

NORFOLK ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 2 October 2009

Present:

Norfolk Joint Museums and
Archaeology Committee

Mr B J Collins (Chairman)

Mrs H T Nelson

Norfolk County Council

Mr J ward

Borough Council of King's Lynn and
West Norfolk

Mrs E Nockolds

Breckland District Council

Mr R G Kybird

Broadland District Council

Mr J W Bracey

Great Yarmouth Borough Council

Mr J R Shrimplin

North Norfolk District Council

Mr H C Cordeaux

Norwich City Council

Miss E J Collishaw

South Norfolk District Council

Dr C Kemp

English Heritage

Mr W Fletcher

Also Present:

Mr A Wright, Heritage Champion, Norfolk County Council

1 Election of Chairman

Resolved –

That Mr B J Collins be elected Chairman of the Advisory Committee for the ensuing year.

Mr B J Collins in the Chair

2 Election of Vice-Chairman

Resolved –

That Mrs H T Nelson be elected Vice-Chairman of the Advisory Committee for the ensuing year.

3 Minutes

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 14 May 2009 were confirmed by the Advisory Committee and signed by the Chairman.

4 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Mr R Bellinger (Norfolk and Norwich Archaeological Society), Dr T N Williamson (University of East Anglia), Mr E N Stanton (Norfolk Farmers' Union (County Branch)) and Dr J S Johnson (The Broads Authority).

5 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

6 Declarations of Interest

There were also no declarations of interest.

7 Half-Yearly Report on the Work of Norfolk Landscape Archaeology

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

The Advisory Committee received a report that described the work of Norfolk Landscape Archaeology (NLA) from April 2009 to the end of August 2009. During the last six months, the NLA had continued to work with the County and District Councils and other agencies to protect and manage the Historic Environment, to maintain and enhance the Norfolk Historic Environment Record and Norfolk Air Photo Library, to identify and record finds, to deal with enquiries and to engage in outreach.

Members welcomed Mr Will Fletcher to his first meeting of the Advisory Committee. Mr Fletcher had been appointed as the new Specialist Adviser (Archaeology) for the east of England region, replacing Mr P R Walker (Inspector of Ancient Monuments).

Members also welcomed Mr Tony Wright (Heritage Champion at Norfolk County Council) to his first meeting of the Advisory Committee as an observer.

It was noted that not all of Norfolk's Heritage Champions were Members of the Advisory Committee and that Mr Gurney was prepared to explore the possibility of organising an annual "get together" of Member Champions to discuss matters of mutual interest. Members asked for the list of Heritage Champions on the HELM (Historic Environment Local Management) website (at www.helm.org.uk) to be updated to include details of two additional Member Champions for Norfolk:

Martin Wynn (South Norfolk Council)
Bill Borrett (Breckland District Council).

Mr Will Fletcher (English Heritage) said that by use of the HELM website and email correspondence, English Heritage kept Member Champions updated on news concerning the Historic Environment and sent out invitations to attend major events and conferences.

Mr Gurney reported on developments at the national, regional and local level that impacted on the strategic development of the Archaeology and Environment

Division (A&E). He said that one of the most important developments at the national level was a proposed new Planning Policy Statement (PPS) for the Historic Environment that brought together the various heritage protection regimes and underlined their essential place in the planning context. The key points that arose from NLA's assessment of the draft PPS were set out in paragraph 5.7 of the report. The Advisory Committee welcomed and supported the response that officers had prepared and noted that the assessment would be shared with the County and District Councils and other heritage organisations in Norfolk, all of whom would be encouraged to make their own response.

Mr Gurney reported that Norfolk Constabulary had said they would send an officer to each of the five Norfolk metal detecting clubs to hear about the problems encountered by responsible metal detectorists, farmers and landowners. He said that Norfolk Constabulary had agreed to produce a briefing note with the NLA about illegal metal detecting for use by Safer Neighbourhood Teams situated in areas with archaeological sites most at risk.

Mr Fletcher said that he knew of prosecutions for illegal metal detecting elsewhere in East Anglia that had implications for Norfolk. He referred to a recent prosecution in Essex that had included evidence of illegal metal detecting in Norfolk. Members said that wherever possible more regional publicity should be given to such prosecutions.

Mr Gurney reported on a joint research project at Caistor St Edmund Roman Town where excavations had resumed after a break of more than 70 years. Further information was available at <http://www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/venta>

Members were pleased to note that Fison Way/Gallows Hill, Thetford, had been designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. There did, however, remain some concern about the long-term future of the site because much of the area around it had been developed in recent years and it was in a far from ideal setting for an important archaeological monument.

Mr Gurney said that DEFRA had invited bids from local authorities interested in becoming "Coastal Change Pathfinders". The idea was for pathfinders to actively engage with local communities and express DEFRA's ideas by piloting a new £11m coastal change fund. The NLA had submitted a bid with North Norfolk District Council for a project working with local communities whose Historic Environment was at risk. Initially, the project would focus on Happisburgh where coastal change was having a significant impact, with additional communities involved in the second stage. Mr Gurney said the outcome of the bid would be reported to the next meeting of the Advisory Committee. A Member said that Great Yarmouth Borough Council had also submitted a smaller bid to DEFRA for a section of coastline near Scratby.

Resolved –

That the report be noted.

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

The annexed report by the Head of Museums and Archaeology was received. The report outlined amongst other things, the large number of treasure cases, the work of volunteers, fundraising activities, loans to other museums, work on exhibitions and galleries, education, outreach and media activities, publications and metal detecting liaison.

The Advisory Committee placed on record its thanks to Dr Tim Pestell, Curator of Archaeology, for conducting the tour of St Benet's Abbey that had preceded the meeting and for making it such an interesting one. It was noted that a site guide book by Dr Pestell could be purchased from the NMAS.

Dr John Davies, Chief Curator and Keeper of Archaeology, said that during the period covered by the periodic report, staff had been working on initiatives for a range of new displays and exhibitions at Norwich Castle and elsewhere. He said that the Department had participated in the creation of The Art Fund Trail and as a partner in the touring exhibition "Anglo-Saxon Art in the Round". Dr Davies added that the Department had made an application for European funding towards the gradual redevelopment of Norwich Castle Keep. Officers from the NMAS had also been speaking with their colleagues at the British Museum about the possibility of developing a major ongoing exhibition of significant medieval collections in the Castle Keep.

Dr Davies said the Department continued to receive regular requests for loans from its collections both from museums in this country and abroad. Those museums that had requested material from the Department included the Museum of Normandy (Caen) for artefacts associated with Caen stone and Falaise Castle, (Calvados) for artefacts of the Norman period.

The Advisory Committee noted that the Archaeology Department was planning for a major archaeological exhibition to be held at Norwich Castle in spring 2012, with elements shown later at other partner venues. Dr Davies said the theme of the exhibition would be the work of the National Portable Antiquities Scheme. The working title for the exhibition was "Britain's History Retold".

The Advisory Committee was pleased to note that the Department had established a Museum Archaeology Network in the east of England.

Resolved –

That the report be noted.

9 Half-Yearly Report of NAU Archaeology

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

Dr Nigel Page of NAU Archaeology described the Norfolk projects and outreach work undertaken by NAU Archaeology during the period May 2009 to August 2009. He said that during that period NAU Archaeology had worked on 63 projects (excluding the post-excavation stages of ongoing projects). He said NAU

Archaeology had also given talks to interest groups and professional bodies associated with the construction industry.

The Advisory Committee noted that NAU Archaeology was being asked to undertake an increasing amount of work on agricultural buildings, particularly in advance of barn conversions. Members discussed how private individuals intending to undertake such work could go about commissioning archaeological services from NAU Archaeology or another archaeological contractor. In reply, Mr David Gurney, County Archaeologist, said that NLA regularly contributed to articles in County and District Council newsletters and in the media generally about where the public could seek archaeological advice. He added that the NLA regularly forwarded copies of published documentary records from archaeological projects to Norfolk's District Councils with the suggestion that Members were given an opportunity to view them. The NLA did not have the resources to share such reports with Town and Parish Councils.

Mr Page of NAU Archaeology described the work of NAU Archaeology in running a community archaeology project at Acle, in collaboration with Acle High School and funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. He said the work in 2009 had involved opening a large area of the site to examine features identified during the previous year's test pitting. Excavation work on the site was expected to continue in the 2010 season.

Resolved –

That the report be noted.

10 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Resolved –

That the next meeting of the Advisory Committee be held in the offices of Breckland District Council in March 2010 at a date and time to be determined after consultation with the Chairman and to be preceded by a tour of a site of archaeological interest in the Thetford area.

The meeting concluded at 3.45pm

Chairman



If you need these minutes in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact Tim Shaw on 0344 8008020 or 0344 8008011 (textphone) and we will do our best to help.