

Norfolk Records Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on 23 April 2010

Present:

Norfolk County Council

Mr D Murphy (Chairman)
Mr R Rockcliffe

Breckland District Council

Mr P Duigan

Great Yarmouth Borough Council

Mrs M Coleman

King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council

Mrs E Nockolds

North Norfolk District Council

Mrs V Gay

Norwich City Council

Ms J Divers
Mr S Jeraj
Ms R Makoff

South Norfolk District Council

Dr C J Kemp

Non-Voting Members

Co-Opted Member

Mr M Begley

Representative of the Bishop of Norwich

Revd C Read

Observer

Dr V Morgan

Representative of the Norfolk Record Society

Dr G A Metters

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Bracey, Mr Jewson, Prof. Rawcliffe, Dr Williamson, and Prof. Wilson.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 15 January 2010 were confirmed by the Committee and signed by the Chairman.

3. Matters of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

4. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5. Norfolk Record Office (NRO) – Performance and Budget Monitoring Report

- 5.1 The annexed report (5) by the County Archivist was received. The report provided Members with an update of performance, together with a budget update for the period up to 28 February 2010. Members were asked to consider and comment on the progress with performance and 2009/10 service plans and progress with the

revenue budget and reserves and provisions monitoring position for 2009/10.

5.2 During the discussion the following points were made:

- The Finance and Business Support Manager stated that, as at the end of February 2010, the forecast revenue out-turn for the NRO was for a balanced budget.
- NRO reserves and provisions have been reduced to make provision within the revenue budget for the purchase of manuscripts.
- Performance indicators for the NRO indicated that The Archive Centre had significantly increased audience participation compared to the previous year.

5.3 **Resolved**

- To note the progress with performance and 2009/10 service plans and progress with the revenue budget and reserves and provisions monitoring position for 2009/10.

6. Annual Review of Charges for Services

6.1 The annexed report (6) by the County Archivist was received. The report dealt with the annual review of Record Office charges and recommended certain changes. Members were asked to note the new changes, as shown in the appendices of the report.

6.2 During the discussion the following points were made:

- The County Archivist made a correction at point 2 of the report, changing '2009-10' to '2010-11'.
- It was possible to pay charges by credit card where an invoice was raised; however this was not possible with over-the-counter payments.
- Members asked whether it were possible for the Records Office to use customers' hardware to download digital copies of archives, such as using their own USB flash drives or e-mailing the files. This would save costs of providing CD-ROM disks or other media. The Principal Archivist replied that the NRO was looking into the possibility of e-mailing digital media, although file size might be an issue, especially for customers who did not have broadband. Using outside memory sticks would expose NRO personal computers to the risk of viruses and be contrary to Norfolk County Council's security policy, so would not be possible.
- The County Archivist confirmed that annual charges rose by 2%. However if the cost of materials rose significantly more than this, charges may reflect this.

6.3 **Resolved**

- To note the report and the amended charges for services.

7. Risk Register

7.1 The annexed report (7) by the County Archivist was received. This report asked the Norfolk Records Committee to note the latest version of the Norfolk Record Office's risk register, as revised on 8 April 2010, and invited any Member comments.

7.2 During the discussion the following points were made:

- It was noted that the issue raised at the previous meeting regarding the risks associated with climate change had since been added to the risk register.
- Members strongly voiced their opinion on their preferred framework within which the Norfolk Record Office would operate, following the result of the Local Government Review in Norfolk. The Committee wished for the current framework to be maintained, as it was a system that worked well and delivered the critical mass which had resulted in the Norfolk Record Office's being one of the highest performing archive services in the country.

7.3 Resolved

- The Committee resolved to note the latest version of the Norfolk Record Office's risk register
- To pass on the Committee's comments to Norfolk County Council and the Norwich Implementation Executive Committee regarding the future of the Norfolk Record Office, in the wake of the Local Government Review.
- To receive an indication in future risk register reports which shows the ongoing process to reduce risks.
- To use shading and patterns to distinguish between categories of risks on the risk matrix instead of colour for future reports.
- To arrange risk training for Members of the Committee before the next meeting in July.

8. Norfolk Record Office Service Plan, 2010-13

8.1 The annexed report (8) by the County Archivist was received. This report outlined the service planning priorities for the Norfolk Record Office (NRO) and its key service activities over the next three years. Members were recommended to note the proposed Service Plan, commenting on it and considering whether there were any areas for further consideration.

8.2 During the discussion the following points were made:

- It was highlighted that the NRO had a 98% approval rating from its users with 67% of users saying their experience was 'very good' and 31% saying it was 'good'.

- The County Archivist confirmed that the NRO worked with schools from all areas of Norfolk, including schools in lower income areas of Norfolk. The NRO also produced custom-made packs of information for schools based on their needs and interests and the age of the students.

8.3 **Resolved**

- To note the report and Service Plan.

9. **Archives for the 21st Century**

9.1 The annexed report (9) by the County Archivist was received. This report provided Members with an update on the national strategy for archives set out in a Command Paper recently issued by HM Government, and asked Members to note and comment on it.

9.2 Since the agenda and report were published, The National Archives (TNA) had published the document 'Archives for the 21st Century in Action'. The County Archivist distributed copies of the document to Members of the Committee and discussed the role of key players and the actions they could take to bring archive services into the 21st century.

9.3 During the discussion the following points were made:

- The Committee acknowledged that many of the actions outlined in the document by TNA were already taking place in Norfolk and that some digitization was already taking place.
- The County Archivist made Members aware of proposed funding from The National Archives, of which he had recently become aware, for a national digitization programme for school admission registers from 2870 to 1914. He had already indicated the NRO's keenness to be involved in the project and planned to send a list of such registers held by the NRO to the regional co-ordinator for the project in May.

9.4 **Resolved**

- To note the report and to receive an update at the next meeting in July 2010 and invite officers from The National Archives for this item.
- To agree that the County Archivist produce a bid for funding for the digitization of school registers.

10. **Periodic Report by County Archivist, 1 October 2009 – 31 March 2010**

10.1 The annexed report (10) by the County Archivist was received. This report informed the Committee in detail about the activities of the Norfolk Record Office during the period 1 October 2009 to 31 March 2010, giving Performance Indicators and listing the accessions received during the period. Members were asked to note the report.

10.2 Members wished to highlight the valuable and indispensable service provided by dedicated NRO volunteers. Their hard work helped to make the NRO one of the top archive services in the country and enhanced the resources available to the

people of Norfolk.

10.3 **Resolved**

- To note the report.
- That the Representative of the Norfolk Record Society would pass a list of additional publications to the Committee Officer, to be circulated with the minutes of the meeting.

11. **Annual Report 2009-10**

11.1 The annexed report (11) by the County Archivist was received. This report provided a selective summary of the activities of the Norfolk Record Office during 2009-10, based on two detailed half-yearly reports to the Committee. The Committee was asked to note the report.

11.2 During the discussion the following points were made:

- It was noted that 2009-10 was an unprecedented year for the number of users visiting the Norfolk Record Office and saw an increase to 54,413 from 29,245 in 2008-09. It was thought that this was largely due to the work carried out with the Parliamentary Archives and the interest in the Norfolk Record Office which this generated, both locally and nationally.
- It was noted that the NRO's work with the Parliamentary Archives received the 2012 Olympic Games' INSPIRE mark and that the NRO was one of the first services in Norfolk County Council to receive this status.
- The County Archivist reported that, unfortunately, the NRO had just been informally notified that it had been unsuccessful in its application for the inclusion of the Red Register of Lynn and the medieval archives of St Giles's Hospital, Norwich ('the Great Hospital') in the UNESCO Memory of the World Register for the UK, but that he had been encouraged to resubmit the bid later in 2010. He was also waiting for more detailed feedback on the bid and what could be improved for the next time.

11.3 **Resolved**

- To note the report.

12. **Exclusion of the Public**

12.1 The Committee noted the following reasoning for the exclusion of the public and the conclusion in respect 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. (Also, persons who might otherwise have donated or deposited documents might feel encouraged to charge for them). 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.

12.2 Resolved

- To exclude the public from the following item.

13. Periodic Report: Appendix: Manuscripts Purchases, 1 October 2009 – 31 March 2010

- 13.1 The report gave details of the documents purchased by the Norfolk Record Office during the period from 1 October 2009 to 31 March 2010. The Committee was asked to note the report.

13.2 Resolved

- To note the report.

14. Date and Time of Next Meeting

- 14.1 The next meeting of the Norfolk Records Committee was planned for 10:30am on Friday, 16 July 2010, in The Green Room, The Archive Centre.
- 14.2 It was noted that the meeting of the Norfolk Records Accounts Approval and Urgent Business Sub-committee was planned for 10:30am on Friday 25 June 2010 in the Colman Room, County Hall.

The meeting ended at 11:50 a.m.

Mr D Murphy, Chairman



If you need this document in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact the Customer Service Centre 0344 800 8020 or 0344 800 8011 (textphone) and we will do our best to help.