

NORFOLK JOINT MUSEUMS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting Held at County Hall, Norwich on 6 April 2018 at 2.00pm

Present:

Norfolk County Council

Mr P Duigan
Mr D Harrison
Mr H Humphrey
Mr M Kiddle-Morris
Mr T Smith
Mr M Storey
Mr J Ward (Chairman)

Norwich City Council

Mrs J Brociek-Coulton
Ms A Haynes
Ms M Maxwell

Broadland District Council

Mr D Buck

Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk

Mrs E Nockolds

Great Yarmouth Borough Council

Mr B Lawn

South Norfolk District Council

Mr R Savage

Co-opted Member (Non-Voting)

Museum Friends

Mrs F Devonshire

1 Apologies for Absence

1.1 There were no apologies for absence.

2 Minutes

2.1 The minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 January 2018 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.

Reports of Area Museums Committees

5.1 Breckland Area Committee

5.1 The annexed report of the Breckland Area Museums Committee meeting held on 26

February 2018 was presented by Mr P Duigan.

- 5.2** The Chairman drew the Joint Committee's attention to the discussion at the Area Committee meeting about the need for a specific centrepiece location in libraries for the display of museum leaflets separately from other tourism material. This matter had been taken up with Jan Holden, Norfolk County Council's Head of Libraries and Information, and the matter would be considered further at the next meeting of the Area Committee.

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

6 Great Yarmouth Area Committee

- 6.1** The annexed report of the Great Yarmouth Area Museums Committee meeting held on 29 January 2018 was presented by Mr B Lawn.

- 6.2** The Chairman drew the Joint Committee's attention to the successful outreach events about forthcoming exhibitions that Time and Tide Museum had held at Market Gates Shopping Centre in Great Yarmouth. The Chairman said that the lessons which had been learnt should be used to enable similar out-reach events to be held at shopping centres in Norwich and elsewhere in the county.

- 6.3** The Joint Committee joined the Area Committee in placing on record its congratulations to the learning team at Time and Tide Museum on another record breaking year in 2017/18 for school pupil visits which was seen as a real testament to the skill and hard work of the museum learning staff. It was pointed out that school pupil visits in 2018/19 would benefit from the work that the learning staff were doing on a forthcoming pirate themed event at Time and Tide Museum to help teachers to get pupils in years 3 and 4 interested in reading and writing.

- 6.4** It was **RESOLVED** to note the report.

7 King's Lynn and West Norfolk Area Committee

- 7.1** The annexed report of the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Area Museums Committee meetings held on 19 March 2018 was presented by Mrs E Nockolds.

- 7.2** In introducing the report, Mrs E Nockolds referred to a project for improving the interpretation and display of the town's South Gate, a grade one listed building and scheduled ancient monument. A project team that comprised of Borough Council and museum staff was meeting regularly to plan and to review progress with this project.

- 7.3** The Committee asked for their condolences to be sent to the family of Louise Gray, a Learning Assistant at Lynn Museum, who sadly had recently passed away.

- 7.4** It was **RESOLVED** to note the report.

8 Norwich Area Committee

- 8.1** The annexed report of the Norwich Area Museums Committee meeting held on 6 March 2018 was presented by Mrs J Brociek-Coulton.

8.2 The Joint Committee joined the Area Committee in placing on record their congratulations to the learning team at Norwich Castle on their involvement at an early stage in the development of exhibitions such as the *Rembrandt: Lightening the Darkness* and the newly opened *The Square Box on the Hill*. The involvement of the learning team had not only promoted school visits but had also led to the development of activities that encouraged families and targeted early years and pre-school children.

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

9 Finance Monitoring Report for 2017/18

9.1 The annexed report (9) by the Executive Director, Community and Environmental Services was received.

9.2 Members received a report that covered the Norfolk Museums Service (NMS) budget out-turn for 2017/18, including the revenue budget, reserves and provisions and the capital programme.

9.3 Members were informed that progress with NMS Revenue budgets and Reserves and Provisions indicated that the NMS should achieve a break-even position at the year-end. This was due in part to strong performances in admissions income during 2017/18, with exceptional visitor numbers to both Norwich Castle and Time and Tide Museum. Members were informed that the income reserve would be maintained in 2018/19 to enable the service to effectively manage pressures on revenue streams and resources, particularly during periods of unfavourable weather conditions that could impact upon visitor numbers.

9.4 Members drew attention to the funding of £0.900m from Norfolk County Council to improve two critical elements of the Norwich Castle site M&E infrastructure, including the systems that controlled the temperature in the exhibition galleries and the external lift, a requirement of the Equalities Act 2010.

9.5 In reply to questions, it was pointed out that the project for the external lift improvements at the front of the Castle Museum included the replacement of the mechanism and lift carriage, the refurbishment of both lift entrances and improved signage and interpretation.

9.6 The Joint Committee **resolved** to note:-

Progress with the revenue budget, capital programme and reserves and provisions forecast out-turn positions for 2017/18.

The agreed revenue budget for 2018/19 and beyond.

10 Risk Management Report

10.1 The annexed report (10) by the Executive Director, Community and Environmental Services was received.

10.2 The Joint Committee received a report that provided Members with the latest Norfolk Museums Service Risk Register as at 31st January 2018.

10.3 Members were given an update on progress with the management of risk within the NMS. Members were informed of the positive progress that had been made against risks on the register, the work that had gone into securing Arts Council England (ACE) funding as a National Portfolio Organisation (NPO), the work to maintain historic museum buildings and the work to reduce the impact scores associated with the flooding of museum sites.

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

The risks at Appendix A to the report and to determine that the mitigating actions identified in the report were appropriate.

11 Norfolk Museums Service – Performance & Strategic Update Report

11.1 The annexed report (11) by the Executive Director, Community and Environmental Services was received.

11.2 The Joint Committee received a report that provided progress with performance over the financial year 2017/18, 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 Inquiry on the Social Impact of Participation in Culture and Sport.

11.3 During discussion, the following key points were noted:

- The Joint Committee was informed that Museum visits across all ten NMS sites for the period up to the end of January 2018 were 371,432 compared to 328,625 for the equivalent ten month period in 2016/17, a 13% increase on last year's very strong performance. This positive position for the year-to-date was largely attributable to a very strong events and exhibitions programme across all ten museums. However, the poor weather of the end of February 2018 and beginning of March 2018 would have a negative impact on the expected year-end total.
- The numbers of school visits to NMS museums for the period up to the end of January 2018 were 35,479 compared to 35,210 for the equivalent nine month period 2016/17, a 1% increase on last year's all time record-breaking figures. The poor weather in March 2018 and the excavation work in the Keep basement would, however, effect the total school figures for the year. The Service was expecting to exceed 400,000 visits across the 10 museums for 2017/18 and to maintain school visits at the 45,000+ level.
- The Chairman drew Members attention to the large amount of preparatory research work that had gone into '*The Square Box on the Hill*' exhibition that showcased the latest designs for the Castle's future as part of the HLF-funded 'Norwich Castle: Gateway to Medieval England' project. *The Square Box on the Hill* was complemented by *Inheritance*, an open art show supported by the East Anglia Art Fund (EAAF) and Brown & Co.
- At this point in the proceedings the Committee received a power point presentation by Dr Francesca Vanke, Keeper of Art and Curator of Decorative Art, about the forthcoming *Paston Treasure* exhibition programme. The presentation that was given to Members could be found on the Joint

Committee pages website. This major exhibition in collaboration with the Yale Center for British Art would gather together some of the extraordinary treasures depicted in the mysterious Paston Treasure painting for the first time in three centuries, featuring a number of very significant national and international loans. The first leg of this exhibition had recently opened at the Yale Center for British Art, Yale University, Connecticut – for more information please see:

<https://britishart.yale.edu/exhibitions/paston-treasure-microcosm-known-world>

Members drew attention to the extensive preparatory research work that had gone into putting together an exhibition of such an exceptionally high standard.

- Members drew attention to a significant increase in wedding bookings at NMS sites which exceeded 600 for the year and had had a positive impact on attendance figures and on the use of museum facilities.
- The Joint Committee was grateful to the Friends of the Norwich Museums and the Norfolk Museums Development Foundation for their work in supporting the Art Fund campaign to display the newly conserved Samson statue in the Museum of Norwich at the Bridewell.

11.4 The Joint Committee resolved to note progress:

- 1. Regarding development of the Gateway to Medieval England/Keep development project at Norwich Castle and to receive a presentation on the project Business Plan (see also minute 12).**
- 2. In terms of the 2017/18 programmes and key Service Plan priorities for the forthcoming financial year, 2018/19.**
- 3. In terms of developing the business plan for Arts Council England's new funding programme for 2018-22 (see also minute 11.5.7).**

11.5 The Joint Committee also resolved:

- 4. To invite the newly appointed Teaching Museum Trainees, who were about to start their 12 month placements, to attend the next Committee meeting and to introduce themselves and their work to Members.**
- 5. To place on record thanks to Dr Francesca Vanke, Keeper of Art and Curator of Decorative Art, for her presentation about the forthcoming *Paston Treasure* exhibition programme.**
- 6. To receive a presentation at the next meeting on the Heritage Lottery Fund's 'Kick the Dust' initiative, a new £10m grant programme which aimed to transform how heritage organisations engaged with young people.**
- 7. To note that Members of the Joint Committee would be invited later in spring 2018 to participate in a session about the creation of a new 5 year Strategy to cover the period 2018-2022. The Strategy would support the new NCC Strategic Plan 'Caring for our County' and would also respond to City and District strategic priorities. Additionally, the new 5 Year Strategy would take account of the recent findings in the Mendoza National Museum Review and the new priorities outlined by Arts Council England and by the Heritage Lottery Fund.**

12 Presentation by Steve Miller, Head of Museums, On The Gateway to Medieval England Project Business Plan

12.1 The Joint Committee received a power point presentation from Steve Miller, Assistant Director, Culture and Heritage and Head of Museums, about the Gateway to Medieval England Project Business Plan.

12.2 The power point presentation (which can be found on the Joint Museums Committee pages website) included details about the following:

- The Gateway to Medieval England project would link together the existing heritage assets in Norwich, including the Cathedrals, the medieval churches and the City walls and make Norwich Castle the premier heritage destination in the East of England.
- The Gateway to Medieval England project would provide a state of the art community venue supporting an extensive and creative programme of formal and informal learning events, alongside commercial functions.
- The main areas of focus for the business plan would be:
 - Visitor numbers and potential income growth through admissions
 - Development of the Museum Pass
 - The Castle retail offer, including the physical repositioning of the shop
 - The Café and catering offer
 - Conference & banqueting
 - Special events and exhibitions
 - Weddings and celebratory events
 - Marketing strategy
 - Learning offer
- The learning offer would include a dedicated space and focus on Early Years' learning. Ms Haynes offered to signpost/introduce some families or groups from the Norwich area who represented Under 7s who might be willing to help the NMS develop their new Early Years' offer.
- Members also spoke about the improvement in public toilet facilities that the project would bring to the museum including the new Changing Places facility, the first facility of its kind in a tourist attraction in Norfolk.
- The Joint Committee was of the view that the Business Plan had modelled projected income and expenditure until 2027/28 using a prudent set of assumptions rooted in the current known financial figures.
- The mix of new and existing activities within Norwich Castle were considered to be highly complementary.
- The Business Plan showed that the *Gateway to Medieval England project* was capable of making a significant financial contribution to both the long-term future of Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery and the financial sustainability of Norfolk Museums Service and the county-wide operation.
- Having discussed the Business Plan and the implications of the partial closure period the Joint Committee gave approval of the 'Norwich Castle: Gateway to Medieval England' Project Business Plan.

12.3 The Joint Committee resolved:

- 1. To reaffirm the decision taken earlier in the meeting to note progress regarding the development of the Gateway to Medieval England/Keep development project at Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery, and in accordance with its forward strategy, to give formal, delegated approval to proceed with the submission of the second round funding application to the Heritage Lottery Fund.**

2. To thank Steve Miller, Assistant Director, Culture and Heritage and Head of Museums, for his presentation.
3. To take up the kind offer in the meeting from Ms Haynes to signpost/introduce some families or groups from the Norwich area who represented Under 7s who might be willing to help the NMS develop their new Early Years' offer.

The meeting concluded at 3.55 pm.

Chairman

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