

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 14 June 2010 at 2.15 pm
in the Committee Suite, King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn**

PRESENT:

Councillor M Langwade	- Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk
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
Mr T Humphreys	- Tourism Manager, Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk
County Councillor M Chenery of Horsbrugh	- Norfolk County Council
County Councillor B W C Long	- Norfolk County Council
County Councillor Mrs J Mickleburgh	- Norfolk County Council
County Councillor A Wright	- Norfolk County Council
M Avey	- Young Person
Dr R Hanley	- Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service
M Kennedy	- Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mrs J Murphy, Mrs V Trevelyan and M Dennis.

2 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

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

3 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

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

4 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 15 March 2010 were confirmed as a correct record.

5 MATTERS ARISING

Appointment of Youth Representative

The Chairman explained that, although contact had been made with the West Norfolk Parliament regarding their Youth Representative, no response had been received detailing who was the new representative.

The Chairman explained that she was aware of a young person who was interested in becoming more involved in the Committee. Mana Avey was a young person who had recently been involved in some of the projects run by the Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service. She was present at the meeting.

RESOLVED: That Mana Avey be co-opted onto the Committee as their Youth Representative for the remainder of the municipal year.

The Chairman welcomed Mana Avey to the meeting.

6 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

7 PRESENTATION BY OUTREACH OFFICER ON WORK IN KING'S LYNN AND WEST NORFOLK

Marie Kennedy explained that she was the Outreach Officer for Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service, focusing on the Western Area.

She provided the Committee with a presentation on recent projects carried out in West Norfolk.

(i) Under 5's Project

This project had recently been carried out in King's Lynn Museums and was based on 'Under the Sea'. The project gave the opportunity for the participants to explore the Seahenge gallery. Participants then had the chance to create a 'sea-scape'.

(ii) Completed projects

The Outreach Officer explained that recently run projects included projects on the Romans, film-making, fashion courses and Henry VIII. All had been very well received.

(iii) Future Projects

The Committee were informed that the Summer programme of activities was available and included projects around the Borough, including Hunstanton, Watlington and Shouldham. Projects would be run on subjects including, The Romans, Tudors and Victorians.

The Outreach Officer explained that to promote the summer activities a stall would be pitched in the Vancouver Quarter in King's Lynn for two days to engage members of the public who would not otherwise know about the projects.

(iv) 'Picture This' project

This project had been funded by the HLF Young Roots programme and involved working with a wide range of community groups. The project entailed working on making films. Mana Avey who was one of the participants in the project explained to the Committee how much she enjoyed working on the project and how it contributed towards gaining skills which helped with building her confidence and securing a place at college.

Marie Kennedy explained that the group made the films and designed the sleeve for the DVD's which were produced as a result. The group also designed invites for the launch of the DVD and the logo for the project. The group re-named the project 'What We've Become'.

Marie Kennedy read out comments from participants in the project, all of who enjoyed the project and felt it helped their career choice.

She hoped that the evaluation DVD for the project would be available to present at the next meeting of the Area Museums Committee.

(v) Women in History project

Marie Kennedy explained to the Committee that another project which had just finished at the end of last year was focused around working with young people who were classed as NEET (not in education, employment or training).

Mana Avey explained that she was categorised as NEET and was one of the participants in the project. She explained that the project explored women from Norfolk history and they worked with a film maker to make a film about each character. The project involved meeting actresses posing as the historical figures who the participants could engage with. It also involved researching the historical figures in the library.

Mana Avey explained that she had enjoyed the project, which she felt had helped her to gain confidence.

Marie Kennedy explained that there were eight people involved in the project at the start and all eight saw the project through to the end. She felt that all participants learnt a lot about history and film making skills. She also informed the Committee that all participants received a Gold Norfolk Youth Award for the project.

The Committee viewed an evaluation DVD about the project which included interviews with the participants.

Marie Kennedy explained that the project had now ended, however all participants were keen to become involved in future projects.

She explained that a further project would be run on the subject Con-men, Murderers and Lunatics and would take place in conjunction with the College of West Anglia. The College of West Anglia had recently picked up on the success of the project and had decided to assist with funding a further project on World War II. The project would involve creation of a film which would be shown at King's Lynn Museum as part of an exhibition. It was also hoped to show the film at King's Lynn cinema.

The Chairman thanked Marie Kennedy and Mana Avey for their presentation and congratulated them on the success of the project.

County Councillor Chenery of Horsburgh explained that he had attended the launch event for the 'Picture This' project and felt it went really well and was impressed with the DVD.

Councillor Tyler praised the scheme and hoped that similar projects would continue. He asked if participants in the project felt that taking part would benefit them when applying for College courses or jobs. Marie Kennedy explained that she had already acted as referee for some of the participants and felt that the projects boosted confidence and provided life skills which she thought would be beneficial when applying to college or for jobs. She explained that all participants of the project were taken on a tour of the College of West Anglia and careers advice was available for the participants from Connexions.

In response to a question from the Chairman, Marie Kennedy explained that she worked with under 5's outside of school time, but there was another Outreach worker who ran projects in schools.

8 REPORT OF THE WESTERN AREA MANAGER

Robin Hanley provided the group with an update report on King's Lynn Museums for the period March to May 2010.

(i) Temporary exhibitions and events

The Lynn Museum re-opened to the public as scheduled on 29 May 2010, following the completion of installation works for the new 'Seahenge Stump' display, a visit by the Committee to view the display had taken place prior to the meeting. Other building and gallery improvement and enhancements had also taken place whilst the Museum was closed. A press preview event for the new 'Seahenge Stump' display had taken place and good coverage had been received in the regional press.

Robin Hanley explained that the centerpiece for the new Seahenge gallery display was the 1.5 tonne great central stump, which was 2.5 metre high and wide. This was safely delivered by specialist movers to the Lynn Museum on 18 April 2010, with the press and public in attendance. Over subsequent

weeks, specialist lifting and cradling equipment was deployed to carefully move and position the stump, prior to it being fixed into a bespoke mount and inserted into a custom-built glass case. A range of specialist contractors were used in the process, which was overseen by the NMAS Conservation Team. Once the stump had been fixed into the display, final conservation work was undertaken to consolidate the surface of the timber. Robin Hanley explained that he was pleased with the end result and felt the public reaction had been good.

During the closure, work in the Chapel Gallery was carried out including the installation of a new backdrop to the Savage's carousel model and repairs to the model turntable. A number of new objects had also been added to the West Norfolk Story displays including paintings by Thomas Bains and recent acquisitions including Saxon metalwork.

Robin Hanley explained that the first temporary exhibition at the Lynn Museum following the site's re-opening was the 'What We've Become' project. The Committee had received a presentation on this project earlier in the meeting. Participants in the project designed the exhibition display, which took the form of a teenager's bedroom. Within the exhibition, the public could view the films created as part of the project.

The Committee was informed that a programme of family events had taken place at the Town House Museum during the Easter school holidays. These included: Victorian Servants; Medieval Fashion; Medieval Murals; and a World War II Mystery. Projects had also been organised in the Lynn Museum and were themed around Seahenge. Seahenge dance workshops had recently taken place where participants worked with a dance teacher to create a short performance inspired by Seahenge. An under 5's session themed on 'under-the-sea' was also held. Each event had approximately 15 to 20 participants.

(ii) Other Museum Developments

Robin Hanley explained that during the closure of Lynn Museum, a range of maintenance projects had been undertaken. Major damp-proofing, re-plastering, lime-washing and re-painting works were carried out on internal walls in the Seahenge and Chapel galleries. Debris clearance works were also undertaken in roof voids. A major programme of display furniture and collections cleaning was also undertaken during the closure period.

(iii) Friends of King's Lynn Museums

Robin Hanley informed the Committee that the Friends of the Museum had provided key match funding which had facilitated the purchase of two important Saxon gold metal detector finds from West Norfolk. The objects had now been placed on display in the West Norfolk Story Gallery. Additional funding for these purchases came from the MLA/V&A Purchase grant fund and the National Art Collections Fund.

(iv) Partnership Projects

The Committee were informed that the latest travelling exhibition and events programme organised by the Fenland Partnership was 'Fenland Stories', which explored both traditional and modern Fenland tales and stories. Fenland Stories was launched at Ramsey Rural Life Museum in April. The exhibition was now touring around the Fens and was currently at Flag Fen in Peterborough and would soon be moving to Thorney Museum. The exhibition would end at Lynn Museum in summer 2011. Robin Hanley explained that the exhibition had been popular and he would provide the Committee with visitor figures at the next meeting.

Linked with the 'Fenland Stories' project, additional funding had been secured to facilitate a 'Fenland Learning' project led by Ely Museum. This project would see a range of story telling resources being developed for partner museums wishing to work with local schools.

Robin Hanley explained that the Borough Council had commissioned the NMAS Renaissance funded Growing Communities Project to work with local residents to collect their memories and photographs of King's Lynn showing how it has changed since the 1960's. The resources would be collated to create a touring exhibition before a final fixed exhibition at King's Lynn Museum from January to March 2011. The project was focusing on five key areas of King's Lynn: Hillington Square, Fairstead Estate and South Lynn, Town Centre and Vancouver Centre and North Lynn Industrial Estate.

Robin Hanley informed the Committee that Freebridge Community Housing had invited NMAS to support the Hillington Square project. Freebridge Community Housing had commissioned Wayne Hemmingway of Hemmingway Designs to work in partnership with local stakeholders and residents to regenerate the estate. There had been an interest in NMAS becoming one of the partners involved in delivering the project. NMAS had a stand at the Hillington Square recent launch event for residents which featured a display of old photographs of the estate being built and a selection of 1960's objects.

(v) Learning and Outreach

The Committee was informed that school booking levels to the museum for the Summer term was encouraging. There were 1,348 school visits during the year 2009-2010 which was an increase of 300 on the previous year.

The Community Outreach Officer was continuing to deliver programmes for young people categorised as NEET. The Committee received a presentation on the work of the Outreach Officer earlier at the meeting.

(vi) Visitor Numbers

Robin Hanley circulated visitor figures for Lynn Museum and the Town House Museum. He highlighted that Lynn Museum had been closed from 30th

January until 29th May 2010 and the Town House Museum was closed throughout January 2010, except for school visits.

The Chairman invited questions on the report, some of which are summarised below:

In response to a question regarding publicising Seahenge, Robin Hanley explained that the Museum had liaised with Norfolk County Council's Communications department regarding press releases which had been picked up regionally. Some specialist interest had also been received. The Committee was informed that an article had also been published in a recent edition of the Your Council publication. Tim Humphreys explained that work would be carried out to include Seahenge in tourism publications.

County Councillor Long asked if the refurbishment of the Museum and installation of Seahenge had taken place within budget. Robin Hanley explained that the work was carried out under budget, which allowed for additional work to be carried out at the same time. He informed the Committee that the project had been well planned by the Project Manager and all works were completed on schedule.

The Chairman explained that this meeting had been preceded by a visit to the Museum to view Seahenge in situ. She encouraged other members of the Committee, who were unable to attend the visit to have a look around the Museum to view the exhibition.

In response to a question regarding school visits, Robin Hanley explained that most school visits were to the Town House Museum as there was more space available and more resources for schools that fitted in with the curriculum. However, now that there had been changes to the curriculum, the Lynn Museum may be able to offer more visits to schools.

The Chairman felt that it would be beneficial for the Committee to visit the Town House Museum. Robin Hanley agreed to arrange this meeting prior to the next scheduled meeting of the Committee and members would be informed of arrangements in due course.

In response to a question, Robin Hanley explained that the King's Lynn Town Guides did not provide tours in the Museums. They did, however, promote the Museums in King's Lynn.

9 GREEN QUAY SIX MONTHLY ACTIVITY REPORT FOR PERIOD ENDED 31 MARCH 2010

No report had been received so this item was deferred until the next meeting.

10 TRUE'S YARD MUSEUM SIX MONTHLY ACTIVITY REPORT FOR PERIOD ENDED 31 MARCH 2010

The Chairman informed the Committee that a written report from True's Yard had been circulated to members prior to the meeting. The report explained

that visitor numbers for the year 09/10 had shown a good increase on the previous year.

In February the new extension was officially opened at True's Yard by HM The Queen and HRH Prince Philip.

A small grant from the association of independent museums had been received which enabled True's Yard to embark on a project to revitalise a corridor from the galleries to the outside yard by transforming it into a North End street scene.

Trust Chairman Paul Richards had created a team of 11 volunteers all trained to become North End Tour Guides who offered local walks encompassing the Museum, St Nicholas Chapel and Pilot Street. The guided tours ran every Wednesday from May to September and on Saturdays throughout June and July.

Unfortunately True's Yard had recently become a victim of crime after two strips of lead had been taken from the lobby roof. County Councillor Rockcliffe advised True's Yard to investigate the possible use of 'smart water' in the future. This was a specialist unique paint that could be painted on the lead so that if it was stolen and then recovered it could be traced back to True's Yard.

The HLF project was continuing with building work now complete, as was work on the fishing smack and work of the Outreach Officer continued. Councillor Langwade informed the Committee that photos of the renovation work to the fishing smack were available on King's Lynn forums website.

11 REPORT OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Tim Humphreys updated the Committee on tourism marketing and operation of the tourism and heritage facilities operated by the Borough Council during the period January to May 2010.

(i) Tourist Information Centres and the Gaol House

Visitor numbers to Hunstanton and King's Lynn Tourist Information Centres had been lower in January and February 2010 than for the same period in 2009. This pattern had continued with poor weather in March, but figures for April and May were comparable with 2009. Overall for the period January to May 2010 visitor levels were around 7% down.

Counting procedures at Downham Market Tourist Information Centre changed in April 2009. Figures for April and May 2010 could now be compared. Figures showed a 14% increase.

Visits to Tales of the Old Gaol House were 13% lower for the period January to April than in 2009. He felt that this was because an ongoing tourism service review meaning that the Tales of the Old Gaol House had not been included in some promotional material.

(ii) West Norfolk Holiday Guide and Advertising Campaign

Tim Humphreys explained that the promotional campaigns aimed at generating enquiries for the West Norfolk Holiday Guide had delivered good results to date. Direct requests for the guide through the West Norfolk campaign had reached 37,000 and requests through East Anglia Seaside campaign had reached 16,055.

An additional 40,000 copies of the guide had been distributed to Tourist Information Centres within the UK and locally at exhibitions and events.

(iii) Destination Management System and Website

Tim Humphreys provided the Committee with a demonstration of the system which linked with East of England Tourism. A new West Norfolk destination management system had been developed and would be used to provide data on numerous aspects of tourism. The first part of the system to go live had been the events section of the website which enabled users to search for details of events, by date, event type, location, price accessibility etc. Each event entry automatically highlighted other events at that location. Events would automatically be removed once the date of the event had passed.

Event organisers could get their event details included on the database by completing an on-line form found on the events webpages.

Work was continuing to develop the site further. The existing accommodation section of the website would be replaced by a new accommodation section. This development would hopefully include the facility for accommodation providers to be able to update details on-line about their product, prices and room availability.

In response to a question, Tim Humphreys explained that accommodation providers did pay to be included in the West Norfolk Accommodation Guide, and as part of this package their product would be featured on the website.

It was expected that further developments to replace existing website content with new searchable information linked to the destination management system would include details of attraction and permanent exhibitions.

The Committee discussed recent press coverage regarding joint arrangements between Sheringham and Cromer, who had recently put on a joint event. Tim Humphreys explained that the main West Norfolk tourism brochure did promote the Borough as a whole, with equal focus on all areas.

(iv) Red Mount and South Gate

The programme of public open days at the Red Mount Chapel and South Gate were now taking place. Both sites were open from 12.00 to 3.00pm on Wednesdays and Saturdays from the end of May to mid September and for the first time would be open on Sundays throughout August. The joint ticket

which covered access to both sites was valid throughout the period of opening and cost £2.00 for adults, accompanied children were free.

(v) Tourism Service Review

The Committee were informed that a tourism mini service review was being undertaken as part of the Borough Council's service review process. A report and recommendations from the review were soon to be considered through the Borough Council's decision making process,

The current service reviews being undertaken may impact on net budgets and delivery of tourism and heritage facilities.

12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Area Museums Committee would be held on Monday 18 October 2010 at 2.15pm in the Committee Suite, Ground Floor, King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn.

The meeting would be preceded by a visit to the Town House Museum, time to be advised.

The meeting closed at 3.43pm