

**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 15 March 2010 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 R Searle	- Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk
Councillor Mrs S Smeaton	- Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk
Councillor A Tyler	- Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk <i>(left the meeting at 3.30 pm)</i>
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 Chenery of Horsburgh	- Norfolk County Council
County Councillor B W C Long	- Norfolk County Council
County Councillor J Mickleburgh	- Norfolk County Council
County Councillor A J Wright	- Norfolk County Council
County Councillor Mr S Dunn	- Chairman of Joint Museums Committee
Dr R Hanley	- Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service

The Chairman welcomed Mr S Dunn, Chairman of the Joint Museums Committee and County Councillor Mrs J Mickleburgh (substitute for County Councillor M Langwade) to the meeting.

**1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors M Langwade and R Rockcliffe and Borough Councillor Mrs J Murphy.

**2 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 4 January 2010 were confirmed as a correct record.

### **3**     **MATTERS ARISING**

#### Appointment of Youth Representative

The Chairman reported that contact had been made with the Youth Representative of the West Norfolk Parliament. An email response was received stating that a new representative would be elected in February 2010. The Democratic Services Officer advised that to date the details of the new representative had not been forwarded.

County Councillor Long suggested that the details be ascertained via the Youth Parliament website.

**RESOLVED:** The Democratic Services Officer would ascertain the relevant contact details for the newly elected representative of the West Norfolk Parliament via the Website. The Youth representative would then be invited to attend future meetings of the Committee

#### Presentation by the Community Outreach Worker

The Chairman advised that the Community Outreach Worker was unable to give a presentation to this meeting of the Committee as she was required to attend an important meeting relating to funding. She would, however, attend the next meeting on 14 June and give a PowerPoint presentation to Members.

### **4**     **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

### **6**     **REPORTS OF WESTERN AREA MANAGER**

#### **(a)**    **King's Lynn Museums Report – January to February 2010**

The Western Area Manager presented a report which provided Members with information on King's Lynn Museums from January to February 2010.

The following points were highlighted by the Western Area Manager.

- The Lynn Museum closed to the public on 30 January to facilitate the installation of the Seahenge stump, alongside other building and gallery improvements. An overview of the scheduled building works and gallery improvements were outlined in detail.

#### Seahenge Stump

An article on the arrival of the Seahenge stump would be published in the next edition of Your Council in April 2010.

Members were reminded that the Seahenge stump was currently in store at Gressenhall. Contractors had been identified for the final specifications of the

case design and mount. Trial lifts, etc were being undertaken and the installation of the stump would take place during early April. The NMAS would liaise with the Borough Council, as part of the Bus Station would need to be fenced off for health and safety reasons to allow the safe delivery of the stump to the King's Lynn Museum. In order to bring the stump into the Seahenge Gallery it would be necessary to demount part of the gallery to allow a clear route for the installation of the stump, but all demounting works would be reinstated.

The Lynn Museum would re-open to the public during the May half-term holiday.

In response to questions, the Western Area Manager explained that the cost of the repair works to the ceiling would be funded by NCC. Works were currently on schedule and within budget to re-open in the May half-term holiday. A News Release had been issued regarding the preparatory works pending the arrival of the Seahenge stump. It was noted that a press viewing would be arranged as soon as was feasible prior to the opening. However, on the day of the installation of the Seahenge stump, it was appreciated that the Press, if present, would have to view the proceedings from behind the fenced area. A Press campaign would be organised in the run up to its installation in the gallery.

A record would be made of the arrival of the Seahenge stump and its safe installation in the gallery at the Lynn Museum. The Western Area Manager circulated a sketch of the case and mount to Members and outlined the specification to which the case/mount had been commissioned.

Following further questions, the Western Area Manager explained that the Seahenge timbers had been treated and freeze dried so there was no requirement to keep the timbers in a wet condition. The environment the timbers were being kept in was fully acceptable to the required standards. Air conditioning units were wall mounted and only on odd occasions when the temperature had risen above the required level had the air conditioning been activated. The gallery and display case would contain monitoring devices which would be linked to a computer in the Lynn Museum and the Conservation Department in Norwich.

The Committee were advised that the Lynn Museum had gained publicity on the back of a BBC Initiative of World Programme. Seahenge had been selected and featured on Radio Norfolk. A series of articles had also appeared in the Lynn News and copies were circulated.

The Chairman also circulated copies of press articles relating to a series of events, including Henry VIII.

- The Town House opened to visitors from 2 February, offering free admission until the end of March. Core museum services including learning activities, research and identification enquiries were currently being delivered through the Town House.

- Visitor numbers at Town House during February half term were pleasing, with some 630 visits. A broad range of family learning events had been organised by the Community Outreach Officer during the half term holidays. Sessions included: *Roman Life*; *Life in World War 2*; *Make a Massive Henry VIII* and *Film-Making*. Approximately 70 children participated in these sessions.
- Further family events at the Town House were planned for the Easter school holidays including: *Victorian Servants*; *Medieval Fashion*; *Medieval Murals*; and *A World War 2 Mystery*. A leaflet advertising such events was circulated to those present.
- With effect from April 2010 there would be some changes to the NMAS Western Area Curatorial team structure that would result in additional curatorial time being allocated to King's Lynn Museums and facilitate specialist curatorial staff being freed up from premises management duties. Oliver Bone – currently Curator of Ancient House Museum Thetford - would take on the role of Curator for Kings Lynn & Thetford, including responsibility for front of house teams, exhibition and event planning and the development of curatorial services. Tim Thorpe – currently Curator for King's Lynn Museums - would become Collections Officer for Kings Lynn & Thetford, with responsibility for collections management, documentation and collections access. These changes would encourage more skill and resource sharing between King's Lynn & Thetford, building on the good work already being done by Melissa Hawker and Marie Kennedy for learning & community outreach services. Linked to these changes, Steve Harris – the Gressenhall Operations Manager - would take on the role as Person in Control for Health & Safety across Western Area sites and would also lead on premises management.
- A young unemployed person from the North Lynn area had been appointed for a 6 month job through the Future Jobs Fund scheme and would work with the Community Outreach Officer. The post-holder would commence employment on 22 March 2010. It was hoped that at the end of the period the young person would have a Curriculum Vitae to enable him/her to apply for opportunities of employment in a Museum or any organisation delivering community-based projects..
- The Friends were providing match funding for the acquisition of two archaeological metalwork finds from West Norfolk. An illustration of a Saxon golden glass pendant was tabled. This had facilitated additional grant funding from the V&A Purchase Grant Fund and the Art Fund.
- The Fenland Project Officer was continuing to support the Fenland Partnership working group which was developing the next Fenland exhibition *Fenland Stories*. An article had been published in the EDP. A launch event is scheduled at Ramsey Rural Life Museum for 1 April. The exhibition would then tour across the Fens. Members of the Committee had been invited to attend the launch event. County Councillors Chenery of Horsbrugh and Wright confirmed they would be attending.

- School numbers had continued to improve, with a likely outturn of 1,400 school visits for the year 2009-10.
- A new version of the popular *All the Fun of the Fair* event for younger school children was piloted at the Lynn Museum on 23 February. 38 reception-age children from Whitefriars School participated in a range of events strongly focused on collections relating to Frederick Savage and the Mart. Teachers provided very positive evaluation for this event, which would be rolled out on a larger scale during the 2011 Mart.
- Seven young people aged 16-18 from King's Lynn who were categorised as NEET (not in employment, education or training) had completed a Renaissance-funded film-making project which explored how women were treated at different times in the past. The young people worked with film-maker Alex Murphy and Community Outreach Officer Marie Kennedy. They met a range of historical characters including Margery Kempe and Mary Smith (a young woman accused of witchcraft.) They also visited other NMAS sites including Gressenhall and the Ancient House Museum in Thetford. The film was previewed at a celebration event at the Town House on 22 January, where participants were also presented with accredited Gold Norfolk Youth Award certificates. The Committee would have the opportunity to view the film at their next meeting.
- Following the success of the first NEET project, Renaissance funding had been secured for a further project with the same group of young people who were all keen to progress. The Community Outreach Officer had recently given two presentations at specialist events for museum professionals, detailing her work with NEETS.
- Following the successful funding bid for £25,000 to the HLF *Young Roots* programme, the *Picture This* project was being taken forward by the Community Outreach Officer who was working with eight local youth groups creating films about their local communities and heritage. The young people were currently designing the exhibition that would be displayed at the Lynn Museum and tour around the three secondary schools in King's Lynn. The programme would be launched at the Lynn Museum during early April.

The visitor figures to King's Lynn Museums were read out. The Western Area Manager reported that:

#### Town House Museum

70 visits during January 2010 and 1,154 visits during February. It was noted that the museum had been closed during January 2009 but had been open from February half term 2009. The 2010 figures represented a significant increase.

In response to questions, the Western Area Manager reminded Members of the presentation they had received on the results of the detailed postcode analysis survey that had been undertaken.

In response to questions, the Western Area Manager explained that the average museum ratio for items on display to items in storage was 1:10. It was highlighted that the Lynn Museum had more items on display than most. The material in storage was not always of display standard. The third phase of the collections rationalisation was ongoing. Work also continued on reorganising reserve collections held in store.

Following further questions/comments, the Western Area Manager explained that following the changes to the NMAS Western Area Curatorial Team structure, separate leaflets would continue to be used to promote King's Lynn and Thetford, although leaflets promoting both areas would be displayed in each Museum. Every effort would be made to promote places to visit in each other's areas as much as possible. The Western Area Manager advised that people would be encouraged to purchase a Museums pass from NMAS to visit relevant museums. In King's Lynn, a discount voucher scheme was in operation.

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

**RESOLVED: (1) That the report be noted.**

**(2) The Community Outreach Worker be invited to give a presentation at the next meeting of the Committee.**

**(3) The Committee would be invited to view the Renaissance-funded film-making project produced by NEET.**

## **6 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 during the period January – February 2010.

The key points were highlighted as set out below:

- Visitor numbers to both TIC's had been lower in January and February 2010 than for the same period in 2009. (26% lower). It was suggested that the colder than normal winter weather had an impact on people visiting and taking days out. The Committee would receive figures at the next meeting which would give a more representative picture for the first half of 2010.
- Final year figures for Downham Market TIC, recorded a total 1960 enquires made in person or by correspondence. During January and February 136 enquiries had been made.

- Tales of the Old Gaol House - Visitor numbers for the period January and February were above levels for the same period in 2009. (26% higher).
- West Norfolk Holiday Guide and advertising campaign - The promotional campaigns aimed at generating enquiries for the West Norfolk Holiday Guide were taking place as planned. The targets for direct requests and distribution were as follows.

	<b>Target</b>	<b>To date</b>
Direct request through West Norfolk campaign	46,000	20,417 (to 28.02.10)
Direct requests through East Anglia Seaside campaign	14,000	4,331 (to 15.02.10)

An additional 40,000 copies were distributed to Tourist Information Centres within the UK, and distributed locally including exhibitions and events. A total of 100,000 copies of the guide were printed.

- The 2010 edition of Where To Go and What To Do in West Norfolk was published on 3<sup>rd</sup> February and primarily aimed at a catchment area of 1.5 hours travel. Distribution of the 200,000 copies commenced immediately. Copies of the leaflet were circulated.
- New editions of the Hunstanton mini guide and Downham Market mini guide and Discover King's Lynn were currently being produced. Discover King's Lynn would be linked to the discount voucher scheme.
- King's Lynn Town Guides leaflet - The Borough Council was again organising the design and production of the King's Lynn Town Guides guided walks leaflet in conjunction with the King's Lynn Town Guides. The 2010 programme would contain 86 walks, 74 afternoon, 8 evening and 4 special festival walks.

#### Destination Management System and website

- The tourism section at the Borough Council were currently working with East of England Tourism, to develop a new West Norfolk destination management system which would link through to the [www.visitwestnorfolk.com](http://www.visitwestnorfolk.com) website and be used to provide data on numerous aspects of the West Norfolk Tourism product. Members would receive a demonstration at the next meeting.
- The development which had benefited from financial support from East of England Tourism was essentially a complete database for storing tourism related information including accommodation, attractions, events, restaurants, retail and much more. The data, which would be updated and maintained by East of England Tourism, was available for distribution to a number of channels, including the national tourist board websites and Tourist Information Centres.
- The development would bring about significant improvements to the [www.visitwestnorfolk.com](http://www.visitwestnorfolk.com) website. It would give the opportunity to provide improved online facilities for customers such as online booking and checking online availability of accommodation providers. The

changes would also mean that visitors to the website would also be able to search for details about facilities, places to visit and events on a much more interactive basis using a range of search criteria. It would also improve links between information, so that for example details of an event would also provide a link to accommodation within the local area.

- Improvements will be integrated into the website on a gradual basis over the coming months. The first area to see the improvements would be the events section of the website, which would enable people to search for details of events, according to date, event type, location, or according to factors such as price or accessibility.
- Local event organisers could get their event details included on the database by completing the event submission form which is found on the introductory page of the events section on the website [www.visitwestnorfolk.com](http://www.visitwestnorfolk.com). The aim was for the system to go live prior to Easter.
- Exhibitions - The Borough Council in conjunction with the West Norfolk Tourism Forum were working in partnership with the North Norfolk Business Forum and North Norfolk District Council to organise an exhibition, promoting the visitor attractions and facilities throughout the area to group travel organisers and travel trade press as well as providing an opportunity for other tourism businesses and accommodation providers to re-acquaint themselves with the attractions and facilities which will be of interest to their customers.
- The event – ‘North Norfolk Simply Outstanding’ would take place in Hunstanton at Searles Leisure resort on 18 March. The event was an extension of an event held in previous years which had been organised by North Norfolk District Council and the North Norfolk Business Forum. North Norfolk Business Forum remained the lead organisation for the event. The event was open to invited group travel organisers, travel trade media and local tourism businesses from 10.00am – 6.00pm with members of the public invited from 2.00pm.
- Red Mount and South Gate - Planning was underway for public open days to Red Mount Chapel and South Gate during 2010. New in 2009 both sites were open to the public on co-ordinated dates and promoted through a joint ticket scheme. In 2009 the regular open days saw 2617 people visit Red Mount (which was open regularly for the first time) and 912 people visiting South Gate which was a significant increase on previous years. These figures exclude special group visits and people visiting on Heritage Open Day. Co-ordinated arrangements are again planned with both sites open Wednesday and Saturdays from 29th May – mid September. New for 2010, based on the suggestion from volunteers, it was also planned for both sites to be open on Sundays throughout August. The joint ticket which covered access to both sites and is valid throughout the period of opening would cost £2.00 adults (Accompanied children free). Public access is reliant of the valuable and enthusiastic commitment of volunteers including The South Gate Keepers, Friends of the Walks and The King’s Lynn Town Guides.
- Town Hall - Work in respect of the service review process including the future development of proposals at the Town Hall was continuing to



take place in accordance with the actions reported to the Area Museums Committee in November. In conjunction with the Norfolk Record Office, the Borough Council were working to develop a specification for architectural feasibility work to be undertaken on the potential development of new Archive facilities within the Town Hall complex. This work was based on the recommendations for the Archive identified in the King's Lynn Heritage and Cultural Assets Buildings Review.

- Ambassadors Programme – Had now been in operation for many years and continued to be successful. Three dates for spring/early 2010 had been offered and were now fully subscribed with a waiting list. To date, approximately 600 people had participated in the programme. Delegates on the programme would be invited to join a free guided walk of historic King's Lynn with the King's Lynn Town Guides.
- Tourism Support Officer – Beverley Howell had now left the Council and been replaced by Philip Eke.

Councillor Tyler informed the meeting that Jim Kelly, a novelist who had written a book on detective stories in Norfolk would be present at Waterstones Book Store on 20 March to sign copies. Following comments, it was suggested that the Tourism Manager make contact with J Kelly to obtain relevant information for potential inclusion in future promotional leaflets.

In response to questions, the Tourism Manager advised that the target was on track for direct requests and distribution for the West Norfolk Guide and advertising campaign. It was anticipated that 85% - 90% of the brochures would be circulated before the summer period and that 10% would be retained for campaigns to promote autumn breaks.

Following comments, the importance of trying to ensure that web search engines would identify King's Lynn and West Norfolk as part of the North Norfolk area searches was highlighted.

In response to a question, the Chairman explained that a reception had been held in December 2008 for the volunteers and tended to be held every couple of years.

A suggestion was put forward to introduce the Ambassador of the Year Award as part of the Annual Business Awards.

The Chairman thanked the Tourism Manager for his informative report.

**RESOLVED: (1) That the report be noted.**

**(2) Members would receive a demonstration on the Destination Management System and Website.**

**7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

County Councillors Chenery of Horsbrugh and A Wright offered their apologies for the next meeting of the Committee.

**8 MEETINGS FOR 2010**

Monday 14 June 2010 at 2.15 pm in the Committee Suite, Ground Floor, King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn.

Monday 18 October 2010 at 2.15 pm in the Committee Suite, Ground Floor, King's Court, Chapel Street, 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 3.41 pm**