

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, 9th October, 2023 at 2.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ

PRESENT:

Borough Councillors

Councillors P Bland, A Bubb, M de Whalley and Mr B Davison

County Councillors

Councillors L Bambridge, M Chenery, A Kemp and J Ward

Norfolk Museums Service

R Hanley and R Williams

1 **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2023/2024**

RESOLVED: Councillor A Bubb be appointed Chair for the Municipal Year 2023/2024.

2 **APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2023/2024**

RESOLVED: Councillor A Kemp be appointed Chair for the Municipal Year 2023/2024.

3 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor C Dawson, Oliver Bone, Curator at Lynn Museum and Lindsay Bavin, Manager of True's Yard Museum.

4 **MINUTES**

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The minutes of the meeting held on 20 March 2023 were agreed as a correct record subject to the following amendments highlighted in bold.

Page 7: Councillor de Whalley Amend to read to promote the **loss of** biodiversity species.

Page 8: Councillor de Whalley asked whether they were looking to **expand** their relationship with other museums.

Page 8: Councillor Kemp raised comments and questions regarding **Savages**.

5 **MATTERS ARISING**

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Councillor Bubb referred to page 7 referred to the purchase of items from the museum and informed those present he had purchased a number of stoneware Seahenge mugs, but there was no mention of the Museum or where you could see the Seahenge exhibition and suggested that the volume 2 of the mugs might include details of Lynn Museum. In response, the Assistant Head of Museums undertook to pass the comments to the Retail Manager.

6 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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Councillor P Bland declared an interest as a Trustee of True's Yard Museum.

7 **REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT HEAD OF MUSEUMS**

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The Assistant Head of Museums presented the report on the King's Lynn Museum activities for the period March to August 2023.

The Committee's attention was drawn to the following areas of the report:

- Covid-19 and Infection Control service update.
- Exhibitions and events at Lynn Museum.
- Forthcoming exhibitions: The Tiger who came to Tea, The Moon: Meet our Nearest Neighbour, Woof – a Celebration of Dogs.
- Family events.
- Family trails.
- Mini Museum
- #Thanks to You Tours.
- Coffee Mornings.
- Heritage Open Days.
- Newman Legacy.
- Other Museum Developments.
- Partnerships.

- Learning and Outreach.
- Kick the Dust Norfolk – Project Update. A verbal update was given following publication of the Agenda.

The visitor figures for the period March to August 2023 were noted, a copy is attached to the minutes. The Committee was advised that visitor numbers were looking good and to date Lynn Museum was currently on track to reach the levels recorded prior to Covid of between 18,000 and 20,000 visits per year.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Head of Museums for the report and invited questions and comments from the Committee, a summary of which is set out below.

Councillor de Whalley commented that it was great to hear that Seahenge was of national and international importance and added there were other historical interests that were both national and international importance and gave an example of the Custom House and asked if there was any update which was part of the Riverfront project of the Town Deal Fund . Councillor de Whalley went on to say that it was good to see involvement with the interpretation of the Guildhall but it did suggest that all of the above three things were creating interest across the country and world and it suggested that consideration should be given to using all 3 together and anything else of interest to drive up visitor numbers to King's Lynn and to the museum.

In response, the Assistant Head of Museums explained that the NMS worked closely with the Borough Council colleagues and were involved in all of the projects mentioned. Seahenge had been a significant part of the redevelopment of the Lynn Museum and had attracted and continued to attract significant interest locally, regionally, nationally and internationally and in terms of marketing activity for the Lynn Museum although there were other sites of interest, the NMS led on the Lynn Museum and had been effective in bringing visitors into the town. The Committee was informed that NMS worked with the Borough Council on marketing campaigns, including Discover King's Lynn which had been successful over the years. NMS was embedded within the project team for the Guildhall and sought to identify opportunities to see the mutual benefits between the sites and look to develop a broader offer for visitors. Members were advised that it was explained that the NMS worked with other collections and partners to share best practice and look at advantages of a wider King's Lynn offer. It was noted that NMS had also being involved with the previous development of the Custom House and the proposed next steps.

The Assistant Head of Museums added that NMS had a good working relationship with the Borough Council to promote the heritage offer in King's Lynn and also worked closely with colleagues in True's Yard and supported other partners when in shared territory and gave an

example of the way the Learning Officers within King's Lynn regularly came together to share experience, best practice and support.

Councillor de Whalley referred to potential risk from rain damage to Town Hall exhibits in the future when heavy rainfalls occurred and asked what plans/works were in place to ensure that excessively heavy rainfall was not going to be an issue for buildings that housed exhibits. In response, the Assistant Head of Museums explained that there was a Borough Council maintenance team for any works required for the Town Hall. For NMS sites NMS had a good property maintenance team which looked after the 10 museums and other NMS buildings within Norfolk. The Committee reviewed an overview of the challenges faced and business continuity arrangements in place to ensure all buildings were maintained. It was further explained that within the NMS there were mitigation measures in place to mitigate the impact on heritage buildings.

Following further questions from Councillor de Whalley on the Kick the Dust statistics set out on page 25 of the agenda and the reported high numbers of young people with mental health issues was indicative of being a general problem within the Borough's youth and should it be something the Norfolk County Council/Borough Council should be looking at and added that equally that there was 0% from care leavers and looked after children and asked if this was something that the Norfolk County Council could assist in raising the profile thereof. In response, the Assistant Head of Museums explained that the statistics in this report for participants including looked after children was from the start of the new Arts Council England-funded Kick the Dust project from end May/beginning June 2023 and advised that under the previous project that had been in operation since 2018, there had been high levels of young people engaging in work in the looked after children category. It was further explained that it was anticipated the figures would change once the new projects became more active but they were currently in the early stages of development. The Committee received an overview of the working relationships with other partners to deliver projects.

The Assistant Head of Museums highlighted the importance of the mental health and well-being work being undertaken by the Borough and County Councils and advised that the NMS team had participated in specialist training and worked in partnership with the YMCA in Norfolk and Leicestershire and other partners including Public Health and also provided an overview of the evaluation process.

Mr Davison commented that Kick the Dust (KTD) was an important project and asked what steps were in place to secure funding in the future. The Assistant Head of Museums explained that NMS recognised that when developing the draft NMS 5 year strategy, it was important to note that KTD started as a project but was now a way of working within NMS and obtaining funding was therefore critical and advised that the initial programme was funded by the Heritage Lottery

Fund (now National Lottery Heritage Fund) which concluded at the end of March 2023. The Committee was informed that funding had been secured for the next three years from Arts Council England as part of an uplift to the NMS national portfolio organisation funding programme which created a direct connection to the core work undertaken by NMS. The Assistant Head of Museums explained that NMS had also been developing a relationship with Norfolk Public Health. The next steps regarding funding would be to seek National Lottery Heritage Fund funding, with a Round 2 application in partnership with YMCA Leicestershire due to be submitted in May 2023 and outcome announced in summer 2023 which would then be a four year programme potentially commencing in autumn 2024. NMS would then be looking for other continuation funding opportunities.

Following further comments from Mr Davison, the Assistant Head of Museums explained that the KTD project was on the national radar.

County Councillor Bambridge referred to future exhibitions and maritime life and mentioned Lord Nelson who did not have a significant maritime life in King's Lynn and added that Captain Vancouver did and was honoured in King's Lynn.

Councillor Bambridge mentioned Samuel Gurney Cresswell who was born at the Bank House, King's Lynn and died at a young age locally in North Runcton and explained that there was local historian who was going to write a book about him.

County Councillor Bambridge also asked if the Hanse League was to be included in the maritime life exhibition.

In response to the above questions, the Assistant Head of Museums explained that in terms of maritime the NMS worked closely with the Stories of Lynn and Creswell did feature in the Stories of Lynn displays and the exhibition in Stories of Lynn focussed on King's Lynn maritime heritage and the story of the Hanse and explorers/traders that came out of King's Lynn and the exhibition complimented what was on display at the Lynn Museum. The Committee was informed that exhibition space in the Stories of Lynn was the best place for a Hanse display.

County Councillor Bambridge commented that she had sent an email to the Director of the Norfolk Museums Service regarding the Manby brothers from Hilgay. One was a sailor and the other invented an incredible piece of equipment.

County Councillor Bambridge added that West Norfolk Astronomy Society wished to become involved in the Moon exhibition and took photographs of the moon. Councillor Bambridge undertook to forward the contact details to the Assistant Head of Museums.

The Assistant Head of Museums responded to questions from Councillor Kybird relating to the Google Arts and Cultural process/engagement with the NMS.

Following questions from County Councillor Chenery, the Assistant Head of Museums provided an overview of the partnership and specialist training available for well-being and mental health. The Assistant Head of Museums undertook to circulate a list of providers.

The Assistant Head of Museums responded to questions from County Councillor Kemp in relation to home schooled children. County Councillor Bambridge advised that there was a Facebook page for home schooled children.

The Chair, Councillor Bubb referred to the list of recent talks held at the Lynn Museum, times held, attendance rates and maximum capacity the Assistant Head of Museums explained that the maximum capacity was around 30 but undertook to pass the comment onto the Curators to check capacity.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

8 **REPORT FROM THE LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT OFFICER - STORIES OF LYNN AND PROJECT WORKING FOR KICK THE DUST**

[Click here to view a recording of this item on You Tube](#)

The Learning and Engagement Officer presented the report for the period 1 March to 23 September 2023 and highlighted the following sections of the report:

- Schools.
- Kick the Dust in King's Lynn – Wednesday's Churchill Park Complex Needs School students, work experience, supporting other activities.
- Family Learning Activities – At Stories of Lynn, Activities at St George's Guildhall Events, Thursdays – Youth Working Session: Play in a Day.
- Ukraine Independence Day.
- Events for October half term are in place and young people in three different groups are helping to devise and deliver the day's activities.
- Change Minds evaluation.

The Chair thanked the Learning and Engagement Officer for the report and invited questions and comments from the Committee.

Councillor de Whalley proposed a vote of thanks to the Learning and Engagement Officer for her valuable work undertaken during her time at the Stories of Lynn and wished her well for the future. Councillor

Kemp seconded the vote of thanks and the Committee gave a round of applause to Rachael.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

9 **TRUE'S YARD REPORT**

In the absence of the Manager, True's Yard, the Chair, Councillor Bubb invited the Committee to email any questions direct to the Manager.

RESOLVED: The Committee noted the report.

10 **REPORT OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN AND WEST NORFOLK**

In the absence of the Senior Tourism Support Officer, the Chair, Councillor Bubb invited the Committee to email any questions direct to the Senior Tourism Support Officer.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

11 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on 8 January 2024 at 2 pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall.

The Chair, Councillor Bubb asked if the Democratic Services Officer could contact the Manager of True's Yard Museum to see if a visit could be undertaken by the Committee prior to its next meeting.

The meeting closed at 4.01 pm