

NORFOLK ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2011

Present:

Norfolk Joint Museums and
Archaeology Committee

Mr J Bracey
Mr P Duigan

Borough Council of King's Lynn and
West Norfolk

Mrs E Nockolds

Breckland District Council

Mr R G Kybird

Broadland District Council

Mr D Buck

Great Yarmouth Borough Council

Mr B G Coleman

North Norfolk District Council

Mrs L Brettle (Substitute)

South Norfolk Council

Dr C Kemp

Norfolk and Norwich Archaeological Society

Mr R Bellinger

1 Election of Chairman

Resolved –

That Mr P Duigan be elected Chairman of the Advisory Committee for the ensuing year.

(Mr P Duigan in the Chair)

2 Election of Vice-Chairman

Resolved –

That Dr C Kemp be elected Vice-Chairman of the Advisory Committee for the ensuing year.

3 Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 30 March 2011 were confirmed by the Advisory Committee and signed by the Chairman.

4 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Mr J Ward (Norfolk County Council), Mr T FitzPatrick (North Norfolk District Council), Mr S Altman (Norwich City Council), Mr E N Stanton (Norfolk Farmers Union, County Branch) and Mr W Fletcher (English Heritage).

5 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

6 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

7 Half-Yearly Report on the Work of the Historic Environment Service (the HES) (Formerly Norfolk Landscape Archaeology)

The annexed report by the Historic Environment Manager (County Archaeologist) was received.

Mr David Gurney, Historic Environment Manager (County Archaeologist) said that during the period covered by the report, 725 Historic Environment Records (HERs) were created along with 1,025 event records and 1,323 source records. He said that during the reporting period staff had also undertaken some significant enhancement work with HERs, focusing in particular on sites recorded by the Norfolk Industrial Archaeology Society and had dealt with the integration into the HER of information previously held by Norfolk County Council's Building and Landscapes Team at County Hall. Furthermore, he pointed out that staff had begun a parish-by-parish audit of HER records to identify other unrecorded historic landscapes and built heritage sites and had worked to ensure all former Heritage Landscape Team data was fully integrated into the HER.

Mr Gurney went on to report that the HES had commented on 304 planning applications and issued 130 briefs in the period between 1 March 2011 and 31 August 2011. He said that this placed the HES on track to be nearly as busy as in 2008-2009 (the busiest year ever for planning applications) and reflected the general, if slow, upturn in development in Norfolk. He said the Planning Team were also involved in consultation on the Localism Bill and the draft National Policy Framework which were expected to be finalised and enacted in time to be considered at the next meeting of the Advisory Committee.

Members were informed that the most worrying aspect of the Localism Bill (as published) was that it appeared to remove much of the protection afforded to listed buildings and conservation areas and this was being challenged at every level, including in the House of Lords. The other proposed legislative change, the National Planning Policy Framework, was aimed at replacing Planning Policy Statement 5 and its associated guidance. There was some concern that the presumption in favour of development present throughout the draft document could place undesignated assets such as historic landscapes at risk. However, small scale assets were considered to be adequately protected through similar measures to those in PPS 5.

In reply to a question from Dr Christopher Kemp, Mr Gurney said that the HES had produced a useful guide for when a local community started work on a community-led plan such as a Parish Plan, Village Design Statement, or similar neighbourhood initiative. Mr Gurney said that copies of the guidance note had been sent to Local Authority Planning and Conservation Officers and were available on request. (Note by Committee Clerk: Following this meeting copies of the guide were published on the County Council's Members Insight web page).

Mr Gurney said that the HES was involved in work to identify heritage crimes at Billingford, Burgh Castle and Bromholme Priory. At the instigation of the HES,

Norfolk County Council had joined the Alliance to Reduce Crime against Heritage. In reply to a question from Mr Danny Buck, Mr Gurney said that the HES staff had brought this initiative to the attention of District Council Conservation Officers, and as a consequence, a countywide meeting about heritage crime was arranged for 20 October 2011. The seminar was free to attend and open to NASAC Members who contacted Broadland District Council to book a place. (Note by Committee Clerk: Details about the event were emailed to NASAC Members after the Advisory Committee meeting).

In reply to a question from Mr John Bracey, Mr Gurney said that work had continued on UEA's Rural Schools Survey project adding over 200 new records and enhancing many others. He added that material from this project had been used as part of a small exhibition placed on display at the Norfolk Record Office.

Mr Gurney went on to report that East Anglian Archaeology, the regional monograph series based in HES continued to flourish, with new titles in print and further work in press describing a range of archaeological discoveries. Recent published volumes included:

- A report on the Roman town at Billingford, the site of the largest Roman cemetery so far excavated in Norfolk and where evidence was found for occupation continuing into the fifth and sixth centuries, after Britain ceased to be a Roman province.
- A report on the archaeology of the Newland in Kings Lynn, where excavations on the site of the Vancouver Centre explored the processes of land reclamation and the gradual building of tenements along the banks of the Purfleet and Broad Street fleet in the 13th century.

The Advisory Committee then went on to receive a PowerPoint presentation from Dr Richard Hoggett, Coastal Heritage Officer, about Norfolk's Coastal Heritage Project. The Advisory Committee were informed that this project allowed Norfolk's coastal communities to prepare for the impact that coastal change could have on their heritage. Dr Hoggett pointed out that initially this project had focused on Happisburgh, before broadening its focus to work with other communities. He went on to say that as the project entered its second phase, he was developing additional links with other interested individuals, groups and societies. He gave as examples, the close links that were being developed with RSPB staff and volunteers at Titchwell and Snettisham and National Trust volunteers at Sheringham Park, all of whom were keen to learn more about the archaeological remains in the areas under their management so that those items could be promoted and interpreted for the public. In reply to a question from Mrs Elizabeth Nockolds, Dr Hoggett said that the coastal heritage project had given some publicity to Seahenge which took centre stage in the Bronze Age Gallery at Lynn Museum.

Resolved –

That the report be noted.

8 Half-Yearly Report of the Archaeology Department, Norwich Museum and Art Gallery

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

Dr John Davies, Chief Curator and Keeper of Archaeology at Norwich Museum and Art Gallery said that during the last six months the work of the Archaeology Department had focused on the key priorities within NMAS; the rationalisation of office space and collections. He said that archaeology staff and volunteers had been involved in the wider Norwich programme of moving offices and stores. Alongside this work the Archaeology Department had maintained a balanced programme of curatorial activities and public services.

Dr Davies went on to point out that there had been a number of important acquisitions made by the Department, including several very generous donations of finds by members of the public. The most significant acquisition involved the securing of £14,250 of external funding to purchase a large collection of Treasure material found on a significant Iron Age site in north west Norfolk. This came from field work at the site during the 2000s, which had yielded a substantial assemblage of gold, silver and bronze objects dating from the Bronze Age to the Roman periods. Most were Iron Age in date including fragments of torc, brooches and 118 Iron Age coins. The most unusual and significant items were five fragments of iron chain mail, which were especially rare from this period. Roman items included coins and some religious items, including miniature votive axes. Thanks to the positive relationships established with metal-detector users and to their generosity, many of the items acquired were gifted to the museum.

The Advisory Committee was informed that the *Collecting Cultures Scheme*, the subject of reports from previous Advisory Committee meetings, was enabling the enhancement of the archaeology collections and displays. This project, worth £220,000 in total, remained a major part of the Department's work programme into 2013. 'Collecting Cultures' funding, derived from a HLF scheme and supported by the Friends of the Norwich Museums, provided for the purchase of a number of important acquisitions. It also allowed for the development of the website and for it to include 'star object' trails.

Members were informed about a new partnership that had been formed between the NMAS and the British Museum, with the project title 'Norwich Castle Gateway to Medieval England', with the aim of creating major new displays in Norwich Castle Keep. The project was based on a partnership between Norwich Castle Museum and communities in the south of England and in Normandy aimed at exploring and developing some of the historic, intellectual and physical links between historic sites, relating to the Norman period.

Members were informed that the Honorary Research Associate, Faye Kalloniatis, had continued to work on the Egyptian Collection Project which represented a major collaboration between Norwich Castle and the British Museum. Once the Shroud had been fully opened it was possible to see that the surface was covered with hieroglyphic inscriptions from the Book of the Dead. The study had shown this to be a rare eighteenth dynasty shroud (c1550BC), of which only a few were known worldwide. It was pointed out that a second phase of study was planned. It was also pointed out that during the reporting period, a workshop on the subject of 'Fakes' had been held at the Castle Museum and that a joint seminar would be held

in conjunction with the Egypt Exploration Society at Norwich Castle in April 2012 about 'Ancient Egyptian Funerary Practices'. The Norwich Egyptian Shroud would be featured during this event.

Resolved –

That the report be noted.

9 Half-Yearly Report of NPS Archaeology

The annexed report by the Manager of NPS Archaeology was received.

Ms Jayne Bown, Manager of NPS Archaeology (formerly NAU Archaeology) presented a report that described the Norfolk projects and outreach work undertaken by NPS Archaeology during the period March 2011 to August 2011 inclusive. Members were informed that during that period NPS Archaeology had worked on 92 projects (along with the post-excavation stages of ongoing projects) of which 65 (71%) were Norfolk projects.

Ms Bown went on to outline some of the major Norfolk projects of the last six months, which included an evaluation that took place prior to the construction of a new residential dwelling on land off Cross Lane at Brancaster, within what was an area of allotments and gardens close to the Roman fort of Branodunum. She said that this excavation had revealed a number of well-preserved archaeological features. The majority of these remains were of likely or probable Roman date, including a partially clay-lined flue (associated with some form of agricultural or light industrial process), several substantial ditches and a pit. The work provided clear evidence that remains from the fort continued into the Cross Lane area.

Ms Bown said that a silver disk had been found during metal detecting in moat deposits at Caister Castle in July 2011. The disk measured 36mm across with a thickness of 1mm and was inscribed on both sides with lettering and decoration. One face of the disk had the wording 'M H Sharpe, Proprietor', with the other side reading 'Norwich Theatre 1786, 5'. The disk was pierced near to one edge; so that it would have hung with the writing the correct way up from a chain, either around the neck or from a fob chain. These 'tickets' were originally created by Thomas Ivory in 1768, whom was the sole owner of the Theatre Royal at this time. The name on the ticket appeared to be M H Sharpe and could refer to the musician and composer, Michael Sharpe, who had close associations with Norwich during that period.

Ms Bown went on to explain how NPS Archaeology staff had been involved in the recent 'Hands on History' event at The Forum in Norwich and in the 2011 annual community project at Acle which had again attracted much interest.

Resolved –

That the report be noted.

10 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Resolved –

That the next meeting of the Advisory Committee should be held in King's Lynn in March or April 2012 and be preceded by a site tour of archaeological interest.

The meeting concluded at 4.20pm.

Chairman



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