

Norfolk Records Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on 29 October 2021 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 A Haynes

Breckland Council

Cllr R Kybird (Vice-Chair)

Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk

Cllr E Nockolds

North Norfolk District Council

Cllr V Gay

South Norfolk District Council

Cllr B Duffin

Non-Voting Members

Representative of the Bishop of Norwich

Rev'd C Read

1 To receive apologies and details of any substitute members attending

- 1.1** Apologies for absence were received from Lady Dannatt, Cllr D King, Dr G A Metters, 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 23 July 2021 were confirmed as an accurate record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.

2.2 Minute 10 Matter Arising: Mr Michael Begley

With reference to minute 10 of the previous meeting, the Chair signed a letter (which had been produced on archival paper and in a presentational box) for the County Archivist to send to Mr Michael Begley to commemorate his retirement from the Committee after many years of service.

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 2020/21, 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 2020/21.
- Emergency grant funding had continued to be sought from the Government to help meet the predicted loss of income for the Service during the extended period of closure and reduction in normal activity due to Covid-19.
- The Record Office had plans for more on-line services. Demand for such services would increase significantly after the release of the 1921 census information.
- It was pointed out that only minor adjustments were made in the risk register since this matter was last reported to the Committee in June 2021.

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 2020/21.

6 Performance Report

6.1 The Committee received a report that provided information on the Record Office's progress towards delivering the Norfolk Record Office (NRO) Service Plan between 1 April 2021 and 30 September 2021.

6.2 The following points were discussed and noted:

- A report on the long-term aims of the Norfolk Record Office was presented to the previous meeting.
- Work continued to be done to enable new audiences to benefit from the use of archives and to record evidence within the local community about the pandemic. This was being done through a mixture of online and in-person events, workshops, talks and displays, work with schools and through work with the Restoration Trust as part of the Change Minds partnership which provided courses that combined archive research and creativity to improve the mental wellbeing of those experiencing problems.
- The Change Minds Project continued to receive much interest at the national level. The Norfolk Record Office continued to develop and submit funding applications for Change Minds UK in conjunction with the Restoration Trust. Further funding was being applied for which would enable the project to expand its work on this project in Norfolk and beyond, thereby providing wellbeing support services to extend the benefits of this high-quality project to a larger audience. In reply to questions, it was pointed out that the Norfolk Record Office aimed to create a national hub that placed it at the forefront of developments in this field of work. People aged in their 20s to those in their 70s had benefited from the Change Minds sessions. Some of the evidence work with the UEA in support of the project could be found on the Change Minds website. The County Archivist was asked to provide Members of the Committee with an update outside of the meeting

on the most recent work in support of the project.

- The County Archivist was also asked to provide a briefing note for Cabinet Members at District Council level on Record Office initiatives (such as the Change Minds Project and work to record the pandemic) that were being undertaken by the Record Office.
- The Committee heard that the Paston Exhibition (which was produced in partnership with the UEA and the Paston Heritage Society and funded through a significant lottery grant) was proving to be a great success although visitor numbers were impacted by the pandemic. Those Members of the Committee who had not already do so were encouraged to visit the exhibition which had been extended for a further two weeks.
- The Record Office had agreed previously that due to budgetary pressures future large scale exhibitions would require external funding. The next NORAH meeting would discuss ideas for future use of the Long Gallery exhibition space.
- From September 2021, the Record Office had reduced some of the restrictions on building access which meant that more people were able to make use of searchroom facilities and did not have to book all their documents in advance of their visit.
- A survey was being undertaken to obtain detailed data for planning environmental conditions within the Record Office strong rooms as part of future planning for the use of the building.
- Work had been done to maximise the use of the strong rooms.
- Members were pleased to hear about plans to resume the on-line volunteer programme in November 2021.
- The County Archivist answered questions about the most significant of the 126 accessions take on by the Record Office during the period covered by the report and how such documents were themselves accessioned.
- Work on the migration and collection of metadata to improve its long-term sustainability and future use continued to take place. The authority files within the catalogue provided specific access points and were being developed as part of a new way of working with data.
- Members spoke about the importance of the information held within Norwich Diocese Consistory Court Deposition Books some of which had recently have been catalogued in detail.

6.3 The Committee CONSIDERED and COMMENTED on the actions taken by the Record Office to provide a service during this period and APPROVED the continued implementation of the Record Office Service Plan.

7 Future Meetings

7.1 The dates of future meetings were noted:

28 January 2022 10.30 am

1 April 2022 10.30 am

The meeting concluded at 11.20 am.

Cllr Michael Chenery of Horsbrugh, Chair of the Committee



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