

NORFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN AND WEST NORFOLK

KING'S LYNN AND WEST NORFOLK AREA MUSEUMS COMMITTEE

**Notes of an Informal Discussion of the above Committee held on
Monday 13 June 2011 at 2.15 pm
In the Committee Suite, King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn**

PRESENT:

Councillor Mrs E A Nockolds	- Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk
Councillor M Back	- Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk
Councillor Mrs S Smeaton	- Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk
Mr T Humphreys	- Tourism Manager, Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk
Mrs W Vincent	- Democratic Services Officer, Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk
County Councillor M Chenery of Horsburgh	- Norfolk County Council
County Councillor A J Wright	- Norfolk County Council
County Councillor R Rockcliffe	- Norfolk County Council
Dr R Hanley	- Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service

The Chairman welcomed new Members to the informal discussion of the Committee and explained that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman would be appointed at the next meeting, as the appointments to the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Area Museums Committee had to be agreed at Full Council on 30 June 2011.

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from County Councillor M Langwade.

2 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 14 March 2011 were confirmed as a correct record.

3 MATTERS ARISING

There were none.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

5 REPORT OF WESTERN AREA MANAGER

King's Lynn Museums Report – March to May 2011

The Western Area Manager presented his report which provided Members with information on King's Lynn Museums for the period March to May 2011 as set out below:

(i) Charging Period

The Lynn Museum was due to have moved into its charging period at the start of April. For 2011, this was delayed until 26 April due to the building works taking place on the main museum entrance. The charging period now extended to the end of September.

(ii) Memories of Lynn: King's Lynn since the 60's

The current temporary exhibition at Lynn Museum is *Memories of Lynn: King's Lynn since the 60s*, and would be on display until 18 June. The exhibition featured Lynn people sharing their experience of the changes to the town since the 1960s. It had been the focus for a number of events and activities including sessions linked to the ongoing programmes for young people categorised as NEET. Positive feedback had been received from visitors.

(iii) Exhibition – Fenland Stories

The next exhibition would be *Fenland Stories*, on show from 2 July until 10 January. This was the travelling exhibition developed by the Greater Fens Museums Partnership, which had been touring Fenland venues during the last year. The exhibition explored traditional Fenland tales and included a collection of animated films produced by local people retelling those stories or giving them a modern twist. The films were shown on the centrepiece of the exhibition, *The Whispering Willow*. There would be a programme of school summer holiday events supporting the exhibition. The public reaction had been strong in that people valued community groups and individuals being involved in developing the content of the exhibition.

(iv) Exhibition of Embroidery Work

From 2 July to 27 August there would be an exhibition of embroidery work by local craftspeople, with demonstrations taking place on each Saturday that the display was running.

(v) Programme of Afternoon Illustrated Talks

A programme of afternoon illustrated talks had been scheduled for Wednesday afternoons. The programme began with *The Story of Seahenge* talk given by Oliver Bone, Curator. Future talks would

explore subjects including fine art in museum displays; the Zeppelin raid of 1917; 18th century literature and Fenland tales.

The afternoon illustrated talks had attracted audiences of between 20-30 people.

(vi) Other Museum Developments

The pack-up of collections and displays at the Town House Museum was completed on schedule, with NMAS handing over the vacated museum and museum offices to the Borough Council on 11 March. The Borough Council had now provided NMAS with alternative storage accommodation to a good standard in the White Barn at the Arts Centre Complex. In the future, NMAS staff formerly based at the Town House Museum would be occupying offices provided by the Borough Council on the first floor of the former Town House Museum building, as part of the project to relocate the Registrar's Service. It was expected that staff would move into the offices during June/July. In the meantime, staff were based in temporary office accommodation at King's Court.

(vii) NMAS continued to work with colleagues in the Borough Council in regard to the re-development proposals for the Town Hall complex. This included supporting colleagues with the development of a funding bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and providing specialist input to the bid-writing process. NMAS would also be providing curatorial advice and support for those Borough collections currently held in the Town Hall including fine art and Civic Regalia. All of these elements had been incorporated into the Service Level Agreement for 2011-12. It was noted that an initial meeting with HLF had been positive and the consultation work which had been piloted and would be submitted with the Stage 1 bid was outlined.

(viii) Work had now been completed on the replacement of the flat roof covering of the Lynn Museum reception, following problems with water ingress. During the period of the works, the site remained open to visitors, with a temporary entrance being utilised at the west (tower) end of the museum. The free admission offer was extended for the duration of the works. Visitor numbers held up well during this period. As part of the works, a number of improvements were made to lighting in the reception area.

(ix) With funding from the Norfolk County Council Carbon Reduction Fund (CERF), all of the main display lights (46) at the Lynn Museum had been replaced with LED units at a cost of £14,000. This would dramatically reduce energy consumption by saving 7 tonnes of Co₂ per annum and would help reduce utility revenue costs.

(x) As part of the staffing restructure necessitated by the closure of the Town House Museum, front of house staff at the Lynn Museum had been re-designated as Museum Learning Assistants. This reflected a greater focus on supporting formal and informal learning activities. The

first programme run by the new team would be available in the October half-term holiday.

(xi) Friends of King's Lynn Museums

The Friends were continuing to offer a varied programme for members including lunchtime talks and trips and an annual lecture.

The Friends continued to support a long-term conservation programme for parts of the fine art collections.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr B Howling advised those present that a lecture by Andrew McNere regarding digitised maps would be held on 14 September 2011 at the Town Hall.

(xii) Partnership Projects

King's Lynn Museums continued to lead the Greater Fens Museums Partnership as part of the current NMAS role as lead partner for the East of England Hub for *Renaissance in the Regions*. Due to changed funding priorities by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, the Fenland project would no longer be supported with Renaissance funding. Transition funding had been agreed to provide cash match funding and project officer support for the current Heritage Lottery Fund Stage 2 bid.

A Stage 2 Heritage Grant application to the Heritage Lottery Fund has now been submitted for the successor Fenland Partnership project *Fenland Lives and Land*.

The current travelling exhibition and events project organised by the Fenland Partnership was *Fenland Stories*, exploring both traditional and modern Fenland tales. The exhibition continued to tour the Fens, having recently been on display at the Cambridge and County Folk Museum and the Prickwillow Drainage Museum. *Fenland Stories* would be on display at Lynn Museum from 2 July 2011.

(xiv) Learning and Outreach

A monthly *Mini Explorers Club* continued to meet at the Lynn Museum, targeted at under 5's, their carers and families.

The Community Outreach Officer continued to deliver programmes for young people categorised as NEET (not in education, employment or training). Additional funding had been obtained through the College of West Anglia to support further NEET programmes in King's Lynn. The film developed as part of the latest NEET project *Women in History* was premiered at the Arts Centre on 27 May.

The film produced by NEET young people to support the *Memories of Lynn* exhibition was currently on show at the Lynn Museum.

The Community Outreach Officer and King's Lynn Museums Youth Forum had recently produced a DVD case study toolkit *So you want to work with Teenagers?* on behalf of the Museums Libraries and Archives Council and The Mighty Creatives.

The Chairman made reference to the Service Level Agreement the Borough Council had with the Museums Services which included the delivery of an outreach programme of activities and highlighted the importance of working together as a partnership to provide the service.

The Western Area Manager informed the Committee that Marie Kennedy, the current Outreach Worker would be taking up a new post in Cambridge and recruitment would be necessary to appoint her replacement. The Chairman commented on the success of the NEET programme and that participants had gained confidence to enable them to either attend a course at the College of West Anglia, or seek employment.

(xv) Visitor numbers

The visitor numbers were tabled.

The Western Area Manager explained that the visitor figures included all museums in Norfolk and that the May figures had been added for May 2011 to the Lynn Museum only. He explained that the visitor numbers were encouraging despite the fact that the Lynn Museum was closed during February and March 2011 and that the target was on track for between 15,000 to 18,000 visitors during the current year.

The Chairman asked if the postcode survey and analysis was still being undertaken at the Museum. The Western Area Manager explained that periodic collection of postcodes was still being done and provided useful information and that more analysis of postcodes would be carried out in the future.

In response to a question from the Chairman on the Wednesday afternoon illustrated talks, the Western Area Manager explained that attendance figures were around 25, which was above target and a keen interest remained in Seahenge gallery.

County Councillor Chenery enquired on the type of covering used on the recent works to the flat roof of the Museum. In response, the Western Area Manager explained that a new improved roof structure had been installed which would improve the drainage and resolve the previous problem of water ingress.

Following questions on the removal of the "dog leg" to improve the front entrance, the Western Area Manager explained that the Museums Service had liaised with the Borough Council and it was proposed that the original dog leg be removed to create a flat frontage and installation of an automatic

entrance door. A feasibility would be undertaken to remove the current gathering point to enable more floor space in the foyer area and to increase the size of the retail shop at the Lynn Museum. If the works were approved, it was anticipated they would be undertaken in the winter period to minimise the impact to visitors.

The Chairman referred to paragraph 2.2 (Town Hall Complex) of the Western Area Manager's report and explained that the Borough Council's Community and Culture Panel would be invited to view the proposals for the Town Hall prior to their meeting on 27 June 2011. The Western Area Manager added that a meeting had recently been held with English Heritage who had been supportive of the principles.

The Chairman enquired as to what promotional material would be forwarded to the Press in relation to the Fenland Stories Exhibition at the Lynn Museum from 2 July 2011. In response, the Western Area Manager advised that a marketing campaign would be launched for the summer holiday period. A press release, A5 flyer and the E-postcard system would be used to raise awareness of events and the Fenland Stories Exhibition. The Chairman asked the Western Area Manager to circulate copies of the flyer to Members of the Committee.

Following questions on suggestions and ideas put forward for the Gaol House and the Town Hall Complex, the Western Area Manager explained that the film which was premiered at the Arts Centre would form part of the submitted bid to HLF during August. Discussions had been held on audio devices, display cases, etc at the Town Hall and would form part of the next phase of the bid. The opening dates/times and access to the Town Hall were part of the work in progress.

The Chairman thanked the Western Area Manager for his detailed report and for his input into the proposals for the Town Hall Complex, which demonstrated a good working partnership between the Borough Council and Norfolk County Council.

RESOLVED: (1) That the report be noted.

(2) On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman asked Mr Howling to pass on thanks to the Friends for all the support given to the Museum Service.

(3) The Western Area Manager to circulate copies of the marketing flyer to Members of the Committee.

6 REPORT OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL

The Tourism Manager tabled the report which updated members of the Area Museums Committee on tourism marketing and provision of tourism information services and public access to heritage sites undertaken by the Borough Council during the period January – May 2011.

West Norfolk Marketing Campaign 2011

Response had been good to the 2011 campaign aimed at generating direct requests for the West Norfolk Holiday Guide. A total of just under 51,000 requests had been generated to date with 4,000 more requests scheduled to be generated throughout the summer and early autumn period. The remaining 45,000 copies were distributed through the joint seaside campaign, national Tourist Information Centre distribution and local distribution through West Norfolk TIC's and exhibitions

Promotion to day visitors

Most of the 200,000 copies of Where To Go and What To Do in West Norfolk had been distributed at venues used by visitors and local residents within large parts of Norfolk as well as being widely distributed at sites in Cambridgeshire, Suffolk, Lincolnshire.

King's Lynn heritage marketing.

A new edition of Discover King's Lynn was published at the end of March, with 100,000 copies in distribution, throughout Norfolk, parts of Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire. The discount voucher scheme had again been produced, in an improved format, with six sites, Lynn Museum, True's Yard Fisherfolk Museum, The Green Quay, Tales of the Old Gaol House, The Custom House Maritime exhibition, Red Mount Chapel/South Gate now included.

Hunstanton mini guide and Downham Market mini guide

Updated versions of both the Downham Market mini guide and the Hunstanton mini guide were published before Easter and distributed throughout the local area.

Tourist Information Centres (TIC's)

Visitor throughput at the Tourist Information Centres, had been at a high level during the first 5 months of 2011. At Hunstanton a total of 46,674 people visited the centre between January and May, which was the highest level for this period recorded over the past 10 years. The figure is 10% up on the same period for 2010.

At King's Lynn 29,564 people had visited the centre, which was comparable which the busiest years recorded over the past 10 years. The figure was 16% up on the same period for 2010.

The combined figure of 73,335 visitors was fractionally below the highest January – May figure achieved over the past 10 years, which took place in 2004.

The Royal connections exhibitions opened at the Custom House on 9th April and would be on display until 22nd July. This special exhibition was in addition to the regular displays at the Custom house about the history of the building, Lynn's trading history and famous sea farers.

Tales of The Old Gaol House

Following seasonal closure, Tales of the Gaol House re-opened on Wednesday 13th April, and was open on Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays through to Saturday 29th October. Average visitor number per day were comparable with 2010. Year round access to the King's Lynn archive on Fridays had been maintained.

Red Mount Chapel and South Gate

The 2011 programme of open days at Red Mount Chapel and South Gate commenced on Saturday 16th April and would run through to Sunday 11th September. This was a longer programme of open days than previous years and had been organised by the Walks Park Manager working with a dedicated group of volunteers. The programme would provide a total of 52 open days on Saturdays and Wednesdays throughout the period plus Sundays during July and August.

The Hanse

King's Lynn celebrated International Hanse Day on 7th May with a treasure hunt, exhibitions at The Custom House and True's Yard and concert at All Saints church. Members of the Hanse Club enjoyed a supper at the Green Quay.

King's Lynn Town Guide guided walks

The programme of regular guided walks commenced on Tuesday 3rd May and continued through to Saturday 29th October. Around 90 walks were offered on Tuesday, Friday and Saturday afternoons and Monday evenings in June and July. The programme included 4 special walks during the King's Lynn Festival. Privately booked tours and specialist walks could also be booked through the town guides.

Events

The interactive events guide featured on www.visitwestnorfolk.com continued to feature an increasing numbers of events. The site currently featured around 250 events taking place throughout the rest of the year, with more being added on a regular basis.

As noted in the report from the NMAS Western Area Manager, The Borough Council, working closely with NMAS was developing proposals for enhancements at the Town Hall complex. Work was taking place to develop a stage 1 Heritage Lottery Fund application which it is hoped would be submitted in August.

The following leaflets were circulated to the Committee:

- Guided Walks around King's Lynn 2011.
- Discover King's Lynn.

- Hunstanton Mini Guide.
- Downham Market Mini Guide.

The Chairman commented that the above leaflets were useful to take when travelling abroad to promote King's Lynn and West Norfolk.

Ambassadors Course

The Chairman invited the Tourism Manager to provide an update on the Ambassadors course operated by the Borough Council.

The Tourism Manager explained that during the 7 years that the scheme had been in operation, around 700 people had attended which included members of staff, Councillors, local businesses, etc. The following dates had been identified for 2011:

- 2 courses in March, May.
- 1 course in June.
- 3 courses in the autumn.

Delegates who had attended the Ambassadors Course during 2011 would be invited to attend any of the Guided Walks free of charge.

County Councillor Rockcliffe asked if the Coach Driver Initiation Days still took place. In response, the Tourism Manager advised that the Coach Driver Initiation Days were no longer on offer, but that the area was promoted to coach tour operators.

County Councillor Chenery asked at which outlets in bordering areas were the information leaflets on West Norfolk displayed. The Tourism Manager explained that this year the Borough Council had paid to display the West Norfolk main guide in racks at the following outlets:

- Peterborough and A1 Newark Services.
- Junction M18 Doncaster.
- Ely and Cambridgeshire Railway Stations.
- Birchanger Services on the M11.

Following a question from the Chairman on where visitors travelled from when visiting Hunstanton, the Tourism Manager explained that customer cards were available for visitors to complete and the research undertaken and captured from a previous survey, indicated that there was an equal split of visitors from the East Midlands, London and the Home Counties.

The Chairman thanked the Tourism Manager for his informative report.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

9 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Area Museums Committee would take place on Monday 17 October 2011 at 2.15pm in the Committee Suite, Borough Council Offices, King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn.

County Councillor R Rockcliffe offered his apologies for the next meeting of the Committee.

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

The Meeting closed at 3.20 pm