

NORFOLK JOINT MUSEUMS & ARCHAEOLOGY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting Held on 22 June 2012

Present:

Norfolk County Council

Mr M Carttiss
Mrs J Leggett (Substitute for Mr J Rogers)
Mr B Stone
Ms J Toms
Mr J Ward (elected Chairman)
Mr A J Wright

Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk

Mrs E Nockolds

Broadland District Council

Mr D Buck (Substitute for Mr J W Bracey)

Norwich City Council

Mr D Bradford
Mr G Gee
Mr M Stonard

Breckland District Council

Mr P J Duigan

North Norfolk District Council

Mrs L Brettle

South Norfolk Council

Mr T Blowfield (Substitute for Dr C Kemp)

Great Yarmouth Borough Council

Mrs K S Robinson-Payne

Co-Opted Member

Museum Friends

Mr J Knight

1 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Mr J W Bracey, Mr G R Jones, Dr C Kemp, Mr J Rogers, Mrs H Thompson and Mr J Wilby.

2 Election of Chairman

Resolved.

That Mr J Ward be elected Chairman of the Joint Committee for the ensuring year.

(Mr J M Ward in the Chair)

3 Election of Vice-Chairman

Resolved.

That Mr J W Bracey be elected Vice-Chairman of the Joint Committee for the ensuring year.

4 Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 27 April were confirmed by the Joint Committee and signed by the Chairman.

5 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

6 Matters of Urgent Business

The Chairman agreed that the Joint Committee should receive the reports of the Area Museums Committees for Breckland and King's Lynn and West Norfolk that were held on 15 June 2012 and 11 June 2012 respectively, that had been received after the Joint Committee agenda papers were dispatched (see minute 9).

7 Public Question Time

There were no public questions.

8 Political Representation on the Joint Museums and Archaeology Committee and Appointments to the Accounts Approval and Urgent Business Sub-Committee

The annexed report by the Secretary of the Joint Committee was received. The report set out to the political representation on the Joint Committee and asked for appointments to be made to the Accounts Approval and Urgent Business Sub-Committee for 2012/13.

Resolved.

- (a) To agree the political composition of the Joint Museums and Archaeology Accounts Approval and Urgent Business Sub-Committee for 2012/13 be as follows:-

Conservative	4
Labour	1
Liberal Democrats	1
Green	1

- (b) That the following Members be appointed to the Joint Museums and Archaeology Accounts Approval and Urgent Business Sub-Committee for 2012/13:-

Mr Bradford
Mr Duigan
Mr Jones
Mr Stone
Ms Toms
Mr Ward
Mr Wilby

9 Urgent Business: To Receive Area Museums Committee Reports From Breckland and King's Lynn

(a) Breckland

The annexed report of the Breckland Area Museums Committee meeting held on 15 June 2012 was received and noted.

In introducing the report, Mr Duigan referred to the success of the Skills For the Future project at Gressenhall Rural Life Museum which provided work-based training in traditional skills relating to heritage landscape management and rural heritage collections. The training programme had been running for over a year in partnership with the Museum of East Anglian Life in Stowmarket. The project provided an opportunity for young people and adults from different backgrounds to develop skills and knowledge in a specific area of traditional skills.

(b) King's Lynn and West Norfolk

The annexed report of the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Area Museums Committee meeting held on 11 June 2012 was received and noted.

In introducing the report, Mrs Nockolds said that the King's Lynn Museums continued to lead the Greater Fens Museums Partnership, which explored the complex relationship between Fenland people and their local landscape. She said that an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for the successor 3 year Fenland Partnership Project "Fenland Lives and Land" had been successful. The project would include a varied programme of events and activities for museum partners and community venues throughout the Fens.

10 Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service – Integrated Performance and Finance and Risk Monitoring Report for 2011/12

The annexed report by the Head of Museums and Archaeology was received.

Members received a report that outlined the latest service performance, together with the NMAS revenue budget, reserves and provisions and capital programme as at 31 March 2012.

During discussion, the following key points were noted:-

- The NMAS had achieved a break-even position at the year-end.
- The capital programme had under-spent by £0.029m in 2011/12.
- The budget for the Bridewell Museum project had been adjusted to allow it to be completed in 2012/13.
- Visitor numbers had reduced by 7.6% during 2011/12 when compared to 2010/11, which had been an exceptional year.
- Significant progress had been made with NMAS service plans.

- There were minor snagging issues with the Gressenhall Biomass Boiler CERF, which would cost £15,000 to resolve.
- The Gressenhall Eco Building was subject to a planning delay with changes having to be made to the original plans to meet environmental concerns. As a result of this, £139,000 had been moved to 2012/13.
- The detailed reasons for the planning delay with the GFWH Wind Solar CERF would be explained to the Chairman after the meeting. (Note: Following the meeting it was noted that the funding was awarded from CERF to provide solar panels on the proposed eco building at Gressenhall. Due to planning delays with regards to the eco building it had not yet been possible to install the solar panels. When the go-ahead for the eco building was received, the NMA would move ahead with the panels).
- An invitation was laid on the table for Members of the Joint Committee to attend on Friday 29 June 2012, a preview of the re-opening of the Bridewell Museum.

Resolved.

To note progress with performance and service plans during 2011/12.

To note progress with the Revenue Budget Capital Programme and Reserves and Provisions – Terms and Conditions for 2011/12.

11 Annual Internal Audit Report 2011/12

The annexed report by the Head of Finance was received.

Resolved:

- To note that the Norfolk Joint Museums and Archaeology Committee Annual Internal Audit Report for 2011/12, and the key message, based on an analysis on the audit work carried out and reports issued, meant that Norfolk Audit Services could assure the Committee of the adequacy and efficiency of internal control, including the arrangements for Risk Management during 2011/12 was “acceptable” and therefore considered sound;
- To note that the system of internal audit, including the arrangements for Risk Management, were adequate and effective during 2011/12 for the purpose of the latest Regulations;
- To note that arrangements for anti-fraud and corruption were adequate and had been reviewed and;
- To note the content of the 2012/13 Audit Plan for the Joint Committee as set out in the Annual Internal Audit Report.

12 Museum Security

The annexed report by the Head of Museums and Archaeology was received. The report set out the conclusions and recommendations of two audits that had been undertaken to review security at Norwich Castle following an attempted theft of a Rhino horn and the actual theft of Nelson memorabilia at the museum in February 2012.

During discussion, the following key points were made:-

- Until this year, the NMAS had an exemplary record on museum theft.
- This year had been characterised by a number of thefts and attempted thefts from museums across the country.
- Annexe 1 to the report set out a summary of the recommendations from the Internal Audit Review of the procedures and the external review of systems at Norwich Castle.
- At the request of Members, the completion of “an over arching procedural standard document” (to inform all relevant staff of policies and procedures) would be moved forward from the end of 2012 to the end of July 2012.
- A “Key Policy and Action Plan” would be put in place by the end of August 2012. This plan would include consideration being given to using different kinds of electronic locking systems on doors (referred to in the report as “using intelligent door furniture to minimise installation and costs”). Further information about how this could be achieved would be reported to a future meeting of the Joint Committee.
- Staff had been reminded of the importance of recording and maintaining accurate and up to date information regarding artefacts and their location on the Modes Database. It was pointed out that periodic spot audit would be undertaken on a random selection of items to ensure that records were kept up to date. The most important and valuable items would be subject to more frequent audits.
- The CCTV system at the Castle Museum was a “top of the range” product.
- Options for the bar coding of objects held in store continued to be explored.
- The Chairman, and Mr Knight representing the Friends of Norwich Museums, said that they supported the increased use of volunteers to assist the NMAS in maintaining museum security. The Friends of Norwich Museums had a large pool of volunteers who could assist with this task. It was, however, noted that this matter would need to be considered in the context of the County Council's Volunteer Guidelines and be subject to Union consultation.
- The Cabinet Member for Cultural Services congratulated the NMAS Officers on the action that they were taking to address the issues that were mentioned in the action plan, all of which could be dealt with within the existing NMAS budget. Overall, the audit review had found the security systems that the NMAS had in place were robust and suitable for the Castle Museum to continue to receive loans from national museums.

Resolved.

- That the NMAS implement the recommendations and action plan at Annexe 1 to the report and keep the Joint Committee informed of developments.

13 Annual Review of Visitor Performance

The annexed report by the Head of Museums and Archaeology was received. The report analysed the number of visits made by members of the public to the museums operated by the Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service for the financial year 2011/12. Over 350,000 visits were made to NMAS museums. Taking into account museum closures, this represented a 0.5% decrease compared to 2010/11, which was an exceptional year. Of the total number of visits to NMAS museums, 43,353 visits were made by school children in organised groups thereby matching the exceptional performance achieved in 2010/11.

Resolved.

To note the report.

14 NMAS Documentation Policy

The annexed report by the Head of Museums and Archaeology was received. The report set out how the NMAS was currently preparing to review its Accreditation status and was required to update existing policies and procedures. The report included a revised draft NMAS Documentation Policy for Joint Committee approval.

Resolved.

That the revised NMAS Documentation Policy be approved for inclusion in the NMAS Accreditation application.

15 Historic Environment Service (ETD) Update

David Gurney, the Historic Environment Manager, NCC Environment, Transport and Development, presented to the Joint Committee the Historic Environment Services Annual Review 2011/12, and updated Members on recent developments in the historic environment sector.

Printed copies of the Annual Review for 2011/12 were laid on the table, and it was pointed out that they were available from David Gurney on request in paper or in digital format.

The meeting concluded at 3.30pm.

Chairman



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