

## **NORFOLK JOINT MUSEUMS & ARCHAEOLOGY COMMITTEE**

### **Minutes of the Meeting Held on 26 April 2013**

#### **Present:**

##### **Norfolk County Council**

Mrs H Cox  
Mr J Rogers  
Mr B Stone  
Mr J Ward (Chairman)  
Mr A J Wright

##### **Broadland District Council**

Mr J Bracey

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

Mrs L Brettle

##### **Norwich City Council**

Mr D Bradford

##### **Breckland District Council**

Mr P J Duigan

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

Mrs K S Robinson-Payne

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

Dr C Kemp

#### **Co-Opted Member (Non-Voting)**

##### **Museum Friends**

Mr J Knight

The Joint Committee welcomed Dr Robin Hanley to his first meeting since his appointment as Acting Head of Museums.

#### **1 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Mr M Carttiss, Mr G Gee, Mr J Joyce, Ms H Lake, Mrs E Nockolds, Ms S Potts, Mr M Stonard, Ms J Toms and Mr M Wilby.

#### **2 Minutes**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 15 February 2013 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 Cabinet Report on the Member Review of the NMAS**

The annexed report by the Director of Community Services and the Cabinet Member for Cultural Services, Customer Services and Communications was received.

The Joint Committee noted the Cabinet's responses to the recommendations of the Museums Working Group, so that discussions about the renewal of the Joint Museums Agreement could commence. Comments on the report had been sought from the District, Borough and City Councils which were all partners to the Joint Museums Agreement. The response from Norwich City Council that was not included in the report was tabled during the meeting. It was noted that a separate response had also been received from Great Yarmouth Borough Council, after being considered by Borough Council Members.

Members stressed the importance of discussions about the future of the Service being held with all Norfolk's Councils and other stakeholders as part of the development of the new Joint Museums Agreement, irrespective of whether there were NMAS museums in the area.

## **7 Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service Integrated Performance, Finance and Risk Monitoring Report for 2013/14**

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

The Joint Committee received a report that outlined the latest service performance, together with NMAS revenue budget, reserves and provisions and capital programme as at 28 February 2013.

The following key points were noted:

- The NMAS was expected to achieve a break-even revenue budget outturn.
- The capital programme continued to be monitored over the life of the schemes rather than a single year. This reflected the life of the projects and the associated funding.
- Taking into account an improvement in visitor numbers over the winter there was a small reduction in admissions income of £0.005M. This had been covered by small increases in income from catering and sales.
- Significant progress had been made with NMAS service plans and with the management of risk within the NMAS.

## **8 NMAS Service Plan 2013/16**

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

The Joint Committee received a report from the Acting Head of Museums and Archaeology that included the NMAS Service Plan of the key activities that the Service had planned for the coming three years.

The Acting Head of Museums and Archaeology said that the Service Plan was fully funded with the largest source of funding being the award of Arts Council England (ACE) Major Partner Museum funding of £3,895M.

Members asked for a breakdown of how the funding from ACE would be spent during the period 2012/15, to enable the Service to become one of the country's major partner museums, and for this to be provided for the next meeting of the Joint Committee.

In the course of discussion, Members welcomed the support which the NMAS gave to independent museums to deliver effective tourism, leisure and learning services, particularly in North Norfolk.

In reply to questions, the Acting Head of Museums and Archaeology said that the NMAS had close links with Norfolk's schools. This meant that the Service was well placed to respond to teacher feedback and new and evolving education policies and best practise so as to deliver the kind of museum services that schools wanted.

The Joint Committee approved the Service Plan for the NMAS for the coming three years which underpinned the detailed development plan for the NMAS and fed into the annual Norfolk County Council Plan. The Service Plan would be used to support grant and Accreditation applications.

## **9 Major Partner Museum Funding from Arts Council England for Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service**

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

The Joint Committee received a report from the Acting Head of Museums and Archaeology which explained how the NMAS had successfully bid to Arts Council England (ACE) to become one of the country's major partner museums.

The Acting Head of Museums and Archaeology explained how ACE funding was partly being used to support the temporary exhibition programme and to enable improvements to the permanent galleries in all NMAS museums. The Norwich Museums Manager added that the refurbishment of the historic courtroom at the Shirehall should be largely completed by mid June 2013. The NMAS Learning Team was developing material for delivering tours for visitors to the courtroom on a similar basis as for the tours of the Dungeons and Battlements at the Castle Museum.

In reply to questions, the Acting Head of Museums and Archaeology said that the NMAS was developing new programmes of training for volunteers. The NMAS was seeking to diversify its volunteer profile, to include more young people and vulnerable adults. A key strand of the ACE activity plan for 2012/15 was to pilot a working model for the NMAS to establish itself as a "teaching museum", following in the footsteps of teaching hospitals and teaching schools.

In reply to further questions, the Acting Head of Museums and Archaeology said that it was the intention of the NMAS to increase online access to collections and engage with its audiences through the effective use of social media. This would be used to support another key strand of the ACE activity plan, to expand commercial activities through image reproduction and on-line sales. Jordan Bacon (a trainee within the Service and in attendance for this item) was undertaking an audit of existing digital activities, and helping to develop a social media strategy, which included the NMAS having an active social media group, and staff spending time on "face book" and

“twitter” answering questions from the public.

The Joint Committee noted the report.

## **10 Development Strategy for Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service**

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

The Joint Committee received an update report on the completed and current projects for the development of NMAS museums and the future aspirations of the Service. The Acting Head of Museums and Archaeology explained our current developments included:

- Skills for the Future Project at Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse
- Display development at Time and Tide, Great Yarmouth
- Royal Norfolk Regimental Museum: Increasing Public Profile
- Norwich Castle Keep: Gateway to Medieval England
- Courtroom, Norwich Castle Study Centre

The Acting Head of Museums and Archaeology also explained how future projects included:

- Re-interpretation of the Gressenhall Workhouse.

The Joint Committee gave its full support to the development plans and approved the submission of funding bids relating to the proposed project at Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse, including a Round 1 Heritage Grant application to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

## **11 NMAS Social History Review and Rationalisation Strategy**

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

The Joint Committee noted that the Social History Review and Rationalisation Strategy aimed to achieve the following outcomes:

- Improved storage conditions for the social history collections, through upgraded storage materials and the reduced volumes of collections.
- Improved documentation of the collections.
- Improve public awareness of the collections and better access to them for researches and the public.

The Joint Committee noted that the standard NMAS rationalisation process would apply whereby Curators would propose objects for rationalisation, which would be scrutinised by an internal Rationalisation Committee comprising of Curators, Conservators and those with collection management responsibility.

## **12 Overview of Commercial Opportunities**

Mark Clancy, Commercial Manager, NMAS, gave the Joint Committee an outline

presentation of the elements which would form the basis for the NMAS Commercial Strategy for the 2013/14 financial year.

Mark Clancy, who had joined the Service in December 2012, said his remit was to boost investment in the museum cafes, shops and spaces for commercial hire in order to maximise earned income. He said that he was also exploring the potential for new income streams such as licensing, online sales and weddings.

Mark Clancy added that as well as developing a county wide commercial business strategy he was developing a tailored package of commercial sales activities for each museum site. The ideas that were being explored included:

- Making use of facebook and twitter and other social media
- Developing apps for use with smart phone technology
- Encouraging philanthropic activities by, for example, making the catering facilities, particularly at the Castle Museum, more suited to the needs of local businesses. Members considered it important, however, to retain the best of the current catering offer available.
- Joint activities with the Friends of Museums
- Learning from the commercial activities of football clubs

The Joint Committee noted the presentation and asked to be kept informed of developments.

### **13 Chairman's Concluding Remarks**

The Chairman placed on record thanks to those Members of the Joint Committee who might not be Members of the Joint Committee after the County Council election on 2 May 2013.

The meeting concluded at 3.20pm.

Chairman