

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 31 March 2014 at 2.15 pm in the
Committee Suite, King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn**

PRESENT:

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 A Tyler	- Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk
Councillor A J Wright	- Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk
County Councillor J Bracey	- Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk
County Councillor M Chenery	- Norfolk County Council
County Councillor H Humphrey	- Norfolk County Council
County Councillor J Ward	- Norfolk County Council
Dr R Hanley	- Norfolk Museums Service
Ms R Farnan	- Norfolk Museums Service
Mr S Hall	- Norfolk Museums Service
Mr P Eke	- Tourism Support Officer, Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk
Wendy Vincent	- Democratic Services Officer, Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk

The Chairman, Councillor Mrs Nockolds welcomed County Councillors J Ward (Chairman of the Joint Museums Committee) and J Bracey (Vice-Chairman of the Joint Museums Committee) to the meeting and thanked them both for attending.

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor D J Collis, Lindsey Bavin, Bryan Howling, Steve Miller, Borough Councillor Mrs S Smeaton and Tim Humphreys.

2 MINUTES

The notes of the meeting held on 14 October 2013 were agreed as a correct record.

MATTERS ARISING

There were none.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

5 REPORT OF WESTERN AREA MANAGER

King's Lynn Museums Report – October 2013 to February 2014

The Western Area Manager presented the report which provided Members with information on King's Lynn Museums for the period October 2013 to February 2014 as set out below:

(i) Temporary exhibitions and events at Lynn Museum

The Lynn Museum was currently hosting a series of temporary exhibitions produced by the Fens Museum Partnership through the Fenland Lives and Land project funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. The exhibition Constructing the Past – Ancient Fen Crafts and Engineering was on show until 22 March 2014. The exhibition Living on Land and Water – Discover a World of Waterways would run from 28 March to 17 May and The Wild Fens – A Journey back to Ancient Landscapes would run from 23 May to 27 July. Complimentary drop in events targeted at families had been organised and funded through the project, including Living on Land and Water on 5 April and The Wild Fens on 24 May.

The major temporary exhibition for 2014 would be 1914-2014: King's Lynn and the First World War, running from 9 April 2014. Marking the centenary of the outbreak of the Great War, the exhibition would explore the town's experience, including damage caused by Zeppelin raids, the Home Front and the role that local businesses played in the war effort.

A programme of illustrated talks continued to be offered at Lynn Museum on Wednesday afternoons. Recent topics had included Fine Art in the King's Lynn Museum Collections; The Archaeology of Tattooing; Displaying Seahenge and Roman Religion. Attendances averaged between 20 – 30 and most talks were delivered by NMS staff.

A regular programme of informal family learning events continued to be offered at the Lynn Museum. Recent 'drop-in' format sessions had included Toys and Games and Monsters, Mammoths and Deadly Dinosaurs.

For 2014, a programme of ten family drop-in events had been scheduled for each school holiday across the year.

(ii) Other Museum Developments

Following the completion of the alterations to the reception of the Lynn Museum, the recently conserved Blackfriars Cross had now been returned to its former display site adjacent to the museum entrance. This location was close to the original site of the cross, in the cemetery of the town's medieval Dominican Friary.

The refresh of the main exhibition gallery at the Lynn Museum was nearing completion, utilising funding from the ACE Major Partner Museum programme. The work had seen a range of displays refreshed or re-displayed, to ensure the quality of the visitor experience at Lynn Museum was maintained. The project had also seen the installation of additional objects such as medieval pilgrim badges formerly displayed at the Town House Museum, alongside improvements to the labelling and display of a number of recent acquisitions such as the Hillington Phallus. The improvements had been designed and delivered by the NMS in-house design and technical team.

The recently recruited team of collections volunteers continued to meet on a weekly basis in the NMS offices at Queen Street. Following training by NMS conservation and collections management staff, volunteers had been focussing on scanning and cataloguing the extensive collection of sketches by local artist Henry Baines.

Staff at the Lynn Museum had been focussing on highlight objects from the museum's collections. A number of the objects had recently been photographed for the new NMS collections access website, as well as to enhance the illustrated Modes collections catalogue. Some of the objects had been re-displayed in the refresh of the main gallery at Lynn Museum.

A staff restructuring had taken place within King's Lynn Museums as part of a wider NMS restructuring required to meet Norfolk County Council budget savings from April 2014. The Curator (covering King's Lynn and Thetford) would increase the allocation of time to King's Lynn and a new part time Curatorial Assistant post would be created. There would also be new subject specialist support from Norwich curatorial teams to support King's Lynn collections. The post of Collections Officer will be deleted. Overall, there would be an increase in the amount of NMS staff time allocated to King's Lynn Museums. The new structure would come into effect in April 2014.

Norfolk Museums Service had a new corporate logo developed by students from Norwich University of the Arts. Following agreement by the Joint Museums Committee, the service had also changed its name from Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service to Norfolk Museums Service.

(iii) Friends of King's Lynn Museums

The Friends continued to offer a varied programme for members including lunchtime talks, trips and an annual lecture. The Friends supported the afternoon talks programme offered at the Lynn Museum during 2013 and would continue to do so during 2014.

The Friends were continuing to fund a programme of painting conservation, with two works recently returned following specialist conservation work.

(iv) Partnership Projects

NMS supported the Borough Council with the development of the HLF Round 2 funding bid for the Town Hall Stories of Lynn project that was submitted in February 2014. As well as being part of the project steering group, NMS also led on the development of the project Activity and Consultation Plans and the collections sections of the Conservation Management Plan. NMS also developed and managed a programme of pilot activities and events during 2013.

The operation of NMS in King's Lynn and West Norfolk continued to be managed under the terms of the 2013-14 Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the Borough Council. Under an extension to the original agreement, NMS 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. A new SLA had been agreed for the period 2014-2015.

NMS continued to lead the Greater Fens Museums Partnership through the development and delivery of the Heritage Lottery Fund – funded partnership project Fenland Lives and Land. The five exhibitions were co-produced by “clusters” of museums and community groups. The exhibitions were launched at a celebration event at The Town Hall on 19 September 2013 and were now touring a range of community venues across the Fens including the Lynn Museum. A supporting events programme had also been developed, alongside a marketing strategy and learning plan for schools.

The new 2014 season marketing leaflets for the Lynn Museum had now been produced. Lynn Museum would also be supporting the 2014 Discover King's Lynn tourism marketing leaflet and accompanying discount voucher scheme, offering £1 off the normal adult admission charge of £3.95 (2014-15).

(v) Learning and Outreach

The Lynn Museum was hosting a second 12 month Teaching Museum traineeship through the NMS Teaching Museum programme, funded by ACE as part of the 2012-15 Major Partner Museum ACE business plan. Emily Shepperson joined the team at King's Lynn and Thetford as the new Curatorial Assistant Museum Trainee. The previous Teaching Museum trainee based in King's Lynn, Sarah Cassell had recently secured employment in the museums sector.

Lynn Museum had continued to work with local schools to deliver a broad range of formal learning sessions. NMS learning staff were currently reviewing the implications of the recent changes to the History National Curriculum, which was likely to result in more primary-age children visiting the Seahenge Bronze Age gallery. A Seahenge-themed schools session had now been delivered and evaluated.

The Learning Officer at the Lynn Museum had delivered an Arts Award in a Day programme with 27, Years 1-2 pupils from Wimbotsham

Primary School, based around a single day programme exploring the theme of toys and games.

NMS would continue to deliver a broad programme of youth engagement activities, funded as part of the ACE Major Partner Business Plan 2012-15. The programme focussed on developing projects and engagement opportunities for young people including those categorised as NEET.

The King's Lynn Museums Youth Forum members created the animation Super Mecha Tech Plate for the Town Hall HLF funding bid. Youth Forum members visited the Regalia collection at the Old Gaol House and researched the history of the objects. The young people then used photographs of the collections to create a piece of stop-frame animation. The group worked with local film-maker and animator over a number of sessions. The film showed the objects in a new light, coming alive and taking on characters, set in front of familiar views from around King's Lynn and enhanced by an exciting soundtrack. The film could be viewed via the following link:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qwV2F25Yuuk&feature=youtu.be>

The Youth Engagement Officer had developed and delivered the innovative new entitled the Messy Museum Café programme, targeted at under 5's and young parents and based on the Story Café model used in schools. Young parents were being reached through the local Sure Start group. Sessions were delivered by the Youth Engagement Officer and Museum Learning Assistants from the Lynn Museum.

(vi) Visitor Numbers

The visitor numbers were tabled. It was noted that as at end February 2014, there had been an increase in visitors over the previous year. It was highlighted that the increase in visitor numbers during January/February 2014 was linked to the family event programme. The figures indicated a positive trend. In order to strengthen visitor numbers during each school holiday a number of events had been scheduled. Temporary exhibitions and World War 1 programmes should also help to strengthen the number of visitors to the Lynn Museum.

In response to questions from County Councillor Chenery regarding notifying Parish Councils of the Wednesday afternoon talks at the Lynn Museum, the Western Area Manager explained that Press Releases were issued which were then published in the Lynn News, Free Newspaper and the King's Lynn Magazine. Announcements were also made on both KLFM and Radio Norfolk. It was highlighted that posters were also distributed in local areas. However, the Museums Services could look at ways of promoting the talks, in particular, to Parish Councils.

County Councillor Bracey referred to paragraph 4.4 relating to the Project Fenland Lives and Land partnership and asked if the project was confined to the Norfolk Fens or over the border. In response, the Western Area Manager explained that the project involving any museums which had Fenland

collections and gave examples of West Norfolk, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

County Councillor Ward commented that Norwich Castle had introduced a £1 admission charge after 4 pm. In response, the Western Area Manager explained that this appeared to be more effective in Norwich. The Committee noted that the Lynn Museum offered a 6 month free period which enabled local people to visit the museum. Lynn Museum received a modest number of visitors after 4 pm.

In response to questions from Councillor Tyler regarding the Museums Services changing its name from Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service to Norfolk Museums Service, the Western Area Manager outlined the rationale for the change in name and assured those present that there would be no diminution in the curatorial support provided to both the Museums and Archaeology areas of the Norfolk Museums Service.

The Chairman, Councillor Mrs Nockolds advised the Committee that the Norfolk Joint Museums Committee had been consulted on the design for the new logo.

In response to questions from Councillor Tyler on volunteers, the Western Area Manager explained that the Museums Service had a social role and that at Gressenhall there were approximately 120 volunteers, some of which had varying levels of learning difficulties. However, with regard to volunteers at Lynn Museum, a structure to offer placements for volunteers with learning difficulties was not yet established. However, the volunteer scheme at the Lynn Museum had been rebuilt approximately a year ago and it was hoped that in the future there would be scope to offer volunteer placements to those with learning difficulties.

In response to questions from Councillor Wright on the number of the visitors to King's Lynn Town Hall being included within visitor figures presented to the Committee, the Western Area Manager advised that the Museums Service would not be responsible for the operation of the Town Hall, but would work in partnership with the Borough Council. The Western Area Manager explained that the Norfolk Museums Service co-ordinated events on behalf of the Borough Council and those visitor figures could be presented to Members.

The Chairman, Councillor Mrs Nockolds asked if schools had been invited to visit the Lynn Museum to view the Seahenge display. In response, the Western Area Manager informed Members that pilot sessions had taken place and the Learning Officer had been promoting Seahenge to local schools.

County Councillor Humphrey asked if there were any lessons to be learned regarding the Bridewell Museum refurbishment. In response, the Western Area Manager explained that Learning Managers from each site attending meetings which provided a network to share good practice. The Committee was informed that new learning webpages would be launched as part of the Norfolk County Council hosted NMS website, which supported themed events.

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

RESOLVED: The Area Museums Committee noted the report.

6 REPORT OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Mr P Eke, Tourism Support Officer presented a report that updated Members of the Area Museums Committee on tourism marketing undertaken by the Borough Council during the period October 2013 – March 2014.

Update on the 2014 Destination Marketing Campaign

West Norfolk Holiday Guide

The 2014 West Norfolk Holiday guide was published in December 2013 with main distribution commencing on 6 January.

- A total of 48,000 enquiries for the brochure were expected to be generated through the main on line and off line advertising campaigns.
- 21,000 copies would be distributed through the national TIC network.
- The balance 21,000 copies would be distributed through enquiries and requests generated through www.visitwestnorfolk.com from 3rd party websites (such as www.visitnorfolk.co.uk) through local West Norfolk Tourist Information centres and at exhibitions/events.

2014 Where to Go and What to Do in West Norfolk

The 2014 leaflet was published in early February. 200,000 copies were produced. Distribution of 180,000 copies would take place to around 2,300 sites used by visitors and residents across Norfolk, Cambridgeshire and South Lincolnshire. Distribution took place throughout the year at regular intervals. Additional copies go to regional Tourist Information Centres. The balance of just under 20,000 copies would be distributed locally, through TIC's and at events.

Discover King's Lynn

The 2014 Discover King's Lynn guide was published in March. The print run would be increased to 120,000 so that more copies could be distributed at sites throughout Norfolk, Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire. The format had been updated to allow more detailed content on additional sites such as the King's Lynn Guided Walks, King's Lynn Minster, Hanse House, Red Mount Chapel and South Gate.

The Discount vouchers for 2014 included 5 offers with the addition of a discount on tickets for the King's Lynn guided walks. The voucher offers were more prominently displayed in the new 2014 guide.

Other Guides

Updated versions of the Hunstanton Mini Guide, Downham Market Mini Guide, King's Lynn Hanse Trail had been printed during March 2014.

Website and On-line Marketing

The website www.visitwestnorfolk.com continued to attract more visitors. Top pages in 2013 comprised the Home page, Hunstanton page, King's Lynn page, Things To Do and accommodation. The proportion of people visiting King's Lynn pages was increasing so that it had recently become the second most visited page. A total of 2353 events were published on the site during 2013.

The @visitnorfolk twitter account was being actively used and now had more than 500 followers.

Partnership Working

West Norfolk was again working with Visit England to take part in the English Countryside Campaign which would run at the end of March 2014.

The Borough Council were active partners in the Visit Norfolk partnership. In autumn 2013 a national advertising campaign for Visit Norfolk included an advert which had over 400,000 views on the ITV iplayer and a series of posters at six railway stations on routes out of London.

The Borough Council continued to be active partners in Visit North Norfolk Coast and Countryside Ltd which had focused on website, social media and PR activity to promote the whole of the Norfolk coast.

Promotion of the Sail The Wash had continued. The Sail the Wash website (which reflected the overall design of the main www.visitwestnorfolk.com website), was developed by the Borough Council in July 2013.

A new promotional flyer to promote the Wash as a sailing destination was currently being produced.

Tourist Information Centres

King's Lynn Tourist Information Centre had welcomed over 99,000 visitors during 2013 which was similar to the highest figures achieved since the Tourist Information Centre moved to the Custom House in 2000.

The Tourist Information Centre in Hunstanton, which was now operated by Hunstanton Town Council under a management agreement with the Borough Council was substantially refurbished during 2013 providing an attractive new look interior. The mechanism for counting visitor numbers had been substantially interrupted during 2013 so comparable annual figures were not available.

Other Heritage Marketing

King's Lynn Town Guides

The Borough Council had continued to support the valuable work of the King's Lynn Town Guides. A total of 15,000 copies of the new 2014 King's Lynn Town Guides, Guided Walks leaflet were printed in March and were now

being distributed to outlets accessed by visitors and residents in and around King's Lynn and West Norfolk.

King's Lynn Maritime Trail

The King's Lynn Maritime Trail was launched on 25 May 2013. Over 1000 copies had been produced and either sold through the Tourist Information Centre or distributed through PR purposes. The Town Guides now provided a series of walks following the Maritime Trail.

Events

The Tourist Information Team and Tourism Team were working with a small partnership including the Museum Service to organise a Burney Festival for 2014. The main event would be a special exhibition 'Georgian Lynn and the Brilliant Burney Family' which will take place at the Custom House from 6 June to 31 October. A programme of other events, including walks, lectures, dancing and a people's party and Georgian banquet would take place over 2 weeks between 6 and 21 June.

The Hanse

The Regeneration Team were planning events to coincide with International Day of the Hanse on 17 May 2014. The day would comprise music performances (including performers from the UK, Norway, Russia and Estonia), medieval activities, dancing, story telling, a medieval market and craft demonstrations and food and drink.

King's Lynn and West Norfolk would also be promoted at the International Hanse festival in Lubeck, Germany in May.

The Town Hall

The Heritage Lottery stage 2 application for the Town Hall project was submitted in February 2014. A decision from the Heritage Lottery Fund was expected in June 2014. If successful works on site would commence in March 2015 with completion due in early 2016.

County Councillor Chenery referred to 4.1 – English Countryside Campaign and asked if the information was available in other languages. In response, the Tourism Support Officer explained that, if possible, all design work and printing was undertaken in-house. Copies of the information could be made available in large print or another language upon request.

In response to questions from County Councillor Humphrey regarding on-line publications, the Tourism Support Officer explained that all information published on the Borough Council's website was created in pdf form and downloadable.

In response to further questions from County Councillor Humphrey, the Tourism Support Officer advised that the Tourism Manager was looking into developing apps.

County Councillor Humphrey asked what were the recording arrangements relating to the number of people visiting the tourism website. In response, the Tourism Support Officer explained that statistics were recorded and follow up emails were sent to those visiting the website.

County Councillor Ward enquired if consideration had been given to 7-day opening for the Lynn Museum. In response, the Western Area outlined the current opening hours as being Tuesday to Saturday. He advised that Monday was a quiet period and Sunday opening had been trialled with limited success. However, he explained that once the Town Hall project had been completed the situation regarding Sunday opening would be reviewed.

RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the report.

7 BREAD OR BLOOD

The Committee viewed the 15 minute abridged version of the Bread or Blood film by Downham Market Academy.

8 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 2 June 2014, 2.15 pm in the Committee Suite, King's Court, Chapel Street.

The Meeting closed at 3.52 pm