclosures and attachments) has been prepared for the exclusive use and benefit of the addressee(s) and solely for the purpose for which it is provided, using the skills, knowledge and experience of Society members. Unless we provide express prior written consent, no part of this report should be reproduced, distributed or communicated to any third party. We do not accept any liability if this report is used for an alternative purpose from which it is intended, nor to any third party in respect of this report.

8 Review dates

The strategy will be reviewed as necessary in the light of ongoing experience.

January 2019