

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, 8th January, 2024 at 2.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ

PRESENT:

Borough Councillors

Councillors P Bland, A Bubb (Chair), M de Whalley, A Kemp (Vice Chair) and Mr B Davison

County Councillors

Councillors L Bambridge and M Chenery of Horsburgh

Ex-Officio Non-Voting Members

Councillor J Ward, Norfolk Joint Museums Committee

Co-opted Non-Voting Members

Lindsay Bavin, True's Yard Museum

Officers

Oliver Bone, Lynn Museum
Robin Hanley, Norfolk Museum Service

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor R Kybird, Norfolk Joint Museums Committee.

2 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 October 2023 were agreed as a correct record, subject to County Councillor J Ward being added to the list of attendees.

3 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

4 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Bland and County Councillor Bambridge declared an interest in item 6 as Trustees of True's Yard Museum.

5 **REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT HEAD OF MUSEUMS**

[Click here to view the recording of this item on You Tube](#)

The Curator of the Lynn Museum presented the report on the King's Lynn Museum activities in the period from September to November 2023. A copy of the report is attached to the minutes.

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

- Covid-19 and Infection Control service update.
- Exhibitions and events at Lynn Museum.
- Forthcoming Exhibitions: The Moon: Meet our Nearest Neighbour and Woof - a Celebration of Dogs. The Curator confirmed the opening event for The Moon: Meet our Nearest Neighbour exhibition was on Tuesday 6 February at 2.30pm and explained Committee Members were welcome to attend the event.
- Family events.
- Family Trails.
- Mini Museum.
- Heritage Open Day.
- Coffee Mornings.

The Curator of the Lynn Museum invited the Committee to ask questions in relation to section 2 of the report.

In response to a question raised by County Councillor M Chenery of Horsburgh, the Curator explained they would be featuring a Taxidermy Wolf in the Exhibition Woof - a Celebration of Dogs and confirmed they would have further information on wolves in Norfolk as part of that.

County Councillor J Ward referred to the Exhibition Woof - a Celebration of Dogs and asked whether they would allow people to bring their dogs to the opening of the Exhibition. In response, the Curator explained assistance dogs would be allowed. The Assistant Head of Museums explained they would need to have a conversation with their Conservation colleagues. He confirmed they would ask the question.

The Chair, Councillor A Bubb commented that his local library was not aware of The Tiger Who Came to Tea Exhibition and raised concerns around advertising. In response, the Curator agreed with the Chair and commented that they could always do better at advertising and added they should have good information at libraries around the district.

Councillor A Kemp referred to the coffee mornings and asked whether there was a diverse of people attending the coffee mornings, particularly people from care homes. In response, the Curator explained they had good links with some local care homes and confirmed they had had residents come in the past. He added they would work on and try to encourage more visits in that way.

County Councillor L Bambridge commented that she really enjoyed the Exhibitions. She added she loved the Hoards Exhibition and thought the displays were excellent and the illustrations at The Tiger Who Came to Tea Exhibition were beautiful.

Councillor M de Whalley asked whether there was anything included in the Woof - a Celebration of Dogs Exhibition about early beliefs. In response, the Curator explained they had incorporated a number of different aspects such as the natural history of dogs, companion dogs, working dogs and added if they weren't able to incorporate it in the exhibition, they would look into including it as part of their talks programme or through social media. The Assistant Head of Museums added there was the potential to explore that and explained he was sure that would feature within the Exhibition.

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

- Newman Legacy.
- Other Museum developments.
- Teaching Museums Trainees.
- Partnerships.

The Chair invited questions and comments in relation to those areas of report.

Councillor M de Whalley referred to the Kick the Dust and getting young people to work alongside professionals and enhancing their digital skills. He added he understood there was a backlog of archive work and asked whether this would be included in those opportunities. In response, the Assistant Head of Museums explained as part of the programme they were planning to improve the collections information about the collections in King's Lynn and added they were looking at opportunities to involve both volunteers and young people in that programme.

In response to a question raised by the Chair, Councillor A Bubb, The Assistant Head of Museums confirmed they did not derive any income from the YouTube channel and added it was more of an advocacy marketing route for them.

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

- Learning & Outreach.
- Kick the Dust Norfolk - countywide project update. A verbal update was given following publication of the agenda.

Mr B Davison commented that it was an excellent report but explained he felt the report lacked information on industrial heritage in relation to King's Lynn and West Norfolk. In response, the Assistant Head of Museums explained that King's Lynn's industrial heritage is really important and added he felt in the displays within the Lynn Museum this was reflected on. He went on to explain an area of work which would focus on that work was the Savages collection. He explained they had discussions with the Curator leading the project about the opportunities to engage young people and new audiences with the Savages story as part of the project to improve the collections documentation and make it more accessible. The Assistant Head of Museums agreed that there were always opportunities to promote King's Lynn's heritage.

The Chair, Councillor A Bubb asked whether there was any assistance for those people from Kick the Dust that do not have their own transport to get to Gressenhall. In response, the Assistant Head of Museums explained they were very aware for the need to facilitate access and added they were working closely with libraries and using those locations to make it more accessible.

County Councillor M Chenery of Horsburgh referred to the Victorian Christmas event at Gressenhall and asked how successful it was and whether it could be done in King's Lynn. In response, the Assistant Head of Museums explained to the Committee that Gressenhall Farmhouse Museum hosted a Victorian family event before Christmas where people could come to the site and celebrate a Victorian Christmas and he confirmed the event was sold out and added they were looking to run it again next year at Gressenhall. The Assistant Head of Museums explained in terms of a Gressenhall type Victoria Christmas event, the Lynn Museum would not be ideally suited but suggested venues such as the Town Hall or the Guildhall would be better to hold an event of a similar nature. County Councillor M Chenery of Horsburgh went on to ask whether the Christmas tree at Gressenhall was lit with candles. The Assistant Head of Museums explained the Christmas tree was artificially lit to try to create the right atmosphere but to prevent incurring risks.

In response to a question raised by Councillor A Kemp, the Assistant Head of Museums explained they worked really closely with colleagues in Childrens Services. He went on to explain there was a regular working group chaired by the Kick the Dust Project Coordinator which brings together colleagues from Childrens Services and other parts of Norfolk County Council to look at opportunities and added he felt confident they had the right connections but explained they could always improve.

County Councillor L Bambridge commented on Savage and explained that last year whilst the Mart was in King's Lynn on the Tuesday Market Place, that there was an Exhibition held at the Corn Exchange which she went to and someone had come along and brought photographs and boards of Savages and added there were opportunities like that there to look into to have pop up Exhibitions.

The visitor figures for the period September to November 2023 were circulated to the Committee at the meeting and noted. A copy of the visitor figures is attached to the minutes. The Committee were advised that during the financial year of 2023-2024, the visitor figures were looking very good for the Lynn Museum. He added the figures were up significantly from where they were this time last year and explained he felt this was because of the greater interest from schools, success from the Exhibition programme and the team at the Lynn Museum. The Curator commented that they hoped that December, January, February and March would also show improvements.

County Councillor J Ward referred to the Norfolk Exhibition Programmes incl. King's Lynn Town Hall SLA within the visitor figures and asked what else it included. In response, the Assistant Head of Museums confirmed it captured activity on site at Stories of Lynn which is managed by the Norfolk Museums Service.

The Assistant Head of Museums responded to questions from the Chair, Councillor A Bubb relating to how far back the attendance figures went.

County Councillor L Bambridge asked for a reason as to why there was a drop in the figures for the Exhibitions compared with 2022-2023. In response, the Assistant Head of Museums commented that they felt this coincided with Rachael Williams' departure but added they expect the figures to increase as soon as the post is filled.

In response to a question raised by Councillor M de Whalley, the Assistant Head of Museums explained the majority of sites around the service were almost back to where they were pre pandemic in terms of overall attendances.

In response to a question raised by County Councillor J Ward, the Assistant Head of Museums explained targets were reviewed on an annual basis working with the statistics team and added he expected to see the targets increase for the next financial year.

Councillor A Kemp asked what activities would be on offer for young people and families in the February half term within Museum settings. In response, the Assistant Head of Museums explained all their sites focused activities on February half term as historically it was a peak time but added all of their sites would be offering family friendly programmes during the February half term period. The Curator of the Lynn Museum confirmed there was a family event day, Museum Trail

for families and the forthcoming Exhibition, The Moon: Meet our Nearest Neighbour scheduled for the February half term.

Mr B Davison commented that he was pleased to see the attendance figures were getting back to pre-covid levels.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

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TRUE'S YARD REPORT

[Click here to view the recording of this item on You Tube](#)

The Chair, Councillor A Bubb thanked the Museum Curator at True's Yard for the visit to the True's Yard Museum which they attended prior to their meeting.

The Committee received the report of the Museum Curator at True's Yard. A copy of the report is attached to the minutes.

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

- Temporary Exhibitions and events at True's Yard Fisherfolk Museum.
- Learning and Outreach.

The Museum Curator at True's Yard invited questions and comments from the Committee in relation to the report.

The Chair, Councillor A Bubb referred to the Summer Art Exhibition and asked whether some of the pictures in the warehouse would be let out to take part in the Exhibition during the summer. In response, the Museum Curator at True's Yard and the Assistant Head of Museums Service explained concerns had been raised that small organisations would not be able to do loans. The Assistant Head of Museums highlighted to the Committee that they do whatever they can with the pressures which sites like True's Yard face and do what they can to mitigate costs. The Assistant Head of Museums added with certain partners that they have wanted to support where the loan of an original work of art has been prohibited in terms of insurance, they have been able to facilitate really good digital versions and explained there were other routes they could explore.

The Chair, Councillor A Bubb suggested to the Museum Curator at True's Yard that they could approach their Borough Councillor who has a fund of £1000 to distribute for Community use and that this could possibly be applied to this. In response, the Museum Curator at True's Yard explained they were fortunate to receive funding from that and spent it on a defibrillator.

In response to a question raised by County Councillor J Ward, the Museum Curator at True's Yard explained the visitor figures met the previous year but did not exceed.

County Councillor M Chenery of Horsbrugh referred to NHS Wellbeing Dungeons and Dragons and asked whether they were working with the Norfolk and Suffolk Foundation Trust. The Museum Curator at True's Yard confirmed this was specifically with Norfolk and Welney.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

7 **REPORT OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN AND WEST NORFOLK**

In the absence of the Senior Tourism Support Officer, the Committee noted the report.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

8 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Area Museums Committee would be held on 18th March 2024 at 2.00pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, King's Lynn.

The Chair, Councillor Bubb asked if the Democratic Services Officer could arrange a tour of the Stories of Lynn for the Committee prior to its next meeting.

The meeting closed at 3.20 pm