

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 25 February 2013 at 2.15 pm in the
Committee Suite, King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn**

PRESENT:

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| Councillor Mrs E A Nockolds (Chairman) | - | 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 |
| County Councillor M Chenery | - | Norfolk County Council (<i>arrived at 2.29 pm</i>) |
| County Councillor M Langwade | - | Norfolk County Council |
| County Councillor B Long | - | Norfolk County Council (<i>arrived at 2.29 pm</i>) |
| County Councillor A J Wright | - | Norfolk County Council |
| Anna Caley | - | Norfolk Museums and Archaeological Service |
| Dr R Hanley | - | Norfolk Museums and Archaeological Service |
| Lindsey Bavin | - | Manager, True's Yard |
| Wendy Vincent | - | Democratic Services Officer, Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk |

The Chairman, Councillor Mrs Nockolds introduced Anna Caley, Youth Engagement Officer and Lindsey Bavin, Manager of True's Yard Museum.

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Borough Councillor G McGuiness, County Councillor R Rockcliffe and Vanessa Trevelyan.

MINUTES

The notes of the meeting held on 15 October 2012 were agreed as a correct record.

3 MATTERS ARISING

There were none.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

5 VERBAL REPORT FROM THE YOUTH ENGAGEMENT OFFICER

The Committee was provided with a verbal update from the Youth Engagement Officer, Anna Caley who had been in post since September 2012, a summary of which is set out below.

Role and Duties of Youth Engagement Officer

- Aim of the post being to increase the engagement of young people and to reach the 'hard to reach' groups. Work as part of the learning team to target groups - NEET, Looked after Children.
- Working with SureStart and Youth Offending Team.
- Contacts with Community Groups.
- Link with relevant museum projects such as the Inspired Choice Exhibition

Programme of Work/Events/Activities

- Lynn Museum Youth Forum – opportunity now to recruit new Members. Wednesday afternoon – range of projects. A new film making project to commence on 27 February 2013.
- Potential joint working with King's Lynn Library
- Participation in the Arts Award – an accreditation for young people.
- Five paintings from Museum collection – paintings to be chosen and create response.
- F White Sculpture to form part of the Inspired Choice Exhibition.
- Community Groups producing an animation for Inspired Choice which would be available to view in the Lynn Museum for a 6 week period.
- Work being undertaken with Surestart at Fairstead. Pilot Scheme to be operated with a view to rolling out the programme on a wider basis.
- Messy Museums aimed at young parents– Lynn Museum.

In response to questions from the Chairman, Councillor Mrs Nockolds, the Youth Engagement Officer explained that contact had been made with the Discovery Centre.

County Councillor Wright asked if the Youth Engagement Officer was aware of villages, etc outside of King's Lynn who would be interested in engaging in the Museum Service. In response, the Youth Engagement Officer explained that she was aware of such satellite areas and invited the Committee to forward details of any communities for the Museums Service to become involved with.

In response to questions from Councillor Tyler, the Youth Engagement Officer explained that the aim of the Museums Service was to encourage all age groups to access the facilities and activities offered at all Museum venues.

Following questions from County Councillor Langwade regarding the role of young people, the Chairman, Councillor Mrs Nockolds explained that in the past, the involvement of the Museums Service with groups of young people had given them the confidence to obtain a place on a college course.

The Chairman, Councillor Mrs Nockolds thanked the Youth Engagement Officer for the report.

RESOLVED: The Committee noted the report.

6 REPORT OF WESTERN AREA MANAGER

King's Lynn Museums Report – October 2012 to January 2013

The Western Area Manager presented the report which provided Members with information on King's Lynn Museums for the period October 2012 to January 2013 as set out below:

(i) Temporary exhibitions and events at Lynn Museum

The current temporary exhibition at Lynn Museum was *Inspired Choice*, running from 5 February to 13 April 2013. The 'exhibition comprised local community groups' artistic responses to paintings in the museum collections, with each group creating their own artistic work for display. The exhibition was opened by the Area Museums Chairman, Councillor Mrs Elizabeth Nockolds, with representatives from the participating community groups and schools in attendance. The opening was covered in the local press and on Radio Norfolk.

The *King's Lynn on the Map* temporary exhibition would run from 27 April 2013, telling the story of the town through maps, models, photographs and objects.

A programme of illustrated talks continued to take place at Lynn Museum on Wednesday afternoons. A full programme of talks was scheduled for 2013.

A regular programme of family events continued to be scheduled at the Lynn Museum.

Planning work was continuing for an exhibition and event programme that would mark the 2014 centenary of the outbreak of World War One. It was expected that this would complement a programme of national and regional events, with a county-wide HLF bid currently being scoped by NCC Community Services. Part of the exhibition proposed for Lynn Museum would be to explore the impact of the early Zeppelin raids on King's Lynn.

(ii) Other Museum Developments

Alterations to Lynn Museum reception were now complete. The NCC Building Maintenance Fund also funded a programme of redecoration throughout the reception area. The site remained open throughout the works. The additional space created by the improvements would facilitate greater flexibility with school and other groups visiting the museum and would enhance retail opportunities.

A "refresh" of the main exhibition gallery at the Lynn Museum would take place during 2013, use ACE funding. A new high specification display case for temporary exhibitions was currently on order for the reception area. These works would be undertaken by the NMAS in-house display team.

(iii) Friends of King's Lynn Museums

The Friends continued to offer a varied programme for members. The Friends supported the afternoon talks programme offered at the Lynn Museum during 2012 and would continue to do so in 2013.

The Friends were currently redesigning and reprinting their membership leaflet, with assistance from the Teaching Museum Trainee.

The Friends held their Annual General Meeting on 22 October 2012.

The Friends continued to support a long-term conservation programme for parts of the fine art collection and had recently funded the acquisition of a 16th century silver gilt dress hook found by a metal detectorist at Bawsey and classified as Treasure under the Treasures Act.

(iv) Partnership Projects

The Lynn Museum charging period ran from April to September. The free admission period would run from October to March. The free admission period was provided under the terms of the Service Level Agreement (SLA) between the Borough Council and NMAS, with part of the SLA funding contribution covering lost ticket income during the free admission period.

The operation of NMAS in King's Lynn and West Norfolk continued to be managed under the terms of the 2012/13 SLA with the Borough Council. Under an extension to the original agreement, 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.

NMAS was continuing to lead the Greater Fens Museums Partnership. The development and delivery of the Heritage Lottery Fund- funded partnership project *Fenland Lives and Land* was progressing well. The five "clusters" of museums and community groups responsible for creating the suite of travelling exhibitions had now confirmed their design briefs and a procurement process was currently underway for exhibition design services. It was anticipated that the exhibitions would be launched in the summer of 2014 and then tour a range of community venues across the Fens. An events programme was also being developed, alongside a marketing strategy and learning plan for schools.

Lynn Museum would feature in the 2013 *Discover King's Lynn* tourism marketing leaflet and accompanying discount voucher scheme, offering £1 off the normal adult admission charge of £3.70 (2013-2014).

(v) Learning and Outreach

The Lynn Museum was currently hosting a Teaching Museum trainee as part of the NMAS *Teaching Museum* programme funded by ACE as

part of the 2012-15 Major Partner Museum ACE business plan. Sarah Cassell was part of the first intake of eight trainees. The trainees came together as a cohort to undertake training and development activities and also work on shared projects.

Lynn Museum had worked with 345 pupils using funding from the Audrey Stratford Trust. The pupils had explored Romans, Invaders and Settlers, Tudors, Toys and Games in the Past and the history of the Lynn Mart.

Over the last term Lynn Museum worked with Whitefriars School to deliver Discover and Explore Arts Awards for a group of KS2 children. The children's work was included in the new *Inspired Choice* exhibition.

The Youth Engagement Officer post and spend budget was funded as part of the ACE Major Partner Business Plan 2012-2015.

(vi) Visitor Numbers

The visitor numbers up to 31 January 2013 were tabled. It was reported that the visitor numbers for the Lynn Museum had decreased in December 2012. Work was currently being undertaken to identify the reasons for this and to address any trends to ensure the drop in visitor numbers did not continue. It was highlighted that the trend had also been reflected at other sites. In the future, the Museums Service would look at ways to improve the marketing of the temporary exhibitions.

During October 2012, visitor numbers had slipped compared to the previous year.

In response to questions from the Chairman, Councillor Mrs Nockolds, the Western Area Manager explained that press releases were issues to the local media at the start of each exhibition, and also for special events during the exhibition period. Some temporary exhibitions had also seen marketing flyers circulated via the local free press. Members were advised that there was limited scope in the budget for advertising purposes.

It was noted that an A5 marketing flyer was distributed locally for the Hard Times Exhibition. The Museums Service would consider the use of targeted distribution of flyers in the future, subject to funding being available.

Councillor Mrs Smeaton enquired if the Teaching Museum Trainee could be invited to give a presentation at the next meeting of the Committee to which the Western Area Manager responded that he would put the necessary arrangements in place and invite Sarah Cassell.

In response to questions from Councillor Mrs Smeaton regarding the display of Civic Regalia, the Western Area Manager advised that the content and way the information was displayed was the responsibility of the Borough Council. As part of the Service Level Agreement, Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service offered advice on the care of collections located at the Town Hall. The NMAS Collections Officer had also provided labels for the paintings in the Civic Reception Area. The Chairman, Councillor Mrs Nockolds advised Councillor Mrs Smeaton to contact the relevant Portfolio Holder.

The Chairman, Councillor Mrs Nockolds informed the Committee that the Sainsbury's Centre in Norwich had made a request to display the King John Cup at a themed exhibition in September. A Cabinet report would therefore be required to grant permission.

In response to questions from Councillor Chenery on the 16th century silver gilt dress hook found by a metal detectorist at Bawsey, the Western Area Manager explained that under the Treasures Act the item would be forwarded to the British Museum who would manage the process and appoint a Valuation Committee who would determine the fair market value. The item would then be offered to local Museum to purchase at market value. The value of the item would be paid to the finder who would normally share the amount with the landowner. The Friends of the Museum had generated funds to enable the item to be purchased.

Councillor Tyler asked if there was a reasonable number of attendees at the afternoon talks organised by the Museums Service. In response, the Western Area Manager advised that the level of attendance was between 15 – 20 at each talk, which was a comfortable number. With the space available any more than 20 would be difficult to accommodate. A new poster template for advertisements was being produced.

Following further questions from Councillor Tyler on the timeframe relating to the changes to Civic Regalia, the Western Area Manager reminded those present that it was a Borough Council project with assistance provided by NMAS. The Heritage Lottery Funding Round 1 application had been submitted and an announcement would be made in March 2013. If the Round 1 bid was successful, funding would be available to develop and submit a Round 2 bid early in 2014.

Councillor Tyler asked how staff time was allocated to Thetford and Lynn Museums. In response, the Western Area Manager explained that approximately 3 days per week was spent at Lynn Museums and 2 days at Thetford. However, if there was an event at a particular site which required support, a flexible approach was adopted. The Western Area Manager confirmed that at the present time, there was enough resource to deliver the programme of activities provided by the Museums Service.

The Chairman, Councillor Mrs Nockolds thanked the Western Area Manager for an informative and interesting report.

RESOLVED: (1) The Committee noted the report.

(2) The Teaching Museum Trainee be invited to attend the next meeting of the Committee.

7 SITE UPDATE REPORT

True's Yard Museum Six-Monthly Activity Report

The Chairman, congratulated True's Yard on winning the EDP Tourist Award for Small Tourist Attraction 2012.

In presenting the report, the True's Yard Manager drew the Committee's attention to the following sections of the report:

Boiler

One of the central heating boilers had to be replaced and Friends of True's Yard had donated generously towards the cost of the new boiler.

Events

True's Talks begun on 31 January 2013 and proved to be very successful in the autumn. School bookings were buoyant.

In response to questions, from Councillor Tyler on the accreditation, the Western Area Manager informed the Committee that he was the Accreditation Mentor for True's Yard and had assisting in the preparation and submission of the application. The accreditation was a benchmark of professional museums and enabled an organisation to apply for external funding and therefore reassured potential funders.

In response to questions from Councillor Mrs Smeaton, the True's Yard Manager advised that the boiler had already been installed at a cost of £4,000, £2,000 of which had been contributed from the Friends. The capacity of the boiler was not known.

The Chairman, Councillor Mrs Nockolds asked if there was a programme of events scheduled for the summer period. In response, the True's Yard Manager explained that there would be a programme of events available which would include living historic walks.

Following questions from the Committee on the request received from Eastern Fisheries to ask if True's Yard could store more of their records, the True's Yard Manager explained that the records were being reviewed and acid free treasury tags attached to them.

The True's Yard Manager informed Members that an IT programme was run on a Friday to assist the Purfleet Trust with obtaining basic skills.

The Chairman, Councillor Mrs Nockolds commented that the visitor figures remained at a good level and thanked the Manager for attending and presenting an interesting report.

RESOLVED: The Committee noted the report.

8 NORFOLK MUSEUMS SERVICE REVIEW

The Chairman, Councillor Mrs Nockolds explained that a review of NMAS was agreed by the NCC Cabinet in April 2012 and taken on by a cross party working party.

As part of the review, the Chairman of each Area Museum Committee was interviewed as well as staff and other interested stakeholders. An on-line survey was conducted with separate questionnaires for people who had visited the Museums.

The Committee was advised that the overall findings were positive in a number of areas and the service provided by NMAS was highly valued by its users with valuable resources for schools and students.

As Chairman and Cabinet Member, Councillor Mrs Nockolds explained that she had discussed with the Executive Director, Chris Bamfield and consulted with the Vice-Chairman the recommendations within the report of the Working Party and sent comments in readiness for the Joint NMAS Committee on 15 February 2013. A copy of the response was circulated with the Agenda for the meeting today.

The Chairman invited questions and comments from the Committee.

Councillor Tyler informed the Chairman that he had carefully read her response to the Norfolk County Council and asked when would be the appropriate time to view the full report and recommendations. In response, the Chairman, Councillor Mrs Nockolds explained that report had been considered by the Joint Museums Committee on 15 February 2013, and would now go back to Cabinet to formulate an action plan after a further consultation exercise had been undertaken.

The Chairman, Councillor Mrs Nockolds drew Members' attention to page 16 which set out the findings of the Working Party.

RESOLVED: That, the Chairman, Councillor Mrs Nockolds arrange for the full Working Party report including the recommendations to be circulated to the Committee.

9 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 13 May 2013 at 2.15 pm in Meeting Rooms 1, 2 and 3, King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn.

The Meeting closed at 3.25 pm