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KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK AREA MUSEUMS COMMITTEE

14 September 2026 Item No.

KING'S LYNN MUSEUMS REPORT

Report by the Assistant Head of Museums
This report gives information on activities
In the period from March – August 2026



*Lynn Museum
showing the museum
entrance from the
town's bus station.*

1 Exhibitions and events at Lynn Museum

1.1 Current Exhibition: *Secrets from the Store*

13 June 2026 – 27 June 2027



The 2026-2027 exhibition at Lynn Museum focuses on the breadth of the King's Lynn collections, with over 200 objects being featured. On show are examples of archaeology, natural history, geology, fine art, costume and

textiles, social history and prints and drawings from the tens of thousands of items collected since the museum collections were first established in 1844. The displays provide a showcase for the collections-based Newman project (see section 2 below).

The exhibition gives the appearance of being within a museum store with objects in boxes – lids open. The exhibition features material that would not normally be displayed long-term because of size, conservation requirements, light sensitivity or fragility.



*Photograph of horse's head film prop used for the film *Revolution*, currently on show at Lynn Museum.*

To prepare the objects for display, Newman Curator (maternity cover) Jan Summerfield worked with colleagues from the Norfolk Museums Service Conservation Team. Exhibits include a taxidermy white-tailed sea eagle, fans from the costume and textile collections and a large horse's head used as a prop for the 1985 film *Revolution*, shot in Kings Lynn with the town's historic waterfront and King Street areas transformed to represent 18th-century New York. The sea eagle is one of the earliest accessioned objects in the Museum (No. 71 February 1844). The curatorial team hopes that the display will include something for everyone and provide interesting talking points for visitors.



*Guests at the opening of the *Secrets from the Store* exhibition on 12 June 2026. The exhibition was opened by the Mayor, Councillor Steve Bearshaw.*

Media coverage includes:

[Artefacts rarely seen by public part of unique display coming to King's Lynn museum](#)

1.2 Previous exhibition: *May The Toys Be With You*

11 July 2025 - 31 May 2026



Poster for the 'May The Toys Be With You' exhibition at Lynn Museum

The previous exhibition at Lynn Museum, which opened in July 2025, was *May The Toys Be With You*. It showcased one of the UK's finest collections of vintage Star Wars toys and original cinema posters, from 1977-1985. It celebrated the now highly collectable vintage toy line and the iconic design work and art of the *Star Wars* movies. This exhibition ran until 30 May 2026.

The exhibition was aimed at developing audiences and was an opportunity to showcase aspects of the Lynn Museum collections including toys and games. Feedback from visitors indicated that the exhibition had been successful in attracting a higher proportion of first-time visitors, equating to 58.5% of the 328 visitors surveyed.

1.3 Family events

The museum continues to offer events and regular family trails during holiday periods.

In connection with the *Star Wars* themed exhibition, two sold out 90-minute workshops were held during the Easter holidays. Participants were invited to "be trained by Obi-wannabe Kenobi in the use of light-sabres, blasters, X-wing fighters as well as strengthening your mind and body to better use the force". In the May Half term holiday, the museum offered a brick Galaxy event enjoyed by 99 people (52 adults, 47 children).



Poster for the museum's Viking-themed events for the school summer holidays in 2026.

Over the school summer holidays, the museum offered five Viking and Archaeology themed events, with a total of 233 participants engaging with these sessions.

1.4 Family Trails

Trails continue to be provided to help children and families enjoy a structured exploration of the museum and its collections. A new trail is offered in each week of the summer holidays, Christmas, Easter and during half-term breaks.

Family trails at museums provide significant benefits by turning visits into interactive, engaging and educational experiences. They focus children on specific collections, encourage close observation and foster deeper engagement with historical themes through fun, accessible activities.

During the Easter period visitors were invited to find and count lost chicks around the museum and during the May half-term the theme connected with *Star Wars* for the final week of that exhibition. Over the summer, visitors enjoyed *Viking Shield*, *Silly Archaeologist* and *Pesky Pests* trails.

1.5 Mini Museum

Lynn Museum continues to provide regular activities for our youngest visitors through the monthly *Mini Museum* programme. Activities are delivered by the museum's learning team. Key benefits of these activities include enhanced early years (pre-school) learning through sensory play, improved social connection and increased confidence for young children. These activities - often featuring trails, songs and storytelling - make heritage accessible, reduce family stress and foster a lifelong positive association with museums.

In the reporting period events were themed around 'Farmyard', 'Shops and Travel' and 'Museum Makers' in June to link with the new exhibition. The July session was 'Summer at the Seaside'.



Activities for under 4s on a farmyard theme as part of the Mini Museum event at Lynn Museum in March 2026.

1.6 Coffee Mornings

Monthly themed coffee mornings continue to be offered at Lynn Museum, normally attended by between 15-30 people. During the reporting period there have been coffee mornings themed around rag rugging, tissue paper flowers, mosaics and potato stampers, fossil pressing, and quill writing.

Participants are invited to “join us for a relaxing hot drink, cake and activity on the last Friday of the month, 10.30-11.30am”. Coffee Mornings are free and include museum admission. Booking is required as seating is limited. Recent coffee mornings have been sold out. These have included bookings by groups from local care centres for adults with additional needs.

1.7 Talks Programme

The afternoon talks are held on the last Friday of the month (following on from the themed coffee mornings held earlier that day). Lynn Museum normally receives audiences of around 20-30 people for the talks. The talks which have taken place during the period covered by this report were:

- Growing Up in the 50s and 60s in Rural Norfolk by Kevin Boardman
- Mourning Manners by Rebecca Smith
- Recent Roman Finds in Norfolk by Alice Lyons
- A Brief History of Dolls by Olivia Bristol
- The Town Walls and King's Lynn's Part in the English Civil War by Gary Walker
- The Ever-Changing Norfolk Coastline by Dr Leanne Melbourne



A poster for the May Afternoon Talk at Lynn Museum.

Following feedback, the museum team has invested in a microphone and speaker system to make the talks easier to listen to for participants.

1.8 Workshops

Lynn Museum ran a successful Pewter Pilgrims Workshop on 9 May 2026, created by Museum Learning Assistant Hayley Simmons. The 2-hour adult heritage craft workshop was inspired by the museum's extensive collection of

Medieval pilgrim badges, and taught participants the process of pewter casting from cuttlefish.



Pewter Pilgrims Adult Workshop
at Lynn Museum

SOLD OUT

Learn how to create and cast your own pewter souvenirs in our 2 hour workshop and go on a Pilgrimage Walking Tour around King's Lynn



Saturday 9 May
10.30am-2.30pm
Ticket £10

For reserve list, contact the museum:
lynn.museum@norfolk.gov.uk / 01553 775001



The sold-out session was run in collaboration with the King's Lynn Town Guides, with participants also having the opportunity to go on a pilgrimage-themed walking tour around King's Lynn.

Another Adult Workshop was held in June when the topic was Natural Paints, again led by Museum Learning Assistant, Hayley Simmons.

1.9 Seahenge Guided tour for National Lottery Open Week.



Staff member Hayley Simmons giving a tour of Seahenge at Lynn Museum.

In 2004, the Lynn Museum was awarded a major grant of £778,500 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund towards a major redevelopment project which took

place between 2005 and 2008. The funding enabled a complete building renovation and repair and a redisplay of the whole museum. It was used to transform the museum's first gallery into a permanent home for Seahenge, the 4,000-year-old Bronze Age timber circle. The project enabled the museum to showcase the internationally significant Seahenge timbers locally in King's Lynn.

As recognition of the National Lottery Heritage Fund's support, and as a thank you to National Lottery players, the museum took part in the annual National Lottery open Week in March with two Seahenge tours. Free tours were offered to National Lottery ticketholders with a total of 34 people attending.

1.10 Seahenge Collaboration with Groundwork Gallery

Groundwork Gallery owner Veronica Sekules approached Norfolk Museums Service in autumn 2025 regarding a collaborative project centred around the Seahenge timbers. Artist George Nuku had been commissioned to produce a piece to mark Groundworks' 10th anniversary and was keen to link it to Seahenge.



Artist George Nuku at King's Lynn's Groundwork Gallery with his piece inspired by Seahenge (image: Groundwork Gallery)

As part of the Norfolk and Norwich Festival, Lynn Museum and Groundworks Gallery hosted an event based around Seahenge on 16 May. The event started at Lynn Museum with the launch of a new Seahenge animation film (see section 2 below) followed by a talk by David Robertson on the Seahenge excavation and research. The audience then moved to the Groundworks Gallery for an introduction to the exhibition by George Nuku and Frances Kerney.

Details of forthcoming events at Lynn Museum may be viewed here: [Museums Service](#)

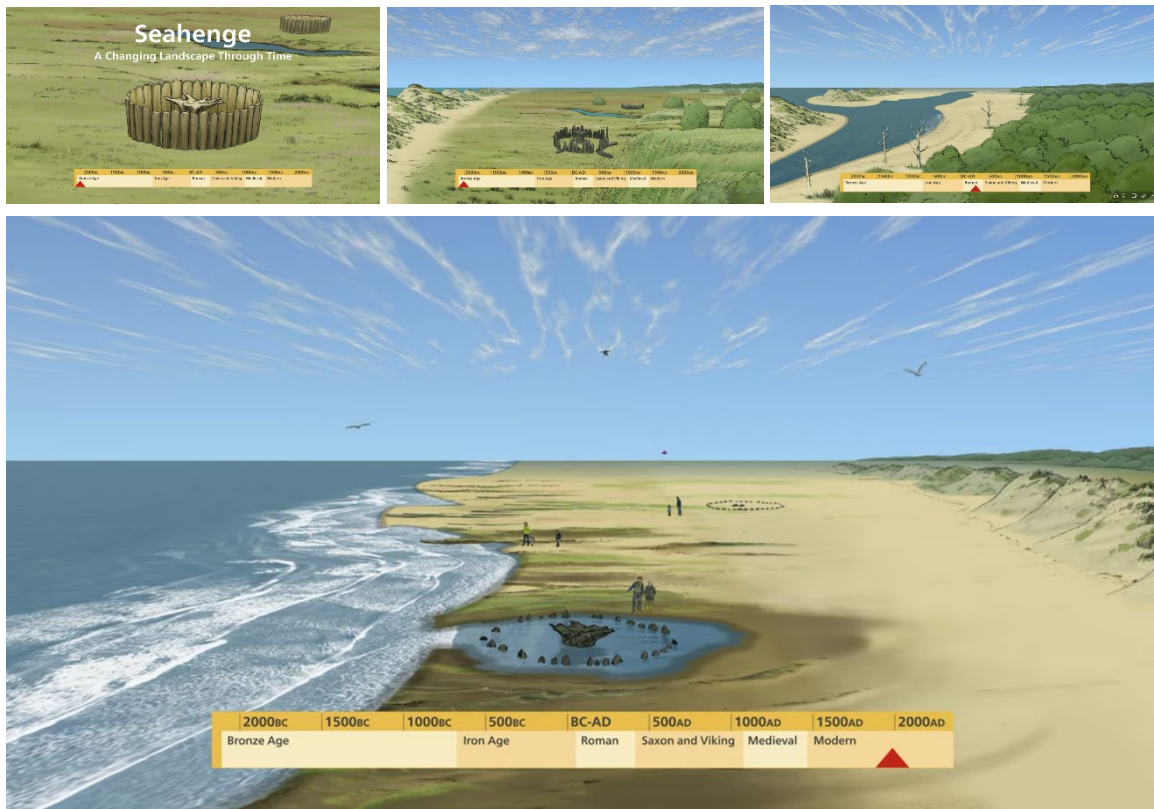
2 Newman Legacy project

As previously reported, the Lynn Museum has benefited from a legacy given specifically for the museum's use provided by the late Eric and Rita Newman. The Newmans were siblings who had retired to Congham near King's Lynn with interests in local history and helping children learn. Norfolk Museums Service is very grateful for the Newmans' generosity.

Newman Curator (maternity cover) Jan Summerfield, Newman Assistant Curator Anna Heffron and Newman NMS Teaching Museum Trainee (2026-2027) Annabelle Goman have been working on the cataloguing and documentation of material in the museum stores, as part of a planned programme of collections management work supported by the Newman legacy. Work continues on the audit, with the Newman team focusing on the collections stored at Gressenhall, with particular attention to the shoe and ceramics collections.

The current *Secrets from the Store* exhibition has come about as a result of this collections project work and is itself funded through the Newman legacy.

The funding is also supporting enhanced and improved interpretation of our collections, including the new Seahenge animation referenced above. The animation explores how the landscape has changed over the 4,000 years since the timber circle was first constructed, ultimately revealing how the timbers came to be discovered on the beach. The animation is now on display within the Seahenge Gallery at Lynn Museum.



3 Other Museum developments

3.1 Publicity and promotion

3.1.1 Social Media

The Lynn Museum continues to develop its social media presence with a focus on Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok.

Facebook Activity

Month	Views	Viewers	Page Visits	Content Interactions	New Followers
May	130,210	48,670	1,544	773	41
June	50,886	17,230	924	579	23
July	51,796	16,338	721	399	20

Lynn Museum has 2,822 followers on Facebook.

The Facebook page had 232,892 views across all posts from May to July.

The most popular post was celebrating the official opening of the *Secrets from the Store* exhibition which gained 4,354 views and 51 interactions.

The most popular post on Facebook viewed by 4,354 with 51 interactions



Instagram Activity

Month	Views	Page Visits	Reach	Content Interactions	New Followers
May	27,275	174	7,811	984	29
June	22,919	187	6,121	995	49
July	259,990	1,614	173,684	24,975	433



Lynn Museum has 2,048 followers on Instagram.

The Instagram page had 323,330 views across all posts during this period. The most popular post was a fun trend video about reading labels in museum galleries, which accumulated 253,851 views and 20,898 interactions.

The most popular post on Instagram within the reporting period, with 253,851 views

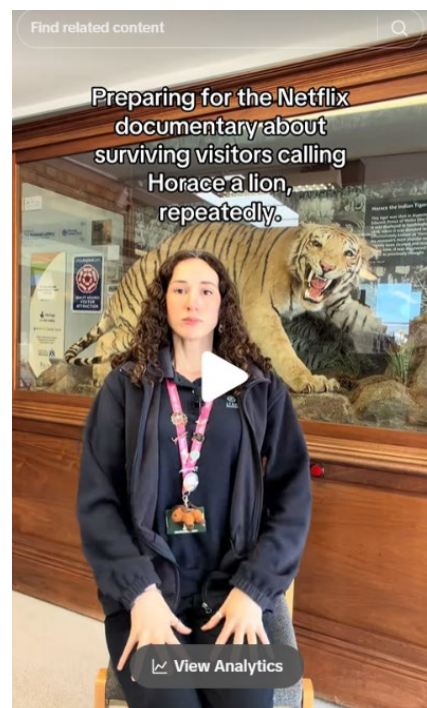
TikTok Activity

Month	Video Views	Reached Audience	Likes	Profile Views	Net Followers
May	9.6K	N/A	369	N/A	14
June	6.1K	N/A	305	109	12
July	23.5K	N/A	729	191	26

Lynn Museum has 2,035 followers on TikTok. The TikTok page had 39,100 views across all posts during this period.

The most popular TikTok video featured visitor favourite Horace the Tiger and gained around 12,000 views and 200 interactions.

The most popular post on TikTok seen by over 12,000 people



Overall demographics

Analytics show that across all platforms our content is consumed predominantly by women (79.5% on Facebook, 62.5% on Instagram and 73% on TikTok). The highest percentage of followers fall in the age category of 35-44 for Facebook and Instagram (33.8% and 31.2% respectively), whilst TikTok skews slightly younger, with more viewers from the 25-34 category (32.2%).

3.1.2 YouTube and Google Arts and Culture Platforms

A variety of films linked to Lynn Museum are available on the museum's YouTube Channel, here: [Lynn Museum - YouTube](#)

A number of online exhibitions are available through the Google Arts and Culture platform: [Lynn Museum, King's Lynn, United Kingdom — Google Arts & Culture](#)

3.1.3 Traditional Media

As well as digital delivery, the museum has maintained strong links with local media outlets including the *Lynn News*. Staff continue to contribute to a fortnightly *Picture This* column, with a focus on local drawings, engravings and paintings.

3.2 Norfolk Museums Pass

Lynn Museum is participating in the [Norfolk Museums Pass](#) promotional campaign *Access all Eras* to encourage people to become members and enjoy a range of benefits including free admission to all ten of the Norfolk Museums Service museums.

Following the full reopening of Norwich Castle, a new campaign has been launched to promote the Museums Pass membership scheme across Norfolk.



The Access all Eras campaign was funded through the Arts Council England Museums Renewal Fund.

Membership has grown by over 64%, surpassing pre-pandemic levels and creating a stronger, more resilient future for our museums.

The Norfolk Museums Service's Marketing team were also pleased to have won 'Brand Growth' at the Brandland Gather Awards for this campaign. The awards are a celebration of branding and creative excellence across the region.

The campaign was about more than promoting the Norfolk Museums Pass - it was about bringing together ten very different museums under one clear and compelling identity and helping more people to connect with them. Together with the design agency Ark, the team reimagined the pass as a gateway to explore centuries of history across the county; the pass was

redesigned with a bold new look that is inspired by a classic hole-punched ticket, celebrating our wonderful collections and Norfolk's rich heritage.

3.3 NMS Teaching Museum Trainees

One-year paid traineeships are offered as part of the Norfolk Museums Service Teaching Museum scheme, principally funded through the NMS Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation programme.

Rosalyn Maclean, trainee for 2025-26, completed her traineeship at the end of March. She experienced a wide range of museum work and we wish her well for her future career. In April, Annabelle Goman started as Newman Trainee for a year working with Norfolk Museums Service. Her focus has been the audit and documentation of King's Lynn's museum collections.



Norfolk Museums Service Trainees for 2026-2027, from left to right: Alex, Dan, Annabelle and Stephanie.

The Norfolk Museums Service Teaching Museum programme offers paid, year-long traineeships designed to provide a pathway into the heritage sector. Over the course of a year, our new trainees will gain hands-on experience across our ten diverse sites, covering collections, learning, and digital communications.

3.4 Retail offer at Lynn Museum

The museum team continues to develop the retail offer at Lynn Museum working with the NMS Retail Manager Harriet Johnson.

3.5 Volunteers

Volunteers continue to make a valuable contribution to the museum. Current volunteer projects include supporting the collections audit and improving collections documentation.

3.6 Finds Identification and Recording Day

Lynn Museum continues to host Finds Identification and Recording Days in partnership with Norfolk County Council's Finds Identification and Recording

Service. These events provide an opportunity for members of the public to bring in archaeological objects to be identified and recorded, including metalwork, coins and pottery.

The events help enhance the Norfolk Historic Environment Record and Portable Antiquities Scheme database, while also fostering connections between finders and archaeological specialists.



The event held on 14 March attracted 35 participants. A further Finds Day is planned for Saturday 4 October.

4 Borough Council partnership working

The delivery of Norfolk Museums Service (NMS) services in King's Lynn and West Norfolk continues under the current Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the Borough Council. Under an extension to the agreement, NMS continues to provide curatorial and conservation advice, specialist support and an enquiry service for Borough Council collections held at the Town Hall, including fine art and civic regalia.

Norfolk Museums Service staff have also supported the Borough Council with the documentation, packing and relocation of collections from the Custom House to secure temporary storage while planned building works take place. This has included the successful removal and storage of the historic Parliament clock.

Staff continue to actively support other Borough Council projects including the St George's Guildhall redevelopment.

The annual free admission period at Lynn Museum, funded through the SLA, runs from 1 October to 31 March. The museum is currently operating its summer opening times, which includes Sunday afternoon opening.

4.1 Stories of Lynn – Events & Exhibitions

Norfolk Museums Service continues to support the Borough Council with the delivery of learning activities at Stories of Lynn in King's Lynn Town Hall. NMS manages the Stories of Lynn Learning & Engagement Officer, Elizabeth Joisce, whose post is co-funded by the Borough Council and the NMS Kick the Dust programme.

The temporary exhibition *Making the Rounds: Stories of Workhouse Nurses Told in Textiles* was on display until the end of March 2026

Seventeenth-Century King's Lynn: Culture and Conflict is the current exhibition which runs until September 2026. This temporary exhibition was researched, designed, curated and installed by Kick the Dust youth group Time Turners. Kick the Dust is the youth engagement branch of Norfolk Museum Service and the youth group are local to King's Lynn.

This is an interactive exhibit, designed for people of all ages to enjoy, with a specific focus on bringing the history of the English Civil War to life.



The museum continues to offer events and regular family trails during holiday periods. In the Easter holidays the Easter events were well attended at Stories of Lynn and King's Lynn Town Hall. In the May half term, the 'King John Lost' family day was enjoyed by all who attended. The



Summer Holidays have been busy with a 'Teddy Bear's Picnic', the second instalment of the 'Children's Bridgerton Ball' and a 'Crime and Punishment through the Ages' event day.





Trails are provided year-round in the museum and are regularly used in both Stories of Lynn and the Town Hall. The King John Family Day included a bespoke, one-day treasure hunt trail.

Looking ahead, in October, Stories of Lynn will play an essential role in Wyrdfest, organised by CULTure Babylon. The Archives will host a temporary exhibition on the history of Witchcraft in East Anglia. Throughout the October half term Witch themed sessions will be held including a potion making workshop for children, a family escape room in the gaol cells and two creative writing workshops for all ages. More information can be found here: <https://www.westnorfolkwyrdfest.com/>

5 Learning & Outreach

5.1 School visits - Lynn Museum

Lynn Museum continues to provide a flexible programme of curriculum-linked workshops for schools and home-educated children.

Sessions include hands-on object handling, costumed interpretation and specialist workshops focused on topics such as Seahenge, the Stone Age and Victorian toys. Toys Through the Ages remains one of the museum's most popular workshops, giving children the opportunity to explore original and replica toys and create a traditional toy to take home.

Educational sessions typically comprise a carousel of activities that support a variety of learning styles and are delivered by museum staff and freelance interpreters. Schools may also choose self-led visits supported by trails and activity resources. The museum's Learning Officer is Melissa Hawker.

The following link for teachers explains what is on offer at Lynn Museum for pupils at Key Stage 2: [Key stage 2 education at Lynn Museum - Norfolk Museums](#)

Lynn Museum learning staff continue to work closely with Stories of Lynn in the running of joint school workshops on topics such as Maritime Life, Lord Nelson, Captain Vancouver, Crime and Punishment, Frederick Savage and the Lynn Mart, the Great Fire of London and Floods and Flooding.



Poster promoting the Rampage Through the Iron Age workshop for Home-educated children on 29 April 2026.

In April, local schoolchildren and home-educated children participated in 'Rampage Through the Iron Age', a programme featuring live theatre by Spinning Wheel Theatre and interactive activities exploring Iceni history. Supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the workshops were provided free of charge and formed part of the museum's wider programme to bring local history to life.

5.2 School visits – Stories of Lynn

Stories of Lynn continues to offer a variety of school workshops, making adaptations where required to meet the different needs of schools and teachers.

Popular sessions include: Victorian Law and Life, Crime and Punishment Through Time, First and Second World War and Local Historical Figures. School sessions contain a carousel of different activities related to the chosen topic and allow children to move around the museum and learn in different ways. Delivery of the sessions is usually undertaken by the Learning & Engagement Officer and freelance historical interpreters alongside experienced volunteers.

Lynn Museum and Stories of Lynn work closely together in the running of joint school visits; popular topics for joint visits include Tudors, Maritime Life, Captain Vancouver, Frederick Savage and the Great Fire of London.

Over the 2025–2026 academic year, Stories of Lynn hosted 53 school visits welcoming nearly 2,000 children.

Stories of Lynn hosted the first instalment of the 0-5 years EYFS event, Tiny Time Turners, in August.



Home Education groups continue to visit the museum every other month for facilitated visits with the Learning & Engagement Officer and volunteers. The most recent sessions were fully booked (30 children) and were on the topics of Witch Trials and Captain Vancouver.

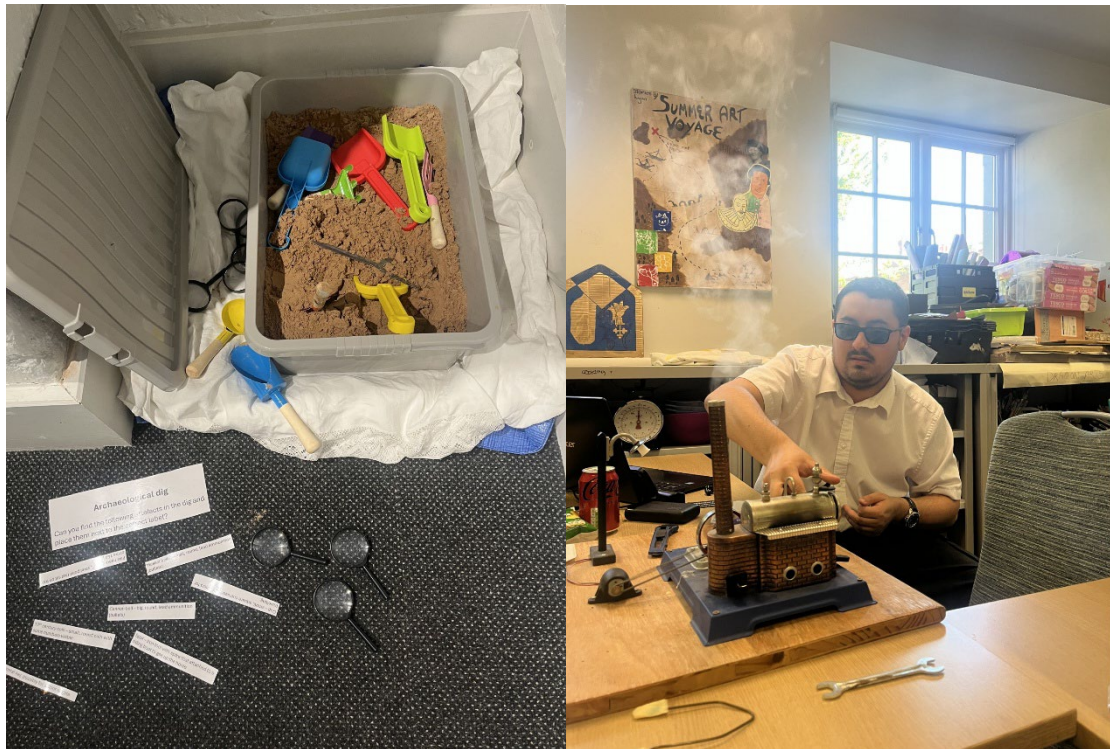
Going into the new academic year, the Home Education group and Stories of Lynn will be hosting a monthly Hands-on History Club at the museum, running workshops and sessions on topics chosen by the Learning & Engagement Officer and the Home Educators.

5.3 Kick the Dust – Activity in King’s Lynn

The long-standing Youth Heritage Collective in King’s Lynn called Time Turners continues to meet weekly and has joined the charity *Bridge for Heroes* for their current project *Beyond the Uniform*. Young people are using digital technology to interview veterans of war about their lives both in and out of the military. The recordings will be placed in Norfolk Record Office’s sound archive, and the young people will create an artistic response to each of the interviews which will be displayed later in the year at a venue yet to be decided.

The members of Time Turners has reached capacity, with 12 young people now permanent members of the group. The age of participants ranges from 14 to 23 and the group caters for all young people with various barriers to education and employment. Most members are in school, college or home schooled, whilst some are in active employment and others are NEET.





The Learning & Engagement Officer at Stories of Lynn and Kick the Dust project worker for the west Elizabeth Joice continues to run popular work experience projects for a number of schools and colleges. In 2026, Elizabeth hosted 26 work experiences placements at Stories of Lynn.

Recently, a pre-traineeship has started for a student at the College of West Anglia, which is funded by the Audrey Muriel Stratford Charitable Trust. The pre-trainee faces barriers in their life and is working alongside the Learning & Engagement Officer and Borough Archivist to gain real world experience and enhance their knowledge.

6 Kick the Dust Norfolk – countywide programme update

Kick the Dust (KTD) is the Norfolk Museums Service (NMS) county-wide programme of youth engagement with heritage that puts young people's voices at the heart of what we do.

Programme funding

- National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) from 2018 - March 2023
- Arts Council England (ACE) NPO Uplift from 2023-28. This is place-focused funding targeting young people in the ACE Priority Places of Great Yarmouth, King's Lynn and Thetford.
- Norfolk County Council (NCC) Public Health cross cutting funding to support young people's mental health & wellbeing (2025-28).
- KTD has secured external funding from the Audrey Muriel Stratford Trust and the Geoffrey Watling Charity to deliver paid traineeships in 2026-29 (see Creative Careers Programme below).
- Recent externally funded projects have included *History in the Making* - a Historic England funded project which explored techniques for positive mental health in Norfolk Record Office (NRO) & NMS collections.

Progression model

Our 'Player-Shaper-Leader' progression model offers young people a pathway which builds sustained cultural engagement, supports skills development and helps prepare young people for the workplace. 'Players' take part in light touch engagements such as taster sessions or work experience. 'Shaper' activities offer long-term engagement with KTD 'Heritage Collectives' groups who develop exhibitions, resources and events. 'Leaders' can join our Youth Board and support the governance of the programme.

Youth Board

Youth Ambassadors aged 17 – 25yrs guide the KTD Programme Steering Group in areas that are important to young people and act as the bridge between the Steering Group and KTD participants. They helped to steer our Creative Careers Programme and 5-year Youth Engagement Strategy.

Heritage Collectives

These groups operate across Norfolk with four KTD Project Workers working alongside museum professionals to support nine groups that meet weekly in museums and libraries. The groups have evolved over time to meet local need and activities include youth led production of events, displays, exhibitions, performances, tours, campaigns & digital content.

Organisational change

KTD is not a one-off project, it is a way of working which has brought huge benefits to our organisation and produced institutional change. Young people work alongside museum professionals across departments to develop transferable work-related and creative skills. During the NLHF Funded period, evaluation consultants were appointed to measure the 'Institutional Change' outcomes of KTD on museum wide practice. They said: *'At its heart, the findings in this report reflect the consultative, communicative and positive nature of Kick the Dust, to both the young people engaged in the programmes, and to staff and partner organisations. This energetic, driven approach has yielded successes that are tangible, such as young people moving into paid work and intangible, such as a demonstrable rise in confidence for many of the young people involved in the project, and museums service staff fully appreciating, perhaps for the first time, the value of the input of young people in their work'.*

NMS Five Year Youth Engagement Strategy

We have recently published this strategy which sets out our vision for 2025-30. The strategy aligns with the broader NMS Five Year Strategy and links to FLOURISH – NCC's ambition to be a county where all children & young people can flourish.

NCC Partnership working:

- NCC Public Health led the coordination of our evaluation methodology to include mental health & wellbeing.
- The Performance and Governance Team have supported analysis of evaluation data.
- Children's Services – supported the Youth Strategy and connections into participation groups.

- Norfolk Libraries & Information Service - combining physical resources and use of venues.

External partnerships

YMCA Norfolk is a long-standing partner. KTD funds an embedded YMCA youth worker. We continue to work with many external youth work & education partners including the Shaw Trust, NR30, Bridge Trust, universities, schools and colleges linked to SEND, FE colleges and the youth justice system.

KTD Young People

Kick the Dust is free to all young people aged 13 -25 but we actively target young people who do not see themselves engaging or working in museums or who face the most barriers to engagement e.g. young people outside of mainstream education, YMCA clients, those Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), young people with complex needs (SEND) and mental health issues.

KTD free pass

All KTD participants receive a KTD free pass, giving them and a friend or family member free access to all NMS sites in the year of their engagement.

Participation numbers

- 6,136 young people have now engaged in 20,283 interventions delivered across Norfolk
- 95% of activities are face to face and involve young people in being part of a long-term group, allowing them to gain a deeper understanding of heritage & explore their identity, develop their skills and confidence and embed themselves more in their local communities
- 80% of all activity is designed and led by young people
- 182 volunteering opportunities have been provided, with 12 current Young Ambassadors.
- 81% of participants strongly agreed that KTD had a positive impact on their mental health and wellbeing, with most impact at shaper level.
- 95% said KTD had gone above their expectations and 100% felt welcomed and respected by staff and volunteers.

Creative Careers Programme

The Kick the Dust (KTD) 'Creative Careers' programme enables young people aged 16-25 to experience the workplace and gain an insight into how museums operate:

Online Work Experience

Our revised Online Work Experience programme happens over four weeks, six times per year. Museum professionals share their career journeys and set a live challenge for participants. We have now completed two iterations of our revised programme which introduces young people to four broad themes.

- How we display and look after our collections
- How we engage children, families, communities and young people with our museums
- How visitors experience our museums

- How we communicate with our audiences

One young person said *'I would like to say thank you again for this work experience in general it has been amazing and I am so grateful!'*

Volunteering & Work Experience

KTD supports as many Yr10, Yr 12 and FE College placements as possible around the county. We have formed a working group with colleagues across NMS to address increasing demand and are working with Norfolk & Suffolk Careers Hub and FE college consortiums to respond to changing requirements. Over forty Yr10 & FE college placements were supported across our sites during the summer term and have led to recruitment to our Heritage Collectives.

Shaw Trust - we have established a new working partnership with the national employment charity the Shaw Trust to set up placements for young people who are NEET. One young person has completed a ten week 'Jump into Work' placement, working with the events officer at Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse. Another young person is taking part in a Supported Internship placement at Ancient House in Thetford. Successful placements have encouraged staff at Ancient House to offer the Supported Internship to a small group of young people to carry out archive work.

Bridge Trust – our partnership with Bridge Trust is strengthening. A group of SEND students have been helping at the Tree Nursery at Gressenhall and are planning to get involved in the new *Seeds of Change* permaculture demonstration garden project. They will also attend a creative workshop linked to the *We Feed the UK – Clean Blue of Linen* exhibition to support their Arts Award qualification.

Wind Energy Centre (WEC) – Following a request from WEC to support new youth engagement activities - KTD delivered a week-long Archive Camp at the site for six Yr10 students from Charter Academy in Great Yarmouth. This was delivered in partnership with the NR30 Charity whose NR Thirty programme is facilitated by Right to Succeed and aims to enhance the life chances of young people residing in the Nelson Ward area of Great Yarmouth.

Norwich University of the Arts – we will deliver the second annual work experience programme for Fine Art Students in the Autumn term when their project will be centred on the planning phase of the *Nature Obsessed* summer exhibition 2027 at Norwich Castle.

Our Great Yarmouth Volunteers - work in Time and Tide Archives to source, digitized and upload stories to the *Our Great Yarmouth* website. They helped deliver an Archive Camp for Yr 10 work experience students from Charter Academy at The Wind Energy Museum.

KTD volunteers in Norwich take part in regular archive-based sessions at Shirehall, alongside the Senior Curator of Natural History, to digitise, document, catalogue and conserve Natural History Collections.

The NMS Environment Hub is engaging young people who have complex

needs. This includes setting up work experience sessions for SEND students from The Bridge Trust and Easton College at Gressenhall.

KTD Bursary Assisted Traineeships

Three of eight new KTD Bursary Assisted Traineeships are underway. These opportunities represent a first step into paid work for those facing barriers to employment.

- The Audrey Muriel Stratford Trust is sponsoring one young person per year for four years in Kings Lynn. Rory has complex needs and long-term member of the Time Turners Heritage Collective. He is working with Learning and Archive Officers at Stories of Lynn for 10hrs per week over a six-month period.
- The Geoffrey Watling Charity is funding two, 10hr X 10week placements with Norwich Learning Team. Bethany, a long term Youth Board member has completed her traineeship.
- KTD funds two, 10hr X 10week placements in Great Yarmouth. Martha (Youth Board, KOST & Archive Volunteer) is working alongside Natalie Fairweather Exhibitions & Events Officer at Time and Tide to deliver the 2026 summer events programmes for families. Martha is also gaining experience with the Visitor Services team.

Kids in Museums - Family Friendly Museum Awards 2026

Our Creative Careers Programme has been shortlisted for a Kids in Museums Family Friendly Museum Award. This is the UK's only museum prize judged by families and young people. It celebrates heritage sites that provide an outstanding, accessible, and fun environment for all ages. Winners are announced annually in the autumn. We have been shortlisted for this year's special category – 'Best Museum Careers Initiative' dedicated to museums, galleries and heritage sites who are working to support young people to engage meaningfully with opportunities to learn more about museum careers, develop skills for employment, undertake relevant work experience, work placements or apprenticeships and build positive attitudes towards work. The judge's presentations will happen on 1 September 2026 and five of our young people will take part.

Wellbeing & mental health

Our offer to support young people with their mental health and wellbeing is on-going and measured through an evaluation framework using data from the young people's feedback forms as well as narrative evaluation. Working with colleagues in NCC Public Health & NCC Performance and Governance teams we have been able to interrogate the data around impact on mental wellbeing which shows that 27% of individual young people who have taken part in KTD identify as having a mental health issue showing the need for this programme, although this decreases as they engage with the programme. 50% of Kick the Dust Participants identify as Neuro divergent and a further 8% identify as having a physical disability which requires additional support. 81% strongly agreed that KTD had a positive impact on their mental health & wellbeing with most impact at shaper level.

'It's made me feel special and it's definitely made me feel more confident because I personally would never have been able to really get out there and speak to anybody, learn new skills or make friends. Making friends is really

hard for me so I think it was really brilliant because I've been given an opportunity to do all of that.' Make Yarmouth Participant.

The Heritage Collectives – update

In recent months young people across the county have been busy, working alongside professionals, to develop transferable work-related and creative skills, through the co-production of activity and events, volunteering and work experience operating at a level that meets their needs.

Norwich Heritage Collective have completed their interactive map documenting Norwich in 1920's to align with the centenary exhibition at Museum of Norwich and have begun to research the *Kindly Ease the Tension* summer Exhibition at Norwich Castle with a view to creating their own museum.

The project worker for Norwich and the Gressenhall Environment Hub is developing a new environmental programme which will engage young people with the work of the Hub. This includes establishing work experience and volunteering sessions for SEND students from the Bridge Trust and Easton College at Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse. We are also liaising with the Youth Justice Team to identify opportunities for 'reparation' for individuals with an existing court order and group work for those who are identified as being at risk of offending.

Norwich-based Knights of the Sound Table delivered their play *Kindred Spirits* at Strangers' Hall. *Kindred Spirits* imagines what it might have been like for two gay women in the 1600's, living at Strangers' Hall. They researched and worked with a script writer to script the play which was performed by a student actor. They created their own publicity and made a documentary about the project.

In Great Yarmouth, the Great Yarmouth Heritage Collective at YMCA have begun scrapbooking their long KTD Journeys to share with peers who are considering joining the group. Make Yarmouth are revisiting a project about the Hippodrome Circus and working with a prop maker. Our Great Yarmouth volunteers helped to plan an Archive Camp at The Wind Energy Museum in Repps for six Yr 10 students from Charter Academy and they continue to source archive material to upload to the Our Great Yarmouth website

National Saturday Club at Time and Tide visited their work on show at the NSC Summer Show at Somerset House in London. They worked with Norfolk & Norwich Festival Creative Bursary recipient Olivia Rodgers to explore projection mapping and staged the *Light Works* exhibition at PrimeYark in Great Yarmouth.

Thetford Heritage Collective have finished their Lorina Bulwer activities and their creative responses are on display at Ancient House. They delivered a Duleep Singh inspired Puzzle Day and worked with Time Will Tell Theatre company on a play about Princess Sophia Duleep Singh for the Festival of Thetford and Punjab 2026. Whilst young Obsidian ambassadors from Nagawa could not visit this year, THC visited Grimes Graves and created a digital tour

of Grime's Graves flint mine to send as part of the archaeological twinning of the Neolithic flint mine with the Jomon Hoshikuso Obsidian Mine in Nagawa. They are currently working on an access film showing the upstairs rooms at Ancient House for visitors who are unable to go upstairs.

In Kings Lynn the Time Turners have installed their Civil War themed temporary exhibition at Stories of Lynn in March. The group also took part in a Bridge for Heroes project which involved them in meeting war veterans and recording their conversations for an oral history archive. In the summer term, the Learning Officer and KTD Project Worker hosted numerous college and high school work experience placements.

Youth Board – update

Youth Board continue to meet bi-monthly to steer the programme and represent it at KTD Project Steering Group meetings. They have produced the first quarterly KTD newsletter, harnessing stories and opportunities from across the KTD community which can be shared with all participants and Youth Board Alumni. The group are planning a KTD wide gathering in October 2026 at Norwich Castle. Long Term member Beth has secured a KTD Bursary Assisted Traineeship at Norwich Castle. Martha is KTD Bursary Assisted Trainee in Great Yarmouth. Two members met Art Fund Museum of the Year judges at their visit to Norwich Castle.

Quotes from young people

We support young people to develop transferable **work-related skills including digital tech skills** with the aim of supporting more working age young people into employment, training or further learning; participants have said:

Yeah, actually being like, we have to do this and in that sense it did feel more like a work skill. I feel like working in a team and working under pressure and a lot more emails and communication between ourselves. And it's so hard because it's once a week and it's like the only thing on my mind all the time.
Knights of The Sound Table participant

We were like, we've got this project, what skills have we got? We've sort of subdivided into teams. I mean, everyone helped everyone back at the same time. We sort of had people who had specific skills or specific things, and we utilised that, didn't we? Knights of The Sound Table participant

I was really nervous to start off with, I've had experience at my mum's school with younger kids but I was nervous of talking to people my own age, with authority, in a leader role. Actually, it was fine, I would want to do this (activity) so why wouldn't they? Seeing it in a different way, it's not school, not behaviour management, I learned how to be a different kind of leader which was refreshing, I enjoyed it. Norwich University of the Arts – Work Experience student

I've decided that I'm going to go into teaching...I'll mention this on PGCE applications in terms of working as a group. I want to be a history teacher so it's quite good knowing information on how other people can get into this. And

I hopefully will go into it later, but for now, I want to do the teaching side of things. Norwich Heritage Collective

Young people have emphasised the fun side of learning **new creative skills & gaining cultural experiences** alongside their friends old and new:

We plainly were all very invested in the project, and I think that has something to do with working to our own interests and our own strengths and not feeling sidelined and feeling that your contributions were valued. But also because of the topic, I think we're all very passionate about it. Knights of The Sound Table participant

Standing with our ideas of what we wanted to do around learning about Lorina. We all agreed that we wanted to learn how to sew/different techniques and we actually got to have someone come in and teach us. It wasn't a case of 'here's a piece of paper with a pattern on it, now follow it', it was more the fact that we were taught step by step by someone who knew how to sew.'

'I now use those sewing skills because I wanted a pair of shorts, but I didn't own a pair of shorts. I cut up a pair of my leggings and actually just sewed them together, so it didn't fray away.'

History in the Making participants

KTD projects, trips and visits have enabled participants to appreciate their own **local history and participate in development projects:**

It was interesting to research the Stuart era as a whole and look at how Norwich functioned in a very dangerous time. The restoration period was a very interesting and tumultuous time and the political effects can still be felt today. Knights of The Sound Table participant

The project has 'made me realise the history of the town. Knowing what it used to be like compared to what it is now. The town is now quite modern, and we've lost that sense of history of what the town used to look like. Like the market stalls etc. Now knowing about people like Lorina Bulwer and what happened, we all have a new connection to it and that's pretty cool.'

'I found out there were museums here from doing this project'.

'I found that I live really close to someone that she mentioned [in the embroideries] and thought that was pretty cool. It's a little bit more extra information and now when I show people around I can say 'Oh, did you know that someone called Lorina Bulwer wrote about this and used to visit these places'. It's a bit of extra trivia and that is really cool!'

History in the Making participants

'I'll tell you the main thing I've learnt is the Hanseatic League. I had no idea about it and until we started our current project. And it really opened my eyes to just how essential local trade has been throughout mainly the early medieval era'. Time Turners member, Kings Lynn.

Co delivery with Norfolk Information and library Service (NLIS) and other partners has enabled possibilities and facilitated access to their different sites, collections and archives.

'Last week we went to the Forum, to the library, and we had a session where we could handle objects in the Queer Norfolk Collection...it was a really great opportunity that I might not have thought about getting if I hadn't joined the collective'. Norwich Heritage Collective member.

Through Kick the Dust groups, participants are **signposted to opportunities**, such as training, jobs, volunteering & work experience within the service and beyond e.g. through the Museums Development South East (MDSE) network:

'I'm shadowing a session with the learning team with Key Stage 2, like an Ancient Egyptians session where the schools will come in next Friday. And I'm really excited myself just to see what they learn or what happens in those kinds of sessions.' Norwich Heritage Collective member.

Participants **wellbeing and personal development** remains at the heart of what we do:

'I am enjoying it here so much. I want to stay here.' Bridge Trust volunteer at GFW Tree Nursery.

'I feel more confident solo travelling. It's quite terrifying. Even though we went in a group together, my friend was meeting their family in town after the session. I went home on the train by myself which was quite terrifying but I'm really glad I did it and I feel proud of myself'.

'It's made me feel special and it's definitely made me feel more confident because I personally would never have been able to really get out there and speak to anybody, learn about sewing, learn new skills or make friends. Making friends is really hard for me so I think it was really brilliant because I've been given an opportunity to do all of that.'

We've 'taken the Lorina mentality and said 'no this is what I think, let's do it' and actually had fun and broken some chains off and gone 'here's my words, let's go for it'. I've learnt to be much more free with myself'.

History in the Making participants

'Just being able to sit, communicate and knowing that your feelings are validated, that's a skill that I've learned very, very well'. – 'Coming to Kick the Dust is therapy. I'm able to come in, talk about whatever, go home and then be like, okay, well, now I'm so excited for next week'. YMCA client (Great Yarmouth Heritage Collective)

7 Visitor figures

Visitor figures for the period will be circulated at the meeting

8 Recommendations:

That the Area Museums Committee notes the report

Report Contact:

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