

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 19 March 2011 at 2.15 pm in the
Committee Suite, King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn**

PRESENT:

Councillor Mrs E A Nockolds	- Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk
Councillor M Back	- 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
Kathy Wagg	- Democratic Services Officer, Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk
County Councillor M Chenery of Horsburgh	- 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
Mr B Howling	- Friend of King's Lynn Museums

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor G McGuinness and V Trevelyan.

2 MINUTES

The notes of the meeting held on 17 October 2012 were agreed as a correct record.

3 MATTERS ARISING

There were none.

6 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

7 REPORT OF WESTERN AREA MANAGER

King's Lynn Museums Report – October to February 2012

The Western Area Manager presented his report which provided Members with information on King's Lynn Museums for the period October to February 2012 as set out below:

(i) Temporary Exhibitions and events at Lynn Museum

The Lynn Museum charging period runs from April to September. The free admission period runs from October to March.

The exhibition *Fenland Stories*, ran at Lynn Museum from 2 July until 10 January. This was the travelling exhibition developed by the Greater Fens Museums Partnership, which had been touring Fenland venues during the last year. The exhibition explored traditional Fenland tales and included a collection of animated films produced by local people retelling these stories or giving them a modern twist. The films were shown on the centrepiece of the exhibition, the "Whispering Willow" tree.

The current temporary exhibition at the Lynn Museum is *Rehome*, running from 21 January to 10 March 2012. This was a partnership project with the King's Lynn Arts Centre Trust. Staff at the Lynn Museum had worked with the team at the King's Lynn Art Centre and colleagues at Freebridge Community Housing to facilitate the development of exhibitions across three sites in Lynn, inspired by domestic objects from the King's Lynn museum collections. Six artists from the King's Lynn Arts Centre's Aspire Artists project, funded by the Arts Council England, had chosen from a selection of objects from which to draw inspiration and acted as a starting point for the artist's creative ideas. Each artist created two pieces, one for display at the Museum and a second for the Arts Centre. As well as the exhibitions at the three sites, a programme of half term activities for families working with the artists had taken place in February. An Art Trail, supported by artist-led tours, linked up the Arts Centre, Museum and the restored 1960s flat at Hillington Square.

The next temporary exhibition would be *Hard Times: Poverty in King's Lynn in the early 20th century* on show at the Lynn Museum from 31 March. The exhibition would feature the story of the workhouse in King's Lynn. The exhibition would include fine art collections, letters and archives.

A programme of informal family learning events continued to be offered at the Lynn Museum. Events during the October half term included the very popular *Deadly Dinosaurs* on 25 October and *Creepy Collections* on 27 October. In the approach to Christmas, a Christmas Crafts event ran on 10 December. During the February half term a lighting themed event ran on 14 February and a Victorian wash day event ran on 18 February.

A programme of occasional illustrated talks was taking place at Lynn Museums on Wednesday afternoons. Recent talks had included *18th Century literature* on 12 October and *Fenland Stories* on 9 November. The next scheduled talk was *Fear of the Workhouse in early 1900s King's Lynn* on 9 May.

A rare gold Romano-British pendant in the shape of a phallus had been acquired by the Lynn Museum. The object had been found in January 2011 by a metal detectorist in Hillington and declared Treasure by the coroner. The pendant was 2cm long and was in excellent condition. The pendant was purchased by the Lynn Museum with the assistance of the Friends of the King's Lynn Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum Purchase Grant Fund and the Headley Trust. This significant item was now on display in the Lynn Museum following its collection from the British Museum in January. The acquisition had been the subject of considerable press interest. The NMAS retail team was investigating the production of a replica for sale in NMAS shops.

(ii) Other Museum Developments

NMAS staff had now moved into the new offices provided by the Borough Council on the first floor of the former Town House Museum building above the Registrars offices. The offices included an activity room that would be used as the main venue for youth/NEET engagement projects in King's Lynn. A small display of objects and paintings would occupy the area of the Museums Service within the Town Hall.

NMAS was continuing to support colleagues from the Borough Council with the project relating to the redevelopment of the Town Hall.

NMAS staff provided a display for the Queen's visit to the Town Hall on 6 February. Curator Tim Thorpe showed the Queen a selection of paintings and prints from the museum collections. Community Outreach Officer Stuart Hall presented extracts from the *Fenland Stories* DVD and talked about NMAS's work with young people.

NMAS continued to provide curatorial advice, support and an enquiry service for those Borough collections currently held in the Town Hall including fine art and Civic Regalia. This role formed part of the Service Level Agreement for 2011-12. NMAS was currently assisting with specialist valuations for specific collections and had also sourced conservation advice for paintings in the collections.

The planning application relating to the proposed modest alterations to the front glazed elevation of the Lynn Museum had been approved, following liaison with the Borough Council. Confirmation of Listed Building consent was pending. As well as creating more space within the reception area for use by schools and other groups, these works would remove the sheltered external area that had been a focus for antisocial behaviour. Building works would take place in October, following the end of the summer season.

(iii) Friends of King's Lynn Museums

The Friends were continuing to offer a varied programme for members including lunchtime talks, trips and an annual lecture. The Friends would be supporting the afternoon talks programme in the Lynn Museum in 2012.

The Friends continued to support a long-term conservation programme for parts of the fine art collections and had recently agreed to fund conservation on further works of art.

The Friends had recently funded a bespoke seating and storage unit for the Lynn Museum reception that provided secure storage for a range of craft materials and school handling collections.

(iii) Partnership Projects

The NMAS bid to the Arts Council England for Renaissance Major Grants was successful. The Arts Council received 29 eligible applications from museums across the country requesting £116.4 million over three years, against a total budget for the Renaissance major grants programme for 2012-15 of around 60 million. Funding had been offered to 16 applicants, and over the coming weeks the final amount awarded to each organisation for 2012-2015 would be confirmed. In King's Lynn the funding would include support for the development of permanent and temporary exhibitions, youth engagement projects and learning programmes.

King's Lynn Museums continued to lead the Greater Fens Museums Partnership. The Round 2 Heritage Grant application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for the next Fenland Partnership project *Fenland Lives and Land* was successful, with £358,000 awarded to the project over the next three years. Match funding of £20,000 came from the externally funded Renaissance in the Regions programme. Following a start up meeting with the HLF, official permission to start had been granted. Recruitment of a FT project officer and PT support worker was now underway.

The Fenland Lives and Land project aimed to explore the complex relationship between Fenland people and their local landscape. The project would give local communities the chance to get involved in co-producing a range of exhibitions and would also support capacity building and skills development in partner museums. The project aimed to facilitate the development of sustainable relationships with local community organisations through a 'cluster' delivery model. The project would see the development of five exhibitions exploring a range of landscape themes and using a variety of different media. The choice of exhibition themes had been informed by consultation with existing and potential community partners and the wider public. The exhibitions would tour museum partners and community venues and would be supported by programmes of formal and informal learning, delivered both on-site and as outreach. It was suggested that the

Project Officer be invited to give a presentation to the Committee in six months time.

(iv) Learning & Outreach

A monthly *Mini Explorers Club* continued to meet at the Lynn Museum, targeted at under 5's, their carers and families.

The Learning Officer continued to deliver a varied programme of events for local schools.

The Community Outreach Officer continued to deliver programmes for young people categorised as NEET. Postholder Stuart Hall had recently recruited new members to the King's Lynn Museums Youth Forum and a number of meetings had been held.

A development programme was currently underway for the Museum Learning Assistant team at Lynn Museum to provide staff with improved skills in planning and delivering informal learning events.

(v) Visitor numbers

The Western Area Manager reported the visitor numbers for the Lynn Museum as set out below:

2012	2011
February 1,669	February 2,401
<u>Year to date</u>	<u>2010/11</u>
15,559	13,839

The Committee was advised that the reason for less visitor numbers than the same time last year was that the 1960's exhibition opened.

In relation to 1.7, Councillor Mrs Smeaton asked how the Museum found the pendant? In response, the Western Area Manager explained that the finder of the item reported the find to the Finds Identification Unit based at Gressenhall as it came under the terms of the Treasure Act. The item was then identified and was subject of an Independent Valuation Committee to ascertain its value. Expressions of interest from museums were then sought for the item. The Museum then raised the funds with the help of the Friends of the Museum. The person who found the item split the money with the farmer where the item was found. The item was then collected from the British Museum. Lynn Museum was currently looking at ways in which the display featuring the item could be improved.

The Chairman thanked the Friends of the Museum for their contribution towards purchasing the item.

Councillor Tyler referred to item 2.4, and asked whether the Borough Council actually owned the items that were on display at the Museum and Town Hall and whether these items could be hired out? He also asked whether items could be taken to Red Mount Chapel to be displayed such as pilgrim badges?

In response the Western Area Manager explained that all items were governed by the Joint Museums Ownership Agreement with the vast majority being owned by the Borough Council. He explained that requests were received regarding the loan of objects and there were a standard set of loan conditions that had to be complied with but each request had to be assessed in relation to security and environmental issues. He added that the Red Mount Chapel would not be a suitable environment for the display of objects in terms of security and environment, however replica badges could perhaps be considered. With regards to the Pilgrim badges from the Town House Museum, he explained that most would be going on display at the Lynn Museum.

With regards to item 2.5, Councillor Long reported that consideration was being given to moving the CCTV cameras in the bus station to give better coverage, but this was subject to available funding.

Councillor Tyler referred to item 1.6 and reported that he had attended the talk on 18th Century Literature but was disappointed at the number of attendees. He asked whether there was a set figure to see if an event was sustainable? The Western Area Manager advised that the talks often complemented the temporary exhibitions and related to different collections. He added that the talks normally attracted between 15-20 people and it was considered that 15 people attending was enough. In addition, a lot of the talks were given by museum staff or volunteers at minimal cost.

Reference was made to the Sea Henge Timbers and Councillor Wright asked who owned them? The Western Area Manager explained that the timbers were owned by the Le Strange Estate and that the Museum had a formal 10 year loan agreement in place which was expected to be renewed at the end of the 10 year period. He explained that the conservation project for Sea Henge was funded by English Heritage, however if significant conservation works were required to the timbers, then Le Strange Estates would be involved. He added that there was a robust loan agreement in place.

The Chairman referred to paragraphs 4.2 and 4.3 and asked if she could be reminded who the Fenland Partners were. The Western Area Manager agreed to circulate a definitive list of partners to the Committee.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman, Councillor Mrs Nockolds thanked the Western Area Manager for an interesting report.

RESOLVED: (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the Fenland Project Officer be invited to give a presentation to the Committee in six months time.

(3) That the Western Area Manager circulated a definitive list of members of the Fenland Partnership to the Committee.

8 **REPORT OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

The Tourism Manager presented a report which updated Members of the Committee on tourism marketing and provision of tourism information services undertaken by the Borough Council during the period June 2011 – March 2012.

(i) West Norfolk Holiday Guide and advertising campaign (2011)

The Tourism Manager provided the Committee with the final 2011 figures for the promotional campaigns aimed at generating enquiries for the West Norfolk Holiday Guide were as follows:

	Target	Final
Direct request through West Norfolk campaign	46,000	48,534
Direct request through East Anglia Seaside Campaign	13,000	13,049
Additional enquiries via email, other advertising and 3 rd party websites		11,808
Total brochure requests responded to		73,391

The remaining brochures were distributed through the national Tourist information network including West Norfolk TIC's and at key road service areas and rail stations with direct connections to the area. The remaining brochures were distributed at exhibitions and events including the Sandringham Flower Show, Holkham Country Fair and Tour of Britain event.

The total distribution of the West Norfolk Holiday guide was 100,000.

(ii) Visit West Norfolk Website

It was reported that considerable work had been taking place to redevelop the www.visitwestnorfolk.com website. The new version of the site was being developed by the tourism section in conjunction with the Borough Council's web team. Whilst the existing visitor pages were an integral part of the main Borough Council website, the re-developed site would be a stand alone site, specifically designed to reflect the branding and diversity of the tourism product throughout West Norfolk. The site would be fully utilise the on-line search facilities using the regional tourism database and destination management system. This extended the approach already developed for event information on the existing website. The new site would be completed and fully operable by May 2012.

(iii) Where to go and what to do in West Norfolk

The 2011 Where to Go guide was extensively distributed to key tourist sites in Norfolk, Cambridgeshire, parts of Lincolnshire and Suffolk. Closer to West Norfolk the guide was also distributed to service and retail sites used by visitors and residents. A total of 200,000 copies were printed and distributed.

(iii) Discover King's Lynn

The 2011 edition of Discover King's Lynn was extensively distributed throughout the season with the full 100,000 print run being distributed by early October 2011. The discount voucher scheme was again promoted throughout the season.

(iv) West Norfolk Marketing Campaign 2012

The 2012 West Norfolk Holiday guide was printed in December, with distribution having commenced on 4 January. A total of 95,000 had been produced. The brochure now featured new photography reflecting the main West Norfolk product themes.

The 2012 marketing campaign would be increasingly focused on generating visits to the www.visitwestnorfolk.com website as well as direct brochure requests. This would include proactive use of the website to maximise search engine optimisation as well as direct promotions using on line advertising to lead potential visitors to the website. Through the website there would be increased use of on-line marketing to maintain regular contact with consumers who had visited the site.

The 2012 edition of Where To Go and What to Do in West Norfolk was published in mid February with distribution commencing immediately. 200,000 copies were produced.

The 2012 edition of Discover King's Lynn was going to print and was being increased by 10,000 to meet levels of demand experienced in 2011. Updated editions of the Hunstanton mini guide and Downham Market mini guide would be published during April.

(v) Tourist Information Centres

The Tourism Manager explained that during 2011 a total of 228,966 people visited West Norfolk's two main Tourist Information Centres in King's Lynn and Hunstanton, which was slightly above figures recorded in each of the last 10 years, with the exception of 2009, when record numbers were recorded. Including written, telephone and email enquiries a total of 265,195 people used the services at the two Tourist Information Centres.

For the seventh consecutive year since the awards started, King's Lynn TIC was shortlisted as one of the 3 finalists for best Tourist Information Centre in the Tourism in Norfolk Awards. Unlike in 2010, the TIC did not win the final award.

(vi) Collaborative and partnership marketing

It was reported that through the Norfolk Tourism Partnership, West Norfolk continued to work with partners across Norfolk to ensure that Norfolk was effectively marketed as a leading visitor centre. Work had been taking place to identify opportunities and gauge support from businesses for more collaborative marketing of the north Norfolk coast product area to ensure it

was promoted as a distinct and leading destination competing with other coastal destinations in the UK. Work was being undertaken through the North Norfolk Tourism Forum and the West Norfolk Tourism Forum.

(vii) Other Heritage Marketing

The Tourism Manager gave an update on the following and reported visitor numbers where appropriate for the following:

- Tales of the Old Gaol House
- Red Mount Chapel and South Gate
- The Hanse
- Heritage Open Day
- King's Lynn Town Guides
- Maritime Trail Walks
- King's Lynn Pedestrian Signposting
- Hunstanton Wolf Trail

The Tourism Manager referred to item 6.3.2 and reported that feedback had recently been received that the joint project proposal by 25 hanse towns including King's Lynn across 11 European countries was likely to receive European funding . The project would aim to develop a project for the development and marketing of the Hanse as a Brand of European Cultural Tourism Products and Services and the development of cultural trails.

In relation to the Town Hall, the Tourism Manager explained that following the stage 1 application to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for the King's Lynn Town Hall development project, the HLF had indicated that they would like to see some further work on the project proposal before a more detailed stage 2 application could be developed. At a follow-up meeting between members of the project team and representatives from HLF there was positive feedback about the project overall as well as discussion around issues requiring further work. Work to refine the scheme would now take place including further consultation with stakeholders, review of the cost/benefits of the scheme, revised conservation plans to reflect the building, collections and archives. The HLF also requested that the vision and strengths of an integrated approach to heritage in King's Lynn be further articulated.

Taking account of the requirements of the HLF it was intended to resubmit a proposal for the Town Hall in late summer/early autumn.

Councillor Tyler stated that he was encouraged by the new website giving the ability to download information about specific events and he was also impressed with the new brochure/design. He asked whether there was any feedback from people who had requested a brochure and then visited West Norfolk? The Tourism Manager explained that whilst it was difficult to obtain comprehensive feedback, a survey carried out in 2008 had suggested that up to 40% of people visited West Norfolk after receiving a brochure. It had to be noted however that this only represented people who had chosen to, return a survey coupon within the brochure, for which a prize incentive had been offered.

In relation to the new website, this would offer an opportunity to carry out more surveys and keep in regular contact with people.

Councillor Chenery asked whether enough promotion was given to Nelson and also that Norfolk had the greatest collection of medieval churches. In response the Tourism Manager explained that Nelson was mentioned in the main brochure. In relation to Churches, he explained that it was the intention with the website to be able to provide much more information on other sites within West Norfolk.

The Chairman pointed out that there were other societies who promoted churches.

Councillor Mrs Smeaton referred to the interpretation boards in Hunstanton which she considered to be excellent. The Tourism Manager explained that the existing fingerposts in King's Lynn were being reviewed to help visitors find the key areas of town as well as specific attractions. Following this other information and interpretation could be considered

Councillor Back stated that a lot of work had been undertaken in respect of the new website and asked whether any consideration had been given to the use of mobile 'app' devices? The Tourism Manager explained that new website was based on interactive content. He added that development of mobile 'apps' would be looked at in the future.

Councillor Mrs Smeaton asked what further promotion could be given to the Maritime history of the area? The Western Area Manager explained that Maritime displays were currently located on the first floor of the Custom House and also at Lynn Museum. In addition, there was True's Yard which explored the fishing community. He added that as part of the Town Hall project there would be more focus on maritime interpretation of the Pocahantus story which currently had been told in a piece-meal fashion but could be improved upon and promoted further.

9 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held on 11th June at 2.15 pm.

The Meeting closed at 4.00 pm