

NORFOLK JOINT MUSEUMS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting Held at County Hall, Norwich on 27 October 2017 at 2.00pm

Present:

Norfolk County Council

Mr P Duigan
Mr J Fisher (Sub for Mr M Storey)
Mr D Harrison
Mr M Kiddle-Morris
Ms C Rumsby
Mr T Smith
Mr J Ward (Chairman)

Norwich City Council

Mrs J Brociek-Coulton
Ms A Haynes

Broadland District Council

Mr D Buck

South Norfolk District Council

Mr R Savage

Great Yarmouth Borough Council

Mr B Lawn

Co-opted Members (Non-Voting)

Arts Council

Ms K Fawcett

Museum Friends

Mr J Knight

1 Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Mr H Castle, Mr H Humphrey, Ms M Maxwell, Mr G Nobbs, Mrs E Nockolds, Mrs M Prior and Mr M Storey.

2 Minutes

- 2.1 The minutes of the previous meeting held on 30 June 2017 were confirmed by the Joint Committee and signed by the Chairman.

3 Declarations of Interest

- 3.1 There were no declarations of interest

4A Matters of Urgent Business

- 4a.1 There were no matters of urgent business.

4b Chairman Announcement- The Castle Museum Cafe

- 4b.1 The Chairman referred to a letter that the NMS had received from a member of the public about the good quality service provided by Dan, one of the staff at the Castle Museum café and in particular the exceptional service that was provided by Dan in

meeting the dietary requirements of a disabled member of the public. It was agreed that the member of staff concerned should be thanked for the exceptional work as well as the rest of the front of house teams.

5 Reports of Area Museums Committees

5.1 Breckland Area Committee

5.1.1 The annexed report of the Breckland Area Museums Committee meeting held on 19 July 2017 was presented by Mr P Duigan.

5.1.2 The Chairman referred to the work at Thetford Museum to create a new permanent gallery dedicated to Duleep Singh. The possibility of using funding schemes offered by the Heritage Lottery Fund and ACE were being investigated.

5.1.3 It was **RESOLVED** to note the report.

5.2 Great Yarmouth Area Committee

5.2.1 The annexed report of the Great Yarmouth Area Museums Committee meeting held on 11 July 2017 and 22 September 2017 was presented by Mr B Lawn.

5.2.2 In introducing the report, Mr B Lawn said that Great Yarmouth museums' performance in terms of total visitor numbers and school visits remained very positive, although it would require a great deal of work to maintain the visitor numbers at the current level. The exceptional results were heavily influenced by the Titanic exhibition and events programme and the record breaking schools visit figures supported by events developed as part of the *Stories from the Sea* programme.

5.2.3 It was **RESOLVED** to note the report.

5.3 King's Lynn and West Norfolk Area Committee

5.3.1 The annexed reports of the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Area Museums Committee meetings held on 24 July 2017 and 9 October 2017 were presented by Mr T Smith.

5.3.2 In introducing the report, Mr T Smith referred to the local marketing and outreach work that was undertaken by members of staff. This work had included mobile exhibitions, visiting community venues, the loan of materials to schools and the production of a new History in Your Hands flier to publicise local museum events.

5.3.3 The Curator of King's Lynn Museums reported that Lynn Museum had acquired a major new work by the King's Lynn painter Henry Baines, funded by a grant from the V&A Purchase Fund along with other grants and donations. It was noted that the painting had been made available for Members to see in the committee room prior to the start of the meeting.

5.3.4 It was **RESOLVED** to note the report.

5.4 Norwich Area Committee

5.4.1 The annexed reports of the Norwich Area Museums Committee meetings held on 11

July 2017 and 12 September 2017 were presented by Mrs. J. Brociek-Coulton.

5.4.2 In introducing the reports, Mrs J. Brociek-Coulton said that she was pleased to be able to record thanks to the school learning teams for their work in ensuring activities for school children remained relevant to subjects within the National Curriculum. The high numbers of school visits to Norwich museums were attributed to the strong and relevant school learning programmes and the significant effort of the learning teams across the NMS.

5.4.3 It was **RESOLVED** to note the report.

6 Finance Monitoring Report for 2017/18

6.1 The annexed report (6) by the Executive Director, Community and Environmental Services was received.

6.2 Members received a report that covered the Norfolk Museums Service (NMS) budget out-turn for 2017/18, including the revenue budget, reserves and provisions and the capital programme.

6.3 In reply to questions, Members were informed that the income reserve was maintained to enable the Service to effectively manage pressures on revenue streams during periods of falling visitor numbers, particularly when due to unfavourable weather conditions. If NMS created an overall surplus from income generation it was possible for new money to be added to this reserve, should it be considered prudent to do so.

6.4 Going forward, the strong exhibition programme planned over the autumn / winter months meant that NMS remained optimistic of continuing to be able to meet its income targets. A word of caution was, however, expressed by the Chairman about the spring 2018 exhibition programme which while of a very high quality was unlikely to achieve the exceptional income generating levels achieved in 2017.

6.5 The Joint Committee **resolved** to note progress with the revenue budget, capital programme and reserves and provisions forecast out-turn positions for 2017/18.

7 Risk Management Report

7.1 The annexed report (7) by the Executive Director, Community and Environmental Services was received.

7.2 The Joint Committee received a report that provided Members with the latest Norfolk Museums Service Risk Register as at October 2017.

7.3 Members were informed of the measures that the NMS had taken to address the risks that were set out in the report.

7.4 It was suggested that NMS should look into the use of flood boards to help mitigate against the residual low level flooding risk that would always remain in terms of Elizabethan House, Great Yarmouth and the Museum Stores at King's Lynn.

7.5 Members were assured that the NMS took additional measures to step up security

arrangements as and when appropriate to do so, for example to provide additional protection for material on loan for major exhibitions such as “Nelson & Norfolk” and “Rembrandt: Lightening the Darkness.” In taking key security decisions, NMS was able to draw upon expert input from Arts Council England’s national security advisor.

7.6 The Joint Committee **resolved** to note –

- **The risks in the latest risk report and how they compared to those in the report taken to the previous meeting.**
- **The risk data, information and analysis presented in the risk register report and that the recommended mitigating actions identified in the report were appropriate.**

8 Norfolk Museums Service – Performance & Strategic Update Report

8.1 The annexed report (8) by the Executive Director, Community and Environmental Services was received.

8.2 The Joint Committee received a report that provided progress with performance over the current financial year 2017/18, details as to museum education and learning programmes, marketing and PR, partnerships, commercial developments, Norwich Castle Keep and other capital developments, NMS fundraising, the Arts Council England funding programme and the DCMS National Museums Review.

8.3 During discussion, the following key points were noted:

- The Joint Committee was informed that Museum visits across all 10 NMS sites for the period up to the end of August 2017 were 217,601 compared to 190,282 for the equivalent five month period in 2016/17, a 14% increase. This positive position for the year-to-date was largely attributable to a very strong events and exhibitions programme, including Titanic: Honour and Glory at Time and Tide and Nelson and Norfolk which gave the Service a record-breaking August for Norwich Castle (31,268 visits).
- The numbers of school visits to NMS museums for the period up to the end of July 2017 were 17,555 compared to 17,406 for the equivalent four-month period in 2016/17, a 1% increase on last year’s record-breaking figures. This excellent result was very much at odds to the national picture of declining school visits to museums.
- The NMS remained confident of maintaining visitor figures of 400,000 visits across the 10 NMS sites plus outreach and special events attendance and of keeping school visits at the 45,000 level.
- The good visitor figures were driven by a strong marketing performance and a successful exhibitions and events programme.
- Going forward, the “Rembrandt: Lightening the Darkness” and the “We Came Here to Conquer” exhibitions could be expected to attract high visitor figures at the Castle Museum.
- The Joint Committee was pleased to hear that the Learning Teams had secured two prestigious Sandford Awards for Excellence in Education. These national awards recognised the role which museums and heritage sites played in supporting the development of young people in a variety of ways. The Chairman expressed a desire to congratulate those who were involved in the

NMS achieving these awards.

- Congratulations were also due to the work of the project team at Norfolk County Council that had led to the launch of the new NMS website in September 2017. The new site, embedded within the NCC website, was enabled for mobile and tablets and features a huge range of new facilities including video. See: www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk
- It was noted that the NMS had been awarded £776,500 from the Heritage Lottery Fund for the 'Norfolk Journeys' project which sought to empower young people to develop their own pathways into the County's heritage. This project formed part of the Heritage Lottery Fund's 'Kick the Dust' initiative, a new £10m grant programme which aimed to transform how heritage organisations engaged with young people.
- Ms K Fawcett spoke about the significant leadership role of NMS in the continued progress of all ACE funded programmes and plans for museums across the East of England.

8.4 The Joint Committee resolved:

1. **To note progress regarding development of the Keep at Norwich Castle which is outlined in paragraph 10 of these minutes.**
2. **To note progress in terms of the programme and key Service Plan priorities for 2017/18.**
3. **To note progress in terms of developing the business plan for Arts Council England's new funding programme for 2018-22.**

9 Collections Review and Rationalisation Programme

9.1 The annexed report (9) by the Executive Director, Community and Environmental Services was received.

9.2 The Joint Committee agreed to the rationalisation of certain social history items that had been considered for rationalisation by the Breckland and Great Yarmouth Area Museums Committees. This was agreed subject to further work being done to identify suitable homes for these items.

9.3 The Joint Committee resolved:

- (a) To approve the rationalisation of the Norwich Social History items from Great Yarmouth and Gressenhall listed in Appendix 2 to the report.
- (b) To note that these objects would be offered in the first instance to other Accredited Museums likely to be interested in their acquisition. They would then be offered to the museum community at large or any other suitable public body. If no interest was expressed they would be sold at auction or destroyed.
- (c) That the cigarette dispensing machine (Record Number: GRSRM: NN178) should be offered to local railway museums in the first instance.

10 Norwich Castle Keep: Gateway to Medieval England-Project and Fundraising Update

10.1 The Joint Committee received a presentation from Dr John Davies, Project Director and Jo Warr, Head of Development, about the Norwich Castle Keep development project.

- 10.2** Dr John Davies and Jo Warr said that Gateway to Medieval England was a four year project that would transform the Keep within Norwich Castle back to its appearance under the great Norman Kings. The project would enable a unique form of partnership, displaying national treasures from the British Museum collections alongside exquisite artefacts from Norwich Castle's own medieval collection, in a new *British Museum Gallery of the Medieval Period*. Regular communication was being held between curatorial and project teams at NMS and the British Museum in order to develop concepts for the British Museum Partnership Gallery of the Medieval Period within the Keep.
- 10.3** The aims of the project included the transformation of Norwich Castle into the premier heritage attraction in the East of England, attracting 300,000 visitors per year and the creation of an inspirational learning resource for Norfolk's schools with the capacity to welcome 30,000 visitors per year. The project would create a positive and significant economic impact for local businesses in terms of creating jobs, providing skills, giving training opportunities and a destination for hospitality and events.
- 10.4** The project needed the support of the business community to realise its ambitious vision for Norwich Castle. With this in mind NMS was offering a range of corporate packages to suit individual business requirements that included access to exclusive events, behind the scenes tours and team building opportunities, brand exposure through PR opportunities, logo placement and digital recognition.
- 10.5** The Project Team had officially entered the Development Phase of the project the work from which would form the basis of the second-round application to the Heritage Lottery Fund, which was expected to be submitted early in 2018.
- 10.6** Questions were asked about the Victorian features of the Castle Keep in relation to the project. Dr John Davies explained the importance of the Academic Steering Group in the project and the detailed recording of all historical features, including the Victorian elements.
- 10.7** The Joint Committee **resolved**:
- To place on record thanks to Dr John Davies, Project Director and Jo Warr, Head of Development, for their presentation about the Norwich Castle Keep development project and to ask to be kept informed of developments at future meetings.

The meeting concluded at 3.45 pm.

Chairman

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