

NORFOLK JOINT MUSEUMS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting Held on 14 April 2023 at 2.00 pm at Norfolk County Council

Present:

Norfolk County Council

Cllr J James
Cllr K Mason Billig
Cllr S Penfold
Cllr R Savage
Cllr K Vincent
Cllr J Ward (Chair)

Norwich City Council

Cllr P Kendrick (sub)
Cllr B Price

Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk

Cllr E Nockolds

South Norfolk District Council

Cllr J Easter

Breckland District Council

Cllr R Kybird

North Norfolk District Council

Cllr V Gay

Co-opted Members (Non-Voting)

Museum Friends

Mrs F Devonshire

Arts Council

Mr J Simpson Wedge

1A Opening remarks by the Chair --Former County Councillor Barry Duffin

The Chair asked Members of the Committee to hold a minute's silence, for the sad passing of Barry Duffin, Councillor for West Depwade, who died on Easter Sunday following an accident. Barry was an active member of the Joint Museums Committee. He also served on Norse and other Committees and had recently been appointed Vice Chair of Corporate Select Committee. Known for his hard work and commitment Barry was respected and liked by colleagues across the wide political spectrum; he would be missed.

1B Opening remarks by the Chair-- Mr John Simpson Wedge (the new Arts Council Co-opted member) and Joint Committee Members not standing for re-election at the forthcoming District Council elections

The Chair welcomed Mr John Simpson Wedge (the new Co-opted member from the Arts Council) to his first meeting of the Joint Committee.

The Chair also placed on record thanks to those members who were not standing for re-election in the forthcoming District Council elections (including Cllr Elizabeth Nockolds and Cllr Virginia Gay who were long serving Members of the Joint Committee).

1C Opening remarks by the Chair-- Grant from the Department of Culture Media and Sport and Arts Council England through the Museums Estate and Development Fund (MEND)

The Chair acknowledged a generous grant of £381,920 from the Department of Culture Media and Sport and Arts Council England through the Museums Estate and Development Fund (MEND) to replace the building management system at Norwich Castle.

1D Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr J Brociek-Coulton, Cllr E Maxfield, Cllr J Huntley, Cllr C Kidman, Cllr D King, Cllr G Freeman and Mr D Keen.

2. Minutes

- 2.1** The minutes of the previous meeting held on 3 February 2023 were confirmed by the Joint Committee and signed by the Chairman.

3 Declarations of Interest

- 3.1** There were no declarations of interest.

4 Breckland Area Museums Committee

- 4.1** Cllr Robert Kybird presented the annexed minutes of the Breckland Area Museums Committee meeting held on 20 February 2023 which were noted.

- 4.2** In introducing the minutes of the Area Committee Cllr Kybird drew attention to the work for the Viking exhibition at the Ancient House Museum which had involved members of the Teenage History Group in choosing artifacts and themes for the display.

5 Great Yarmouth Area Museums Working Group

There were no minutes from the Great Yarmouth Museums Working Group.

6 Norwich Area Committee

- 6.1** In the absence of Cllr Jacob Huntley who had given his apologies for the meeting, Cllr John Ward, Chair of the Joint Committee, who had chaired the most recent meeting of the Area Committee, presented the annexed minutes of the Norwich Area Museums Committee meeting held on 7 March 2023 which were noted.

- 6.2** Cllr Ward said that he was pleased to be able to report that the external lift to Norwich Castle Museum was operational again.

7 Kings Lynn and West Norfolk Area Committee

- 7.1** Cllr Elizabeth Nockolds presented the annexed minutes of the Kings Lynn and West Norfolk Area Committee meeting held on 20 March 2023 which were noted

- 7.2** Cllr Nockolds highlighted the support that volunteers provided to the NMS and the work being done to encourage more volunteers to come forward to help support all the heritage sites in King's Lynn.

8 Norfolk Museums Service – Finance Monitoring Report for 2022/23

- 8.1** The annexed report (8) by the Director of Culture & Heritage was received.
- 8.2** The Joint Committee received a report that covered the Norfolk Museums Service (NMS) forecast budget out-turn for 2022/23 and detailed the latest monitoring position of the revenue budget, capital programme, reserves and provisions.
- 8.3** The Joint Committee's attention was drawn to the following issues:
- The detailed net revenue budget position for 2022/23 and the forecast outturn for NMS were set out in the table at paragraph 1.1.6 of the report.
 - The Service was currently projecting an over-spend of £1.304m as it continued to face significant uncertainty in relation to the main income streams following a slower than hoped for return to normal, pre-pandemic visitor numbers and patterns. The very hot summer, cost of living pressures, and reduced visitor offer in place at Norwich Castle Museum due to the ongoing work for the Keep re-development were also important factors. This projected overspend also contained a number of extraordinary items including specific staffing pressures resulting from the annual NCC pay increase, and utilities pressures.
 - NMS budgetary pressures continued to be managed by the County Council at CES departmental level.
 - The Joint Committee noted that since the last monitoring report, funding at CES departmental level had been secured for an invest to earn scheme of £0.302m. This would be deployed over the next three years to enable NMS to realise the full potential of the commercial opportunities available to them upon reopening Norwich Castle.
 - The NMS remained confident that it would be able to achieve its income generation targets.
 - There were no changes in the operational arrangements for the running of the NMS.
 - The table at paragraph 1.2.3 of the report set out the capital building programme.
 - The position regarding reserves and provisions was set out in paragraph 1.3 of the report.

8.4 The Joint Committee resolved:

- 1. To note the latest monitoring position of the revenue budget, capital programme, reserves and provisions and forecast out-turn for 2022/23.**
- 2. To note the proposed budget savings and changes for 2023/24 that were set out in the report.**

9 Norfolk Museums Service - Risk Management Report

- 9.1** The annexed report (9) by the Director of Culture & Heritage was received.
- 9.2** The Joint Committee received a report that provided Members with the latest Norfolk

Museums Service Risk Register. The Norfolk Museums Service risk register was last reported to the Joint Museums Committee in February 2023.

9.3 The Committee's attention was drawn to the following issues:

- To change the title of risk RM14364 to Failure to deliver Arts Council England business plan 2023-26. This follows the completion of the 2018-22 business plan cycle, and our movement to now delivering against the new business plan for 2023-26 from April 2023.
- To amend the target date of risk RM14364 Failure to deliver Arts Council England business plan 2023-26, to the end of 2023/24, to cover the first year of the business plan. This will be further reviewed closer to the end of 2023/24 to cover the next financial year of the business plan delivery.
- To change the title of risk RM14162 to Failure to generate additional income streams for 2023/24 in accordance with service plan. This follows the movement into the new financial year.
- To amend the target date of risk of risk RM14162 - Failure to generate additional income streams for 2023/24, to the end of the financial year 2023/24. Again, this follows the movement into the new financial year.
- To close risk RM14499 - Future Arts Council England Funding now that the funding has been granted for the next three years. Closer to the point of the next business plan cycle, this risk can be re-opened to help to focus the mitigating actions required to minimise the risk of not achieving future ACE funding from 2026/27 – 2028/29.

9.4 In reply to questions, Dr Robin Hanley explained how NMS benefited from the support provided by a dedicated museums facilitator manager from NORSE TFM. The facilitator had close links with inhouse site based operational managers who were able to jointly respond to issues about the fabric of museum buildings. Dr Robin Hanley was the NMS lead officer for the NORSE TFM contract group (managed and monitored by the County Council through the work of the Norfolk Property Team) and held regular meetings about the maintenance of museum buildings with all interested parties.

9.5 The Joint Committee raised issues of security in the vicinity of the Norwich Castle lift in the Castle Gardens and asked for this matter to be taken up with the City Council and other partners with a view to a report on the situation being brought back to the next meeting.

9.6 The evidence presented to the Joint Committee showed that all risks were being managed to an appropriate level with appropriate mitigation tasks being undertaken.

9.7 **The Joint Committee resolved to agree:**

- 1. The active and dormant risks as per appendices A and B of the report.**
- 2. The key changes to the risks as set out in paragraph 2 of the report:**

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 report noted the Service's award-winning learning programmes and the Service's

work with key identified groups including the Service's award-winning learning programmes and the Service's work with key identified groups including Looked After Children, carers and foster families, and vulnerable older residents across the County. The report also provided an update on all major projects, including the *Norwich Castle: Gateway to Medieval England* project and the National Lottery Heritage Fund supported youth development programme, *Kick the Dust Norfolk*.

10.3 The following points were discussed and noted:

- Overall visitor numbers for the first eleven months of the financial year were above target. School visits to museum sites had encouragingly increased significantly and were back to pre-Covid levels.
- The Joint Committee praised the excellent work that continued to be done to develop a strong social media presence, particularly with Instagram, Twitter and Facebook accounts being actively used and maintained by staff.
- Members were encouraged to explore the links in the periodic performance report to museum blogs and museum activities that were designed to be of interest to a wide range of NMS audiences.
- It was pointed out that the extensive exhibition programme at Norwich Castle currently included *The Last Voyage of the Gloucester: Norfolk's Royal Shipwreck, 1682; Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery, 25 February – 10 September 2023*, a major exhibition that included for the first time some of the fascinating objects recovered from the wreck site.
- The Joint Committee received an update from Dr Robin Hanley on recent headlines regarding the Kick the Dust project which remained the subject of regular update reports to the Area Committees. It was pointed out that young people continued to be heavily involved in shaping the future direction of this important quality project as it underwent organisational change and started on a new delivery phase.
- The Director of Culture & Heritage explained other strategic developments in the Service which were fully set out in the report. These included work on key Arts Council England and National Lottery Heritage Fund programmes and the Service's planning relating to its Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation funding for 2023-26. The Committee were informed that they would be seeing a regular monitoring report on the NPO programme. In addition, there was also a grant application by the Ancient House Museum for the new Duleep Singh interpretation and joint partnership working with District Councils on development programmes linked to Market Towns and a digital learning programme around Robert Kett.

10.4 The Joint Committee resolved to note:

- 1. An update on the 2022/23 Service position to date.**
- 2. Progress regarding development of the Norwich Castle: Gateway to Medieval England project.**
- 3. The grant application by the Ancient House Museum for the new Duleep Singh interpretation, and to recommend that the Executive take the project forward.**
- 4. Progress in terms of our key Arts Council England and National Lottery**

Heritage Fund programmes for 2022/23 and the Service's planning relating to its Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation funding for 2023-26.

11 Museum Development Report

- 11.1** The annexed report (11) by the Director of Culture and Heritage was received.
- 11.2** The Joint Committee received a report that provided an update on Arts Council England's (ACE) plans for Museum Development in 2024-26, and NMS proposals to address those plans.
- 11.3** The Joint Committee was informed that ACE was inviting interested parties to apply for Museum Development funding for 2024-26. The existing South East Museum Development programme (SEMD) was delivered by Brighton and Hove Museums (BHM) in partnership with other regional providers and NMS was developing a joint application with SEMD (managed by Brighton & Hove Museums) for ACE Museum Development funding in 2024-26 once details and requirements had been released by ACE. This new approach mirrored Arts Council England's regional structure and national approach to museum development at a strategic level.
- 11.4** The Joint Committee was fully supportive of the action that was being taken.
- 11.5** **That the Joint Committee note the update on the proposal by NMS to form a partnership with Brighton & Hove Museums to apply for Museum Development funding for 2024-26.**

12 Norwich Castle Royal Palace Reborn—Project Update

- 12.1** The Chair introduced Hannah Jackson, Project Manager, and Dr Tim Pestell, Senior Curator of Archaeology, who gave the Committee a detailed presentation with photographs on the Norwich Castle Royal Palace Reborn. The update advised the Committee of decisions made by the Project Board regarding activity tours, the construction works and interpretation elements of the project which would enable the Keep reopening to visitors around Easter 2024.
- 12.2** Working with the British Museum, the NMS was creating a fascinating new gallery of the Medieval period. This would feature almost 1,000 objects from NMS collections, from the British Museum and from other key lenders including the V&A to help explore this period of history. This work was being done in a way that ensured the Castle Keep, and the museum as a whole, was accessible and welcoming for all visitors through physical changes and careful interpretation decisions.
- 12.3 The Joint Committee resolved:**
- 1. To thank Hannah Jackson, Project Manager, and Dr Tim Pestell, Senior Curator of Archaeology, for providing Members with an interesting presentation.**
 - 2. Look forward to receiving further update reports about the Norwich Castle Royal Palace Reborn Project at future meetings.**

Chair

The meeting concluded at 4.00 pm.

If you need these minutes in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact Customer Services on 0344 800 8020 or Text Relay on 18001 0344 800 8020 (textphone) and we will do our best to help.