

NORFOLK JOINT MUSEUMS & ARCHAEOLOGY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting Held on 27 April 2012

Present:

Norfolk County Council

Mr G Jones
Mrs J Leggett (Substitute for Mr M R H Carttiss)
Mr J Rogers
Mr B Stone
Mrs H Thompson
Miss J Toms
Mr J Ward (Chairman)
Mr M Wilby
Mr A J Wright

Breckland District Council

Mr P Duigan

Co-Opted Members

Museum Friends

Mr J Knight

Broadland District Council

Mr J Bracey

Norwich City Council

Mr D Bradford

North Norfolk District Council

Mrs L Brettle

South Norfolk Council

Dr C Kemp

1 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Mr M R H Carttiss, Mr B Coleman, Mr G Gee and Ms V Thomas.

2 Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 13 January 2012 were confirmed by the Joint Committee and signed by the Chairman.

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4 Matters of Urgent Business

There were no matters of urgent business.

5 Public Question Time

There were no public questions.

6 To Receive Reports of Area Museums Committees/Forum/Scrutiny Committee

(a) Breckland

The annexed report of the Breckland Area Museums Committee meeting held on 10 February 2012 was received and noted. In introducing the report, Mr Duigan referred to the success of the Skills for the Future project at Gressenhall where further trainees were being recruited to address a regional shortage of work based training opportunities in traditional skills such as Heritage Gardening and Heritage Landscape Management.

It was noted that the Friends of Gressenhall had produced a mobile “pop up” display kit to promote the museum at off site events which it was hoped could be used throughout the county.

(b) Great Yarmouth

The annexed report by the Eastern Area Manager about the activities at the Great Yarmouth museums was received and noted.

It was pointed out that the total visitor figure at Time and Tide Museum for 2011/12 had exceeded the visitor target for the year by 12%. Great Yarmouth museums staff continued to increase the awareness of Time and Tide amongst local people and tourists in order to sustain and grow visitor numbers and effectively market the museum as a leading visitor centre.

(c) King's Lynn

The annexed report of the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Area Museums Committee meeting held on 19 March 2012 was received and noted.

In introducing the report, Mrs E Nockolds referred to a varied programme of learning and outreach events for local schools and the development programme at the Lynn Museum to provide staff with improved skills in planning and delivering informal learning events. She also referred to how the King's Lynn museums continued to lead on the Greater Fens Museum Partnership and had been successful in obtaining an award from the Heritage Lottery Fund of £358,000 over the next three years for the next Fenland Partnership project entitled “Fenland Lives and Land”. Match funding for this project of £20,000 had also been obtained from the externally funded Renaissance in the Regions programme.

(d) North Norfolk

The annexed report of the North Norfolk Area Museums Forum meeting held on 28 March 2012 was received and noted. In introducing the report, Mrs L Brettle referred to a suggestion that had been raised at the Forum of

developing a centralised leaflet swap shop between the museums that could be referred to by the Tourist Information Centres when they were seeking information to pass on to visitors.

(e) Norwich

The annexed report of the Norwich Area Museums Committee meeting held on 19 March 2012 was received and noted. In introducing the report, Mr D Bradford referred to the Royal Norfolk Regimental Museum displays that had been reinterpreted and relocated to exhibition cases on Norwich Castle's rotunda balcony where they were central to the visitor experience for the museum.

Members referred to how Norfolk had united in a show of strength of support for its Armed Forces personnel and their families by entering into an Armed Forces Community Covenant, pledging practical help for the county's military community. It was suggested that the NMAS should be involved in some way in ensuring that the needs of the Armed Forces were appropriately recognised through the Honour the Covenant campaign which would include a number of covenant projects being supported by the County Council and the District Councils. It was also suggested that material from the Royal Air Force and the Royal Navy could be represented in some way alongside material from the Royal Norfolk Regimental Museum collections.

(NB NMAS will be providing free entry for armed services personnel and their families to all its museums as part of the County Council's response to the Armed Forces Community Covenant.)

7 To Receive the Report of the Meeting of the Norfolk Archaeological Services Advisory Committee held on 9 March 2012

The annexed report of the meeting of the Norfolk Archaeological Services Advisory Committee held on 9 March 2012 was introduced by its Chairman, Mr P Duigan.

Mr P Duigan, Chairman of the Advisory Committee and Mr D Gurney, Historic Environment Manager at Norfolk County Council, spoke about how the Historic Environment Service would continue to support the District Councils and other stakeholders in archaeology should the Joint Committee agree to the recommendation contained in the report, to suspend the activities of the Norfolk Archaeological Services Advisory Committee following the transfer of the Historic Environment Service to the Department of Environment, Transport and Development.

Resolved –

That meetings of the Norfolk Archaeological Services Advisory Committee be suspended pending changes to reporting arrangements to be agreed between the County and District Councils in a revised agreement for the provision of a Joint Museums and Archaeology Service and that, in the meantime, liaison and joint working be continued by means of alternate six month reports being presented directly to the Joint Museums and Archaeology Committee by the Historic Environment Manager (Mr D Gurney) and the Chief Curator of the NMAS (Dr John

Davies) in his role as Keeper of Norwich Castle Archaeology Department.

8 Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service – Integrated Performance and Finance Monitoring Report

The annexed report by the Head of Museums and Archaeology was received.

Members received a report that outlined the latest service performance, together with projected outturn for the 2011/12 revenue budget, the 2011/12 capital programme and forecasts of provisions and reserves at 29 February 2011.

The Joint Committee noted that the NMAS was on target to achieve a break even position at year end, the capital programme was continuing with some delays to programmes caused by planning permission and that performance indicators indicated that the service had slightly reduced audience participation compared with exceptional performance last year.

The Joint Committee noted that the NMAS Risk Register had been reviewed and updated and was included within the main body of the report. Mr Peter Woodward of Norfolk Audit Services agreed to distribute to Members of the Joint Committee the notes of a presentation from a conference about anti-fraud and corruption that had recently taken place at County Hall and to report back to the Joint Committee on any implications for Members of the Joint Committee that might arise from the introduction of the Localism Act.

It was pointed out that the Leader of Norfolk County Council had set up a Working Group of County Councillors under the Chairmanship of Mr George Nobbs to examine the challenges facing the future operation of the NMAS and the Working group was expected to come up with a report by the end of October 2012. The Working Group had recently held its first meeting and the proposed terms of reference for the Group were being presented by the Chairman of the Group to the Leader for approval.

The Head of Museums said that the review of security at the Castle Museum was being undertaken by the National Security Adviser for the Arts Council. The recommendations of the security review and the resulting action plan would be shared with Members of the Joint Museums and Archaeology Committee at its meeting in June 2012.

Resolved –

To adopt the anti-fraud strategy as attached within the main body of the report.

To note:

- Progress with performance and 2011/12 service plans
- Progress with the revenue budget, capital programme and reserves provisions outturn positions for 2011/12
- Progress with the NMAS risk register (with a note on any implications that might arise from the introduction of the Localism Act being presented to a future meeting of the Joint Committee).

9 Major Partner Museums Funding for the Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service

The annexed report by the Head of Museums and Archaeology was received.

The Joint Committee received a detailed presentation from Mr Bill Seaman, Assistant Head of Museums and Archaeology, who explained the successful outcome of the bid by the NMAS to the Arts Council, England for the Service to become one of the country's Major Partner Museums.

The following main points arose from the presentation:

- The Major Partner Award for NMAS was:
 - 2012/13 Year 1 - £1,330,000
 - 2013/14 Year 2 - £1,282,500
 - 2014/15 Year 3 - £1,282,500
- The Major Partner Museum Activity Plan was attached as Appendix 1 to the report and Appendix 2 contained the key performance indicators which supported the funding agreement with Arts Council England.
- All planned programmes were fully costed and funding secured.

It was noted that the Activity Plan for 2012/15 included:

- The re-hanging of the Norwich School paintings.
- The exhibition Queen Elizabeth II by Cecil Beaton: A Diamond Jubilee celebration.
- Improved facilities at Norwich Castle Study Centre.
- Digital developments.
- The refurbishment and re-opening of the Bridewell.
- The refurbishment of the Courtroom in the Shirehall as a public space funded by NCC's building maintenance fund.
- NMAS plans to establish itself as a teaching museum in the east of England.
- Youth engagement.
- Adult learning.
- Services for older people.
- Services for schools.
- An international exhibition proposal Tea East and West: Its Magic and Meaning.

Members drew attention to the proposed international touring exhibition on the history of tea and tea-ware that would be based around the Tea-Ware Collections of Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery and those of the Capital Museum, Beijing. Fund partners and sponsorship were being sought. Members suggested that the exhibition could be used to promote the consumption of “Fair Trade” tea in Norwich, and make use of promotional films that had been produced in the past to increase the sale of tea.

Resolved –

That the Joint Committee ratify the Activity Plan and key performance indicators forming the funding agreement between Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service and Arts Council England.

10 Development Strategy for Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service

The annexed report by the Head of Museums and Archaeology was received.

The Joint Committee received a presentation from Mr Bill Seaman, Assistant Head of Museums and Archaeology, who provided the Committee with an update on completed and current projects for the development of NMAS museums and outlined future aspirations for the service and answered Members detailed questions as to what was included in the development plans.

Mr Bill Seaman explained how current developments included:

- Supporting audience and commercial development through site investment at Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse.
- Skills for the Future project at Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse.
- Display developments at Time and Tide, Great Yarmouth.
- Bridewell: A Museum for Norwich.
- Norwich School Cotman and Colman Art Galleries.
- Royal Norfolk Regimental Museum: Increasing Public Profile.
- Delivering Norwich Museums reserve and study collections and study services on one site.
- Norwich Castle Keep: Gateway to Medieval England.
- Phase I: New Prison displays – completed.
- Phase II: Developing a vision for Norwich Castle Keep – 2010/11.

Future projects included:

- Greater Fens Museum Partnership.

- Courtroom, Norwich Castle Study Centre.

The Joint Committee gave its full support to the development plans.

Resolved –

That officers of the NMAS should seek to implement the proposed development strategy for the NMAS.

11 NMAS Service Plan 2012-15

The annexed report by the Head of Museums and Archaeology was received.

The Joint Committee received a report that set out the key activities that were planned for the coming three years and underpinned the more detailed development programme which had been considered as the previous agenda item. The NMAS service plan was a working plan of the NMAS and fed into the annual Norfolk County Council plan.

Resolved –

That the Joint Committee approve the service plan for use with future grant and accreditation applications.

12 NMAS Collections Rationalisation

The annexed report by the Head of Museums and Archaeology 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.

It was noted that Annex 2 of the report 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 collection.

Resolved –

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

The meeting concluded at 4.15pm.

Chairman



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