

Norfolk Records Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held at the Norfolk Record Office on 13 January 2017 at 10:36am

Present:

Norfolk County Council

Mrs J Brociek-Coulton
Mr Michael Chenery of Horsbrugh

Norwich City Council

Mr D Bradford
Mr D Raby
Ms V Thomas

Broadland District Council

Mr D Buck

South Norfolk District Council

Dr C J Kemp (Chairman)

Breckland Council

Mr P Duigan

Non-Voting Members

Co-Opted Members

Prof. C Rawcliffe

Others Present

Mr G Tuson, the County Archivist

1. To receive apologies and details of any substitute members attending

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Mr M Begley, Mrs A Claussen-Reynolds, Mrs M Coleman, Mr Jewson, Dr Metters, Dr Morgan, Mrs E Nockolds, Revd Read, Mr P Smyth and Mr R Wilson.
- 1.2 Mr M Chenery of Horsbrugh had submitted apologies for lateness.
- 1.3 The Chairman welcomed the Committee to the first meeting of 2017.

2. Minutes

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting of the Norfolk Records Committee held on the 28 October 2016 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman subject to an amendment to change "Norfolk Records Society" to read "Norfolk Record Society".

3. Items of Urgent Business

- 3.1 There were no items of urgent business.

4. Declarations of Interest

- 4.1 The Chairman declared an interest as a trustee of Norfolk Archives and Heritage Development Foundation (NORAH), and declared an interest on behalf of Mr Chenery of Horsbrugh, who had not yet arrived, as a trustee of Norfolk Archives and Heritage

Development Foundation (NORAH). Mr D Buck declared an interest as Chairman of the Hellesdon History Society.

5. Organisational Development

5.1.1 The Committee received the report giving background on progress made towards the Norfolk Record Office (NRO) long term strategic priorities detailed in its Service Plan.

5.1.2 The County Archivist reported that significant progress had been made towards many long term objectives outlined in the Plan, and gave detail around those which required further work.

5.2.1 Accommodation:

- Maximisation of space use in the strong rooms was progressing;
- The County Archivist felt that through this work, the Norfolk Record Office strong room's expansion capacity could be extended from 2018, as originally planned when the building was constructed, to around 2023;
- When there was a risk that space would run out in approximately 3 to 4 years, the issue would be brought to Committee for consideration.

5.2.2 The County Archivist reported that the building was designed to enable extra accommodation to be built onto the back if needed; the estimated construction cost would be around £4-5m, not including running costs.

5.2.3 The NRO's income had increased from £60,000 in 2015-16, to £170,000 this year, 2016-17; the income was forecast to increase to £190,000 in 2017-18.

5.3.1 Alternative Methods of Service Delivery:

- An important aspect of focus was archive discovery;
- This would be developed through working with community groups, volunteers and local history groups;
- At that time, 1% of the content of the NRO archive was available online;
- NROCAT, the NRO's online archive catalogue did not provide full search functionality;
- The County Archivist gave a demonstration of use of the quick-search page of NROCAT, the main page used for searching on the website;
- He gave a demonstration of some of the problems involved with searching on the website and the limitations of the search functionality;
- Concerns were that the limited search functionality meant users did not find documents which would benefit them;
- Training was provided to help users learn to search NROCAT;
- Whether it would be more effective to update or to change the cataloguing system needed to be looked into. This would need to take account of the full implications of such a move including migration costs and staff training;
- Future proofing was an important part of this development process taking into account digital archives, interoperability of data and current developments like the semantic web

5.3.2 "Discovery" was highlighted as the system used at the National Archives; the County Archivist reported that work into a national portal had been discussed.

5.3.3 Delineation between Archives, the Heritage Centre and Museums was queried, and whether they could work together to link to records held on each other's archives to support archive discovery; the County Archivist was keen to look into ways of doing this moving

forward.

5.4.1 Releasing research potential:

- There were over 812,000 records in the system;
- Archivists at the NRO followed the General International Standard Archival Description, ISAD(G);
- The County Archivist demonstrated to Members how archivists catalogued items hierarchically;
- Around 25% of searches on “Discovery” were based on place;
- Other important searches were for names and subjects;
- The County Archivist reported that NRO authority files were an important area for development.

5.4.2 Mr Chenery of Horsbrugh arrived at 11:14am

5.4.3 It was recognized that the NRO could not create rich, transaction level metadata by itself, therefore other ways of approaching this were needed, for example, crowd sourcing and work with volunteers and community groups.

5.5.1 Community groups:

- A second “Explore Your Community Conference” was due to be held on Saturday 25 February 2017;
- The previous conference had been very popular, with local community groups speaking about their projects;
- A common query raised had been about loss of data when websites were lost or taken down, highlighting a need for information on retaining online data and ensuring people catalogued to standards and used the correct terms;
- A basic skills day was held in September 2016, covering topics including document handling and preservation, constitutions, documentation and terms of deposit;
- Norfolk Record Office could promote sustainability by working in partnership with such groups, providing support and, ultimately, a repository should the groups close.
- Work with community groups would benefit the Norfolk Record Office and Norfolk County Council as well as providing positive outcomes for the wellbeing of members of the community.

5.5.2 The difficulty of organisations using different systems was discussed; the County Archivist reported that it was planned to seek external funding to support skills development and good practice in community groups.

5.5.3 A point was raised over the difficulty of cataloguing some items, for example, words painted on wood which could be defined as a document or an artefact.

5.5.4 The County Archivist reported that money had been received from the Mancroft Advice Project via South Norfolk Council to work with Asperger’s Anglia clients to digitise documents relating to Seething Airfield in World War II.

5.5.5 The County Archivist reported that Archivematica, a digital preservation tool which was being trialled, looked at file formats and migrated them when there was a risk of not being able to access them in their existing format. The cost of running such a tool on a shared basis was the subject of a pilot project with the NRO working with four other archives in the eastern region.

5.6.1 Fundraising:

- Norfolk Archives and Heritage Development Foundation (NORAH) trustees were looking to recruit additional trustees;
- The fundraising strategy was being developed;
- The fundraising strategy would be brought to the Committee for consideration once written, which would include information about patrons.

5.7 The Committee:

- **APPROVED** this area of work; and
- **APPROVED** the use of funds as detailed in the report;
- **APPROVED** the use of reserves as set out in paragraphs 6 and 7 of the report.

6. Finance and Risk

6.1 The Committee received the report containing information on the financial forecast for the NRO budget out-turns for 2016/17, progress with the NRO revenue budget for 2016/17 reserves and provisions and an update on the service risk register.

6.2.1 The County Archivist clarified that the 975% variance to premises budget related to building and improvement work carried out to the Norfolk Record Office. Despite this, a balanced budget had been delivered

6.2.2 Savings on staff had been made through gaps in recruitment and secondment.

6.2.3 Income this year (2016/17) was projected to be £15,000 above target.

6.2.4 The County Archivist clarified that the increase shown in “services and supplies” included income from licensing digital images.

6.3.1 Risk register

The key risks were discussed:

- Funding issues: income generation and fundraising were being looked into to mitigate this risk;
- Inability to collect: mitigating this risk involved reviewing use of space to provide further storage;
- Failure to grow public expectation: there was growing expectation regarding access of information online. The unrealistic expectations created by television was also discussed.

6.4 The Committee **NOTED:**

- Performance with the revenue budget and reserves and provisions for 2016/17;
- Management of risk for 2016/17.

Future Meetings:

Date	Time	Venue
31 March 2017	10:30am	Green Room, Norfolk Record Office, County Hall
30 June 2017	10:30am	Green Room, Norfolk Record Office, County Hall

The meeting ended at: 11:45am

Christopher Kemp, Chairman of the Committee



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