

NORFOLK JOINT MUSEUMS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting Held at County Hall, Norwich on 11 January 2019 at
2.00pm

Present:

Norfolk County Council

Mr R Brame (substitute for Mr H Humphrey)
Mr P Duigan
Mr D Harrison
Mr B Iles
Mr G Nobbs
Mr T Smith
Mr J Ward

Norwich City Council

Dr E Fulton-McAlister
Dr J Huntley
Ms R Taylor

North Norfolk District Council

Ms V Gay

Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk

Mrs E Nockolds

Broadland District Council

Mr D Buck

Breckland District Council

Mr R Kybird

South Norfolk District Council

Mr R Savage

Co-opted Member (Non-Voting)

Museum Friends

Mrs F Devonshire

1 Apologies for Absence

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Mr H Humphrey, Ms C Rumsby, Mr M Storey and Ms K Fawcett.

2. Minutes

2.1 The minutes of the previous meeting held on 2 November 2018 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 and Chairman's Comments

4.1 There were no matters of urgent business.

- 4.2 The Chairman brought to the attention of the Joint Committee the award of a British Empire Medal to John Newstead. John Newstead was a pharmacist in Wroxham Road and later Blenheim Road, Sprowston until he retired in 1990. Over the years, John Newstead travelled the country collecting what he could from pharmacies that were modernising or closing down and he built a small museum in his garden. It was this collection that was donated to the NMS in 1984 and used to set up the chemist shop in the Museum of Norwich at the Bridewell.
- 4.3 It was agreed that the Chairman should write to John Newstead congratulating him on his award.

5 Great Yarmouth Area Committee

- 5.1 The annexed report of the Great Yarmouth Area Museums Committee meeting held on 8 October 2018 was presented by Mr B Lawn.
- 5.2 Members were updated on the work that was being done as part of the *Making Waves Together* project which was aimed at building cultural partnerships, engaging new audiences and putting arts, culture and heritage at the heart of the local vision for the Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft area. As part of this project a feasibility study was being undertaken into the viability for co-curated content to be displayed in the Lowestoft partner museums, as well as designating the Time and Tide Museum as a centre for collecting, conserving and studying the cultural material of coastal community heritage in all its forms. The feasibility study would result in outline plans to reconfigure displays and galleries across several areas within Time and Tide and was expected to report to the Area Museums Committee in the next 12 months.
- 5.3 It was **RESOLVED** to note the report.

6 King's Lynn and West Norfolk Area Committee

- 6.1 The annexed report of the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Area Museums Committee meeting held on 3 December 2018 was presented by Mrs E Nockolds.
- 6.2 In introducing the report, Mrs E Nockolds drew the Committee's attention to the latest programme of NMS activities and the partnership work that NMS and the Borough Council undertook with other organisations including King's Lynn Festival and the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership to provide a good cultural offer for local communities and visitors to King's Lynn. Members said that there were lessons that could be learnt from the partnership working and conferences with a cultural theme that were held in King's Lynn and West Norfolk for other areas of the county.
- 6.3 It was **RESOLVED** to note the report.

7 Norwich Area Committee

- 7.1 The annexed report of the Norwich Area Museums Committee meeting held on 11 December 2018 was presented by Dr E Fulton-McAlister.
- 7.2 In introducing the report, Dr E Fulton-McAlister referred to the work of the Norfolk Museums Learning Team and of how their engagement with schools and teachers had increased the number of school visits to the Norwich museums and ensured that

museum events were relevant to the National Curriculum.

- 7.3 Dr E Fulton-McAlister also referred to the success of the televised Children in Need event which was an excellent showcase for the Castle Keep.
- 7.4 During the discussion, Members stressed the importance of the forthcoming Viking exhibition and of maintaining access during the construction phase of the Castle Keep project. It was noted that a Wider Impact Group had been established to ensure that disruption to the operation of Norwich Castle and operational difficulties in maintaining access was kept to a minimum. These matters were further addressed as part of the NMS periodic report and as part of the presentation by Dr Robin Hanley at the end of the meeting.
- 7.5 The Joint Committee noted the Girl Guiding event that was held to mark the International Day of the Girl on 13 October 2018 and the potential for NMS to coordinate the event in future years.

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

8 Norfolk Museums Service - Finance Monitoring Report for 2018/19

- 8.1 The annexed report (8) by the Assistant Executive Director, Community and Environmental Services was received.
- 8.2 The Joint Committee received a report that covered the forecast Norfolk Museums Service (NMS) budget out-turn for 2018/19, including the revenue budget, reserves and provisions and the capital programme. The report also detailed savings proposals applied to the revenue budget for 2019/20.
- 8.3 The Joint Committee was informed that NMS anticipated small shortfalls from partnerships income (including undesignated fundraising and sponsorship income) and admissions income at financial year end. The shortfall in admission income was mainly due to unfavourable weather conditions. A turnaround in admission income was expected in the coming months from the major exhibitions: Circus 250 and Viking: Rediscover the Legend, but this did not mean that the NHS would meet the very high levels of income achieved in the previous record-breaking year.
- 8.4 Members were informed that by reviewing all non-essential spend and by vacancy management NMS was still working hard to achieve a break-even financial position at year end and to be able to bring in a balanced budget for 2019/20.
- 8.5 The Joint Committee **resolved** to note –
- a. **The latest monitoring position of the revenue budget, capital programme, reserves and provisions and forecast out-turn for 2018/19.**
 - b. **The proposed budget savings and changes for 2019/20 and beyond that were set out in the report.**

9 Norfolk Museums Service - Risk Management Report

- 9.1 The annexed report (9) by the Assistant Director, Community and Environmental

Services was received.

9.2 The Joint Committee received a report that provided Members with the latest Norfolk Museums Service Risk Register as at December 2018. There were no significant changes since the previous risk management report to the Joint Committee in November 2018.

9.3 Members were updated on the positive progress which had been made against the risks on the register. Members were informed that the reporting arrangements for the risks associated with the Castle Keep project were currently subject to discussions with risk management officers at County Council and would be included in the next risk management report.

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

The active and dormant risks that were set out in appendices A and B to the report and that the risks associated with the Castle Keep project would be reported as part of the next risk management report.

10 Norfolk Museums Service – Performance & Strategic Update 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 progress with performance over the current financial year 2018/19, 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.

10.3 During discussion, the following key points were noted:

- The Joint Committee noted that the Winfarthing Pendant, an Anglo-Saxon treasure acquired through the generous support of the Art Fund, the National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF) and the Friends of the Norwich Museums, was voted as the nation's favourite acquisition for 2018 in a national poll. The Pendant was currently on display at the British Library and would return to Norwich Castle in the Spring.
- Members were introduced to three of the 2018-19 cohort of museums trainees who delivered a huge range of impressive projects and programmes across the county. Each of the trainees explained the wide range of work that they undertook for the NMS. In reply to questions about the objects within the NMS collections that they found of special interest, the trainees identified an early example of a children's talking book from the 1880s, the Seahenge displays at Lynn Museum, and a taxidermy puffer fish. Members thanked the trainees for their detailed presentations and the answers that they gave to questions.
- The Joint Committee welcomed the NMS partnership work with the County Council's Public Health services and third sector partners to identify and support people with mental health issues and the early onset of dementia. Because many of these Public Health initiatives were of relevance to Borough/City/District Councils Members suggested that they should be given an opportunity to consider NMS involvement in this line of work at meetings of

the Area Museums Committees.

- Members were informed that the construction phase of the Castle Keep project was expected to commence in May 2019 and to be completed in phases during 2020. The prime draw for visitors to Norwich Castle during 2019 will be the *Viking: Rediscover the Legend* exhibition which will contain some of the most significant Anglian and Viking treasures ever discovered in Britain and feature star objects from the British Museum and Yorkshire Museum. Members would be given opportunities to see the Castle Keep while it was empty of contents and to see areas of the Castle Museum and the Shirehall that were not usually open to the public.
- A discussion was held amongst Members regarding access to museum experiences for those from lower socio-economic groups. It was suggested that this ongoing work could be referenced in the equality impact assessment paragraph. It was agreed that officers would investigate with the Council's Equality and Diversity Manager and report back to the next meeting of the Joint Museums Committee.
- In reply to questions, it was pointed out that NMS curatorial staff continued to progress the *Deep History Coast* Project Initiative and would provide a presentation on this subject to the next meeting of the Joint Committee.

10.4 The Joint Committee resolved:

- 1. To note progress regarding development of the Norwich Castle: Gateway to Medieval England project.**
- 2. To note the position for the current financial year 2018/19, including delivery against the Arts Council England and Heritage Lottery Fund programmes.**
- 3. That because it is unfeasible for the County Council (the NMS governing body) to provide Arts Council England with a monthly cash flow statement for NMS's National Portfolio Organisation grant for 2018-22 and for NMS' Subject Specialist Organisation grant for Museum Development for 2018-22, the Joint Committee ask ACE to waive this payment requirement on the understanding that the County Council will commit to provide ACE with an assurance to underwrite any cash shortfalls across the life of the funding agreements.**

11 To Receive a presentation updating Members on progress with the Norwich Castle Gateway to Medieval England Project

11.1 Dr Robin Hanley, Assistant Head of Museums (Head of Service Delivery), gave the Joint Committee a power point presentation on progress with the Norwich Castle Gateway to Medieval England Project.

11.2 The Joint Committee noted the following:

- The Gateway to Medieval England project would provide a state of the art venue supporting an extensive and creative programme of formal and informal learning events, alongside commercial functions.
- The £13.5m project would re-create the 12th century Norman royal palace and develop a new British Museum Gallery of the Medieval Period.
- The Gateway to Medieval England project would help to link together the existing heritage assets in Norwich, including the Cathedrals, the medieval

churches and the City walls and make Norwich Castle the premier heritage destination in the East of England.

- A new and much improved main entrance was being planned for the Castle Museum that addressed accessibility issues, gave improved customer service and supported the generation of partnership income.
- A fully accessible visitor bridge would provide a level public access to the Castle Keep. There would also be public lifts to all levels of the building for the first time in the history of the Castle.
- The Gateway to Medieval England project involved close working with the City Council Conservation Officer to ensure the approach was sympathetic to the important listed building.
- The project would deliver improved access to the Castle, a newly positioned café, improved toilets and a new Changing Places facility and improved facilities for school parties.
- Discussions were continuing with the City Council about the future of the Norwich Civic Regalia.
- The Castle Keep was due to be empty of contents by the end of Easter 2019. There would then be a few months in which visitors were able to see the Castle Keep before building work commenced.
- Medieval themed events were to be planned for across the City as part of the Activity Programme.
- A tapestry was to be produced referencing Norwich's medieval history.
- Members were informed that a separate Castle Museum interpretation plan would be put together to tell the wider story of the building.
- Members said that visitors should be informed on arrival when the Keep was not open to visitors or had restricted access. The rest of the museum, including parts which were not usually open to the public, would remain open throughout the whole of the development. Special behind-the-scenes tours and digital access to the Keep would also be made available for visitors, so that they could feel part of the development journey.
- Members were assured that any issues about public access during the development period would be kept under close review and that regular reports would come to both the Norwich Area Museums Committee and the Joint Committee.

11.3 RESOLVED

That Members place on record thanks to Dr Robin Hanley, Assistant Head of Museums (Head of Service Delivery) on his detailed presentation.

The meeting concluded at 4 pm.

Chairman

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