

Norfolk Records Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on 28 October 2022 at 10.30 am at County Hall Norwich

Present:

Norfolk County Council

Cllr Michael Chenery of Horsbrugh (elected
Chair)
Cllr A Birmingham
Cllr P Duigan

Norwich City Council

Cllr B Price

North Norfolk District Council

Cllr V Gay

Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk

Cllr E Nockolds

Broadland District Council

Cllr G Nurden

Breckland District Council

Cllr R Kybird (elected Vice-Chair)

Non-Voting Members

Representative of the Bishop of Norwich

Rev'd C Read

Representative of the Norfolk Record Society

Dr G A Metters

1 To receive apologies and details of any substitute members attending

- 1.1** Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Julie Brociek-Coulton, Cllr Duffin, Cllr V Thomas, Lady Dannatt, Cllr M Jeal, Dr V Morgan, Prof. C Rawcliffe and Mr A Steynor.

2. Election of Chair

- 2.1** Cllr Michael Chenery of Horsbrugh was duly elected for the ensuing year.

(Cllr Michael Chenery of Horsbrugh in the Chair)

- 2.2** The Chair welcomed Cllr Ben Price to his first meeting of the Records Committee.

3. Election of Vice-Chair

- 3.1** Cllr R Kybird was duly elected Vice-Chair for the ensuing year.

4 Minutes

- 4.1** The minutes of the meeting held on 1 April 2022 were confirmed as an accurate record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.

5 Declarations of Interest

- 5.1** The Chair declared an "other interest" as a trustee of NORAH (Norfolk Archives and Heritage Development Foundation).

6 Finance and Risk

6.1 The Committee received a report that covered the Norwich Record Office revenue budget for 2022/23, capital programme and reserves and provisions and an update on the service risk register.

6.2 The following points were discussed and noted:

- The Record Office was currently forecast to achieve a balanced budget position.
- The Risk Register contained six key risks: one had a risk rating of red, four were amber and one was green.
- The County Archivist reported regularly to the Records Committee and the Director of Culture and Heritage on the risks that were included in the Risk Register.
- There was a standard methodology used throughout the County Council for assessing and scoring the impact of the risks.
- The risk scores relied on the knowledge and expertise of the senior management team.
- All the risks on the register were core risks and some remained long-term risks. The risk scores changed depending on the perceived level of risk at a point in time.
- The Record Office relied on the IT expertise of the County Council for its systems. It also used guidance from NCC when required for project-based data issues in relation to data protection organisations.
- One of two new risks (RM14345) related to the discoverability of catalogue records that did not always meet with user needs.
- Feedback relating to the use of online catalogues was assessed by way of an analysis of email comments received from the public.
- The Record Office education offer was regularly updated so that it stayed in line with expected school requirements.
- There were currently two capital funding projects: the first related to the management of the collection and the second to the preparations for the storage project which was considered as part of the next item on the agenda.

6.3 The Committee **CONSIDERED** and **COMMENTED** on:

1. Forecast position of the revenue budget, capital programme, reserves and provisions.

2. Management of risk for 2022/23.

7 Norfolk Record Office Performance Report

7.1 The Committee received a report that outlined progress towards delivering the Norfolk Record Office (NRO) Service Plan between 1 April 2022 and 30 September 2022.

The following points were discussed and noted:

- The County Archivist explained the wide range of work that continued to be done to make the Norfolk Record Office more accessible to new audiences.
- It was pointed out that the programme of events and activities during the

previous six months had included an exhibition on Duleep Singh and his family which was hosted by the NRO in the Long Gallery.

- The Committee's attention was drawn to the creative ways in which the Change Minds partnership between the Restoration Trust and the NRO was working to support organisations around the UK and beyond to run Change Minds projects. These projects were targeted at people who would benefit from them the most. An example of this work was the way in which the Norfolk Change Minds project involved the delivery of workshops to prisoners in Norwich Prison. The Norfolk Record Office aimed to create a national hub for Change Minds projects that placed it at the forefront of developments in this field of work.
- The NRO was the largest user of digital storage within the County Council. The number of digital records would grow but this was not currently presenting difficulties as the digital collection of archives was still in its infancy. The NRO had not yet experienced requests for large deposits of material born in a digital form.
- Work on the migration and collection of metadata to improve its long-term sustainability and future use continued to take place.
- The aim of net zero carbon emissions by 2030 would, in part, be achieved by continuing to increase the amount and spread of catalogue metadata available to the public, thereby enabling the public to order more digitized images.
- The County Archivist said that he would provide the Committee with statistics to show the number of documents that were viewed on family history websites and the number of people who had ordered documents online.
- A Member suggested that the NRO should explore the possibilities for having its own mobile phone app.
- In reply to questions, the County Archivist said that the NRO was usually subject to only small-scale changes in NRO staff from one year to the next. This was mainly in non-professional staff who had retired or moved onto other work. Of the two non-professional members of staff who had retired in recent years one had become a professional writer.
- The County Archivist explained how the proposals for Norfolk County Council savings presented to Cabinet on 4 July 2022 included a reduction in the NRO budget of £22,000 coming from a reduction in opening hours at the Archive Centre in Norwich. This section of the report provided the data upon which the proposed changes in opening hours were based.
- This proposal would be going out to public consultation later this year. The results would be presented to the Records Committee in the new year.
- While details were not kept of how long visitors stayed at the Record Office this was estimated to be in the region of between 2-3 hours.
- The revised opening hours would not preclude opportunities for special NRO opening days/times.
- The proposed reduction in NRO opening hours compared with a similar position that could be found at Record Offices elsewhere in the country.
- The Committee placed on record their concern that the continuing constraints on local government finances threatened attempts to make the Norfolk Record Office's unique and important collections and services accessible to the public.
- The Committee then carefully considered the set of objectives and benefits for addressing the NRO's physical (as opposed to digital) storage needs and how these were being developed along with the benefits they would

deliver.

- The County Archivist confirmed that the appraisal would include options for offsite storage and the repackaging of documents.
It was suggested that a new Record Office repository could provide an income stream from providing a paid storage service to external clients.
- An appraisal of the options would come before the Committee at its spring meeting.

7.2 The Committee CONSIDERED and COMMENTED on the contents of the report and the actions taken by the Record Office to provide a service during this period between 1 April 2022 and 30 September 2022 and APPROVED the project objectives and associated benefits proposed for the Storage Project.

8 Future Meetings

8.1 The dates of future meetings were noted:

3 February 2023	10.30 am
14 April 2023	10.30 am
28 July 2023	10.30 am
27 October 2023	10.30 am
2 February 2024	10.30 am
19 April 2024	10.30 am

The meeting concluded at 12.10 pm

Cllr Michael Chenery of Horsbrugh, Chair of the Committee



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