

Norfolk Records Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held at the Norfolk Records Office on 31 March 2017 at 10:30am

Present:

Norfolk County Council

Michael Chenery of Horsburgh

Norwich City Council

Mr D Bradford

Broadland District Council

Mr D Buck

South Norfolk District Council

Dr C J Kemp (Chairman)

Great Yarmouth Borough Council

Ms M Coleman

Breckland Council

Mr P Duigan

North Norfolk District Council

Cllr A Claussen-Reynolds

Non-Voting Members Present

Co-Opted Members

Mr M R Begley
Prof. C Rawcliffe
Prof. R Wilson

Representative of the Norwich Record Society

Dr G A Metters

Representative of the Bishop of Norwich

Revd C Read

Others Present

Mr G Tuson, the County Archivist

1. To receive apologies and details of any substitute members attending

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Mrs J Brociek-Coulton, Mr R Jewson, Dr V Morgan, Mrs E Nockolds Mr D Raby, Mr P Smyth and Ms V Thomas.
- 1.2 The Chairman welcomed new members to the Committee.

2. Minutes

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on the 13 January 2017 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.
- 2.2 Matters Arising from the Minutes:
A discussion was held over parking facilities for meetings and over the impact on visitors to the Record Office on parking at County Hall.

3. Items of Urgent Business

- 3.1 There were no items of urgent business.

4. Declarations of Interest

- 4.1 There were no declarations of interest.

5. Finance and Risk

- 5.1 The Committee received the report covering the forecast financial position and risk management for the Norfolk Records Committee in 2016/17 as at 28 February 2017, and providing an update on the service risk register.
- 5.2 The County Archivist gave background to the report:
- The financial forecast indicated a slight underspend overall;
 - The County Archivist had attended the launch of “Archives Unlocked”, the new national vision for archives, by the Minister of State for Digital and Culture;
 - Information would be brought to a future meeting of the Records Committee;
 - Information was circulated about Archives Unlocked; the policy included information about activities undertaken by the Norfolk Record Office;
 - Actions to manage risks identified in the risk register were shown in the Service Plan, at item 7 of the Agenda.
- 5.3.1 During discussion the following points were raised:
- 5.3.2 It was noted that development of fundraising including a patron scheme would be considered at by Norfolk Archives and Heritage Development Foundation (NORAH).
- 5.3.3 The underspend on staffing had impacted on conservation, Norfolk Heritage Centre outreach activities, and cataloguing.
- 5.4 The Committee **ENDORSED**:
- Performance with the revenue budget and reserves and provisions for 2016/17;
 - Management of risk for 2016/17.

6. Performance report 1 October 2016 – 28 February 2017

- 6.1 The Committee received the report providing information on the activities of the Norfolk Record Office (NRO) and performance against its service plan during the period between 1 October 2016 –28 February 2017, the Norfolk Records Office’s education and engagement work; public access; collection development and preservation activities and on specific projects.
- 6.2 The County Archivist introduced the report:
- 450 people had attended education events run by the Norfolk Record Office;
 - At the latest “Explore your Community” Conference, interest was shown in all

- suggested areas of training and support;
- Searchroom access figures had increased;
- Reasons for the increased figures were unclear but media coverage, events and projects were thought to have had an influence;
- It was noted that in paragraph 3.1 of the report, under the table, it should read “Oct to March 2015/16”;
- The County Archivist gave information about the volunteer project to create seal socks;
- Sale of boxes continued to generate income, and support other organisations with preservation of archives;
- 15 applications were received for trustees of NORAH of which 4 were recruited; they hoped to have a board of around 10 trustees by the end of April 2017.

6.3.1 During discussion the following points were raised:

6.3.2 The County Archivist clarified that visits to schools and school visits to the Record Office were usually for a set topic which could be repeated. Craft and archive activities were organised during half term holidays for children and adults to do together.

6.3.3 A query was raised over work done related to the Second World War project. The County Archivist clarified that work had been carried out on “the Friendly Invasion”.

6.3.4 A discussion was held over the merits of historically accurate documentation and historical imagination.

6.3.5 Volunteer role descriptions and a wide range of volunteer opportunities were available. Examples of volunteer projects were discussed.

6.3.6 It was noted that positive feedback had been received about the new Kings Lynn trainee archivist.

6.3.7 The Chairman noted Norfolk’s good record for creating apprenticeships and the importance of encouraging them.

6.4.1 Discussion was held over the Accessions listed in Appendix 1 to the report:

- ACC 2016/197 Digital images of the diary of Revd William Blyth of Norfolk: query was raised over access to this and other digital images from the Searchroom. The County Archivist reported that a computer was available in the Searchroom for this purpose; discussions were underway with the ICT department to replace some microfilm readers with computers for accessing digital images;
- Documents from Morningthorpe Hall sale: the County Archivist clarified that these related to items purchased by individuals other than the Norfolk Record Office at the sale who had subsequently given them to or deposited them with the Norfolk Record Office;
- ACC 2016/239 Prints from engravings of mural paintings in the Vatican: the County Archivist thought this may be information related to the person who created the murals;
- ACC 2016/245 Photographs and history of the Wright family of Norfolk: the

description was queried; the County Archivist clarified that the new accessioning system meant items were now scored according to criteria when received. High scoring items were dealt with first, and lower scoring items were put in a 'queue' for cataloguing at a later date. It was likely from the broad description that this was lower down in the queue;

- God's House Unlocked: the County Archivist clarified that these catalogued items would be put on the Norfolk Record Office website, and include there were plans to include some images of documents, transcripts and interpretations. Mrs Rawcliffe suggested that Norfolk Record Society could run a link to this on their website and offered to discuss this with Ellie Phillips.

6.4.2 It was clarified that there was a process in place for archivists for identifying items not suitable for the archive collection. Information was also available for depositors; see paragraph 4.4 of the report.

6.5 The Norfolk Records Committee **NOTED** performance against the 2016/17 service plan and were pleased to see high levels of performance in all areas.

7. 2017-18 Service Plan

7.1 The Committee received the report providing information on the Norfolk Record Office service plan for April 2017 to March 2018:

- It was hoped that 30m³ of additional space could be created through repackaging to assure space availability until 2023;
- After 2020 an options appraisal would be carried out to review future storage space, which could include external storage as an option;
- The increase in income generation was noted.

7.2.1 The County Archivist reported that the user profile of the Record Office was skewed towards those aged 50 and over; he highlighted the strength of providing a resource for older users in light of the aging population. The Change Minds project had been successful in bringing in more male users to the Record Office aged 30-40.

7.2.2 The Chairman highlighted the opportunity of co-location with the registration office for bringing in new users.

7.2.3 The Service plan was discussed:

- Change Minds projects were planned to be run in Norwich and Great Yarmouth;
- M Chenery of Horsburgh suggested King's Lynn and West Norfolk would benefit from the Change Minds project;
- The Norwich Medieval Churches exhibition would also involve engagement and educational activities;
- It was noted that the exhibitions listed in the Service Plan had external funding;
- It was clarified that the "Mills exhibition" was related to the "Mills of the Marsh Folk project";
- A report was brought to the Committee in January discussing organisational development, which would involve developments relating to making metadata accessible for reuse including in the semantic web, work to enhance metadata and collaborative working;

- Migration of data and training of staff would need to be fully accounted for as these would be time consuming and resource heavy aspects of this project;
- The difficulties posed when searching for archived documents caused by services, such as the museums and library services, using different systems was raised;
- The second application to the Heritage Lottery Fund's Skills for the Future programme with the National Archives was in progress;

7.3 The Norfolk Records Committee **AGREED** to adopt the 2017-18 Service Plan.

7.4 The Committee recorded their thanks and congratulations to the County Archivist for his work and for the Reports submitted to the Committee. Thanks were submitted to Members who had represented Norfolk County Council over the past 4 years who were not seeking election or not successful in election.

Future Meetings:

30 June 2017	10:30	The Green Room, The Archive Centre, County Hall
27 October 2017	10:30	The Green Room, The Archive Centre, County Hall

The meeting ended at: 11:52am

Christopher Kemp, Chairman of the Committee



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