

## **NORFOLK JOINT MUSEUMS COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of the Meeting Held at County Hall, Norwich on 8 November 2019 at 2.00pm**

### **Present:**

#### **Norfolk County Council**

Clr J Brociek-Coulton  
Cllr P Duigan  
Cllr D Harrison  
Cllr H Humphrey  
Cllr G Nobbs  
Cllr T Smith  
Cllr M Stone  
Cllr M Storey  
Mr J Ward (Chairman)

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

Cllr V Gay

#### **Broadland District Council**

Cllr D King

#### **Breckland District Council**

Cllr R Kybird

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

Cllr R Savage

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

Cllr E Nockolds

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

#### **Museum Friends**

Mrs F Devonshire

#### **Arts Council**

Mr L Wiseman

### **1 Apologies for Absence**

- 1.1** Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Jacob Huntley, Cllr Laura McCartney-Gray Cllr G Freeman and Cllr Nigel Utton.

Apologies were also received from Steve Miller, Assistant Director, Culture and Heritage (otherwise engaged on County Council business) with Dr Robin Hanley Assistant Head of Museums (Head of Service Delivery) attending as substitute.

### **2. Minutes**

- 2.1** The minutes of the previous meeting held on 9 July 2019 were confirmed by the Joint Committee and signed by the Chairman.

### **3 Declarations of Interest**

- 3.1** There were no declarations of interest.

### **4 Matters of Urgent Business**

- 4.1 There were no matters of urgent business.

## 5 Breckland Area Committee

- 5.1 The annexed reports of the Breckland Area Museums Committee meetings held on 17 July 2019 and 14 October 2019 were presented by Cllr R Kybird.
- 5.2 In introducing the report, Mr R Kybird drew the Joint Committee's attention to the work to put in place a pop-up exhibition at Ancient House as part of the Festival of Norfolk and Punjab about Princess Sophia Duleep Singh who was a leading suffragette. The Joint Committee noted that good links had been formed with the Sikh Museum Initiative and the Centre for Punjab Studies to make more of the unusual connections between the Museum and the Maharajah Duleep Singh and his family and create a new and more permanent display.
- 5.3 The Joint Committee was also informed about a potential bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund to fund work at the Ancient House with a target date of 2024 to tie in with the 100th anniversary of the opening of the museum.
- 5.4 The Joint Committee's attention was drawn to the Farmers' Foundry steam engine restoration project, funded through Arts Council England. The Assistant Head of Museums said that the steam engine was due to be returned to Gressenhall by the end of March 2020 and made fully operational again. This would provide an opportunity to train and engage with a new and diverse audience and volunteer team.
- 5.5 Members placed on record their thanks to NMS staff on the amount of time and energy that went into planning the Once Upon A Time event at Gressenhall. The Assistant Head of Museums explained that this was a literacy focus day that encouraged children to think about life through stories set in the past. The event had been running for a number of years and was now well established.
- 5.6 It was **RESOLVED** to note the report.

## 6 Great Yarmouth Area Committee

- 6.1 The annexed report of the Great Yarmouth Area Museums Committee meeting held on 24 September 2019 was presented by Dr Robin Hanley.
- 6.2 It was **RESOLVED** to note the report.

## 7 King's Lynn and West Norfolk Area Committee

- 7.1 The annexed report of the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Area Museums Committee meeting held on 30 September 2019 was presented by Cllr E Nockolds.
- 7.2 Cllr E Nockolds drew the Committee's attention to the summer 2019 exhibition at Lynn Museum, *Journeys, People, Place and Pilgrimage*, which drew upon the museum's rich collections relating to West Norfolk including the nationally significant historic collection of pilgrim badges found in King's Lynn's River Purfleet.
- 7.3 It was **RESOLVED** to note the report.

## **8 Norwich Area Committee**

- 8.1** The annexed report of the Norwich Area Museums Committee meeting held on 10 September 2019 was presented by Cllr J Brociek-Coulton.
- 8.2** In introducing the report, Cllr Brociek-Coulton said that Members of the Area Committee had received a presentation at their previous meeting on the Kick the Dust Norfolk Project and had asked for a report on the Youth Offending Team Castle Project to be presented to a future meeting of the Area Committee.
- 8.3** Cllr Brociek-Coulton added that the Norwich Area Committee had placed on record thanks to the Norwich Freeman for their continued support of the Freeman Fortnight and had asked for some parking for disabled people to be maintained during the construction period at the Castle Keep. Further information about disabled parking would be made available to Norwich Area Committee Members once the contractor was in place.
- 8.4** Members said that at a recent museum event in Norwich it had become evident that some young people did not properly understand the difference in the value of one old penny to that of one new penny. On occasion this needed to be explained when displaying items within the NMS that were aimed specifically at a young audience.
- 8.5** It was **RESOLVED** to note the report.

## **9 Norfolk Museums Service - Finance Monitoring Report for 2019/20**

- 9.1** The annexed report (9) by the Assistant Executive Director, Community and Environmental Services was received.
- 9.2** The Joint Committee received a report that covered the forecast Norfolk Museums Service (NMS) budget out-turn for 2019/20 and gave details of the latest monitoring position of the revenue budget, capital programme, reserves and provisions.
- 9.3** Members questioned why the NMS had acquired the early masterpiece by Joseph Mallord William Turner (who was not a local artist) entitled *Walton Bridges* which was currently on display at Norwich Castle and was due to tour the region with exhibitions planned at Kings Lynn, Ipswich, Colchester and Great Yarmouth over the next three years, before going back on permanent display at Norwich Castle in 2023. In reply, the Assistant Head of Museums said that this was because the Castle Museum was of regional significance and this was the first Turner oil to enter a public collection in the East of England; the painting, which was believed to be the first oil by Turner to be painted in the open air, would complement other British landscape paintings and had a direct association with the development of the Norwich School of Art. In reply to further questions the Assistant Head of Museums added that the NMS would explore the commercial possibilities for commissioning retail objects that made use of the painting's image including a suggestion from Members of a jigsaw for sale at the Castle Museum shop.
- 9.4** In reply to questions about a projected shortfall in income at the Castle Museum due to the planned closure and Final Delivery Phase of Norwich Castle: Gateway to Medieval England Project, the Assistant Head of Museums said that officers had

found it difficult to predict the real impact that this would have on the NMS budget from Autumn 2019 onwards at the time when the NMS revenue budget was first set. Previous meetings of the Joint Committee had discussed the wide range of measures that were being taken to maintain income and improve the visitor experience for the duration of the Castle Keep project.

**9.5 The Joint Committee resolved:**

**To note the latest monitoring position of the revenue budget, capital programme, reserves and provisions and forecast out-turn for 2019/20.**

**10 Norfolk Museums Service - Risk Management Report**

- 10.1** The annexed report (10) by the Assistant Director, Community and Environmental Services was received.
- 10.2** The Joint Committee received a report that provided Members with the latest Norfolk Museums Service Risk Register as at October 2019. The Norfolk Museums Service risk register was last reported to the Joint Museums Committee in July 2019, and following review in October 2019, there were no significant changes to report.
- 10.3** The Assistant Head of Museums was questioned about the measures that had been taken to guard against the potential dangers to collections from “hot building works” at the Norwich Castle during the Gateway to Medieval England Project. In reply, the Assistant Head of Museums said that the fire safety systems at the Castle Museum had been improved; safety measures had been discussed with the building’s insurers and would be discussed further with the contractor when one was appointed.
- 10.4** The Joint Committee noted that the evidence showed that all the risks on the register were being managed to an appropriate level and that there were no risks rated Red.
- 10.5 The Joint Committee resolved to agree to the following:**

**The active and dormant risks included in appendices A and B to the report.**

**11 Norfolk Museums Service – Performance & Strategic Update Report**

- 11.1** The annexed report (11) by the Assistant Director, Community and Environmental Services was received.
- 11.2** The Joint Committee received a report that provided progress with performance over the current financial year 2019/20, details as to museum education and learning programmes, marketing and PR, partnerships, commercial developments, Norwich Castle Keep and other strategic developments, NMS fundraising and delivery against the Arts Council England and Heritage Lottery Fund programmes.
- 11.3** During discussion, the following key points were noted:
- The Joint Committee was pleased to be able to note that total visits across the 10 museum sites for the period 1 April 2019 to 30 September 2019 were 239,078 compared to 233,055 for the period 1 April 2018 to 30 September 2018, a 3% increase overall. The positive year-to-date figures reflected a

strong exhibitions and events programme across the 10 museums and more varied weather than during the summer of 2018.

- An early masterpiece by Joseph Mallord William Turner, Walton Bridges, had been acquired following generous grants from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, the Art Fund and a private donor. The acquisition was the first Turner oil to enter a public collection in the East of England where it complemented existing British landscape paintings by John Constable, Thomas Gainsborough, and artists of the Norwich School, including John Sell Cotman and John Crome.
- Lines of Sight: W.G. Sebald's East Anglia', also received significant national and international interest when the exhibition opened at Norwich Castle in May and had continued to generate interest internationally.
- Development work was progressing well in terms of 2020, a year in which a series of high-profile Norfolk projects and anniversaries would be delivered with the branding work now completed.
- Following approval by Norfolk County Council's Cabinet on Monday 10 June, permission was given to go out to tender for the construction contract for the Castle Keep project. Evaluation of the construction tender returns was currently underway. Further details about progress with the project would be provided directly to Members after the completion of the tender process or at the next meeting of the Joint Committee.
- It was noted that Eastern Area Learning Team had supported a successful £1.1m funding application to Arts Council England to deliver a new Creative People and Places programme (CPP) which would be the subject of a separate report to a forthcoming meeting of the Great Yarmouth Area Museums Committee.
- NMS was successful in its application to be included in the Arts Council England's National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) family for the period 2018-22. NMS was awarded £4.812m for the four-year period.
- In addition to the NPO application, the Service had submitted a successful application to continue as one of the nine national providers of Museum Development services through SHARE Museums East (SHARE Museums East was now described as a Sector Support Organisation or SSO). NMS was awarded £1.745m for the four-year period.
- The Joint Committee noted that good progress continued to be made with the North Norfolk District Council (NNDC) in the delivery of new external interpretation boards across the North Norfolk Coast along with a digital App which allowed visitors to interact with the environment through the use of augmented reality.
- The Joint Committee discussed the feedback that the NMS had received following its annual assessment by Arts Council England. One of the many strengths recognised by Arts Council England was the push to be more representative with communities with events such as Festival of Norfolk & The Punjab and Pride to the People exhibition, however, the Arts Council had said that more effort was needed to diversify the workforce and to ensure a more diverse range of community voices at Joint Museums Committee meetings.
- It was suggested that the Joint Committee should consider at the next meeting whether to appoint an additional co-opted non-voting Member to represent minority interests and that Mr Danny Keen, who had previously assisted the NMS with the Black History Project, might be interested in taking up such a position on the Joint Committee. If Members had an alternative proposal, then they were asked to contact Mr Steve Miller before the next meeting of the Joint

Committee.

**11.4 The Joint Committee resolved:**

- 1. To note progress against the key performance indicators for 2019/20 including total visits and school visits.**
- 2. To note progress regarding development of the Norwich Castle: Gateway to Medieval England project.**
- 3. To note progress in terms of key Arts Council England and National Lottery Heritage Fund programmes for 2019/20.**
- 4. To ask for a report at the next meeting recommending an additional co-opted non-voting member is appointed to ensure a more diverse range of community voices are heard at Joint Committee meetings.**

**12 To Receive a presentation from the 2019/20 Teaching Museum Trainees**

**12.1** Members were introduced to the 2019-20 cohort of museums trainees who delivered a huge range of impressive projects and programmes across the county. Each of the trainees gave a presentation that explained the wide range of work that they undertook for the NMS and answered questions from Members about their work.

**12.2** It was noted that the current Museum Traineeship would come to an end in March 2020 and that steps were being taken to fill the positions for 2020/21.

**13.4 The Joint Committee resolved to place on record thanks to the 2019/20 cohort of trainees for their detailed presentations and to wish them well in their future careers.**

**The meeting concluded at 4.10 pm.**

**Chairman**

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