

## **NORFOLK JOINT MUSEUMS COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of the Meeting Held at County Hall, Norwich on 30 October 2020 at 2.00pm**

### **Present:**

#### **Norfolk County Council**

Clr J Brociek-Coulton  
Cllr P Duigan  
Cllr D Harrison  
Cllr H Humphrey  
Cllr T Smith  
Cllr M Storey  
Cllr J Ward (Chair)

#### **Norwich City Council**

Cllr Jacob Huntley  
Cllr Laura McCartney-Gray

#### **Breckland District Council**

Cllr R Kybird

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

Cllr V Gay

#### **Broadland District Council**

Cllr D King

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

Cllr R Savage

#### **Great Yarmouth Borough Council**

Cllr G Freeman

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

#### **Norfolk Black History Month**

Mr D Keen

#### **Arts Council**

Mr L Wiseman

### **1 Apologies for Absence**

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Nigel Utton, Cllr G Nobbs, Cllr M Stone, Cllr E Nockolds and Mrs F Devonshire (Museum Friends).

### **2. Minutes**

- 2.1 The minutes of the previous meeting held on 7 August 2020 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 report of the Breckland Area Museums Committee meeting held on 12 October 2020 was presented by Cllr R Kybird.

- 5.2** In introducing the report, Cllr R Kybird said that the Area Committee had received a short presentation with photographs about the new Adventure Playground at Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse (and a similar presentation would be given to the Joint Committee at the end of today's meeting) .
- 5.3** The Joint Committee's attention was drawn to the good links that 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 display. Members' attention was also drawn to the broad range of digital resources that the Service continued to put in place to support audiences remotely which had helped significantly expand social media activity.
- 5.4** In reply to questions it was noted that the remote volunteering opportunities at Gressenhall were proving to be successful; there had been a significant increase in the number of volunteers and the increase (from 120 to 150 people) came from across all age groups.
- 5.5** 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 21 September 2020 was presented by Dr Robin Hanley, Assistant Head of Museums (Head of Service Delivery) in the absence of Cllr E Nockolds who had given her apologies for today's meeting.
- 6.2** The Joint Committee's attention was drawn to the success of the Thomas Baines Exhibition in attracting visitors to the Lynn Museum which reopened shortly after the Area Committee had last met.
- 6.3** Members placed on record thanks to the Learning and Engagement Officer for King's Lynn and West Norfolk for the excellent work undertaken to engage with young people through the Kick the Dust Project.
- 6.4** 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 8 September 2020 was presented by Cllr J. Huntley.
- 7.2** In introducing the report, Cllr J. Huntley said the Area Committee had received an update on the Norwich Castle project and the impact of the pandemic on the project.
- 7.3** It was noted that the Area Committee had also discussed opportunities to display the museums' collections to a wider audience by using vacant shop windows. The Chair said that a shop window in Elm Hill, Norwich had displayed a fine artistic work of a pelican, made up of small tiles, of which NMS held the original work. The use of shop fronts in this imaginative way could be used to enable NMS to engage more widely with the public about the Norwich Castle Keep project and promote museum events in the run up to Christmas.

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

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

8.1 The annexed report (8) by the Director of Culture and Heritage was received.

8.2 The Joint Committee received a report that covered the forecast Norfolk Museums Service (NMS) budget out-turn for 2020/21 and detailed the latest monitoring position of the revenue budget, capital programme, reserves and provisions.

8.3 The main issues for consideration by this Committee were:

- Monitoring of NMS Revenue Budget indicated that the Service was currently projecting significant pressures for 2020/21.
- Latest monitoring position of NMS Capital Budgets.
- Movements in NMS Reserves & Provisions.

8.4 During discussion, the following key points were noted:

- NMS was currently facing significant uncertainty in relation to its financial position.
- The budget over-spend had reduced to just over £1m, but NMS remained unable to operate at anything close to a normal service, a position it had been in since the beginning of the financial year.
- NMS had received financial support through the CES share of Government income support channels.
- NMS had also been successful in their grant bid from the Culture Recovery Fund, administered by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). This funding would help to support NMS in continuing to deliver a strong countywide service and critical projects over the short and medium-term.
- The forecast over-spend was mostly due to the predicted loss of income for the Service during the extended period of closure and a reduction in normal visitor numbers following site re-openings. Financial modelling had been based on a projected income of 30% of income before the start of the pandemic but the general situation had now deteriorated significantly, and this income target was no longer possible.
- The current modelling around the planned savings for 2021/22 was that NMS would not be looking at closures and would not be looking at a reduction in opening hours across any of the 10 museums in terms of making savings. NMS would also not be looking at reducing core services, including its schools' programmes across the county.

8.5 **The Joint Committee resolved:**

**To note the latest monitoring position of the revenue budget, capital programme, reserves and provisions and forecast out-turn for 2020/21.**

## 9 **Norfolk Museums Service - Risk Management Report**

9.1 The annexed report (9) by the Director of Culture and Heritage was received.

**9.2** The Joint Committee received a report that provided Members with the latest Norfolk Museums Service Risk Register as at October 2020. The Norfolk Museums Service risk register was last reported to the Joint Museums Committee in August 2020, and following review in late September 2020, there were changes to report to the risks presented, detailed in the proposals section of the annexed report. Since last reporting in August 2020, the Norfolk Museums Service has re-opened four museums following changes in national guidance, allowing museums to re-open. The necessary health and safety risk assessments were completed and the physical environments adapted to safely accommodate staff and visitors.

**9.3** 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. The Amber and Green ratings mentioned in the report were based on the current situation regarding museums that were open and were subject to change if the situation regarding the impact of the pandemic on the operation of the NMS were to change. There were no new risks to add to the register.

**9.4** **The Joint Committee resolved to agree to the following:**

**The active and dormant risks as per appendices A and B of the report, noting latest updates associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.**

## **10 Norfolk Museums Service – Performance & Strategic Update Report**

**10.1** The annexed report (10) by the Director of Culture and Heritage was received.

**10.2** The Joint Committee received a report that provided progress with performance over the current financial year, details as to museum learning programmes, marketing and PR, partnerships, commercial developments, Norwich Castle Keep project and other strategic developments, NMS fundraising and delivery against the Arts Council England (ACE) and National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) programmes.

**10.3** During discussion, the following key points were noted:

- The Joint Committee noted that Time and Tide had launched ‘Candid About Covid-19’ a public campaign to collect photographs, objects and personal experiences of the Covid-19 pandemic from people who lived and worked in Great Yarmouth. The museum’s goal was to collect a digital archive showing how local communities had experienced the pandemic, including images, videos, scanned documents and audio recordings, collect images and experiences and this would part of a national record about the impact of the pandemic.
- The Joint Committee received an update regarding the Kick the Dust project for which NMS had received an increase of £135,000 of NLHF funding. Since the start of the pandemic some 1,400 packs of resources about heritage-based activities were distributed to young people across the county as part of this project which worked in many cases with young people who were in digital poverty and normally struggled to engage with heritage projects. The resource packs were distributed to amongst others those living in YMCA accommodation.
- Staff had risen to the challenge of using digital technology to engage with new

audiences and were producing digital content that was professionally recognised both nationally and internationally to be of a high quality.

- The acquisition of new digital skills had breathed life into the weekly development programme of the current cohort of museums trainees and helped them to deliver a huge range of impressive projects and programmes across the county. Members said that they would welcome an opportunity to meet with the trainees and discuss their work at a future meeting.
- Members asked to be kept informed of developments at a future meeting regarding the joint working with Broadland DC on the excavation of a Roman villa close to Aylsham.
- Members received an update on progress on the Norwich Castle: Gateway to Medieval England project which had been very positive with construction beginning on site in August. Members could keep up to date on the progress of the project on the website which outlined the latest position.  
<https://www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk/norwich-castle/castle-keep-transformation>
- Members received an update on NMS's ongoing work in terms of the Arts Council England's Creative Case for Diversity. NMS had received a rating of 'Strong' for the financial year 2020/21 and Liam Wiseman, Relationship Manager for ACE, commented on the Service's positive work in this area.
- The Joint Committee heard that work was continuing with North Norfolk District Council on the shape and future direction of the Deep History Coast Project. A progress report would be given at a future meeting of the Joint Committee that at Members' request would include examples of recent finds.
- The Joint Committee received a presentation with photographs from Dr Robin Hanley about the new Adventure Playground at Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse, which was funded through the Norfolk County Council capital programme. The new play equipment was fully installed, and final elements of landscaping were being completed by the Gressenhall team. A detailed COVID-19 risk assessment and related safe system of work had been written for the playground area which opened to the public in time for October half term. The new look adventure playground would play a key role in attracting families, repeat visitors and NMS Museums Pass holders to the site. A copy of the presentation could be found on the Joint Committee's committee pages website.

#### **10.4 The Joint Committee resolved:**

- 1. To note 2020/21 position in light of the impact of Covid-19.**
- 2. To note progress regarding development of the Norwich Castle: Gateway to Medieval England project.**
- 3. To note progress in terms of our key Arts Council England and National Lottery Heritage Fund programmes for 2020/21.**

**The meeting concluded at 3.50 pm.**

**Chair**

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