

NORFOLK JOINT MUSEUMS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting Held at County Hall, Norwich on 13 January 2017 at
2.00pm

Present:

Norfolk County Council

Mrs J Brociek-Coulton
Mr H Humphrey
Ms E Morgan
Mr M Storey
Mr J Ward (Chairman)

Norwich City Council

Mr T Jones
Dr K Maguire
Mrs V Thomas

Broadland District Council

Mr D Buck

Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk

Mrs E Nockolds

Breckland District Council

Mr P J Duigan

South Norfolk District Council

Mr B Stone

Great Yarmouth Borough Council

Mr B Lawn

1.1 Apologies for Absence

1.2 Apologies for absence were received from Mr P Gilmour, Mr T Jermy, Mr M Kiddle-Morris, Mr J Knight, Mr J Joyce and Miss B Palmer.

2 Minutes

2.1 The minutes of the previous meeting held on 28 October 2016 were confirmed by the Joint Committee and signed by the Chairman.

3 Declarations of Interest

3.1 There were no declarations of interest

4 Matters of Urgent Business

4.1 There were no matters of urgent business.

5 Reports of Area Museums Committees

(a) Great Yarmouth

5.1 The annexed report of the Great Yarmouth Area Museums Committee meeting held

on 16 November 2016 was presented by Mr B Lawn.

5.2 In introducing the report, Mr B Lawn drew the Joint Committee's attention to the forthcoming "Titanic Honour & Glory" national touring exhibition that would be held in Great Yarmouth between 1st April 2017 and 24 September 2017. The Chairman added that there were a number of local Titanic societies in Norfolk that provided an opportunity for those interested in the history of the Titanic, the White Star Line and other ships of the classic era to further their knowledge and enjoyment of this fascinating subject.

5.3 The Joint Committee's attention was drawn to the David Howkins Museum of Memories, a privately owned and funded museum in Great Yarmouth. Mr Lawn said that he would make enquires about this museum and report back to the Area Committee. The Chairman added that it would be interesting to periodically read in Area Museums Committee reports about the activities of independent museums.

5.3 It was **RESOLVED** to note the report.

(b) King's Lynn and West Norfolk

5.4 The annexed report of the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Area Museums Committee meeting held on 19 December 2016 was presented by Mrs E Nockolds.

5.5 In introducing the report, Mrs E Nockolds drew the Joint Committee's attention to the special display at Lynn Museum of two of the six Pentney Brooches found in the churchyard of Pentney Church in the 1970s that were on loan for a limited time only from the British Museum. The display ran until the 25th February 2017.

5.6 The Joint Committee drew attention to a donation of material relating to Samuel Gurney Cresswell, the Arctic explorer. This material included a ceremonial sword, cabinet, scroll and epaulettes presented to Cresswell by the people of Kings Lynn in 1853. It was hoped that these items could be incorporated into the Stories of Lynn displays at the Town Hall where the Cresswell story was highlighted.

5.7 It was **RESOLVED** to note the report.

(c) Norwich

5.7 The annexed report of the Norwich Area Museums Committee meeting held on 13 December 2016 was presented by Mrs J Brociek-Coulton who drew the Joint Committee's attention to the activities of the Norwich museums during this period.

5.8 The Head of Museums agreed to make enquires as to if the NMS had taken in the Norwich City Council civic regalia.

Note by Head of Museums: Having made enquiries, I can confirm that as there is no immediate prospect of being able to display the regalia (due to water damage in the display cases in the Keep and the impending capital development), it has been agreed that the City will continue to care for the regalia.

5.9 It was **RESOLVED** to note the report.

6 Norfolk Joint Museums Service – Finance Monitoring Report for 2016/17

6.1 The annexed report (6) by the Head of Museums was received.

Members received a report that covered progress with the NMS revenue budget for 2016/17, reserves and provisions, the capital programme and savings applied to the revenue budget for 2017/18.

6.2 In the course of discussion, the following key points were noted:

- Progress with NMS Revenue budgets indicated that the Service should achieve a break-even budget outturn position for 2016/17.
- There was a projected shortfall of £0.074m from Admissions Income, which was -5.7% of the target, although the exhibitions planned for the second half of the year were expected to lead to an improvement in the current position.
- Any shortfall in Admissions Income would be offset by other additional income and by the control of expenditure.
- The NMS capital programme was funded from a variety of sources and included capital monies that had yet to be received but was allocated to the Service to meet its commitments when needed.

6.3 The Joint Committee **resolved** to note –

- (a) Progress with the revenue budget, capital programme and reserves and provisions forecast out-turn positions for 2016/17.
- (b) The proposed savings and changes for 2017/18 and beyond.

7 Norfolk Joint Museums Service – Risk Monitoring Report for 2016-17

7.1 The annexed report (7) by the Head of Museums was received.

7.2 The Joint Committee received a report that provided Members with the latest Norfolk Museums Service Risk Register as at December 2016.

7.3 The Joint Committee noted that the report had been compiled in a similar way to risk monitoring reports presented to service committees of the County Council. All the risks identified in the report were continually reviewed by appropriate managers to ensure that the risk scores reflected the current position against current Service objectives.

7.4 It was noted that the “tolerance target” for the risk associated with the reduction of centralised support services should not have been shown to have exceeded the “current risk” and that this matter would be corrected when the Committee received its next risk monitoring report.

7.5 It was pointed out that a vigorous review of museum security systems and procedures were undertaken by NCC’s internal audit department in 2016. All NMS security procedures were shown to have been fully adhered to. NMS staff continued to maintain vigilance in this key area of risk.

7.6 The Joint Committee was informed of a wide range of measures that had been taken to protect Great Yarmouth and King’s Lynn museum collections from the threat of

flooding. Objects that were subject to this danger had been moved to more secure locations within the Service wherever possible – for example, the moving of the basement stores in Great Yarmouth to stores on Blackfriars Road. It was noted that because of the exceptionally high tide that was predicted at Great Yarmouth today, Andrew Smith, the NMS Operations Manager for the Eastern Area, had given his apologies for the meeting so he could be in Great Yarmouth to take measures to protect the Elizabethan House Museum and its contents from the risk of flooding.

7.7 The Joint Committee **resolved** to note:

- (a) The risk data, information and analysis presented in the newly formatted risk register report at Appendix A to the report and that the mitigating actions identified in it were being managed to an appropriate level.
- (b) Progress with Risk Management since the previous meeting, as shown in the reconciliation report at Appendix B to the report.

8 Norfolk Museums Service – Performance & Strategic Update Report

8.1 The annexed report (8) by the Head of Museums was received.

8.2 The Joint Committee received a report that provided progress with performance against the NMS agreed service plan for 2016/17, details as to museum education and learning programmes, marketing and PR, partnerships, commercial developments, Norwich Castle Keep and other capital developments, NMS fundraising, the Arts Council England funding programme and the DCMS National Museums Review.

8.3 During discussion, the following key points were noted:

- The Joint Committee was informed that museum visits across all 10 NMS sites for the period 1st April 2016 to 31st October 2016 had shown a slight decrease of 1% when compared to the equivalent period in the preceding year. Given that 2015/16 represented a record year for the NMS and that Easter had fallen early in the year, the total visitor figure for the period 1st April 2016 to 31st October 2016 of 265,614 represented a very successful and positive result for the year to date.
- The numbers of school visits to NMS museums for the period 1st April 2016 to 31st October 2016 had shown an increase of 7% when compared to the equivalent period in the preceding year. This very strong performance, when benchmarked against the total for school visits achieved during 2015/16, continued to go against the national trend and was attributed to the learning teams across the county continuing to deliver award-winning programmes for children of all ages.
- Following the opening of the new *Voices from the Workhouse* project at Gressenhall, and a strong exhibitions and events programme across the county, the NMS was confident that for the year as a whole it could match last year's excellent overall figure of 400,000 visits across NMS sites plus outreach and special events attendance and meet its challenging performance targets. An application would be submitted to the Art Fund for the *Voices from the Workhouse* project in the national competition for Museum of the Year 2017.
- It was noted that NMS commercial income strands including conference and banqueting, conservation and design services and weddings continued to

develop positively and were a key focus for the current year as they would be for 2017/18.

- In reply to questions, the Head of Museums said that weddings had led to increased sales at museum retail outlets and to repeat museum visits. The distribution on social media websites of wedding pictures taken at museum sites had led to increased museum attendance figures throughout the Service. The NMS operated within data protection constraints when it came to making use of information collected for wedding purposes.
- The highlights of the current NMS visitor programme included:
 - **LITTLE LIVES: Snapshots of Childhood 1800 to the Present Day:** exhibition at Lynn Museum, King's Lynn that continued into 2017.
 - **Flint Rocks: exhibition at Ancient House, Thetford** which ran until 29 October 2016.
 - **'Sixty Years On': Norfolk Contemporary Art Society; exhibition at Norwich Castle:** exhibition in the Timothy Gurney Gallery running until spring 2017.
 - **Fishermen & Kings: The Photography of Olive Edis. Exhibition at Norwich Castle:** the exhibition ran until 22 January 2017.
 - **Punk in the East. Exhibition at Museum of Norwich at the Bridewell:** exhibition ran until 28 January 2017.
 - **Never Had It So Good: Exhibition at Time and Tide Museum, Great Yarmouth:** exhibition ran until 5 March 2017.
- The Joint Committee was informed that work continued with the British Museum on the concepts for the British Museum Partnership Gallery within the Castle Keep and on the funding opportunities that this unique partnership provided.
- Members were informed that the NMS was represented on a Steering Group for a Museums Taskforce that had been set up by the Museums Association to examine the state of the museums sector across the UK and to produce a report by May 2017. This review was being done in parallel with the National Museums Review undertaken by the Department for Culture Media and Sport and to which the Head of Museums had submitted evidence. The Joint Committee heard that these reviews came at a time when funding for local authority and independent museums came under considerable pressure and many museums and art galleries across the UK were likely to have to announce they were to close or cease some of their activities.
- The Joint Committee considered that Norfolk was well served by a joint county-wide museums service supported by County, City, Borough and District Councils and that there were lessons from this form of joint working for museums elsewhere in the UK.
- The Joint Committee was pleased to hear of an application that had been made to the national Great Place programme, funded by the Arts Council England and the Heritage Lottery Fund. The application proposed a series of health and wellbeing projects across the County, led by Creative Arts East and supported by Norfolk County Council's Cultural Services and Public Health. The Joint Committee was thankful to Mary Muir, Arts Officer at Norfolk County Council, and to officers of Public Health at the County Council for their work in compiling the application.

8.4 The Joint Committee **resolved:**

1. To note progress regarding redevelopment of the Keep at Norwich Castle, the

key focus for the Service for the coming period.

2. To note progress with plans for the remainder of 2016/17, including the exhibition and events programme and the Service's progress in achieving a balanced budget.
3. To note progress with Arts Council England's new funding programme for 2018-22 and progress with the Service's funding applications.
4. That progress on all other museums matters should continue to be reported back to the Joint Committee as part of the Head of Museums' periodic Performance and Strategic Update Report.

9 To receive a presentation about the Teaching Museums Programme

9.1 The Joint Committee received a short video presentation on the Teaching Museums Programme from the NMS Learning Manager, Sarah Gore.

9.2 The Joint Committee heard that the Teaching Museums Programme provided a stepping stone for people of all ages to enter into the world of museums. No previous museums experience was required. A range of one year traineeships were available that provided an opportunity to work with museums and their collections: handling, documenting, interpreting and caring for objects/artefacts. The trainees received the skills, knowledge and experience to pursue a career in the museum sector.

The Norfolk Teaching Museum was widely recognised as a national example of best practice and had won a number of major regional and national awards.

The meeting concluded at 3.45 pm.

Chairman

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