

NORFOLK JOINT MUSEUMS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting Held at County Hall, Norwich on 2 November 2018 at 2.00pm

Present:

Norfolk County Council

Mr R Brame (substitute for Mr T Smith)
Mr P Duigan
Mr D Harrison
Mr H Humphrey
Mr G Nobbs
Mr M Storey
Mr J Ward (Chairman elected during meeting)

Norwich City Council

Dr E Fulton-McAlister
Dr J Huntley
Ms R Taylor

Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk

Mrs E Nockolds

Broadland District Council

Mr D Buck

Breckland District Council

Mr R Kybird

South Norfolk District Council

Mr R Savage

Co-opted Member (Non-Voting)

Museum Friends

Mrs F Devonshire

1 Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 The Chairman welcomed to the Committee Mr R Brame who was attending his first meeting of the Committee as a substitute for Mr T Smith.
- 1.2 Apologies for absence were also received from Mr B Lawn, Ms K Fawcett and Ms C Rumsby.

2. Minutes

- 2.1 The minutes of the previous meeting held on 26 July 2018 were confirmed by the Joint Committee and signed by the Chairman.
- 2.2 **Matter Arising:** With reference to minute 7.3, Dr E Fulton-McAlister agreed to fill the Labour vacancy on the Joint Museums Urgent Business Sub-Committee.

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 King's Lynn and West Norfolk Area Committee

- 5.1 The annexed report of the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Area Museums Committee meeting held on 3 September 2018 was presented by Mrs E Nockolds.
- 5.2 In introducing the report, Mrs E Nockolds drew the Committee's attention to the latest programme of museum activities at the Lynn Museum that were aimed at attracting a young and diverse audience.
- 5.3 It was **RESOLVED** to note the report.

6 Norwich Area Committee

- 6.1 The annexed report of the Norwich Area Museums Committee meeting held on 11 September 2018 was presented by Dr E Fulton-McAlister.
- 6.2 In introducing the report, Dr E Fulton-McAlister referred to the success of *The Paston Treasure: Riches and Rarities of the Known World* exhibition at the Castle Museum which was now closed and to the *Armistice: Legacy of the Great War in Norfolk*, a major centenary exhibition commemorating the end of the First World War, which runs until 6 January 2019.
- 6.3 Members were introduced to the 2018-19 cohort of museums trainees who delivered a huge range of impressive projects and programmes across the county. Each of the trainees explained the wide range of work that they undertook for the NMS.
- 6.4 Members spoke about the untapped commercial opportunities that might be available to the NMS from the recording and showing on film of major exhibitions. In reply, the Assistant Director Community and Environmental Services (Culture & Heritage), said that producing DVD film recordings of major exhibitions was now standard practice within the NMS. A film recording of the Paston Treasure would be entered into a national competition for a prestigious award. The NMS would be happy to consider further how film recordings of major exhibitions could be made more widely available to the public and to report back to a future meeting of the Committee on this matter.
- 6.5 The Committee's attention was drawn to the work of Dr John Davies, Chief Curator and Project Director and Angela Riley, Project Manager, who had successfully led the Heritage Lottery Fund application for the *Norwich Castle: Gateway to Medieval England* project, which brought the total funding for the project from the National Lottery to £9.2m (see minute 9.3).
- 6.6 Members were informed that Dr John Davies would be retiring from the museums service at the end of November 2018 after 27 years of service and that Dr Robin Hanley, Assistant Head of Museums would be stepping into the role of leading the *Norwich Castle: Gateway to Medieval England* project.
- 6.7 The Committee placed on record their thanks to Dr Davies for his support and

contribution to the NMS and praised both him and Colly Mudie, Norwich Learning Manager and others who were also retiring from the NMS for their contribution to the work of the Committee, the Norfolk Museums Service and the Castle Keep Project.

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

7 Finance Monitoring Report for 2018/19

7.1 The annexed report (7) by the Assistant Executive Director, Community and Environmental Services was received.

7.2 The Committee was informed that the NMS had anticipated underspends from salary budgets due to turnover of staff and changes in posts that were necessary to achieve overall control of the NMS budget. As part of the overall recruitment approach in the Community and Environmental Services Department, the NMS actively reviewed vacancies and, where they arose, took opportunities to test out new ways of working, including alternative ways to structure and manage work allocation within teams. The County Council's Communities Committee received regular reports on this matter.

7.3 Members suggested that in adapting to climatic change the NMS should not only give careful thought to the environmental conditions required for the display of museum objects but should also consider the impact on admission policies and approaches to museum attendances. Evidence from elsewhere suggested that climatic change had started to impact on visitor patterns for a wide range of cultural activities.

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

The latest monitoring position of the revenue budget, capital programme, reserves and provisions and forecast out-turn for 2018/19.

8 Risk Management Report

8.1 The annexed report (8) by the Assistant Director, Community and Environmental Services was received.

8.2 The Joint Committee received a report that provided Members with the latest Norfolk Museums Service Risk Register as at October 2018.

8.3 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 the risks on the register and of a new risk that was added to the register to stress the importance of the NMS successfully delivering Arts Council England business plans, including the Arts Council's requirements around the Creative Case for Diversity which was the subject of a presentation at the end of the meeting.

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

- 1. The new risk RM14364 - Failure to deliver Arts Council England business plan 2018-22 (see Appendix A to the report).**
- 2. That risks have been split into active risks (Appendix A to the report) and dormant risks (Appendix B to the report).**

9 Norfolk Museums Service – Performance & Strategic Update Report

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

9.2 The Joint Committee received a report that provided progress with performance over the current financial year 2018/19, details as to museum education and learning programmes, marketing and PR, partnerships, commercial developments, Norwich Castle Keep and other strategic developments, NMS fundraising and delivery against the Arts Council England and Heritage Lottery Fund programmes.

9.3 During discussion, the following key points were noted:

- The Joint Committee was pleased to hear that the NMS had secured the second round Heritage Lottery Fund support for the Norwich Castle: Gateway to Medieval England project which brought the total funding for the project from the National Lottery to £9.2m.
- Securing this level of funding had required a strong team effort from staff, volunteers and partners.
- As well as major National Lottery funding, the Castle Keep project had received funds from a wide range of partners and from the public who had raised money through the 'Keep Giving' campaign and an 'Adopt an Object' scheme. The NMS remained deeply grateful to many other funders and stakeholders including the additional support from the Norwich Freeman's Charity as well as the support of the University of East Anglia— the project's new official Academic Partner.
- The developed Keep was expected to open to the public in 2020.
- The summer of 2018 was particularly challenging because the hot weather had made outdoor activities more attractive than visiting a museum. This was reflected in the visitor figures that were included in the report. The NMS remained hopeful of achieving c 400,000 visitors across the 10 museum for 2018/19 and of mainlining school visits at around the 45,000+ level.
- It was suggested that attendances might be increased by developing links between local history subjects (such as the life of Thomas Paine) and the curriculum of American schools and by targeting publicity material of interest to Americans at Norfolk Parish Councils that were close to American military bases. This approach had worked well when it was done in the past.
- The Committee's attention was drawn to a major national Summit that would be hosted by The New Anglia Cultural Board in Norwich on 8/9 November 2018, supported by Arts Council England and the New Anglia LEP.

9.4 The Joint Committee resolved:

- 1. To note progress regarding development of the Norwich Castle: Gateway to Medieval England project.**
- 2. To note the position for the current financial year 2018/19, including delivery against the Arts Council England and Heritage Lottery Fund programmes.**
- 3. To note that Members of the Committee would be invited to attend a formal leaving event at the Castle Museum on Friday 30 November 2018 for Dr John Davies.**

10 The Arts Council England Creative Case for Diversity

- 14.1** Jo Warr, Head of Development, NMS, gave the Joint Committee a PowerPoint presentation on the Arts Council England Creative Case for Diversity.
- 14.2** The Creative Case for Diversity was Arts Council England's new approach to diversity and equality; a way of exploring how organisations such as the NMS could enrich the work they did by embracing a wide range of influences and practices.
- 14.3** Members were informed that this represented a major shift in perspective from Arts Council England, from regarding diversity as an aspect of equality legislation to understanding its creative potential and the ways in which it could promote long-term organisational resilience.
- 14.4** The Arts Council England definition of diversity encompassed responding to issues around race, ethnicity, faith, disability, age, gender, sexuality, class and economic disadvantage and any social and institutional barriers that prevented people from participating in and enjoying cultural activities.
- 14.5** Members spoke about how the NMS could respond positively to this new approach by using collections to tell new museum stories that gave a greater understanding of issues linked to diversity and in so doing attract a wider audience of visitors.

The meeting concluded at 3.50 pm.

Chairman

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