

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK

KING'S LYNN AND WEST NORFOLK AREA MUSEUMS COMMITTEE

Minutes from the Meeting of the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Area Museums Committee held on Monday, 13th June, 2016 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 (Chairman)
Councillor A Tyler	- Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk
Councillor Mrs A Wright	- Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk
Councillor T Smith	- Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk
County Councillor Chenery	- Norfolk County Council
Susan Thompson	- Friends of King's Lynn Museums
Dr R Hanley	- Norfolk Museums Service
Ms H Jackson	- Norfolk Museums Service

An apology for absence was received from County Councillor H Humphrey, T Wing-Pentelow, Mr J Ward and Lindsey Bavin

10 **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2016/2017**

RESOLVED: That Councillor Mrs E A Nockolds be appointed as Chairman for the Municipal Year 2016/2017.

11 **APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2016/2017**

RESOLVED: That County Councillor Humphrey be appointed as Vice-Chairman for the Municipal Year 2016/2017.

12 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 14 March 2016 were agreed as a correct record.

Councillor Chenery queried the spelling of the word Napolenic, and it was confirmed that it should read 'Napoleonic'.

It was also pointed out that the minutes attached with the agenda were from 2015 rather than 2016. However, the minutes which had been sent out to the Committee following the meeting were the correct version.

13 **MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

14 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

15 **REPORT OF THE HEAD OF OPERATIONS AND LEARNING**

The Chairman welcomed Robin Hanley and Hannah Jackson to the meeting.

The Head of Operations and Learning and Western Area Operations Manager presented the report which provided Members with information on King's Lynn Museums activities for the period from March 2016 – May 2016.

(i) Temporary exhibitions and events at Lynn Museum

The current major exhibition at Lynn Museum explored the life and work of Frederick Savage and was entitled Art of the Mart: Savage's – the famous fairground makers of Lynn. The exhibition had been hugely popular with visitors and was due to finish on 2 July 2016 but had been extended over the summer months and would now run until 11 September 2016.

A programme of illustrated talks continued to be offered at Lynn Museum on Wednesday afternoons. Recent topics included Battle of Jutland by Nigel Amies, Victorian Menageries by Michael Medlar and a talk on whaling given by Learning Officer Melissa Hawker and Curatorial Trainee Morgan Bell. Attendances averaged 15-25 and most talks were delivered by NMS staff. It was reported that Morgan had left the Museum for another job within the heritage sector.

An enhanced programme of informal family learning events continued to be offered at the Lynn Museum for the school holiday periods. Drop-in events this year included: a Dinosaurs (640) and Romans (67) events during the Easter holiday and Fancy dress (51) an event during the May half term to make costumes for the Roaring Twenties town-wide event on 12 June 2016. It was reported that during that event there was over 400 visitors to the museum.

During the school holidays the Lynn Museum continues to offer a popular programme of themed gallery discovery trails, with a new trail available for each week of the school holidays. Recent trails have included an Easter egg hunt and All the fun of the

fair. A loyalty card scheme would be offered to families and those which took part in 5 trails would be invited to a tea party.

The Lynn Museum continued to host monthly Coffee, Cake and Collections “coffee morning” style events for adults, with each session exploring a different aspect of the collections. Topics included a session on medieval King’s Lynn and RAF Marham centenary themes.

The Museum participated in the national initiative known as Museums at Night with a screening of the film *Cathead* by the King’s Lynn Youth Forum on Friday 13th May. The young people involved in making the film participated in a discussion after the film was shown about how the film was made.

The reception case at Lynn Museum was redisplayed regularly by Museum Trainee, Morgan Bell. A request had been made to the British Museum to display two of the Anglo-Saxon Pentney brooches in January and February 2017.

The Chairman commented that the museum played an important part of the town and this was demonstrated at the Roaring Twenties event held on Sunday.

(ii) Other Museum Developments

The Lynn Museum continued to develop its social media presence, with Twitter and Facebook accounts being maintained by staff. The Lynn Museum Twitter account had 2388 tweets and 1582 followers while the Facebook account had 358 likes. The Museum participated in the international Twitter event Museum Week and gained interest and new followers.

A team of collections volunteers continued to meet on a weekly basis in the NMS offices at Queen Street. Volunteers had continued with a programme of work involving the scanning and cataloguing of the drawing collections by local artists Henry Baines and Walter Dexter. The team’s work enhanced and illustrated the museum catalogue available online through the museum service’s collections website.

In addition to the scanning project, a small team of volunteers was working with Assistant Curator Dayna Woolbright on a weekly basis, undertaking an audit of collections at the museum stores at Aickmans Yard. They had been joined by a local artist who had been creating drawings of different objects which were shown to audiences on social media and formed a display in the reception case last winter.

The Museum had been successful in obtaining grant funding of £1,160 from the Woodmansterne Conservation Awards,

supporting the conservation of two newly acquired portraits in poor condition. The portraits were of John Langley and his wife Elizabeth. The Friends of King's Lynn Museums and two private donors were also contributing to the costs. The portrait of Elizabeth Langley had been conserved and returned to the Museum and the cleaned painting was much improved. Once both portraits were completed an unveiling of the finished work was planned with the Museum Friends Group.

The Museum's fortnightly History of King's Lynn in 100 Objects series with the Lynn News had generated significant interest.

Recruitment of staff for the Museum's Front of House team was currently in progress with the appointment of Carl Hutchings as Front of House Supervisor and interviews took place on 6 June 2016 for two part-time Museum Learning Assistant positions.

Following the closure of the King's Lynn Arts Centre, a 19th century British School oil painting The Regatta of 1860 featuring a maritime event at the town had been donated to the Museum to be added to the town collections.

Recent notable acquisitions to the museum's collections also included a print of Trafalgar Square by Lynn artist Dudley Page, a miniature of Robert Partridge, born in King's Lynn and later Mayor of Norwich and a Medieval silver annular brooch.

Councillor Chenery asked where John Langley was from. The Head of Operations and Learning stated that he would find out and let the Committee know.

Susan Thompson informed the Committee that she would be carrying out a biography of the Langleys.

In relation to the Woodmansterne Conservation Awards, the Head of Operations and Learning explained that this was a well-established charitable trust which had been in existence for a number of years.

Reference was made to the Regatta in paragraph 2.7, and the Western Area Operations Manager explained that she would look into the details of this.

In response to queries regarding twitter/facebook, the Western Area Operations Manager explained that almost all enquiries received on Twitter and Facebook was responded to. She explained that the Museum still promoted the use of postal address, email and telephone enquiries but these could only be responded to in office hours. Comments left on Trip Advisor were also responded to.

The Head of Operations and Learning explained that it was intended that responses should be in the public domain and that the Museum service was changing the way it communicated with visitors/users.

(iii) Friends of the Museum

The Friends were continuing to offer a varied programme for members including lunchtime talks, newsletters, trips and an annual lecture. The Friends continued to support the afternoon talks programme being offered at the Lynn Museum during 2016.

The Friends were continuing to fund a programme of fine art conservation, most recently the cockerel drawing for the Art of the Mart exhibition and support for the conservation of the portraits of John and Elizabeth Langley.

A Junior Friends of King's Lynn Museum scheme has been launched and members of the Friends Committee attended last summer's family events to invite children and young people to join.

It was also highlighted that it would be the 60th Anniversary of the Friends next year. Susan Thompson was compiling a list of everything that the Friends had contributed to. Once the list had been compiled it would be easier to keep up to date for future years.

The Chairman added that without the Friends Group the Museum Service would not be able to get external funding.

Susan Thompson confirmed that the Junior Friends were aware of the trail loyalty cards. She also confirmed that there were 37 junior members.

(iv) Partnerships

The Lynn Museum free admission period ran for October to the end of March. This free admission period was provided under the terms of the Service Level Agreement (SLA) between the Borough Council and NMS.

NMS continued to support the Borough Council with the delivery of the HLF-funded Stories of Lynn project focussed on King's Lynn Town Hall. As well as being part of the project steering group and Project Board, NMS continued to lead on the development and delivery of the project activity plan and had led on the development of exhibition designs and site interpretation. NMS was hosting the Learning & Engagement Officer and had hosted the Project Curator post until the end of March. Both had

worked closely with colleagues from the Borough Council and the Norfolk Record Office, alongside the external designers responsible for developing the new exhibitions at the Town Hall. Dayna Woolbright, Assistant Curator for Lynn Museum was seconded to the Stories of Lynn project from January to March 2016 to complete the curatorial aspects of the work including installation of objects in displays, completing graphic panels and labels and arranging for the packing and safe return of objects. The new display opened on 25 March. The Assistant Curator had continued to support the Stories of Lynn project through April and May including display snagging, supporting the production of the town app to guide people around the history of King's Lynn, and setting up the Town Hall's collections storage facility.

Assistant Curator Dayna Woolbright had led an exhibition in the Stories of Lynn changing displays area to commemorate the 100th anniversary of RAF Marham. Timed to coincide with the annual Freedom Parade and the launch of the summer Tornado Trail, the exhibition opened on 27 May. Linked to the exhibition was a plane spotting trail for the families in the Stories of Lynn exhibition area.

Partnership working with the Borough Council continued with the delivery of two major town events in 2016: the Roaring Twenties event on 12 June to commemorate the Queen's 90th birthday, and a second event on the 17th July with Forties Lynn: Life on the Home Front Second World War theme.

The Lynn Museum had started opening on Sundays from 12 until 4 for the 2016 season running from April to September, made possible by financial support from the Borough Council. A Sunday joint ticket was available for visitors to Stories of Lynn to also explore both the Custom House exhibition and the Lynn Museum.

The Museum would be working with the King's Lynn Festival again in 2016 by providing the Lynn Museum as a venue. There were plans for a 30 minute performance by flautist Anna Rosa Mari on Thursday 28 July and an event aimed at pre-school children and their families by the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment on Saturday 16th July.

(v) Learning & Outreach

During 2015 – 2016 and again in 2016-2017, the Lynn Museum was hosting a 12 month Teaching Museum traineeship provided through the NMS Teaching Museum programme, funded by ACE as part of the 2015-18 Major Partner Museum ACE business plan. Morgan Bell worked as a Curatorial Trainee for King's Lynn and Thetford in 2015/2016. Amongst a range of

other activities she helped to coordinate the trails programme, supervised collections volunteers and scheduled displays in the museum reception area. Morgan's traineeship ended in April when new trainee Imogen Clarke, one of 6 hosted by the Museums service as a whole was welcomed.

Lynn Museum had continued to work with local schools to deliver a broad range of formal learning sessions. Learning programmes had been adapted following recent changes to the history National Curriculum. The Seahenge and early history displays and themes were proving popular with schools and school numbers were up on last year's total. New boxes of handling artefacts were being created for use with schools including a new Romans box and at 'Archaebin' with layers of archaeological finds for children to investigate local history and archaeology.

On 17th May Museum staff welcomed pupils for the first joint schools event in partnership with Stories of Lynn. Children found out about Frederick Savage's life and role as Mayor at Stories of Lynn and discovered more about his work at Lynn Museum.

The Committee made comments/asked questions, some of which are summarised below:

Comments were raised regarding schools visiting the museum and engagement with schools. The Head of Operations and Learning explained that the museum mainly worked with Key Stage 2 children and also with pre-schools. He added that the museum did try to be proactive to help schools visit the museum. Staff from the museum did go out to schools to talk to teachers.

The Head of Operations and Learning also explained that Melissa Hawker was familiar with the history contacts in schools and it was hoped that schools within a 30 minute drive would be aware of what the museum could offer.

Following a question in relation to the schools' curriculum for GCSE and A levels, the Head of Operations and Learning explained that there was a new theme Crime and Punishment was a module and the museum was seeing an increase in engagement from secondary schools. He added that there were new opportunities over 12 months to develop a GCSE and A level offer.

(vi) Visitor numbers

The visitor figures for the period were circulated.

The Head of Operations and Learning highlighted two lines of interest – Lynn Museum, which reported an increase in visitor numbers for April and May and a new line Norfolk Exhibition Programmes incl. King's Lynn Town Hall SLA. This did not record visitor numbers to the Town Hall as these would be recorded separately by the Borough Council.

16 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting was scheduled for **Monday 26 September 2016 at 2.15 pm** in the **Committee Suite, King's Court, King's Lynn**.

The meeting closed at 3.30 pm