

NORFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN AND WEST NORFOLK

KING'S LYNN AND WEST NORFOLK AREA MUSEUMS COMMITTEE

**Notes of a Meeting of the above Committee held on
Monday 6 July 2009 at 2.15 pm
in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn**

PRESENT:

Councillor Mrs E A Nockolds	- Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk
Councillor Mrs J Murphy	- Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk
Councillor R Searle	- Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk
Mr T Humphreys	- Tourism Manager, Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk
Mrs W Vincent	- Democratic Services Officer, Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk
County Councillor M Langwade	- Norfolk County Council
County Councillor M Chenery of Horsbrugh	- Norfolk County Council
County Councillor B Long	- Norfolk County Council
County Councillor A J Wright	- Norfolk County Council
Dr R Hanley	- Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service
Michael Dennis	- Green Quay (<i>arrived at 2.20 pm</i>)

Apologies for absence were received from V Trevelyan, D Higgins and Borough Councillor A Tyler (*immediately following the meeting*).

1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

RESOLVED: That Councillor Mrs E Nockolds be appointed as Chairman for the remainder of the Municipal Year.

2 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

RESOLVED: That County Councillor A J Wright be appointed as Vice-Chairman for the remainder of the Municipal Year.

3 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 2 March 2009 were confirmed as a correct record.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

5 REPORTS OF THE AREA MUSEUMS OFFICER

(a) King's Lynn Museums Report – March to May 2009

The Chairman congratulated the Western Area Manager on his permanent appointment with Breckland and West Norfolk.

The Western Area Manager presented a report which provided Members with information on King's Lynn Museums from March to May 2009.

The following points were highlighted by the Western Area Manager.

- The Lynn Museums was currently in its charging period, which runs from April to September 2009. Visitor numbers had continued to be encouraging. Both the Town House and Lynn Museum were supporting the June EDP £2 admission scheme and would also be offering a "2 for 1" deal as part of a planned Borough Council summer promotion. Both museums continue to participate in the Discover King's Lynn voucher scheme.
- The next temporary exhibition at Lynn Museum will be Comings and Goings: King's Lynn Trade from Medieval times to the 20th century. This exhibition forms parts of the Hanse Festival programme and will run from 4 July to 26 September 2009. The exhibition will highlight the role of the Medieval Hanseatic traders; Medieval pilgrims; whaling fleets, the coming of the railways and the building of the docks in the Victorian period.
- During the Easter holidays, local children were able to participate in an Easter Chick Hunt at the Lynn Museum. There was also an Easter bonnet making event at the Town House Museum on 7 April.
- In partnership with Norfolk Library and Information Service, storytelling sessions for children ran at Lynn Museum on 15 and 17 April.
- On 27 May local children came to Lynn Museum to participate in the Create A Quayside! Event. This involved the creation of a frieze depicting Medieval Lynn, which will be displayed as part of the Hanse Festival temporary exhibition.
- Work was continuing on the second phase of collections rationalisation currently stored in the Town Hall and at Aickman's Yard. A number of objects had already been successfully re-homed, including a number of 1930's radios that had been used in an exhibition at the new National Trust Centre.
- Work continued on a major programme of reorganisation and repacking of reserve collections held in King's Lynn.
- King's Lynn Museums were continuing to host a UEA postgraduate Museology student placement for 2 days per week, providing support for the Curator. The current student placement was due to expire at

the end of next year, but a further student placement had been confirmed.

- A new mobile display drawer had been installed in the Lynn Museum. This unit facilitated the secure display of items.
- The Friends of King's Lynn Museums were running a varied programme for members and membership levels remain strong.
- NMAS staff will be supporting the programme of Friends lunchtime lectures during 2009.
- The Friends continued to provide strong support and raise funds to enable objects to be purchased. They continued to provide assistance with the garden at the Town Hall Museum. The Friends took a stand to the Gressenhall History Fair on 25 May.
- NMAS continuing to assist the Borough Council with the ongoing review of the Town Hall.
- NMAS continuing to work with the Borough Council on the Walks restoration project.
- King's Lynn Museums continued to lead the Greater Fens Museums Partnership as part of the NMAS role as lead partner for the East of England Hub for Renaissance in the Regions.
- The Fenland Project Officer was supporting a Fenland Partnership working group in developing the next Fenland exhibition on the theme of Fenland Stories. A new partnership website was being developed to complement this project.
- NMAS continued to support the HLF-funded development project at True's Yard Museum and was represented on the specialist advisory group which met monthly to review progress and provide specialist advice and support.
- Learning and Outreach – the 2009-10 programme for schools was currently under review. A more detailed report would be presented to the Committee at its November meeting.
- The Learning Officer was working with Park High School on a transition summer school based on the theme, P-Pick Up a Penguin.
- The new Community Outreach Officer, Marie Kennedy, took up post on 1 June. An outline of her role and priorities were provided.
- The Community Outreach Officer was currently planning the 2009 summer outreach programme, the details of which were tabled. An update report would be given to the Committee later in 2009.
- King's Lynn Museums continued to offer a broad range of adult education courses. Pilot courses had been run and two more courses were planned for the autumn.
- Following the successful funding bid for £25,000 to the HLF Young Roots Programme, the Picture This project was being taken forward by the new Community Outreach Officer. A further detailed update report would be provided at the November meeting.

The visitor figures to King's Lynn Museums were tabled. It was reported that the figures compared well for the Lynn Museum and Town House Museum with the previous year. The Western Area Manager reported that the Museums Service were currently working with local schools in order to review

the programme offered. The Chairman reminded the Committee that they could present their Member Identity Card to either Museum and be given a tour. The Western Area Manager invited any Member to contact him if they wished to take up such an offer to receive a guided tour of either museum. The list of forthcoming events would continue to be circulated to Members for information purposes.

Councillor Long referred to sections 1.4, 1.5 and 1.6 of the report and commented that it would be useful to know the attendance levels. In response, the Western Area Manager agreed to provide the figures and also include attendance levels in future reports. He explained that between 15 – 20 participants usually attended such events. The Chairman advised that attendance levels would be detailed in the Community Outreach Officer's report.

In response to a question regarding the level of funding received for the England Hub for Renaissance, the Western Area Manager explained that for the Fenland Project, £80,000 plus a project officer had been received over a period of 2 years.

Councillor Langwade made reference to paragraph 4.4 of the report. He enquired if a formal approach had been made to the Marshland Smeeth IDB. In response, the Western Area Manager explained that Marshland Smeeth had been involved in the Feast of Fenland project and that Bryan Howling had attended meetings. The Western Area Manager outlined the difficulties of schools visiting such sites because of health and safety issues. He advised that Jamie Everitt the Museums Development Officer for Norfolk was available to provide assistance.

Councillor Searle commented on the marketing and publicising of events, in particular, the children's events and suggested more joint working with officers in the Corn Exchange, Guildhall, etc to create more interest in museums. In response, the Western Area Manager explained that he would be pleased to see more joint working in the future and welcomed the suggestion of working with other organisations. He added that the blue flyer advertising children's events was distributed through local schools on a cluster basis. The local media covered such events and provided additional advance publicity.

In response to further comments, it was noted that the events organised by the Community Outreach Officer encouraged more families to visit museums. Due to the demand for the workshops, an extra event was organised at Barroway Drove. The Committee was also reminded on the MOSAIC postcode survey results that detailed the demographic profile and geographical location of visitors to museums.

The Western Area Manager explained the process of the rationalisation of items and informed the Committee that once the rationalisation programme was completed, a news release would be issued. A visit to Aickman's Yard would be organised for the Committee later in 2009.

The Chairman enquired if the travelling exhibition – Fenland Stories could visit the Green Quay. The Western Area Manager advised that Stuart Hall would liaise with Michael Dennis, Manager of the Green Quay.

The Western Area Manager reported that the HLF Young Roots programme, the Picture This project was being taken forward by the new Community Outreach Officer. The project would be completed by the summer of 2010. Currently, the young people involved were creating films and would produce a short series to form part of a travelling exhibition. A website would also be launched providing a virtual exhibition.

The Chairman thanked the Western Area Manager for the detailed report.

RESOLVED: (1) That the report be noted.

(2) A site visit be organised to Aickman's Yard later in 2009.

5 REPORT OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL

The Tourism Manager presented a report that updated Members of the Committee on the operation of the tourism and heritage facilities operated by the Borough Council and apologised for the lateness of the report. The report also provided a summary of the recent Sea Change application and an update on work of the Town Hall project team in connection with the King's Lynn Heritage and Cultural Asset Buildings Review.

The following points were highlighted as set out below:

- Visitor numbers – the total number of visitors to the Borough Council's Tourist Information Centre in King's Lynn and Hunstanton during the period January – June 2009 had totalled 100,027, around 1.3% more than in 2008. In Hunstanton the total of 61,436 was the highest for this six month period since 2004.
- Downham Market TIC – Since April 2009, the method of recording the number of people using the TIC facility had been changed. Figures now recorded actual counter enquiries rather than also recording looking at/collecting information. Figures for April – June were 333 desk enquiries and 407 all enquiries.
- Tales of the Old Gaol House – Visitors for the period January – March 2009 were down compared with 2008, but had been up on 2008 for the period April – June. Overall for the full 6 month period figures were 7% down.
- Custom House – the special Hanse exhibition at the Custom House was officially opened by the Mayor on 30 June and will remain open until 31 October 2009.
- Red Mount Chapel and The South Gate – a team of around 25 volunteers had been working with the Venues and Attractions Manager to provide regular public access to The Red Mount Chapel for the first time in 2009. Red Mount had been jointly promoted with South Gate with a £1.00 joint ticket covering admission to both venues. Over the

first 11 opening dates, a total of 875 people had visited Red Mount and 311 people had visited the South Gate.

- Discover King's Lynn – discover King's Lynn and the associated discount vouchers were published and distributed in mid March. An assessment of usage can be provided at the next Area Museums Committee.
- West Norfolk Advertising Campaign – between January and June the 2009 advertising campaign had generated a total of 32,873 direct brochure enquiries. The annual target 42,000 was well on track. The joint seaside campaign undertaken with 5 other coastal resorts in East Anglia had generated over 15,300 additional brochure requests.
- Hunstanton and Downham Market Information - Hunstanton Mini Guide was updated for 2009, with an increased print run of 15,000 copies produced. The Hunstanton events guide was also produced. The Downham Market Mini Guide was updated and published and an increased print run of 10,000 distributed within a 5-6 mile catchment area.
- King's Lynn Town Guides Leaflet – following the initial print run of 5,000, an additional 2,000 King's Lynn Town Guided Walks leaflets had been printed. Information on numbers participating in Walks would be reported to the next meeting on 2 November 2009.
- Hanseatic King's Lynn and the Hanseatic Town Walk –A new guide to Hanseatic King's Lynn which featured a new self guided Hanseatic trail, devised by Dr Paul Richards was near completion. This will be a permanent guide and will be produced in English and German.
- King's Lynn Hanse Festival – 30 July to 2 August. Full details of the event are publicised on the website www.kingslynnhansefestival.com and in the festival guide.
- Signposting and Visitor Information – Work had commenced on the review of pedestrian sign posting and information. An initial report setting out recommendations for improvement will be presented at the next meeting on 2 November 2009.
- Hunstanton Promenade – Following the development of the Master Plan in September 2008 for the Southern Seafront and Town Centre of Hunstanton, work had been taking place to develop a new design framework for the Promenade. An application had been made to acquire funding through the Sea Change programme. The decision would be announced early October. A summary of the Sea Change project application was attached at Appendix 1 to the report. The outcome of the application would be reported at the next meeting.
- King's Lynn Heritage and Cultural Asset Buildings Review – A project team had been working to assess the viability and develop more detailed proposals on how the recommendations for the Town Hall could be developed. The work undertaken to date by the project team was outlined as detailed in paragraphs 5.1 to 5.8 in the report. It was noted that current service reviews being undertaken by the Borough Council might impact on net budgets for the Town Hall complex, including Tales of the Old Gaol House.

The Chairman reported that the Leader of the Council's aim was to make the Town Hall more accessible to the public; therefore the work being undertaken would provide a long term vision for the building. Councillor Searle was a member of the Review Panel.

In response to questions regarding the potential new facilities for the Archive, the Tourism Manager confirmed that consideration would be given to the risk of flooding. In addition to the proposed location being at higher ground level than the current repositories, different approaches to address the risk of flood along with other risks would be fully addressed at an architectural and design stage.

Councillor Mrs Murphy enquired on the progress of sign posting from the main trunk road into King's Lynn. In response, the Chairman explained that following this important issue being raised at the Joint Museums Committee, a joint meeting of Norfolk authorities had been arranged by South Norfolk District Council to consider tourism signposting issues. Unfortunately, neither the Tourism Manager or the Chairman had been able to attend. The minutes of that meeting were not yet available. However, the new Hanse signs were now in place.

With regard to the Town Guides, Councillor Searle asked if the walks offered were widely promoted and if a sufficient number was being provided. The Tourism Manager explained that 86 guided walks were offered between April and the end of September. For 2009, 3 new themed walks had been introduced. In addition, organised talks for groups were also undertaken by the Guides. There were currently around 25 guides. The Tourism Manager described the King's Lynn Town Guide training scheme which the guides had introduced in 2006/2007 in consultation with the Borough Council. This had been developed as an alternative to national training through the Institute of Town Guides which he understood cost in excess of £500 per trainee. He reminded members that each individual King's Lynn Town Guides provided their services on a voluntary basis.

The comment was made that perhaps more self-guided trails should be made available for people visiting the town. The Chairman explained that the Pilgrimage trail offered a self-guided tour. The Discover King's Lynn Map also set out a suggested route to follow.

In response to a comment made on "tapping" into the pilgrims visiting Walsingham, Councillor Chenery of Horsburgh agreed to liaise with the Tourism Manager and provide contact details.

The Chairman thanked the Tourism Manager for his informative report.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

6 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Co-opted Youth Representative

The Chairman sought the Committee's views on sending a letter to the current youth representative enquiring if she was still able to attend meetings at 2.15 pm.

RESOLVED: (1) The Chairman, on behalf of the Committee, would send a letter to the youth representative enquiring if she is still able to attend future meetings.

(2) If the current youth representative is unable to attend, contact be made with secondary schools in September seeking a replacement youth representative in time for the November 2009 meeting.

Borough Council Representative – Vacancy

The Chairman informed those present that Councillor Langwade would be representing the County Council, therefore, the Community and Culture Panel would appoint a new Borough Council representative.

2009 Museums and Heritage Excellence Awards

The Western Area Manager advised that the Sea Henge Gallery had not been successful in the above awards.

Membership of the Joint Museums Committee

The Chairman informed those present of the details of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman as set out below:

Chairman – County Councillor Dunn
Vice-Chairman – Councillor Bracey

7 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 2 November 2009 at 2.15 pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, King's Lynn

If any Member is unable to attend this meeting, please could they forward apologies to the Democratic Services Officer well in advance of the meeting.

The Meeting closed at 3.51 pm