

## NORFOLK JOINT MUSEUMS COMMITTEE

### Minutes of the Meeting Held on 5 July 2019 at 2.00pm in the Edwards Room, County Hall, Norwich

#### Present:

##### Norfolk County Council

Cllr John Ward (Chairman)  
Cllr Phillip Duigan  
Cllr George Nobbs  
Cllr Thomas Smith  
Cllr Margaret Stone  
Cllr Martin Storey

##### Norwich City Council

Cllr Jacob Huntley  
Cllr Nigel Utton

##### North Norfolk District Council

Cllr Virginia Gay

##### Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk

Cllr Elizabeth Nockolds

##### Breckland District Council

Cllr Robert Kybird (Vice-Chairman)

##### South Norfolk District Council

Cllr Robert Savage

#### Co-opted Members (Non-Voting)

##### Arts Council England

Liam Wiseman

##### Officers Present

Steve Miller

Jo Warr

Dr Robin Hanley

Assistant Director, CES (Culture and Heritage)

Head of Development, Norfolk Museums Service

Assistant Head of Museums (Head of Service Delivery)

#### 1. Election of Chairman

1.1 Cllr Robert Savage nominated Cllr John Ward, seconded by Cllr Robert Kybird.

1.2 Cllr John Ward was **duly elected** as Chairman for the ensuing Council year

1.3 Cllr John Ward in the Chair

#### 2. Election of Vice-Chairman

2.1 Cllr Margaret Stone nominated Cllr Robert Kybird seconded by Cllr Elizabeth Nockolds

2.2 Cllr Robert Kybird was **duly elected** as Vice-Chairman for the ensuing Council year

### **3. Minutes**

- 3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 5 April 2019 were **AGREED** as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman subject to the following amendment:
- Cllr Gay noted that she was not present at the meeting
- 3.2 Cllr Ward noted that the Medieval Medicine exhibition was still running at Time and Tide Museum until 22 September 2019

### **4. Apologies for Absence**

- 4.1 Apologies were received from Cllr David Harrison, Cllr Julie Brociek-Coulton, Felicity Devonshire, Cllr Freeman, Cllr King, Cllr Humphrey
- 4.2 Also absent was Cllr Laura McCartney-Gray

### **5. Declarations of Interest**

- 5.1 There were no declarations of interest

### **6. Matters of Urgent Business**

- 6.1 There was no urgent business discussed

### **7. Political Representation on the Joint Museums Committee**

- 7.1 The Joint Committee received the report setting out the political representation on the Joint Committee and seeking appointments and agreement for the political composition of the Urgent Business Sub-Committee
- 7.2 The Joint Committee:
- (i) **AGREED** that the political composition of the Urgent Business Sub-Committee be:
    - Conservative: 4
    - Labour: 2
    - Liberal Democrat: 1
  - (ii) Nominated the following members for the Urgent Business Sub-Committee
    - Conservative: Cllr Robert Kybird, Cllr Elizabeth Nockolds, Cllr Phillip Duigan and Cllr John Ward
    - Labour: Cllr Jacob Huntley and Cllr George Nobbs
    - Liberal Democrats: Cllr David Harrison
  - (iii) **AGREED** that nominations be given by the Group Leaders for a single substitute Member representing each Group, drawn from the membership of the Joint Committee.

### **8. Breckland Area Museums Committee**

- 8.1 The Joint Committee discussed the minutes of the meeting of the Breckland Area Museums Committee held on the 18 March 2019

- 8.2 The Vice-Chairman introduced the minutes to the Joint Committee:
- Voices of the Workhouse Gallery had been well received but the digital elements within the new galleries had the potential to cause sensory overload; to mitigate this, early bird sessions were available to those on the autistic spectrum who might experience sensory overload
  - There had been good attendance at the Gypsy Roma Traveller community event; outcomes at this day exceeded expectations and it was likely to be repeated in the future
  - The Vice Chairman highlighted the exhibition of the work of pioneering photographer Olive Edis and the Festival of Norfolk and the Punjab, which had begun on the 4 July 2019.
- 8.3 The following points were discussed and noted:
- There was a discussion about the coal powered Heritage Steam Engine at Gressenhall; a point raised was about proposals from central Government which may threaten the supply of coal and increase its price, and which could impact on the price of running of the Gressenhall Boiler
  - It was noted that the Assistant Head of Museums was still Dr Robin Hanley and not Samantha Johns as had been incorrectly recorded in the minutes
  - The Assistant Head of Museums confirmed that heating and hot water at Gressenhall was supplied by an oil-fired boiler through Norfolk County Council (NCC) contracts and a biomass boiler obtained through NCC capital funding through the carbon reduction scheme; this boiler used biomass pellets.
  - When developing the lodge at Gressenhall, there was an aspiration to put in solar panels. Due to concerns over the impact this would have on the aesthetics of the workhouse, free standing solar panels had been installed on site instead.
- 8.4 The Joint Committee **NOTED** the minutes of the Breckland Area Museums Committee
- 9. Great Yarmouth Area Museums Committee**
- 9.1 The Joint Committee discussed the minutes of the meeting of the Great Yarmouth Area Museums Committee held on the 8 April 2019.
- 9.2 The Assistant Head of Museums had attended the meeting on 2 July 2019; there was good attendance in contrast to the meeting of the 8 April 2019. Discussions had been held with democratic services in Great Yarmouth about communicating with Members about dates of upcoming meetings.
- 9.3 The Joint Committee **NOTED** the minutes of the Great Yarmouth Area Museums Committee
- 10. Norwich Area Museums Committee**
- 10.1 The Joint Committee discussed the minutes of the meeting of the Norwich Area Museums Committee held on the 4 June 2019
- 10.2 A discussion was held about the Lord Mayor's Coach which had been restored and whether this could be used for civic events; the Assistant Director, CES (Culture and Heritage) confirmed that this would not be possible because using the Coach on the

road would expose it to stresses which could damage it.

- 10.3 Liam Wiseman, Relationship Manager for Arts Council England arrived at 2.28pm  
Cllr Smith requested more information on Taboo – “Colonialism in the Decorative Arts”.
- 10.4 More information was available at this link: <https://www.visitnorfolk.co.uk/Norwich-Taboo-Colonialism-in-the-Decorative-Arts/details/?dms=3&venue=0220264&feature=1118>
- 10.5 The Joint Committee **NOTED** the minutes of the Norwich Area Museums Committee

## **11. Performance and Strategic update report**

- 11.1 The Joint Committee considered the report giving an update on performance against Norfolk Museums Service plans.

- 11.2.1 The Assistant Director, CES (Culture and Heritage) gave background to the report:
- The number of visits to the 10 museums was lower than in 2017-18, however, 2017-18 had seen an all-time record for visits to the 10 museums, helped by the Rembrandt and Nelson exhibitions. Visits in 2018-19 had also been impacted by the hot summer which had discouraged visits to the museums, however, the total visits for 2018-19 were still amongst the best visitor figures seen over the last 20 years.
  - An area of particular interest was the all-time record of school visits in 2018-19 with more than 50,500 school visits seen across the 10 museums. A vote of thanks was given to the NMS Learning Teams.
  - Positive feedback from the visitor book from W.G. Sebald’s East Anglia exhibition was shared with the Joint Committee.
  - Trainees were now in post and working in the sites around the County and performing very well.
  - The Kick the Dust Norfolk project was aiming for 8,000 high quality contacts with young people across the County and was well on the way to reach this.
  - The Curator of Cromer Museum, Alistair Murphy, had been on Antiques Roadshow talking about Olive Edis, helping to raise exposure for the Service.
  - Festival of Norfolk and Punjab was now live, building on the success of the Festival of Thetford and Punjab in 2018.
  - There was now an Escape Room game in Buckingham Palace, London, created by History Mystery and similar to the one which had been held in the Museum of Norwich at the Bridewell.

### **11.2.2 Keep Development:**

- The tender process was now live and would continue for 8 weeks; contractors had started to make contact to arrange site visits.
- Interviews would take place in August 2019, and it was hoped that the appointment would be made in September 2019.
- Architectural designs had been developed to support the tender documents.
- The project team were working with Norwich City Council planning department to look at listed building and monument consent for work being carried out and to ensure they were able to discharge their list of planning conditions.
- Work was underway with the design team and specialist contractors regarding operation of the site and information had been included in the tender documents.

- Project funded staff were now joining the team to support interpretation of the project, project management, and to work with build contractors.
- Experiences from recent projects would be used to inform this project.
- The Keep would remain open throughout the summer.
- Office relocation during the disruption period was being planned.
- The temporary entrance area was being planned.
- Delivery of services during the development was being planned.
- Information on corporate sponsor opportunities would be brought to a future meeting.

#### 11.2.3 5 Year Strategic Framework

- The page about responding to Norfolk County Council priorities had since been updated to be in line with Norfolk County Council's 6-year plan and future plans of Arts Council England.
- The Service's main focus was responding to the needs of the County and providing a high-quality service to the people of Norfolk, using every means available to ensure services were financially sustainable for the future
- The reductions in available public funding were recognised and steps had been taken to address this such as introducing weddings at Norwich Castle and events such as the Escape Room games created by History Mystery to produce a 10% increase in earned income over the last 5 year period.

#### 11.2.4 Projects

- Deep History Coast would be launched on 16 July 2019; there was an app associated with this which was already live.
- The Deep History Project was spread over a wide range of areas in Norfolk.

#### 11.3 The following points were discussed and noted:

- It was noted that museums were required to be kept cool and on very hot days social media could promote this.
- Cllr Stone congratulated the museums team on their work and the variety of socioeconomic groups they had reached through their work.
- The Assistant Director, CES (Culture and Heritage) confirmed that there were many free entry days per year plus a range of good value tickets and deals available at the 10 sites, including the pop in for £2 at Norwich Castle; there were also groups of people who were exempt from paying, including targeted groups such as Syrian refugees. Work was carried out with charities and organisations to ensure the correct people were targeted and reached.
- The Assistant Head of Museums (Head of Service Delivery) reported that the Kick the Dust project had enabled the team to work with young people with barriers to access such as transport and cost
- The arrears on diversity monitoring forms situation was queried; the Head of Development, Norfolk Museums Service confirmed that the forms had now been submitted to the Arts Council and feedback was being awaited.
- Information on the geography of school visits was requested; the Assistant Head of Museums (Head of Service Delivery) reported that smaller museum sites often received visits from local schools while larger sites tended to have visits from local schools as well as from schools in neighbouring Counties. Overall, the vast majority of schools in Norfolk used the Service in any given year, with many schools visiting on multiple occasions.
- Cllr Nobbs **proposed** that the Joint Committee formally pass a motion

congratulating the Assistant Director, CES (Culture and Heritage) and the museum team on their work over the past years, particularly in relation to school visits. The Joint Committee **agreed** with this motion.

- The Teaching Museum trainees mentioned in the report were unable to visit the meeting but were hoping to attend the Joint Museums Committee meeting in September 2019.
- Energy conservation and preservation within the Castle Keep development project was queried; it was confirmed that the project had committed to the silver level of the Green Tourism Business Scheme and it was planned to extend this to Gressenhall and other NMS sites in due course. The Project Manager would lead on this.
- The Assistant Head of Museums (Head of Service Delivery) confirmed to Members that the temporary entrance would open at the end of October 2019 and be located to the right of the main entrance, with entry via the decorative art gallery. A plan of the changes to entrances would be **circulated** to Joint Committee Members
- The staff entrance would be adapted to allow it to be used for wedding parties
- It was noted that 2020 would be the 100th anniversary of the Ancient House Museum and suggested events could be carried out to commemorate this.
- It was suggested that there should be a focus on the Service becoming carbon neutral in the future.
- A Member noted that photos in the strategic framework did not reflect diversity in the population, and the diversity of population reached by the Museums Service; the Head of Development, Norfolk Museums Service reported that the photograph on the front cover on the strategic framework was the Teenage History Club who were diversity champions for the Service and had been developing LGBT history tours and talks. The Assistant Director, CES (Culture and Heritage) noted that Norwich Castle was due to become one of the most physically accessible historical buildings of its kind in Europe and it was important to reflect this ongoing strong commitment to access and diversity in the framework and that additional images which showed this commitment would be sourced.
- It was suggested that working with fishing communities on the Deep History Coast project could be useful.

#### 11.4.1 The Joint Committee **NOTED**:

- progress regarding development of the Norwich Castle: Gateway to Medieval England project
- the final position for the financial year 2018/19, including delivery against our Arts Council England and National Lottery Heritage Fund programmes.
- progress in terms of our key Arts Council England and National Lottery Heritage Fund programmes for 2019/20.

#### 11.4.2 The Joint Committee **ADOPTED** the 5-year strategic Framework subject to additions and changes made from comments made in the meeting

## 12. Norfolk Museums Service – Finance Monitoring Report for 2018/19

- 12.1 The Joint Committee received the report covering the final outturn position for the Norfolk Museums Service (NMS) in 2018/19 as at 31 March 2019 including the revenue budget, capital programme, reserves and provisions and giving an early indication of the forecast budget out-turn for 2019-20.

- 12.2 The Assistant Director, CES (Culture and Heritage) gave an overview of the key points:
- there had been a reduction on the previously reported overspend
  - the budget for 2019-20 was forecast to be breakeven, assisted by reduction in some costs such as removing some of the costs of the operation
- 12.3 The following points were discussed and noted:
- Cllr Smith, noting the past situation, thanked the Assistant Director, CES (Culture and Heritage) and his team for their work to improve the financial situation of the Service; the Joint Committee **endorsed** this comment
- 12.4 The Joint Committee **CONSIDERED** and **COMMENTED** on the final revenue budget, capital programme and reserves and provisions position for 2018/19.
- 13. Risk Management**
- 13.1 The Joint Committee discussed the report giving detail on the latest Norfolk Museums Service risk register as at June 2019, aligned with and complementing the performance and financial reporting to the Committee.
- 13.2 The Assistant Director, CES (Culture and Heritage) reported that the dormant risks related to financial situation and theft of objects would always remain on the register however were mitigated. Items at risk of flood were now moved to a safer location however the sites in question were still at risk of flooding
- 13.3 The following points were discussed and noted:
- Noting the fire at Notre Dame in Paris and the hazards of restoration work that this had highlighted, it was queried whether this was a listed risk for the Joint Committee. The Assistant Director, CES (Culture and Heritage) replied that health and safety was taken very seriously, and all appropriate mitigations would be put in place as the project developed
  - It was queried whether the risk rating on letting of the contract would reduce; The Assistant Director, CES (Culture and Heritage) confirmed that it would be kept under review over the next 2-3 years as changes in key variables could change the risk score
- 13.4 The Joint Committee **CONSIDERED** and **AGREED** the active and dormant risks as per appendices A and B of the report.

The meeting ended at 15:29

**Chairman**



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