

## **NORFOLK JOINT MUSEUMS and ARCHAEOLOGY COMMITTEE**

### **Minutes of the Meeting Held on 15 July 2011**

#### **Present:**

##### **Breckland District Council**

Mr P Duigan

##### **Broadland District Council**

Mr J Bracey

##### **King's Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council**

Mr T Wright

##### **North Norfolk District Council**

Mrs L Brettle

##### **Norwich City Council**

Mr D Bradford

Mr G Gee

Ms V Thomas

##### **Norfolk County Council**

Mr P Hardy

Mr Kiddle-Morris

Mr B Stone

Mr J Ward

Mr M Wilby

Dr F Williamson

##### **South Norfolk District Council**

Dr C Kemp

#### **Co-opted Members Present:**

Mr J Knight

Museum Friends

#### **Other Members Present:**

Mr G Nobbs

### **1. Apologies**

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Mr Carswell, Mr Carttiss, Mr Rogers, Mrs Nockolds (with Mr T Wright substituting), Mr Coleman, and Mr Gurney (with Mr J Knight substituting).

### **2. Election of Chairman**

#### **Resolved –**

- 2.1 That Mr Ward be elected Chairman of the Joint Committee for the ensuing year.

(Mr Ward in the Chair)

- 2.2 On behalf of the Joint Committee, the Chairman paid tribute to the outgoing Chairman, Mr Stuart Dunn, for his dedicated service to the committee.

### **3. Election of Vice-Chairman**

#### **Resolved –**

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

#### **4. Minutes**

- 4.1 The minutes of the previous meeting held on 15 April 2011 were confirmed by the Joint Committee and signed by the Chairman.

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

- 5.1 There were no declarations of interest.

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

- 6.1 It was noted that the late June meeting of the Joint Museums and Archaeology Urgent Business and Accounts Approval Sub-Committee had been cancelled due to a change in the legislative requirements. Members were asked to select a date for the meeting of the Joint Museums and Archaeology Urgent Business and Accounts Approval Sub-Committee.

##### **Resolved –**

- 6.2 That this meeting be held following Council on Monday 26 September 2011 at 2pm.

#### **7. Public Question Time**

- 7.1 There were no public questions received.

#### **8. Political Representation on the Joint Museums and Archaeology Committee: Appointments to Sub-Committee and Outside Body 2011/12**

- 8.1 The Report by Secretary of the Joint Committee was received. The report set out the political representation on the Joint Committee and asked Members to make appointments to the Sub-Committee and the Norfolk Archaeological Services Advisory Committee for 2011/12.

- 8.2 Dr Kemp requested that a note on how the proportionality was determined be circulated to Members.

##### **Resolved –**

- 8.3 To agree the political composition of the Joint Museums and Archaeology Accounts Approval and Urgent Business Sub-Committee be as follows:

- Conservative – 4
- Labour – 1
- Liberal Democrat – 1
- Green – 1

- 8.4 That the following Members be appointed to the Joint Museums and Archaeology Accounts Approval and Urgent Business Sub-Committee for 2011/12:

- Mr Wilby
- Mr Stone
- Dr Kemp
- Mr Duigan
- Mr Bradford
- Mr Hardy
- Dr Williamson (to be confirmed by Dr Williamson)

8.5 That the following Members be appointed to the Norfolk Archaeological Services Advisory Committee for 2011/12:

- Mr Duigan
- Mr Bracey

## **9. Reports on the Activities of Area Museums**

### **(a) Breckland**

The annexed report of the Breckland Area Museums Committee meeting held on Friday 17 June 2011 was received and noted.

Members noted that the results of the feasibility study relating to the current shop arrangements at Gressenhall to enhance visitor spend per head would be known in two months. The Head of Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service explained that it was hoped to relocate the shop to the courtyard at the centre of the museum.

Members were informed that energy savings were to be made following the installation of biomass boilers. Several events spaces had been refurbished and could be hired by the public or for training events, which would bring in revenue.

### **(b) Great Yarmouth**

The annexed report about the activities of Great Yarmouth Museums, as considered by the Scrutiny Committee of Great Yarmouth Borough Council on 6 June 2011 was received and noted. In introducing the report, Mr Stone apologised for the thin report, which was down to holiday arrangements but said that a full report would be provided at the next meeting.

### **(c) King's Lynn**

The annexed report of an informal meeting of the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Area Museums Committee held on Monday 13 June 2011 was received and noted.

### **(d) Norwich**

A report from the Norwich Museums Manager had been circulated to Members under separate cover after the agenda had been despatched and has been attached to these minutes at [Appendix A](#). The report gave a general update and detailed the work in the Norwich

Museums over the last three months. This report was received and noted.

**(e) North Norfolk**

The annexed report of the North Norfolk Museums Forum meeting held on 8 June 2011 was received and noted.

**10. Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service – Integrated Performance, Finance and Risk Monitoring Report for 2010/11**

- 10.1 The annexed report by the Head of Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service was received. The report provided performance information against service plan and budget out-turn information for 2010/11 for the Norfolk Museum and Archaeology Services (NMAS) to the 31 March 2011.
- 10.2 During the discussion the following points were noted:
- The Business and Development Manager noted that there was an error on the first page of the Appendix. He said that the 2010/11 capital outcome figure for the Gressenhall Biomass Boiler CERF should read “0.019” and not “0.19”.
  - In response to a Member question, it was stated that the final invoice for the Seahenge installation was taking some time due to it being completed in several stages, with the final stage only being completed last year.
  - In response to a Member question about the procurement and contractor delays in relation to the Bridewell Museum Development, it was noted that building works had been ten weeks overdue due to a range of causes including finding a large hole underneath the site and the removal of asbestos. Also, during the extremely cold weather, work could not continue due to health and safety considerations.

**Resolved –**

- 10.3 To note the progress with performance and service plans during 2010/11.
- 10.4 To note progress with the revenue budget, capital programme and reserves and provisions out-turn positions for 2010/11.

**11. Annual Internal Audit Report 2010-11**

- 11.1 The annexed report by the Head of Finance was received. The report introduced the Annual Internal Audit Report which summarised the internal audit work carried out in 2010-11, provided assurance that financial, non-financial controls, and risk management arrangements existed and were effective and provided details of the relevant sections of the Councils 2011-12 internal audit plan.

**Resolved –**

- 11.2 To note the report and its key message, that based on an analysis of the audit work carried out and reports issued, Chief Internal Auditor can assure that, the adequacy and effectiveness of the system of internal control including the arrangements for the management of risk during 2010-11 was “acceptable” and therefore considered sound.
- 11.3 That the systems of internal audit were adequate and effective during 2010-11 for the purpose of the latest regulations.
- 11.4 That arrangements for anti-fraud and corruption were adequate and have been reviewed.
- 11.5 To note the content of the 2011-12 Audit Plan for NJMAC set out in the Annual Internal Audit Report.

## **12. Annual Governance Statement 2010-11**

- 12.1 The annexed report by the Head of Finance was received. The report introduced the proposed Annual Governance Statement 2010-11 and provided assurance that the Norfolk Joint Museum and Archaeology Committee’s governance framework, including the system of internal control, was adequate and effective.

### **Resolved –**

- 12.2 To note that the Chief Internal Auditor had reviewed the effectiveness of the system of internal control including the arrangements for the management of risk.
- 12.3 To note that there were no findings from the review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control.
- 12.4 To approve the Annual Governance Statement and require that the Chairman and Director of Community Services should sign off the statement.
- 12.5 To require the Head of Finance to ensure that the Annual Governance Statement accompanies the Annual Statement of Accounts.

## **13. NMAS Collections and Accommodation Rationalisation Programme 2010-14**

- 13.1 The annexed report by the Head of Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service was received. The report detailed the NMAS ongoing Collection Rationalisation Programme whereby collections were assessed on a regular basis and those that were not suitable for future display or study needs were found alternative homes.
- 13.2 Under separate cover, Annex 2 of this report, which set out the list of items which had been assessed as surplus to NMAS’ requirements as being of poor quality, or of limited interest, or more relevant to another museum collect, is now attached to these minutes at [Appendix B](#).

- 13.3 The Head of Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service noted that there was a correction to the description of the fifth item on the list, which should have read “Commode, Continental, probably Dutch, veneered in yew, crossbanded in kingwood, about 1780”.
- 13.4 At [Appendix C](#) of these minutes is a collection of further descriptions of the items which are to be rationalised.

**Resolved –**

- 13.5 To approve the rationalisation of the items listed in Annex 2 of the report.

**14. Annual Review of Visitor Performance**

- 14.1 The annexed report by the Head of Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service 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 2010-11. Over 380,000 visits were made to NMAS museums, an increase of over 21,000 on the previous year. Out of this, 43,481 visits were made by school children in organised groups, which was a substantial increase on the previous year.

**Resolved –**

- 14.2 To note the report.

**15. Review of Future Governance Arrangements for Museums**

- 15.1 The annexed report by the Head of Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service was received. The report asked Members to contribute their views to inform an options appraisal on the future governance of the museums service.
- 15.2 One option being explored was the creation of a Charitable Trust, which would manage the museum buildings and collections on behalf of the local authorities in Norfolk. With Cabinet approval, external funds had been used to commission Winckworth Sherwood to produce an options appraisal.
- 15.3 A key part of the appraisal was consultation with key stakeholders in order to inform the draft recommendations, which were due at the end of July 2011.
- 15.4 In addition to the report, under separate cover, Members received a further briefing paper on the benefits of Charitable Trusts. The briefing paper is attached to the minutes at [Appendix D](#).
- 15.5 Members were asked to note the report and consider the presentation of the findings to date from Winckworth Sherwood. Members were asked to contribute their views to inform the options appraisal process.
- 15.6 Members then received the presentation by Winckworth Sherwood which is attached to the minutes at [Appendix E](#).

15.7 Following the presentation, a discussion took place and the following points were noted:

- Members questioned whether there would be a formal consultation, how long the process would take, and when the decision would be made. The Head of Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service said that a formal consultation process would need to be carried out with each local authority which was a member of the Joint Committee so each authority's timeframe would vary but the timetable would be significant and would allow for an extended period of formal consultation.
- Members highlighted that this was likely to be the most important decision they would have to make about the museums service and asked to view case studies of other services which had gone down the same route. They asked to see more detail on the drawbacks of Charitable Trust status and asked to hear about other alternatives. The Head of Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service said that she would ensure these areas were covered by the consultants in their report.
- Members asked what options were available to current Museums staff and how becoming a Charitable Trust would affect them and the local authority. The Head of Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service said that TUPE arrangements would apply to Museums staff. Mr Simon Randall, a consultant from Winckworth Sherwood, stated that those staff who worked over 50% of their hours in the Museums Service would transfer but those who worked less than 50% of their hours would not. Staffs' pension entitlements would continue as well.

15.8 With permission from the Chairman, Mr Nobbs was invited to address the Joint Committee as Labour Group Spokesperson for Cultural Services. Mr Nobbs made the following points:

- He stated that the final decision on whether to adopt Charitable Trust status would be that of the Joint Committee.
- He noted that he felt the real proposal which would be decided on was to form a Charitable Trust with Ipswich and Colchester City Councils. He said that this option was one of many which had been briefly mentioned during the presentation.
- Through Freedom of Information requests, Mr Nobbs had obtained numerous emails from April 2010 involving senior officers in Cultural Services, the Conservative Political Assistant, and the Leader of Norfolk County Council which discussed contacting the Minister and Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex MPs, and Vicky Ford MEP, Robert Sturdy MEP, and Geoffrey Van Orden MEP. He said that there was no Member consultation except through the Leader of Norfolk County Council and later the Cabinet Member for Cultural Services.

- He said there was a single line within Norfolk's Big Conversation document which said "For example, we will have explored the potential of setting up a Charitable Trust for securing and safeguarding the future of the joint museums service". This line was within a section on Adult Social Services and not in a position where information on the future plans for the Museums Service to be found.
- Mr Nobbs referred to the high-performing Museums Service operated by Hull City Council. He said he had made contact with the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture about the proposed move to Charitable Trust status and who replied by letter. In his letter, Cllr Terry Geraghty stated that this issue had been raised a number of times in Hull over the last six to eight years however to date the Council had not been persuaded by evidence it had seen and he could safely "say that there is no appetite in any political party in this council to pursue charitable trust status". Cllr Geraghty also said that the Museums Services was rightly regarded as the jewel in the crown of the City and it had a huge impact on the city centre economy. It was key to the internal and external image of the city and that such a significant asset was too important to leave the control of the democratic process. He added that not all museums trusts had prospered and there had been recent cases of failure and trusts having cash flow problems and seeking further support from their local authorities. Cllr Geraghty went on to say that the flexibility of action and opportunity for income from different sources needed to be balanced against the risk of cash flow problems and the ability of a significantly larger organisation, such as a local council, to draw on expertise and support that would be very costly in the external market, such as legal advice, HR support, and financial management. He ended his letter by saying that there were a number of implications of transfer to charitable trusts which he felt to be morally challenging. Some of these implications were that broadly speaking the pay of senior managers in trusts was higher than in council run services as a result of the changed structure and generally the pay of other staff in trusts was lower than in council run services. He added that some trusts had cut staff pay in the recent economic crisis as a method of reducing costs. There had also been cases of confusion in respect of the ownership of collections and it was his view that collections held on behalf of the public should be subject to the most rigorous management and scrutiny given their significance and value.

15.9 In response to the information presented by Mr Nobbs, the following points were made:

- The Head of Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service said she felt that misleading information had been given within Mr Nobbs' presentation. She said that the email communication in April 2010 was to seek acceptance of the concept of working more closely with Colchester and Ipswich and the County Council was anxious to demonstrate the opportunities that working with these two authorities would bring. This was being pursued at a time when the Renaissance scheme was being wound up and it had been indicated that any



successor scheme would only be available to larger metropolitan services or partnerships. NMAS had been keen to explore all routes that would enable it to apply for successor funding.

- The Head of Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service said that officers were seeking permission to employ Winckworth Sherwood and not asking the specific question on whether to go ahead with pursuing charitable trust status.
- The Head of Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service said that her service was in the process of reorganisation and, contrary to Mr Nobbs' assertion, was not making significant numbers of staff redundant. She added that approximately three posts would be lost from the service but that any redundant staff would be eligible for redeployment.
- The Head of Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service clarified that the Councils of all authorities made the final decision about the future of the Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service. It was the intention of Winckworth Sherwood to appear in front of all Councils throughout the consultation and decision-making process.
- The Head of Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service stated that when officers had a clear recommendation there would be an opportunity to discuss this recommendation in detail and then each authority would take this recommendation through their democratic process and to their Council for a decision.
- Some Members felt that Member involvement was missing in the charitable trust structure. As Members understood, local authorities owned the buildings and collections while the charitable trust would operate the management of the museums and the collections and would act as employer to staff. It was felt that evidence was an extremely important factor and that the lack of detail was causing the unease. Members were concerned about accountability and their duty to preserve the collections owned by the local authorities. The Chairman clarified that the presentation to Members today was to enable them to raise any issues. Each local authority would be consulted individually once the consultants' feasibility study was completed.
- Mr Randall noted that in relation to Member involvement, there would be a restriction on the number of representatives from outside bodies and there would be a maximum of three councillors serving on the Board of the Charitable Trust. He said that he would ensure that more information was provided about York and Luton Museums.
- In relation to Business Rates, Mr Randall said that the statement from the Deputy Prime Minister was lacking in detail and therefore the benefits of this change were not completely clear at this point.
- Mr Randall felt that corporate sponsorship was an extremely attractive

benefit for charitable trusts and he felt that there was a flourishing atmosphere of philanthropy which charitable trusts could benefit from when local authorities could not.

- 15.10 The Head of Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service thanked Members for the wide-ranging discussion and wide variety of comments. She stated that the public sector found itself in a difficult position and officers were looking at ways of continuing and maintaining valued services. She felt that Members were enormously passionate about Museums. She assured Members that if the option of charitable trust status did not deliver clear benefits for the service and the people of Norfolk, it would not be pursued. However, if there were benefits, it was her duty to investigate these further.

The meeting concluded at 4:15pm

**Chairman**

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