

Norfolk Records Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on 23 July 2021 at 10.30 am at County Hall Norwich

Present:

Norfolk County Council

Cllr Michael Chenery of Horsbrugh (elected
Chair)
Cllr A Birmingham
Cllr P Duigan

Norwich City Council

Cllr V Thomas

Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk

Cllr E Nockolds

Non-Voting Members

Representative of the Bishop of Norwich

Rev'd C Read

Representative of the Norfolk Record Society

Dr G A Metters

Observer

Dr V Morgan

1 To receive apologies and details of any substitute members attending

- 1.1** Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Duffin, Cllr V Gay, Cllr D King, Cllr A Haynes, Cllr R Kybird, Cllr T Wainwright, Cllr A Waters, Mr M Begley, Lady Dannatt, Prof. C Rawcliffe and Mr A Steynor.

2. Election of Chair

- 2.1** Cllr Michael Chenery of Horsbrugh was duly elected for the ensuing year.

(Cllr Michael Chenery of Horsbrugh in the Chair)

2.2 The late Cllr David Bradford MBE

- 2.2.1** The Chair announced the sad passing of Cllr David Bradford MBE who served on this Committee for many years. David died on 1 May 2021. He represented Crome ward on Norwich City Council from 1978 until 2019 and was a well-liked and much valued member of this Committee for many years. David was passionate about helping people and, as a wheelchair user himself, he was always an effective champion for disability rights.

- 2.2.2** The Committee held a minute's silence to remember David.

3. Election of Vice-Chair

- 3.1** Cllr R Kybird (who had given apologies for this meeting) was duly elected Vice-Chair for the ensuing year.

4 Minutes

- 4.1** The minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2021 were confirmed as an accurate record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.

5 Declarations of Interest

- 5.1** The Chair declared an “other interest” as a trustee of NORAH (Norfolk Archives and Heritage Development Foundation).

6 Items of Urgent Business

- 6.1** There was no urgent business.

7 Charges at the Norfolk Record Office

- 7.1** The Committee received a report that outlined a new system of charging for digital images which would make it easier for remote users to order copies.

- 7.2** The following points were discussed and noted:

- The Norfolk Record Office generated around a third of its running costs through the charges it provides for its services. Around £70,000 of this income came from the issue of certified copies of birth death and marriage certificates, with additional income coming from licencing of images for online use, sale of conservation materials, archival storage and project work.
- The proposed scale of fees and charges for the new scheme for digital images was as set out in paragraph 2 of the report. All other charges for Norfolk Record Office services were last reviewed in 2020 and would remain unchanged.
- The proposed new system of charges for digital images meant that when the Norfolk Record Office was asked to supply digital images it applied a pre-paid charge for remote users covering either completion of the small order or providing samples and an estimate of the costs of completing the work.
- The proposed new system of charging for digital images was in line with that applied for digital images of National Archives.
- Members of the Committee spoke about how the new scheme could improve the delivery process and be more convenient for the user as well as the Norfolk Record Office.

7.3 The Committee RESOLVED

To adopt to the proposed scale of fees and charges with the new scheme for digital images set out in paragraph 2 of the report.

8 2021-2022 Service Plan

- 8.1** The Committee received a report that summarised the mission of the Norfolk Record Office and its six long-term strategic aims. The report detailed how each of these aims was being progressed through the 2021- 2022 Service Plan.

8.2 The following points were discussed and noted:

- A report on the long-term aims of the Norfolk Record Office was presented to the previous meeting.
- Staff were consulted in January and February of each year about the service plan for the year ahead.
- Amendments to the Public Records Act meant that the NRO, as an official place of deposit for public records (i.e. those of central government bodies such as courts, prison, coastguards and coroners), accepted records 20 years after creation instead of 30 years.
- The programme of forthcoming educational activities included an exhibition in the Long Gallery (from August 2021) produced in partnership with the UEA and the Paston Heritage Society and a series of lectures and workshops (produced both in person and on the internet) aimed at attracting a wide audience. This would be funded by the Lottery.
- The Norfolk Record Office continued to develop and submit funding applications for Change Minds UK in conjunction with the Restoration Trust. The Norfolk Record Office aimed to create a national hub that placed it at the forefront of developments in this field of work.
- The Norfolk Record Office was built to accommodate 15 years of expansion. At the current rate in which documents were being accessioned, the NRO had until 2027 to find a long-term solution. Managerial actions were being taken to make existing storage space more efficient, but this would not provide a long-term solution.
- A long-term solution involved putting together a business case for a sustainable, effective service to be provided from an environmentally friendly building which met the needs of Norfolk in the mid-21st century. Planning for this kind of building was underway and the Committee would be kept informed of developments.
- Members of the Committee spoke about how changes to the Registration of Marriage Regulations had resulted in the closure of hundreds of marriage registers and their transfer to the NRO.
- It was noted that Churches no longer kept marriage registers and Church of England clergy were encouraged to deposit their remaining marriage records with the NRO.
- The Anglican Diocese of Norwich was not coterminous with the county of Norfolk. The implications of this anomaly for the storage of marriage registers was the subject of discussion with neighbouring county record offices and did not present a difficulty when records were digitized.
- To meet the ritual needs of those getting married, some private publishers were selling bound marriage books for signature during the marriage service. While these books had no legal status, they might be of interest to the NRO of the future.
- Work on the migration and collection of metadata to improve its long-term sustainability and future use continued to take place. The authority files within metadata provided specific access points and were being developed as part of a new way of working with data.

8.3 The Committee RESOLVED

To approve the adoption of the 2021 -2022 Service Plan for the Norfolk Record Office.

9 Future Meetings

9.1 The dates of future meetings were noted:

29 October 2021 10.30 am
28 January 2022 10.30 am
1 April 2022 10.30 am

10 Mr Michael Begley

10.1 The Chair said that Mr Michael Begley had decided to retire from the Committee after many years of service.

10.2 Mr Begley had emailed to say that he regarded the joint committees for Records and Museums as one of the great success stories in the county administration. He was co-opted on to the Joint Museums Committee shortly after it was set up in 1974/5. He did not recall exactly the year when he joined the Records Committee, but it was before the fire when the Records Committee met in the Shirehall. What followed were momentous years, but after the evacuation of the old Record Office, the setting up of the temporary office in Anglia Square, the search for a new site, first up at the university, and finally the adaptation and new building at County Hall the Records Committee achieved one of the finest record offices in the UK with a staff and a standard of service of outstanding quality. Mr Begley was pleased to be associated with the achievements of the joint committees.

10.3 It was agreed that the Chair and County Archivist should provide Mr Begley with a suitable memento of his time with the Committee.

The meeting concluded at 11.20 am.

Cllr Michael Chenery of Horsbrugh, Chair of the Committee



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