

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, 14th September, 2015 at 2.15 pm in the Committee Suite, King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs E A Nockolds (Chairman)
Councillors H Humphrey, T Smith, A Tyler, T Wing-Pentelow and Mrs A Wright

Dr R Hanley	–	Norfolk Museums Service
Ms H Jackson	–	Norfolk Museums Service
Ms R Farnan	–	Norfolk Museums Service
Ms M Bell	-	Norfolk Museums Service
Ms L Bavey	–	Manager, Trues Yard Museum
Mr T Humphreys	–	Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk

An apology for absence was received from Councillors Coke and Collis, Ward and Mr S Miller

1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: That Councillor Mrs E Nockolds be appointed Chairman for the remainder of the Municipal Year.

2 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: That County Councillor H Humphrey be appointed Vice-Chairman for the remainder of the Municipal Year.

3 MINUTES

The notes of the previous meeting held on 16 March 2015 were agreed as a correct record.

4 MATTERS ARISING

There was none.

5 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

6 REPORT OF THE WESTERN AREA MANAGER

The Head of Operations and Learning and Western Area Operations Manager jointly presented the report which provided information on King's Lynn Museum activities for the period February to August 2015 and highlighted the following points:

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 was opened on 25 July 2015 by the Mayor of King's Lynn and West Norfolk. It told the story of King's Lynn iconic creator of merry-go-rounds – including a close look at the art, craft and design of the fairground. The exhibition included the modern 'Mart' horse, and the bell used in the Opening Ceremony in February, on loan from the Town Hall collections.

The previous major temporary exhibition *1914-2014: King's Lynn and the First World War* ran until 6 June 2015. Marking the centenary of the outbreak of the Great War, the exhibition explored the town's experience, including damage caused by Zeppelin raids, the Home Front and the role that local businesses played in the war effort. The exhibition features a broad range of collections including costume, ephemera and Zeppelin fragments.

A small travelling version of this World War One exhibition had been created and had been loaned to a number of community venues including schools in Upwell and Emneth.

From the 12 June until 12 July 2015, the Lynn Museum showed *Trading Stories: A century of shops, crafts and trade*. This exhibition was an enhanced version of the *Shops and Shopping* travelling exhibition produced by the Fens Museums Partnership as part of the HLF-funded *Fenland Lives & Land* project. Graphic panels featuring photographs of historic Lynn shopfronts used in the display had now been passed to colleagues at the Borough Council to support the promotion of the Townscape Heritage Initiative in the town.

A programme of illustrated talks continued to be offered at Lynn Museum on Wednesday afternoons. Recent topics had included *Hidden Histories*, *The First Official First World War Artist and the History of Lynn Museum*. Attendances averaged 15-25 and most talks were delivered by NMS staff.

An enhanced programme of informal family learning events continued to be offered at the Lynn Museum. Recent 'drop-in' format events had included:

- *Carousels and Candy Floss* – 17 February (66 participants).
- *Dinosaurs* – 31 March (210 participants)
- *Romans and Iceni* – 7 April (70 participants)
- *Waterloo* – 26 May (45 participants)
- *Seahenge* – 28 July (48 participants)
- *Egyptians* – 4 August (44 participants)
- *Treasure* – 11 August (72 participants)
- *Vikings* – 18 August (108 participants)
- *Dinosaurs* – 25 August (126 participants)

An additional Fairground event for families was held on 25 July, to mark the opening of the *Art of the Mart* exhibition (50 participants). During the school holidays the Lynn Museum continued offer a popular programme of themed gallery discovery trails, with a new trail available for each week of the school holidays.

The Lynn Museum continued to host monthly “coffee morning” style events for adults, with each session exploring a different aspect of the collections.

The reception case at Lynn Museum had seen displays of acquisitions made with festival support from the Friends, two displays featuring the King’s Lynn Festival, a display of Victorian Roller skates, and a display of a Rudham dirk, a large ceremonial Bronze Age dagger on loan from Norwich Castle Museum.

Other Museum Developments

NMS staff had been supporting Borough Council colleagues with recent improvements to the King’s Lynn bus station, including new interpretation. New exterior signage will be installed on the front of the Lynn Museum following the completion of bus station improvements and following consultation with the Borough Council’s Conservation Officer. The reception for the opening event for the Bus Station on 30 July was held at Lynn Museum, with some forty guests in attendance. The completed bus station works offered benefits to the Museum and its users, with an improved external environment including additional paved areas, seating and trees.

The Lynn Museum continued to develop its social media presence, with Twitter and Facebook accounts being maintained by staff. At the end of August 2015, there were 1228 Twitter followers (729 August 14) and 199 Facebook followers (131 August 2014).

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. Volunteers from the team were nominated for SHARE Museums East Volunteer Awards in the ‘going the extra mile award’ and the ‘behind the scenes award’. The team had now scanned

around 2,000 items from the Museum's prints and drawings collection helping to make them much more accessible.

In addition to the scanning project, a small team of volunteers was working with Curatorial Assistant Dayna Woolbright on a weekly basis, undertaking an audit of collections at the museums stores at Aickmans Yard. They had been joined by a local artist who had been creating drawings of different objects. The drawings had been displayed on social media and would form part of an exhibition in the reception display case scheduled for the autumn.

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 Friends of the King's Lynn Museum and two private donors were also contributing to the costs.

Lynn Museum would feature in an edition of the TV programme Antiques Road to be screened early in the New Year.

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 continue to support the afternoon talks programme being offered at the Lynn Museum during 2015.

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 display to promote the work of the Museum Friends was exhibited in the display case in the Lynn Museum reception area. This included a number of recent acquisitions, together with fine art conserved with support from the Friends.

A Junior Friends of the King's Lynn Museum scheme had been launched and members of the Friends Committee had been attending the summer family events to invite children and young people to join. So far, there were 37 new members.

Councillor Humphrey commented that the travelling exhibition went to a school in Emneth. 4 or 5 children were trained to talk about and it proved very useful and enjoyable.

Councillor Smith stated that he went along to the opening of the Mart Exhibition and felt that congratulations should be sent to all the staff involved with that exhibition. The Western Area Operations Manager stated that she would make sure that the comments were passed on to colleagues involved with the exhibition.

Partnerships

The Lynn Museum free admission period ran from 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 the development of exhibition designs and site interpretation.

NMS was hosting the two *Stories of Lynn* project funded posts, the Project Curator (12 months) and the Learning & Engagement Officer (48 months). Both continued to work closely with colleagues from the Borough Council and the Norfolk Records Office, alongside the external designers responsible for developing the new exhibitions at the Town Hall.

Partnership working with the Borough Council this summer included the delivery of two major town events, Magna Carta 800 which ran on the weekend of 13-14 June (810 participants at Lynn Museum) and Lynn at War: Life on the Home Front which took place on the 19 July (884 participants at Lynn Museum). To support the range of activities taking place across the town centre, the Museum offered costumed re-enactments and a variety of other activities including the striking of a replica King John penny, object handling, crafts and trails.

The delivery of NMS services in King's Lynn & West Norfolk continued to operate under the terms of the 2015-16 SLA with the Borough Council. Under an extension to this 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.

The Museum had been working in partnership with King's Lynn Festival. Teaching Museum trainee Morgan Bell liaised with Daniel Brown, an intern from the King's Lynn Festival office, to produce two displays for the museum reception case.

Learning & Outreach

During 2015 the Lynn Museum would be 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 was appointed to this position and started in April. She was working as a Curatorial Trainee for King's Lynn and Thetford. Amongst a range of other activities, she

helped coordinate the summer trails programme, supervised collections volunteers and scheduled displays in the museum reception area.

Lynn Museum 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. A recent partnership with local schools saw a project to decorate small wooden horses in connection with the Art of the Mart exhibition at Lynn Museum. The horses had been mounted on a turntable to form a colourful merry-go-round exhibit.

The Head of Operating and Learning then invited Ruth Farnan to outline the programme of activities.

Councillor Mrs Wright asked what the 6 topics would be in the lectures. In response, the Learning and Engagement Officer explained that there were still to be confirmed but might cover Civic Regalia, King John Cup and Medieval townscape.

The Chairman added that the Learning and Engagement Officer had been working hard with many community groups. She also added that it was good to see the display of drawings from the Purfleet Trust.

The Head of Operating and Learning invited Morgan Bell to outline some of the areas she had been involved with.

Visitor Numbers

The visitor numbers were tabled.

It was reported that with regards to town centre events, visitors had been encouraged to move around various places within the town. It was noted that it not only helped the Museum service but all businesses within the town.

Councillor Humphrey stated that it was pleasing to see the trainees going on to full-time employment.

The Chairman referred to the Fenland Lives and Land, and asked whether there would be any further HLF funding to put another one on. The Head of Operations and Learning explained that options were being reviewed but the Museums Service was always keen to support the Fenland Partnership.

Councillor Smith asked whether consideration had been given to being able to buy one ticket to visit all King's Lynn attractions, for example Lynn Museum, Trues Yard, Southgates and Red Mount.

The Chairman explained that once people visited the Town Hall there would be a hub which would direct people to other activities within King's Lynn.

The Tourism Manager explained that a joint ticket was something that had been thought about for many years but the Discover King's Guide covered all sites. He added that the four main sites and Maritime Trail all promoted the voucher scheme.

The Head of Operating and Learning added that as part of the Stories of Lynn Project, a mobile app would be developed which would take people from the Town Hall to other sites in town.

The Head of Operating and Learning drew the Committee's attention to paragraph 5.4 of the report and explained that over the summer, the Museum participated in a high profile youth engagement project in partnership with the national organisation 'Kids in Museums' utilising funding derived from the Heritage Lottery Fund's Young Roots programme. The 'Teen Take' project entailed young people from King's Lynn Museums Youth Forum and members of the Teenage History Club at Thetford's Ancient House Museum making a film with the support of professional film makers. Following museum study visits in August, the young people gave their considered opinions on each other's museums with the aim of encouraging greater levels of access and engagement by teenage audiences. The project was overseen by Learning Officer Melissa Hawker and Stories of Lynn Learning and Engagement Officer, Ruth Farnan. A premier of the film took place in Thetford on 2 September and the film would now be circulated to museums across the region.

The Committee then watched the film.

It was reported that there was another project in the pipeline and it was hoped that the good news would spread and encourage more young people to join.

The Chairman then asked the Manager from Trues Yard for an update. It was explained that next year the museum would be 25 years old and she explained the activities that would be taking place.

AGREED: That the report be noted.

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REPORT OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL

The Tourism Manager presented a report which provided an update on the Borough Council's tourism marketing and development activities since 2015 and highlighted the following areas:

Destination Marketing Campaign

2015 West Norfolk Holiday Guide

The 2015 brochure campaign had progressed well. To the end of August around 35,000 copies had been sent to people requesting the brochure through the advertising campaign, around 10,000 to TIC's nationally and 13,000 copies through West Norfolk TIC and local events. Further campaigns running in September and October would see a further 11,000 distributed with the balance of 6,000 continuing to be distributed through Tourist Information Centres.

2016 West Norfolk Holiday Guide

Work is underway on production of the 2016 guide. Advertising rate cards were sent out on 1st September. The new format introduced for 2015 would be continued and the print run of 75,000 will continue.

www.visitwestnorfolk.com

Traffic to the website www.visitwestnorfolk.com had continued to increase in 2015. This had seen the Hunstanton and King's Lynn pages become the most viewed pages, ahead of the home page which reflected work done to improve search rankings for these terms.

When asked which themes/activities were of most interest to website visitors in 2015, the coast and beaches were ranked slightly ahead of countryside with similar numbers highlighting King's Lynn. In terms of activities/themed areas of interest the three most popular areas indicated by users were.

- Nature and wildlife
- History and heritage
- Food and drink

New Version of the Website

Work has been taking place since June on developing a new version of the website. Most importantly this would be a responsive website optimised for viewing on mobile phones and tablets as well as desktops. (currently 42% of people access the website via desktop, 29.5% via mobile phone and 28.5% via table). In April, Google indicated it would favour responsive websites over non responsive websites in its search terms. Around 83% of current visitors to www.visitwestnorfolk.com were from organic searches. Development of the new version of the website was largely in response to these changes.

The new site would provide much more content on many of the villages within the Borough. This was aimed at improving awareness of visitor opportunities throughout the rural areas of the Borough.

Mobile Phone App

Work on the new mobile phone app for the whole of West Norfolk would be progressing during the autumn. The aim was to use the same content database used for the West Norfolk website so that consumer information on facilities, services and events was consistent across online and down loaded formats.

Location specific and attraction based marketing

Distribution of the following publications had taken place throughout 2015.

- Where To Go and What to Do in West Norfolk - 200,000 copies.
- Discover King's Lynn - 130,000 copies.
- Hunstanton Mine guide - 42,000 copies.
- Downham Market Mini Guide – 15,000 copies.
- Lynn Lumiere (Art, Cities & Landscape) - 50,000 copies.
- King's Lynn Guided walks - 15,000 copies.
- King's Lynn Heritage open day - 11,000 copies.
- Flightpath of the Spitfire Trail - 8,000 copies.

The King's Lynn Pilgrimage Trail, King's Lynn Hanseatic Trail, King's Lynn Maritime Trail, Hunstanton Wolf Trail and Hunstanton Horticultural Trail continued to be printed and distributed with quantities of between 1,000 and 5,000 for each publication distributed each year.

Partnership Working

.West Norfolk were again working with Visit England. Most recently we had submitted a number of autumn experiences which Visit England will promote including:

- Lynn Lumiere – as part of Visit England's 'Heritage in Autumn' theme.
- Castles and historic houses – as part of Visit England's 'Heritage in Autumn' theme.
- West Norfolk's wildlife wonders – as part of Visit England's 'Rural escapes in Autumn' theme.

The Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk were active partners in the Visit Norfolk partnership and had continued to support and work with Visit North Norfolk Coast & Countryside.

Events

A number of new or expanded events had taken place in King's Lynn for 2015.

In addition to the main King's Lynn Festival, Festival Too, Poetry Festival and Fiction Festival and the Grand East Anglia Run, additional heritage events had included, and expanded to 2 days King's Lynn

Hanse Festival (16 & 17 May), Magna Carta event celebration 13 & 14 June, 1940s day and RAF cadets Freedom Parade and launch of Spitfire Trail 17 & 18 July, Beer, Butchers & Barbers 12 & 13 September, Heritage Open Day and Classic Car event 13 September.

Other Developments

Work on the Stories of Lynn is progressing well. It was expected that the new attraction would open for Easter 2016.

Improvement works to King's Lynn Bus station and links to the rail station had been completed. The new information office at the bus station included new visitor information leaflet racking and a 24 hour touch screen information kiosk. The kiosk uses the same database content as the www.visitwestnorfolk.com website.

New pedestrian fingerpost signing for Hunstanton was installed in July.

The first stage application to the Heritage Lottery Fund under the Parks for People scheme for enhancements to the garden spaces (The Green, Esplanade Gardens and the cliff top to St Edmunds Chapel) at Hunstanton had led to an invitation to submit a more detailed second stage application in spring 2016.

Councillor Mrs Nockolds stated that she thought that it was still good to have paper brochures as these were still used.

In response to a query from Councillor Mrs Wright regarding the promotion of events to the north of the Borough, the Tourism Manager explained that the Council was an active partner in the Visit Norfolk Partnership and continued to support and work with Visit North Norfolk Coast and Countryside, which gave wider promotion of West Norfolk events. There was however always the opportunity to try and promote events more to people in the local area.

The Chairman noted that West Norfolk needed to be included as strongly as possible in the tourism partnerships.

Councillor Humphrey suggested that links to Parish Council websites could be included in the main website. He also asked if all the publications previously referred to, were available to view on the website. The Tourism Manager confirmed that they were, however Councillor Humphrey pointed out that in some cases the user had to rotate the view to see some sections. The Tourism Manager agreed to look into the matter.

Councillor Tyler made reference to the issue of leaflets at the train station and following a meeting with the Regional Manager, the leaflets would be back in the foyer.

Councillor Tyler also asked if the Sensory Gardens in Hunstanton were promoted. In response, the Tourism Manager explained that it was included within with Hunstanton Horticultural trail and the Hunstanton mini guide.

Councillor Tyler referred to the success of the Heritage Open Day, etc and asked if the Council was providing events that the public were interested in. The Tourism Manager explained that he had received positive feedback on the events which had been put on, ie. Lynn Lumiere and Spitfire Trail.

The Chairman thanked the Tourism Manager and Museum staff and added that it had been a fantastic summer of events and hoped that it continued.

AGREED: That the report be noted.

8 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting was Monday 9 November 2015 at 2.15pm in the Committee Suite, King's Court.

The meeting closed at 3.45 pm