

Norfolk Records Committee

**Minutes of the Meeting held at the Norfolk Records Office
on 07 February 2020 at 10:30am in the Archive Centre, County Hall**

Present:

Norfolk County Council

Michael Chenery of Horsburgh (Chairman)
Cllr Phillip Duigan

Breckland Council

Cllr Robert Kybird (Vice-Chairman)

Broadland District Council

Cllr Grant Nurden

North Norfolk District Council

Cllr Virginia Gay

Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk

Cllr Elizabeth Nockolds

Norwich City Council

Cllr Sally Button
Cllr Marion Maxwell

Non-Voting Members

Co-Opted Members

Mr Alan Steynor

Representative of the Norwich Record Society

Dr G Alan Metters

Representative of the Bishop of Norwich

Revd Charles Read

Others Present

Mr G Tuson, the County Archivist

1. To receive apologies and details of any substitute members attending

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Michael Begley, Cllr Denise Carlo, The Lady Dannatt, Cllr Barry Duffin, Victor Morgan, Prof. Carole Rawcliffe, Cllr David Rowntree and Cllr Alan Waters (Cllr Marion Maxwell substituting). Also absent was Cllr Wainwright.

2. Minutes

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on the 8 November 2019 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

3. Items of Urgent Business

- 3.1 There were no items of urgent business discussed.
- 3.2 The meeting would be followed by a short, 15-minute presentation for Members
- 3.3 Dr Metters discussed the success of the public lecture on Maharajah Duleep Singh which had required 2 sessions to accommodate all attendees; it was noted that talks such as this increased the profile of the Record Office.

4. Declarations of Interest

- 4.1 The Chairman declared an interest at a trustee of NORAH (Norfolk Archives and Heritage Development Foundation).

5. Finance and Risk Report

- 5.1.1 The Committee received the report setting out the revenue budget for 2019/20, capital programme and reserves and provision, and an update on the service risk register.
- 5.1.2 The County Archivist introduced the report:
- A slight underspend was predicted which was likely to result in a balanced budget at year end 2019-20
 - The only risk highlighted as amber was RM13959, "loss of or reduction in funding"
 - RM13959 highlighted increased pressures in 2020-21 around income generation as it would be difficult to develop measures further
 - All parish registers had been licenced to family history websites and there were few further records that could be licenced to them to significantly increase revenue. Income from this source was based on the number of views
 - There was a £20+k increase in income generation requirements for 2020-21, putting pressure on the budget; some projects with external funding were likely to end in 2020-21 and this may put pressure on the service. The impact of these pressures was unclear at that time.
- 5.2 The following points were discussed and noted:
- A Member asked how often new risks were identified and how often the risk register was updated; The County Archivist reported that there was a consultation process in place around the existing risks with staff and they had been adjusted over time. The risks presented in the report were core risks to the service and project-based risks arose over time which sat below these service level risks
 - The County Archivist confirmed that risk number RM13963, "inability to continue collecting archives", which related to archive space at the Norfolk Record Office, would be affected if the Historic Environment Service moved into the archive.
- 5.3 Committee **CONSIDERED** and **COMMENTED** on:
1. Forecast position of the revenue budget, capital programme, reserves and provisions
 2. Management of risk for 2019/20

6. Norfolk Record Office Fees and Charges

- 6.1.1 The Committee received the report setting out details a proposed fees and charges schedule at the Norfolk Record Office from 1 April 2020.
- 6.1.2 The County Archivist introduced the report:
- There was a proposal to increase fees by approximately 10%; exceptions were that there would be no increase for use of digital cameras or cost of bespoke archive boxes
 - It was important that the search room was free of access to ensure it was

accessible, but anything above and beyond this was chargeable.

6.2 The following points were discussed and noted:

- The charge for use of digital cameras was not increasing because there had been feedback from visitors of the search room that the level of charging was high; it was common for users to use digital cameras to take photos of the documents
- Staff were on hand in the search room to remind users of correct document handling and provide support; so far, no major damage had been reported to documents in the search room
- The fees at the Record Office were mid-range compared to other counties
- The use of digital cameras in the search room was particularly beneficial in the case of documents which were not possible to photocopy
- The fees for transport of documents for exhibitions was queried; the County Archivist confirmed that this would normally be on a time-charge basis – the £54 per hour would be charged. All loans of records were required to have museum grade cases and standards; if not, then surrogates could be provided
- Some documents classed as unfit for reproduction could only be viewed in the conservation studio; based on surveys in other record offices, putting this provision in place could make a further 15% of the collection accessible to the public
- Following a query, Dr Metters confirmed that some church parishes still retained their own records; discussions were being held with them to encourage them to deposit them at the Norfolk Record Office. The Parish would retain ownership however this would enable them to be stored in an environment which would preserve the documents. The Chairman was concerned about ecclesiastical parish records being lost due to fire, flood or theft
- The issue of church parish digital data being preserved, such as website or email information, was discussed, as there were no policies or processes currently in place for this purpose in most parishes
- Revd Charles Read agreed to find out whose responsibility it was in parish churches to agree to deposit records.

6.3 The Committee **APPROVED** the schedule of fees and charges.

7. Move of Historic Environment Service to Norfolk Record Office

7.1.1 The Committee received the report providing a rationale for moving part of the Historic Environment Service from its current base to the Norfolk Record Office.

7.1.2 The County Archivist introduced the report:

- The consultation regarding moving the Historic Environment Service to County Hall, Norfolk Record Office and Shirehall had now ended
- If the service moved to the Norfolk Record Office, office space for staff and 45m² accommodation for collections in the strong room would need to be found
- Accommodating the Historic Environment Service records in the strong room would reduce useable expansion space to 2027, and long-term accommodation plans would need to be brought forward
- Moving the Historic Environment Service records to the Norfolk Record Office would improve their storage conditions
- The move would allow the offices at Gressenhall to be used as an income generation site.

- 7.2 The following points were discussed and noted:
- A reduction in budget savings had been negotiated in line with the proposed changes
 - The County Archivist clarified that the accommodation at Gressenhall had been identified as problematic due to issues such as the accessibility of the site, which was difficult to reach by public transport. The County Archivist also had concerns about the storage environment of documents on the site.
 - It would be difficult to obtain a grant for a building extension without involvement of integrated service, therefore having more services integrated into the building may be an advantage when applying for funding
 - A Member noted that having these documents on site could be an advantage as it could bring more visitors to the search room; it was noted that having the records in one location would be more convenient for customers
 - The County Archivist confirmed that there would not be space to fit all the Historic Environment Service team in the Record Office, however they would be co-located with teams they worked with for example the planning team in County Hall
 - The Vice-Chairman **proposed** a second recommendation was added in that the Committee note the increased pressure on storage space at the Record Office, which was agreed by the Committee.
- 7.3 The Committee:
- **APPROVED** the relocation of the Historic Environment Service from Gressenhall to the Norfolk Record Office
 - **NOTED** the increased pressure on storage space at the Norfolk Record Office

8. Archives for Wellbeing Network

- 8.1.1 The Committee received the report giving information on the grant received from the National Archives to set up an Archives for Wellbeing Network centred around the work to establish a string of Change Minds projects across the UK.
- 8.1.2 The County Archivist introduced the report:
- The project had been developed following on from the Change Minds project and interest received from other organisations to deliver their own Change Minds projects
 - Data had been gathered as part of this project and work had been carried out with the University of East Anglia to show that the methodology worked.
- 8.2 The following points were discussed and noted:
- The County Archivist clarified that the first two Change Mind projects worked with Together for Wellbeing who referred people into the project; the projects were targeted to people who would benefit from them the most
 - The County Archivist confirmed that the service had worked with Inspire, a Norfolk and Suffolk Foundation Trust consultative body, to develop project documentation and interview staff in preparation for the project
 - The ability to hold Change Minds sessions in the west of the County would be funding dependent
 - The project involved had involved a visit for participants to Gressenhall and sessions in libraries
 - A new grant had been awarded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund for Dr

Hills' Casebook: A Change Minds Project. This would use the same research sessions as before, but the creativity element would involve the writing and development of a play which would then tour in the autumn.

- The conference was likely to be in early 2021
- One of the outcomes of Change Minds was that people developed research skills which could be applied to family history.

8.3 The Committee **NOTED** the contents of the report and comment accordingly.

9. **Any Other Business**

9.1 Alan Steynor, Co-opted member representing NORAH, gave information to the Committee on events carried out to raise funding for the Charity. NORAH were encouraging people to join a supporter's scheme; for a subscription fee, supporters would receive benefits such as an archive box among others and invitations to special events.

9.2 The supporter's group were meeting on Thursday 13 February at 6pm in the Green room, the Archive Centre; Mr Steynor **invited** the Committee to attend this meeting where historical documents purchased by the Record Office through NORAH grants, would be on display for viewing.

Future Meetings:

Date	Time	Venue
3 April 2020	10:30	Green Room, Archive Centre, County Hall
3 July 2020	10:30	Green Room, Archive Centre, County Hall
30 October 2020	10:30	Green Room, Archive Centre, County Hall

The meeting ended at: 11.45

**Cllr Chenery of Horsbrugh,
Chairman of the Committee**



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