

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, 15th September, 2025 at 2.00 pm in
the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn
PE30 5DQ**

PRESENT:

Borough Councillors

Councillors Bland, Bubb (Chair), Lintern, Rose (sub) and de Whalley

County Councillors

Councillors Bambridge and Chenery of Horsbrugh

Officers

Oliver Bone – Lynn Museum

Robin Hanley – Norfolk Museums Service

Hannah Jackson – Norfolk Museums Service (observing)

1 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR FOR THE MEETING

RESOLVED: Councillor Rose who was a substitute for Councillor Kemp was appointed as Vice Chair for the meeting.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Borough Councillor Kemp, Councillors Kybird and Ward, Norfolk Joint Museums Committee and Lindsey Bavin, Manager of True's Yard Museum.

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 16 June 2025 were agreed as a correct record.

4 MATTERS ARISING

The Chair, Councillor Bubb queried the Committee's membership and the Democratic Services Officer clarified that Councillor Kemp was a Borough Councillor representative for the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Area Museums Committee but was appointed Vice Chair of the

Committee due to the absence of Norfolk County Council nominees at the last meeting held on 16th June 2025.

5 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

6 **REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT HEAD OF MUSEUMS**

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The Assistant Head of Museums welcomed Hannah Jackson back as Operations Manager for the Norfolk Museums Service (Western area), overseeing Gressenhall, King's Lynn and Thetford after a secondment to the Norwich Castle redevelopment project.

The Curator of the Lynn Museum introduced the report on the King's Lynn Museum activities in the period from June to July 2025. A copy of the report is attached to the minutes.

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

- 1) Exhibitions and events at Lynn Museum
 - 1.1 Current Exhibition May the Toys Be with You
 - 1.2 Previous Exhibition *Woof: A Celebration of Dogs*
 - 1.3 Forthcoming Exhibition: *"Unboxed: Discovering Lynn's Collections"* (working title)
 - 1.4 Family events
 - 1.5 Family Trails
 - 1.6 Mini Museum
 - 1.7 Coffee Mornings

The Curator of the Lynn Museum invited questions from the Committee in relation to those areas of the report, as summarised below.

County Councillor Bambridge suggested involving Sixth Form students from King Edward VII School to assist with cataloguing. The Curator of the Lynn Museum commented that they had taken on two work experience students from the College of West Anglia and confirmed he would raise this with Jan Summerfield who was working on a new programme of volunteering.

Councillor de Whalley asked about challenges in completing the remaining 13,500 records and the Curator of the Lynn Museum explained there was some data cleaning needed and added there were challenges because of missing or disposed items, gaps in historical records and duplication in the museum catalogue system.

The Chair, Councillor Bubb suggested that a leaflet on the history of the Lynn Museum building would be useful. The Curator of the Lynn Museum explained there was a Henry Baines oil painting of the former Chapel in the Lynn Museum. He added there was also an introductory panel in the reception area and audio guides had been updated. The Curator of the Lynn Museum suggested they could have someone provide a talk as part of the Talks Programme.

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

- 2) Newman Legacy project
- 3) Other Museums developments
 - 3.1 Publicity and promotion
 - 3.2 NMS Teaching Museum Trainees
 - 3.3 Retail offer at Lynn Museum
 - 3.4 Object Photography
 - 3.5 Volunteers
 - 3.7 Finds Identification and Recording Day

The Curator of the Lynn Museum invited questions from the Committee in relation to those areas of the report, as summarised below.

The Chair, Councillor Bubb asked about sales and the Curator of the Lynn Museum reported they were doing very well, with Star Wars themed material being particularly popular.

Councillor de Whalley congratulated officers for their work on improving the sales. Councillor de Whalley raised a question around publicity feedback and the Curator of the Lynn Museum suggested they would review marketing efforts and provide an update at the next meeting of the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Area Museums Committee.

The Chair, Councillor Bubb asked how visitors were informed about the feedback form. The Curator of the Lynn Museum explained details were provided in the exhibition area with printed forms and a QR code which linked to a form online. He added he would check with the front of house supervisor to see if this was an area they could improve on.

The Assistant Head of Museums highlighted to the Committee that they had secured full accreditation for all Norfolk Museums Service sites, including the Lynn Museum and advised an update would be provided at the next meeting of the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Area Museums Committee.

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

- 4) Borough Council partnership working

The Assistant Head of Museums highlighted that he had asked Elizabeth Joisce to provide written updates of work carried out for future meetings of the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Area Museums Committee.

The Assistant Head of Museums invited questions from the Committee in relation to that area of the report, as summarised below.

In response to a question from the Chair, Councillor Bubb, the Assistant Head of Museums explained the first block of artworks from the town collection would be displayed in the Leader's office at the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk and added they were looking at other opportunities to get paintings into public locations subject to conservation security.

In response to questions from Councillor de Whalley, the Assistant Head of Museums explained that the Guildhall was a Borough Council led project, and they would make the decisions on the project and plans for the piano whilst the Norfolk Museums Service could assist with archaeological interpretation.

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

5) Learning & Outreach

Councillor Lintern asked on average how many school visits they got in a year. The Assistant Head of Museums confirmed it averaged between two to three thousand per year at the Lynn Museum. He reported that they were reviewing their visitor data collection and that there was a significant rise in home educated children with new programmes introduced at Norwich and Gressenhall.

In response to a question from the Chair, Councillor Bubb, the Assistant Head of Museums explained Norfolk schools always got free admission to any Norfolk Museums Service site; however they got charged for additional services beyond that.

The Assistant Head of Museums provided an update on the Kick the Dust project. He highlighted they were due to publish their new youth engagement strategy and confirmed members of the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Area Museums Committee would receive a copy of the strategy.

In response to a question from County Councillor Horsbrugh, the Assistant Head of Museums explained they had robust safeguarding procedures in place and enhanced training for their project workers when faced with challenging behaviours from young people. He added that they had close relationships with partnerships.

The visitor figures were circulated to the Committee at the meeting and were noted. A copy of the visitor figures is attached to the minutes.

The Curator of the Lynn Museum highlighted that Lynn Museums' figures were a little down on the year to date compared with last years figures but reassured the Committee they were well up on previous years.

RESOLVED: The Committee noted the report.

7

TRUE'S YARD REPORT

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County Councillor Bambridge referred to the upcoming exhibition in commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the Great Gale of 1875 and commented that they had requested the loan of a model and thanked Robin Hanley and Oliver Bone for the loan.

RESOLVED: The Committee noted the report.

8

STORIES OF LYNN AND TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE VISITOR FIGURES

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The visitor figures for the period June to August 2025 were noted. A copy of the visitor figures is attached to the minutes.

The Chair, Councillor Bubb referred to the pontoon enquiries and asked whether they turned into bookings. The Democratic Services Officer confirmed she would get further information around the pontoon enquiries and circulate a response to the Committee after the meeting.

9

UPDATES ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

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The Chair, Councillor Bubb commented that he had raised a question at a recent Borough Council Briefing Session around how they were thinking of funding County wide organisations such as libraries and museums and explained he did not get a clear answer and asked Committee Members if they had received any information.

County Councillor Horsbrugh commented that the Norfolk Records Committee had voted that it stay as one and not divide.

Councillor de Whalley commented that they should know the decision in March 2026.

The Assistant Head of Museums highlighted that in the last set of draft minutes from the Norfolk Joint Museums Committee meeting held on 25th July 2025, discussions took place around Local Government Reorganisation and that there was a preference stated that the Museums Service for Norfolk continues as a single entity.

Councillor Lintern commented that her understanding was that the service would remain the same.

Councillor de Whalley proposed that the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Area Museums Committee endorse the recommendations which were put forward at the Norfolk Joint Museums Committee on 25th July 2025 for the service to remain as a joint partnership across Norfolk. This proposal was seconded by Councillor Rose and the Committee unanimously agreed.

10 **ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA**

The following item was identified to include on the next Agenda:

- Review on marketing plans

11 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Area Museums Committee was scheduled to take place on 12th January 2026 at 2.00pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn.

The meeting closed at 3.23 pm