

NORFOLK JOINT MUSEUMS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting Held on 28 January 2022 at 2.00 pm at Norfolk County Council

Present:

Norfolk County Council

Cllr M Billig
Cllr B Duffin
Cllr J James
Cllr E Maxfield
Cllr S Penfold
Cllr R Savage
Cllr K Vincent
Cllr J Ward (Chair)

Norwich City Council

Cllr J Huntley

Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk

Cllr E Nockolds

Broadland District Council

Cllr D King

Breckland District Council

Cllr R Kybird

North Norfolk District Council

Cllr V Gay

1 Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Cllr J Brociek-Coulton, Cllr R Everett, Cllr G Freeman, Felicity Devonshire, Cllr M Schmierer, Mr L Wiseman and Mr D Keen.

2. Minutes

- 2.1 The minutes of the previous meeting held on 29 October 2021 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.

5 Breckland Area Museums Committee

- 5.1 Cllr Robert Kybird presented the annexed minutes of the Breckland Area Museums Committee meeting held on 22 November 2021 which were noted.
- 5.2 In introducing the minutes of the Area Committee Cllr Kybird referred to the following:
- There was a target completion date of 2024 for the work on the new displays at

the Ancient House Museum that would make more of the unusual connections with the Maharajah Duleep Singh and his family, especially his son Prince Frederick Duleep Singh. This date coincided with the 100th anniversary of the opening of the museum as well as the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Joint Museums Committee and the 20th anniversary of the opening of Time and Tide at Great Yarmouth.

- The Gressenhall Environmental Hub project was currently underway at Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse to help interpret and engage the public with wider NCC work and its priorities in relation to the environment. This project includes the installation of a new tree nursery on an area of ground at the farm which was being worked on over the winter period.
- The Chair said that many Parish and Town Councils across Norfolk (including Sprowston Town Council in his division) would also be creating tree nurseries as part of their participation in the NCC project to plant 1 Million Trees for Norfolk.

6 Norwich Area Committee

6.1 Cllr J. Huntley presented the annexed minutes of the Norwich Area Museums Committee meeting held on 7 December 2021 which were noted.

6.2 In introducing the minutes of the Area Committee Cllr J. Huntley referred to the following:

- The opportunity given to Norwich Members to visit Norwich Castle on a “Behind the Hoardings” tour before the start of the Area Committee meeting.
- The good progress that was being made in the Norwich area with the Kick the Dust project.
- Work by the NMS to develop its digital offer.
- Work by museum learning teams to welcome schools back into Norwich museums.
- The excellent feedback that the NMS was receiving from Museum Pass holders about the tote bag that they received as a thank you for their continuing support throughout the pandemic.

7 Kings Lynn and West Norfolk Area Committee

7.1 Cllr E Nockolds presented the annexed minutes of the King’s Lynn and West Norfolk Area Museums Committee meeting held on 18 October 2021 which were noted.

7.2 Cllr E Nockolds thanked the King’s Lynn Museums staff for their efforts delivering the service during the pandemic. She drew particular attention to the work as part of the *Kick the Dust* project and a new exhibition that told the story of gardens and gardening in King’s Lynn entitled ‘*Gardens, Sowing Seeds, Growing Stores*’ that ran until 12 June 2022. The displays told the story of gardens and gardening in the King’s Lynn area, including the display of collections from the Taylor’s seed merchants business in the town and material relating to the Walks and other public gardens.

8 Norfolk Museums Service - Finance Monitoring Report for 2021/22

8.1 The annexed report (8) by the Director of Culture & Heritage was received.

- 8.2** The Joint Committee received a report that covered the Norfolk Museums Service (NMS) forecast budget out-turn for 2021/22 and details about the latest monitoring position of the revenue budget, capital programme, reserves and provisions. The report also detailed savings proposals applied to the revenue budget for 2022/23.
- 8.3** Steve Miller, Director of Culture & Heritage, drew the Committee's attention to the following main issues for consideration by this Committee:
- The detailed budget position for 2021/22 was set out in the table at paragraph 1.1.2 of the report. The position was broadly similar to that reported to the previous meeting, although there was slightly less income from admissions and commercial activity in the lead up to Christmas 2021 due to Covid-19 than originally anticipated.
 - NMS budgetary pressures continued to be managed by the County Council at CES departmental level.
 - NMS continued to receive vital financial support from Government income support funds which helped the Service to provide a county-wide service and support critical projects over the short-medium term.
 - The table at paragraph 1.2 of the report set out the capital building programme for 2021/22.
 - The position regarding reserves and provisions was set out in paragraph 1.3 of the report.
 - The budget savings proposals for 2022/23 were set out in paragraph 1.4 of the report.
 - In reply to questions, it was pointed out that the NMS had more than 200 active volunteers who were working mostly on tasks that continued during the pandemic which would not otherwise be done by front of house or other members of staff. The considerable added value provided by volunteers would be explained in more detail in a report to a future meeting.

8.4 The Joint Committee resolved to note:

- **The latest monitoring position of the revenue budget, capital programme, reserves and provisions and forecast out-turn for 2021/22.**
- **The proposed budget savings and changes for 2022/23.**

9 Norfolk Museums Service - Risk Management Report

- 9.1** The annexed report (9) by the Director of Culture & Heritage was received.
- 9.2** The Joint Committee received a report that provided Members with the latest Norfolk Museums Service Risk Register for January 2022. The Norfolk Museums Service risk register was last reported to the Joint Museums Committee in October 2021.
- 9.3** The Committee's attention was drawn to the following issues:
- There were no material changes to the risk register since this matter was last reported to the Committee.
 - There remain financial implications for revenue generation resulting from the effects of previous site closures owing to COVID-19, and reduced visitor numbers to museums.
 - The target dates for risks RM14286 - Reduction of centralised support services

and RM14364 - Failure to deliver Arts Council England business plan 2018-22 had changed. The target date for risk RM14286 had been extended by three months to the beginning of July 2022 to allow for the embedding of the new MyOracle system and staff to familiarise themselves with it. For RM14364, with the Arts Council England business plan having been extended by one year to the end of the financial year 2022/23, the target date was adjusted to the beginning of April 2023 to mirror this.

9.4 The Joint Committee resolved:

To agree the active and dormant risks as per appendices A and B of the report, noting latest updates associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

10 Norfolk Museums Service – Performance & Strategic Update Report

10.1 The annexed report (10) by the Director of Culture and Heritage was received.

10.2 The Joint Committee received a report that provided progress with performance of Norfolk Museums Service over the current financial year 2021/22 including the Service's award-winning learning programmes and the Service's work with groups including Looked After Children, carers and foster families and vulnerable older residents across the County. The report also provided an update on all major projects, including the Norwich Castle: Gateway to Medieval England project and the National Lottery Heritage Fund supported youth development programme, Kick the Dust Norfolk.

10.3 The following points were discussed and noted:

- The Joint Committee heard how the NMS continued to develop its social media presence. Digital output remained high with Instagram and YouTube continuing to be the fastest growing social media platforms and covering a wide range of subjects. The Norwich Castle platforms were especially popular, primarily due to the increased output around the *Royal Palace Reborn* project, including a new series of weekly 'behind the hoardings' updates.
- Applications for the next round of Teaching Museum trainee recruitment were currently being assessed. The trainee roles were in the Collections Team, Communications, Norwich Castle Learning, and Western area. The new trainees would take up their posts on 1 April 2022.
- The Joint Committee's attention was drawn to the *Kick the Dust: Norfolk project*, funded through the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) and delivered in partnership with a range of organisations including YMCA Norfolk that had continued to engage with young people aged 11-25 throughout the COVID-19 lockdown period. The project team had adapted their activities to support existing groups across Norfolk, in particular YMCA groups, using digital means. There were some new and exciting opportunities for further funding that would be reported to the next meeting of the Joint Committee.
- NMS continued to work closely with Broadland and with South Norfolk to support a wide range of work linked to Market Towns, and a new digital offer and wider learning programme around Robert Kett.
- For marketing and audience development purposes NMS had detailed information about the characteristics of those who visited its museums.
- The NMS was working with partners in the New Anglia Culture Board on a

range of initiatives, including the Cultural Tourism project, supported by Arts Council England and the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership. This involved working on a collaborative destination marketing project, *Head East*, currently focused on East London (including Islington, Highbury, Angel) which included bus panels and the Underground stations. In reply to questions, it was noted that the digital marketing for the campaign was highly focused outside of Norfolk and its success was being carefully evaluated.

- In reply to questions, it was pointed out that if it were not for Covid-19, NMS would have been more involved (as it had in previous years) in this year's activities to mark Holocaust Memorial Day, when communities around the world remembered the millions of people killed in the Holocaust. NMS was planning for important stories about the Jewish community in Norwich and their history to be told as part of the new exhibitions planned for Norwich Castle.
- In reply to further questions, it was pointed out that NMS was involved in the promotion of the green heritage of Norfolk including the promotion of walking and cycling initiatives across the county. NMS was also involved in a wide range of work on diversity issues including the Arts Council England creative case for diversity. Details about work with Arts Council England and other partners on diversity issues would be brought to the next meeting.
- The Joint Committee was reminded that NMS was successful in its application to be included in the Arts Council England's National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) family for the period 2018-22 and that the Service had begun the process of applying for new National Portfolio Organisation funding over the coming months. Further updates will be given at the next JMC meeting.
- The Joint Committee gave its full support for the development of an expression of interest to the National Lottery Heritage Fund for the development of Time and Tide Museum in Great Yarmouth which would be 20 years old in July 2024. The museum had not received any significant capital investment since it first opened. The aim was for the development project to reinvent and reinterpret this historically significant building and its nationally important collections. The Joint Committee was informed about some recent successful diversity projects that involved material from the Great Yarmouth collections being used to interpret history in different ways and to sensitively engage with new and existing audiences.
- The Assistant Head of Museums gave an update on the work of the Norwich Castle Project Board and the schedule of works for the *Norwich Castle: Gateway to Medieval England Project* including updates on construction work, and the development of the British Museum Partnership Gallery of the Medieval Period. Details regarding the construction work and interpretation work were as set out in the periodic report and the subject of the next item on the agenda.

10.4 The Joint Committee resolved:

1. To note progress on the 2021/22 position in light of the continued impact of Covid-19.
2. To note progress regarding development of the Norwich Castle: Gateway to Medieval England project.
3. To note progress in terms of key Arts Council England and National Lottery Heritage Fund programmes for 2021/22 and the Service's planning relating to its future Arts Council England funding.
4. To fully support the development of an expression of interest to the

National Lottery Heritage Fund for the development of Time & Tide Museum.

- 11 To receive a presentation from Hannah Jackson, Project Manager, Norwich Castle: Royal Palace Reborn**
- 11.1** The Chair introduced Hannah Jackson, the Norwich Castle: Royal Palace Reborn Project manager, who gave a power point presentation on the progress of the project which would be made available after the meeting on the Committee pages website.
- 11.2** The Chair said that Members of the Joint Committee were welcome to take part in the 'behind the hoardings' tour of the construction site for the Norwich Castle: Royal Palace Reborn project on Monday 31st January 2022. The tour of the construction site would provide Committee Members with the opportunity to meet members of the project team and to see how work was progressing on the transformation of Norwich Castle. Following the tour, Members would be able to take part in a visit to the museum itself where there would be an opportunity to view the fascinating exhibitions Alfred Cohen: New Horizons and Textile Treasures, and to meet Curatorial colleagues involved with both shows.
- 11.3** The Joint Committee thanked Hannah Jackson for the interesting and informative presentation.

The meeting concluded at 4 pm.

Chair

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