

NORFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN AND WEST NORFOLK

KING'S LYNN AND WEST NORFOLK AREA MUSEUMS COMMITTEE

**Notes of a Meeting of the above Committee held on
Monday 2 November 2009 at 2.15 pm
in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn**

PRESENT:

Councillor Mrs E A Nockolds	- Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk
Councillor Mrs J Murphy	- Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk
Councillor R Searle	- Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk
Councillor Mrs S Smeaton	- Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk
Councillor A Tyler	- Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk
Mr T Humphreys	- Tourism Manager, Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk
Mrs W Vincent	- Democratic Services Officer, Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk
County Councillor M Langwade	- Norfolk County Council
County Councillor M Chenery of Horsbrugh	- Norfolk County Council
County Councillor B Long	- Norfolk County Council (<i>left the meeting at 3.12 pm</i>)
County Councillor R Rockcliffe	- Norfolk County Council
County Councillor A J Wright	- Norfolk County Council
Dr R Hanley	- Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service

The meeting was preceded by a tour of Aickman's Yard at 1 pm

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Mrs S Smeaton to her first meeting of the Committee.

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were none.

2 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 6 July 2009 were confirmed as a correct record.

3 MATTERS ARISING

There were none.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

5 APPOINTMENT OF YOUTH REPRESENTATIVE

The Chairman reported that she had received a letter from the current youth representative informing her that she was no longer able to attend meetings of the Committee, as she would be leaving the area to go to University.

The Committee was reminded that in the past every high school had been approached to nominate a youth representative. The Chairman sought views of the Committee regarding changing the time of the meetings, to allow a youth representative to attend after the school day had finished. The general consensus was to keep the time as at present.

County Councillor Long suggested that an approach be made to the Youth Parliament seeking a nomination.

RESOLVED: An approach be made to the Youth Parliament seeking a youth representative. County Councillor Long to forward contact details to the Democratic Services Officer.

6 REPORT OF WESTERN AREA MANAGER

King's Lynn Museums Report – June to September 2009

The Western Area Manager presented a report which provided Members with information on King's Lynn Museums from June to September 2009.

The following points were highlighted by the Western Area Manager.

- The Lynn Museum moved into its free admission phase from 1 October 2009, following the ending of the six month charging period running from April to September 2009.
- The current temporary exhibition at Lynn Museum is Drawn to Paint, running from 10 October 2009 to 9 January 2010. Linked to the national *Big Draw* campaign, the display explored the way in which different artists approached the creation of a painting. It featured preliminary sketches and finished works by a number of local artists including Henry Baines and Walter Dexter. This exhibition would serve as the focus for a range of formal and informal learning events, which included a launch event for children on 10 October, entitled Our Community Cabinet.
- A varied programme of site-based children's activities had been organised for the Town House and Lynn Museums for the period

October to January. A leaflet was tabled outlining details of the activities available for children from October 2009 to January 2010 funded by the Renaissance East of England. The film making course had completely sold out, and it was hoped that more courses would be run over the next year. At the Lynn Museum on 28 October, a 3-D Seahenge Art School had proved popular and the models created would be used to decorate the gallery at the Lynn Museum.

- NMAS supported Heritage Open Day on Sunday 13 September 2009, with both the Lynn Museum and Town House Museum open free of charge. There were 660 visits to the Town House and 372 visits to the Lynn Museum. The visitor numbers, however, had dropped compared to 2008. A free bus service had been provided by the Civic Society to enable people to visit sites on the Open Day. It was hoped that a free bus would be provided in future years by the Civic Society.
- All of the objects identified in the second phase of collections rationalisation had been re-homed successfully. A third block of objects for potential rationalisation will be considered at the next meeting of the Committee.
- King's Lynn Museums will be hosting a further UEA postgraduate Museology student placement, who will be based at the Lynn Museums for two days per week from October, providing support for the Curator with a number of collections management projects.
- The Friends were continuing to offer a varied programme for members and membership levels remained strong. The Friends Annual General Meeting took place at the Lynn Museum on 12 October 2009. The Friends had agreed to provide match funding towards the acquisition of two archaeological finds from West Norfolk, one being an early Anglo-Saxon pendant found in Gayton. The pendant was currently with the British Museum for valuation purposes, but was likely to be in the region of £5,000. The Museum had lodged an appeal against the valuation of a silver item found in Hunstanton.
- The Fenland Project Officer was supporting a Fenland Partnership working group in developing the next Fenland exhibition on the theme of Fenland Stories. Work was progressing well on the travelling exhibition and linked event programme, which would explore the myths, legends and memories of Fenland folk and commence in April 2010. The travelling exhibition would visit King's Lynn. The films had been created by a variety of community groups working alongside film-making experts. The Committee would receive an invitation to attend the launch event.
- A witchcraft project was being developed with Renaissance in the Regions partners from Colchester and Ipswich Museums Service and the University of East Anglia. The travelling exhibition would visit King's Lynn and a number of Fenland towns.
- NMAS were continuing to support the HLF-funded development project at True's Yard Museum and was represented on the specialist advisory group which met monthly to review progress and provide specialist advice and support.
- Staff from the NMAS Renaissance-funded Growing Communities project had met with colleagues from the Borough Council to explore

ways in which museums and other cultural services could support the King's Lynn Growth Point project. A proposal was being developed for an exhibition which could provide an historical context for the Growth Point plans, similar to the Thetford exhibition. The exhibition will engage local people who moved to King's Lynn in the 1960s as part of the London Overspill in reminiscence and oral history events to share their memories of moving to the town.

- NMAS staff participated in the Community Engagement workshops organised by the Borough Council at Lynnsport on 10-11 September.
- The 2009-10 programme for schools included a range of special events for Key Stage 1-2 children at the Town House Museum and Lynn Museum as follows: Medieval Lynn, Victorian Servants, Tudor Times, All the Fun of the Fair and Toys through the Ages. Events would be run during the Mart 2010.
- The summer holiday community outreach programme was developed and managed by the Community Outreach Officer. The programme ran during July and August and comprised a range of collections-based children's activities, utilising a range of community venues across the borough. Outreach participant numbers during July and August totalled some 1,100. The charge for the majority of these events was £1.50 per child. The costs of the summer outreach programme were funded through the Renaissance in the Regions Business Plan 2009-11.
- King's Lynn Museums continued to offer a broad range of adult education courses. Current courses included creative writing, knitting and English as a Second Language (ESOL).
- Following the successful funding bid for £25,000 to the HLF Young Roots Programme, the Picture This project was being taken forward by the Community Outreach Officer, who was working with eight local youth groups creating films about their local communities and heritage.

The visitor figures to King's Lynn Museums were tabled. The figures for the Lynn Museum were disappointing. It was felt that this was partly due to the free admission voucher scheme not being operated during the summer period. Arrangements for 2010 would need to be explored. However, it was reported that income levels were on target. The visitor numbers to the Town House Museum had increased.

The Western Area Manager advised that the Learning Officer was currently working with schools by attending assemblies and meetings in order to rebuild and redesign the service the Museums could offer to local schools. In response to questions, the Western Area Manager explained that school groups were given free admission to the Museums. Further development work was being carried out in order to ascertain what to retain on the current programme being offered.

In response to a question regarding the Picture This Project, the Western Area Manager undertook to find out the contact for the mental health youth group.

Councillor Searle congratulated the Western Area Manager on the production of the King's Lynn Museums Children's Activities leaflet.

A comment was made on the provision of a free bus for the Heritage Open Day, and future consideration being given to the provision of a bus service on an ongoing basis, rather than just for 1 day, to make it easier for members of the public to visit the Museums.

The Western Area Manager invited the Committee to view a selection of press cuttings following the meeting.

The Chairman thanked the Western Area Manager for the detailed report.

RESOLVED: (1) That the report be noted.

(2) The Committee would receive a third block of objects for potential rationalisation at the next meeting in January 2010.

(3) The Community Outreach Officer would be invited to give a presentation to a future meeting of the Committee.

7 SITE UPDATE REPORTS

(a) Green Quay Six Monthly Activity report for Period ended 31 March 2009

In the absence of the Green Quay Manager, there was no update report available.

(b) True's Yard Museum Six-Monthly Activity Report

The Committee received a detailed written six monthly activity report for the period to October 2009. A copy of which was circulated with the Agenda. The Chairman highlighted the following points:

- The HLF funded Museum Extension Project was well underway.
- Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Scheme Accreditation gained over the summer.
- Financial Report – income from admissions and the tearoom were up on the same time last year.

8 REPORT OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL

The Tourism Manager presented a report that updated Members of the Committee on the operation of the tourism and heritage facilities operated by the Borough Council. It also provided an update on the work in connection with the Town Hall review and the current service review process being undertaken by the Borough Council.

The key points were highlighted as set out below:

- Visitor numbers to the Borough Council's two main Tourist Information Centres in King's Lynn and Hunstanton during the period January – October 2009 had totalled 233,000, around 13% more than in 2008. These visitor numbers represented a significant increase in people using the service during 2009, and were significantly higher than levels recorded over recent years. The final total was expected to be in the region of 250,000 visitors.
- Downham Market TIC – To date in 2009 a total of 1764 counter enquiries had been made at the Tourist Information desk of the Council Information Centre at Downham Market.
- Tales of the Old Gaol House – Visitor numbers to Tales of The Old Gaol House for the period January – August 2009 were 1% higher compared with 2008. Since April the increase had approached 7% compared with 2008.
- Custom House – The special Hanse exhibition which opened at the Custom House in June 2009 would be dismantled on 31 October. 23,000 people had visited the displays. A children's quiz had attracted 300 entrants.
- Red Mount Chapel and The South Gate – The first season of co-ordinated regular public access to Red Mount and South Gate on 33 dates ended on 12 September. Total visitors to Red Mount on regular open dates had totalled 2,617 visitors. Including Heritage Open Day and other group visits the total had been in excess of 3,600 visitors. A total of 912 people had visited South Gate, compared with figures below 300 in recent years. Proposals for 2010 opening will be considered during November.
- Discover King's Lynn – Planning will shortly commence for the 2010 edition of Discover King's Lynn. Use of the Discover King's Lynn voucher scheme had been comparable to 2008, with 534 vouchers redeemed at the 5 participating sites, up to the end of September.
- West Norfolk Advertising Campaign – To date, the main destination advertising campaign had generated around 37,270, direct brochure enquiries. In addition to this figure, 15,000 enquiries had been received from the joint seaside campaign.
- King's Lynn Town Guides Leaflet – Following two reprints, a final total of 7,500 copies of the King's Lynn Town Guides Guided Walks leaflet were produced and distributed. It was noted that 657 attendees had participated in the walks offered to date compared with around 550 in 2008 and 577 in 2007 over the same period. Councillor Langwade proposed that a letter of thanks be sent to the Town Guides on behalf of the Committee.
- Hanseatic King's Lynn and the Hanseatic Town Walk – The new guide 'Hanseatic King's Lynn – a self guided trail' which included a trail devised by Dr Paul Richards, was published by the Borough Council in July. A German edition had now also been published. Copies both in English and German were circulated to the Committee.

- King's Lynn Hanse Festival – During the 4 days of the Festival, 6,194 people visited the TIC at the Custom House of whom 4,497 visited the Hanse exhibition on the 1st floor. Approximately 6000 people visited the Lisa Von Lubeck. Footfall in the Vancouver Centre was around 29% higher than for the 4 day Vancouver festival held in 2007.
- Promoting Local Days Out – During 2009, the tourism team had attended a series of local special events and exhibitions, aimed at encouraging local residents and visitors from neighbouring areas to visit the wide range of attractions and facilities offered in West Norfolk. A special discount voucher promotion was organised in conjunction with 20 sites or attractions. It was hoped that the programme of exhibition attendance would continue in 2010 and consideration would also be given to attending the Norfolk and East of England Shows. An analysis of the campaign results will be undertaken during November.
- Hunstanton Promenade – Sea Change application. Decisions on the applications for Wave 3 Open Grants were due on 30 September. Notice was provided that feedback to applicants was being delayed due to a review that the Department of Culture, Media and Sports had been undertaking of its capital programmes. A decision was expected by 13 November 2009.
- The Town Hall – Following work undertaken by the Town Hall project team to further consider proposals for the Archive and Museum facility at the Town Hall, a report was considered by the Borough Council's Cabinet setting out a number of recommendations. Through the service review process, options were being examined to identify ways of reducing operating costs connected with maintenance and public access to the contents of Tales of the Old Gaol House, The Regalia Rooms and The King's Lynn Archive. Following discussions, the Registrars Service had since indicated that the Registrars had found alternative premises to relocate to.
- Service Review Process – Through the Borough Council's review process, a review of all services provided through the tourism division was being undertaken. This would include all aspects of strategic marketing, including partnership working as well as operational delivery of tourism and heritage facilities. The current service reviews being undertaken by the Borough Council may impact on net budgets and delivery of tourism and heritage facilities.

Councillor Tyler noted he had raised the question with the Leader of the Council regarding the possibility of reintroducing reference to Emmerich Twinning on the Welcome to the Hanseatic Town of King's Lynn signs. In response the Chairman advised Councillor Tyler to continue to follow the matter up direct with the Leader of the Council. The Tourism Manager noted that three welcome signs were in place and from his recollection it was only the sign at Gayton Road which previously had reference to the Emmerich Twinning Town. Regarding other brown signing matters, it was reported that a meeting had been organised by South Norfolk District Council in June to discuss brown signing policy issues in Norfolk, but unfortunately neither the Chairman nor the Tourism Manager was able to attend. The minutes from that meeting had not yet been circulated. It appeared that South Norfolk

District Council were lobbying Norfolk County Council on the Brown Sign policy, particularly regarding the application process and application fees.. The Chairman advised that she would follow this important matter up at the next meeting of the Joint Museums Committee.

In response to a question on how the number of visitors was recorded, the Tourism Manager explained that the number of visitors was recorded via a clicker counter installed on the door. Visitors were encouraged to complete a feedback card at each Tourist Information Centre. Results of this feedback survey were regularly reported to the Area Museums Committee. The report for 2009 would be provided at the next meeting. The Chairman asked whether visitors could be asked to provide their postcode details on the feedback form to help gauge the home location of people using the service.

In response to further questions, the Tourism Manager explained that the current location and potential alternative locations for the operation of the Tourism Information Centre would be addressed as part of the service review being undertaken by the Borough Council. A report would be considered at a future meeting of the Community and Culture Panel.

Councillor Tyler suggested that perhaps consideration could be given to a permanent replica of an old ship being constructed to provide an all year round attraction. The Chairman suggested that the question be asked at Annual General meeting of the West Norfolk Tourism Forum. Councillor Searle commented that rather than a permanent replica being constructed, consideration be given to a ship visiting King's Lynn at a regular date/time on an annual basis.

In response to a question on conversion information being available from enquiries received, the Tourism Manager reported that in the 2008 main brochure, a response coupon was included and 1,000 responses were received, which gave an indication of the profile and what visitors were looking for when visiting the area, how they use the brochure and whether they subsequently visited..

Following a comment on the Hanse Trail being published in German, the Tourism Manager explained that guide had been published in German as the membership of the current Hanse League consisted of a significant number of German cities.

The Chairman thanked the Tourism Manager for his informative report.

RESOLVED:

(1) That the report be noted.

(2) The Tourism Manager investigate the possibility of including postcode details of visitors on the feedback form.

(3) The Chairman on behalf of the Committee would send a letter of thanks to the Town Guides.

9 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was none.

10 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Monday 4 January 2010 at 2.15 pm in the Committee Suite, Ground Floor, King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn.

If any Member is unable to attend this meeting, please could they forward apologies to the Democratic Services Officer well in advance of the meeting.

The Meeting closed at 3.58 pm