

Norfolk Records Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on 1 April 2022 at 10.30 am at County Hall Norwich

Present:

Norfolk County Council

Cllr Michael Chenery of Horsbrugh (Chair)
Cllr A Birmingham
Cllr P Duigan

Norwich City Council

Cllr M Maxwell (sub for Cllr A Waters)

Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk

Cllr E Nockolds

Breckland Council

Cllr R Kybird (Vice-Chair)

North Norfolk District Council

Cllr V Gay

Non-Voting Members

Representative of the Bishop of Norwich

Rev'd C Read

Representative of the Norfolk Record Society

Dr G A Metters

1 To receive apologies and details of any substitute members attending

- 1.1** Apologies for absence were received from Cllr B Duffin, Lady Dannatt, Cllr A Haynes, Cllr D King, Dr V Morgan, Prof. C Rawcliffe, Mr A Steynor, Cllr V Thomas, Cllr T Wainwright and Cllr A Waters.

2 Minutes

- 2.1** The minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2022 were confirmed as an accurate record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.

3 Declarations of Interest

- 3.1** The Chairman declared an "other interest" as a trustee of NORAH (Norfolk Archives and Heritage Development Foundation).

4 Items of Urgent Business

- 4.1** There was no urgent business.

5 Finance and Risk

- 5.1** The Committee received a report outlining the Norwich Record Office revenue budget for 2021/22, capital programme and reserves and provisions and an update on the service risk register.
- 5.2** The following points were discussed and noted:

- The Record Office was currently forecast to achieve a balanced budget position for 2021/22.
- Since the previous meeting, two of the risks listed in the risk register were reduced to “Amber” (there were: RM13959 ‘Loss of or reduction in funding and RM14165 ‘Failure to collect, preserve and make accessible new formats of archive’).
- It was noted that digitally born records were kept in a widely accessible format using processes that met with international standards. While the numbers of digitally generated records were currently small, there were expected to quickly increase in number.
- In reply to questions it was pointed out that the Record Office provided guides on its websites about the kinds of records that should be stored with the Record Office. These guides were particularly helpful to organisations and individuals who were unfamiliar with the process for depositing records.

5.3 The Committee **CONSIDERED** and **COMMENTED** on:

1. Forecast position of the revenue budget, capital programme, reserves and provisions.

2. Management of risk for 2021/22.

6 Norfolk Record Office Performance Report

6.1 The Committee received a report that outlined progress towards delivering the Norfolk Record Office (NRO) Service Plan between 1 October 2021 and 31 March 2022. The Committee was also presented with a short film on the screens in the Council Chamber about the Change Minds partnership project.

6.2 The following points were discussed and noted:

- The County Archivist explained the wide range of work that continued to be done to make the Norfolk Record Office more accessible to new audiences.
- It was pointed out that the programme of events during the previous six months had included new hybrid events, along with some in-person and online events work with volunteers.
- Archive Skills sessions that gave people the skills to discover, read and understand archives for themselves had proven to be particularly popular.
- Since the previous meeting the Change Minds partnership between the Restoration Trust and the Norfolk Record Office was awarded a £249K National Lottery Heritage Fund grant for the Scaling Up Change Minds project. A project officer had recently been appointed to work on the project along with evaluation, web development and educational consultants.
- The Committee was pleased to be able to note that Richard Johnson, who has been a part of Change Minds since 2018, had won the Heritage Alliance’s Heritage Hero Award. Richard Johnson first participated in Change Minds in 2018, when he became profoundly impressed by the life, work and character of Dr William Hills, Medical Superintendent of Norfolk County Asylum from 1861 to 1887 and began research that revealed new evidence about the history of mental health treatment. In reply to questions from a member, the County Archivist agreed to speak to Richard Johnson about the possibility of his work being published by the Norfolk Record Society.

- A short film about the work of the Change Minds project that featured the work of Richard Johnson was shown in the Council Chamber.
- Members were pleased to hear that as Covid-19 restrictions were relaxed: on-demand document ordering had resumed; the searchroom service had been extended and the King's Lynn Borough Archive had reopened to the public.
- In reply to questions, the County Archivist explained how the volunteers were managed through the work of a senior archivist.
- The Committee asked that a letter be sent to Rachel Farmer, the ex-Support Services Manager, who had recently retired from the Record Office after more than three decades of service. Rachel's post was replaced with a new role: Remote and Support Services Manager and other members of the NRO management team had taken on new responsibilities for building management, health and safety, and public services management.

6.3 The Committee CONSIDERED and COMMENTED on the contents of the report and the actions taken by the Record Office to provide a service during this period between 1 October 2021 and 31 March 2022.

7 Future Meetings

7.1 The dates of future meetings were noted:

22 July 2022 10.30 am
28 October 2022 10.30 am
3 February 2023 10.30 am
14 April 2023 10.30 am

The meeting concluded at 11.20 am.

Cllr Michael Chenery of Horsbrugh, Chair of the Committee



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