

Norfolk Records Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on 24 June 2011

Present:

Norfolk County Council

Mr D Murphy (Chairman)
Mr R Rockcliffe
Dr F Williamson

Breckland District Council

Mr P Duigan

Broadland District Council

Mr J Bracey

North Norfolk District Council

Mrs A Claussen-Reynolds

Norwich City Council

Ms D Carlo
Ms V Thomas

South Norfolk District Council

Dr C J Kemp

Non-Voting Members

Co-Opted Member

Mr M Begley
Prof C Rawcliffe
Prof R Wilson

Representative of the Norfolk Record Society

Dr G A Metters

Observer

Dr V Morgan

1. Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Mrs M Coleman, Mrs E Nockolds, Mr M Sands, Mr R Jewson, and Revd C Read.

2. Election of Chairman

- 2.1 Mr Murphy was elected Chairman of the Norfolk Records Committee for the ensuing year.

3. Election of Vice-Chairman

- 3.1 Mr Duigan was elected Vice-Chairman of the Norfolk Records Committee for the ensuing year.

4. Minutes

- 4.1 The minutes of the previous meeting held on 14 January 2011 were confirmed by the Committee and signed by the Chairman.

5. Matters of Urgent Business

- 5.1 There were no items of urgent business.

6. Declarations of Interest

- 6.1 There were no declarations of interest.

7. Appointment of Co-opted Members and Observer

- 7.1 The annexed report (7) asked Members to appoint (or re-appoint) three Co-opted Members and one Observer for the ensuing year.

RESOLVED

- 7.2 That Mr Begley, Prof Rawcliffe, and Prof Wilson be re-appointed as Co-opted Members for the ensuing year.
- 7.3 That Dr Morgan be re-appointed as Observer for the ensuing year.

8. Accounts Approval and Urgent Business Sub-Committee

- 8.1 The annexed report (8) detailed the changes to the sub-committee and asked for Members to appoint representatives to the sub-committee.

RESOLVED

- 8.2 That Mr Murphy, Mr Rockcliffe, Mr Duigan, and Dr Kemp were appointed to serve on the sub-committee.
- 8.3 That the sub-committee exercise all the powers of the main Committee in dealing with matters which are urgent (having been agreed as such by the Head of Democratic Services and the Chief Officer(s) concerned) and which fall, partly or wholly, within the Terms of Reference of the Committee.
- 8.4 That the sub-committee be renamed to the Norfolk Records Urgent Business Sub-Committee to reflect the change in regulations.

9. Norfolk Records Committee Annual Accounting Statements 2010/11

- 9.1 The annexed report (9) introduced the Annual Return required by the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011.

RESOLVED

- 9.2 That the Committee approve the accounting statement at Section 1 of the Annual Return as set out in Appendix A of the report and that the Chairman sign the return.
- 9.3 That the Committee approve the Annual Governance Statement at Section 2 of the Annual Return as set out in Appendix A of the report, and that the Chairman and the County Archivist sign the return.
- 9.4 To note the Annual Internal Audit Report at Section 4 of the Annual Return as set out in Appendix A of the report, together with the note set out at Appendix C.
- 9.5 To receive a detailed Annual Governance Statement and a detailed Annual Internal Audit Report as set out in Appendices D and E.

10. Norfolk Record Office – Performance and Budget Report, April-March 2010/11

- 10.1 The annexed report (10) provided information on performance against service plans and budget out-turn information for 2010/11 for the Norfolk Record Office (NRO).
- 10.2 The Chairman thanked the Record Office staff for their exemplary efforts in extremely difficult financial times.

RESOLVED

- 10.3 To note the outturn performance against 2010/11 service plans.
- 10.4 To note the outturn revenue budget and reserves and provisions for 2010/11.

11. Annual Review of Charges for Services

- 11.1 The annexed report (11) dealt with the annual review of Record Office charges and recommended certain changes. Members were asked to note the new charges as shown in the appendices of the report.
- 11.2 During the discussion the following points were noted:
- Members questioned whether some of the charges which were made fully covered the costs of those services, including staffing costs and equipment. The County Archivist confirmed that the costs were covered by the charges. He also noted that charges could be raised, but he felt it was important to keep pace with the charges of other record offices.
 - Members highlighted the charge of £65 per month for a photography permit and suggested that this type of charge was not always useful. It was suggested that perhaps a charge could be made instead for a number of visits over a three-month period rather than unlimited visits within one month and that this type of charge may be more attractive for some users. The County Archivist replied that a similar monthly charge, synchronised with that of the Record Office, had only recently been brought in by the Library Service, but that this was an area which could be reviewed at a future date.
 - Members noted that some of the photography permit charges may be prohibitive for students and the question was asked about whether a student discount was available. The County Archivist replied that the take-up rate for photography permits had gone up. He felt that this service was cheaper and more convenient than the copying service and there were additional benefits, such as savings in travel costs. In relation to the student discount query, the County Archivist stated that there were no explicit discounts, but it had been noted in the report that, at his discretion, he may be able to vary or waive charges if this were requested from individuals. However, it was important to keep adequate funding levels to ensure the viability of the service.

RESOLVED

- 11.3 To note the charges as outlined in the appendices.

12. Risk Register

- 12.1 The annexed report (12) asked the Committee to note the latest version of the Norfolk Record Office's Risk Register and invited Member comments.
- 12.2 During the discussion, Members considered the use of the term 'partnership' and whether it was appropriate to use this term within the Risk Register, as there was no legal contract which governed these arrangements. The County Archivist stated that there were different degrees of partnership working, with some arrangements working within a contract and others operating more informally. It was suggested that the term 'working arrangement' be used instead when there was not a legal contract to govern the relationship with other bodies.

RESOLVED

- 12.3 To note the latest version of the NRO's Risk Register.

13. Norfolk Record Office Service Plan, 2011-14

- 13.1 The annexed report (13) outlined the service planning priorities for the Norfolk Record Office and its key service activities over the next three years. It highlighted the three strategic ambitions to which the work of the NRO contributed and also listed headline activities for the coming year.
- 13.2 During the discussion the following points were noted:
- In response to a question on how the budget pressures might limit the realisation of the strategic ambitions, the County Archivist said that he felt it was prudent err on the side of caution, as a number of external funding streams were either ceasing or ones which had been expected might not materialise, such as the funding which was thought to follow the Government's Command Paper *Archives for the 21st Century*. He noted that The Record Office would continue to rigorously pursue external funding, but he felt it was possible that budget pressures could have an impact on how the Record Office supported the strategic ambitions.
 - It was asked whether the Norfolk Record Office were able to get a share of the Community Infrastructure Levy through Regulation 123. The County Archivist replied that, in practical terms, it had been shown across the country that archives had actually received very little of this funding, as they were competing with much larger and higher-profile services.
 - It was noted that the Community Infrastructure Levy funding was controlled by the local District Councils and that the charging schedules were set out in September. Members hoped that their District Council colleagues would support the Norfolk Record Office through this funding stream. The Chairman noted that the Community Infrastructure Levy would be discussed at the next Public Sector Leaders' Board.

RESOLVED

- 13.3 To note the Service Plan and approve its use with future grant applications.
- 14. The Medieval Records of the Great Hospital, Norwich: Inscription in UNESCO's UK Memory of the World Register**

- 14.1 The annexed report (14) informed Members about the recent inscription of the medieval records of the Great Hospital, Norwich in UNESCO's UK Memory of the World Register and gave information about the records themselves. Members were asked to note the report.
- 14.2 The Chairman thanked Prof Rawcliffe for her instrumental role in supporting this successful application. Prof Rawcliffe added that these records were highly important, as they were the only medieval hospital archives to receive UNESCO status.

RESOLVED

- 14.3 To note the report.

15. Periodic Report, 1 October 2010-31 March 2011

- 15.1 The annexed report (15) informed the Committee in detail about the activities of the Norfolk Record Office during the period, giving Performance Indicators and listing the accessions received during the period. Members were asked to note the report.
- 15.2 The County Archivist noted that the volume of accessions catalogued had dramatically increased as a direct result of a new approach being used which has been very effective. He noted that a record 53 square metres of documents had been catalogued.

RESOLVED

- 15.3 To note the report.

16. Annual Report, 2010-11

- 16.1 The annexed report (16) provided a selective summary of the activities of the Norfolk Record Office during the period, based on two detailed half-yearly reports to the Committee. Members were asked to note the report.

RESOLVED

- 16.2 To note the report.

17. Exclusion of the Public

- 17.1 The Committee was asked to consider excluding the public from the meeting under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 for consideration of the item below, on the grounds it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act, and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

- 17.2 The County Archivist presented the following conclusion of the public interest test:

The NRO bids at auctions and acquires by private treaty sales documents of relevance to Norfolk, which fit within its Collections Policy. The prices of

documents are increasing all the time, particularly because dealers' attitudes are "to charge what the market can stand". If prices paid by the NRO for documents were to become generally known publicly, this will have the effect of inflating the market. Since public funds are involved in its purchases, the NRO operates a strict value for money policy and strives to pay no more than is necessary, while, at the same time, trying to ensure that no important documents are lost to Norfolk. Releasing information about prices paid for documents would have a significant detrimental impact on NCC's commercial revenue and might put documents out of the NRO's financial reach, thereby losing part of the county's written heritage. It was therefore not in the public interest to release information about prices paid for document purchases.

RESOLVED

- 17.3 To exclude the public for the following item.

PUBLIC SUMMARY OF THE EXEMPT MINUTES

18. Periodic Report: Appendix: Manuscripts purchased, 1 October 2010-31 March 2011

- 18.1 The exempt report gave details of the documents purchased by the Norfolk Record Office during the period.

RESOLVED

- 18.2 To note the report.

19. Date and Time of Next Meeting and Future Meeting Dates

- 19.1 Members noted that the next meeting would take place at 10:30am on Friday 18 November 2011 in The Green Room, The Archive Centre. The following meeting dates and details for 2012 were also noted:

Date	Time	Venue
Friday 13 January	10:30am	The Green Room, Archive Centre
Friday 27 April	10:30am	The Green Room, Archive Centre
Friday 22 June	10:30am	The Green Room, Archive Centre
Friday 23 November	10:30am	The Green Room, Archive Centre

Mr D Murphy, Chairman



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