

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, 17th June, 2024 at 2.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ

PRESENT:

Borough Councillors

Councillors M de Whalley and A Kemp (Vice Chair in the Chair)

County Councillors

Councillors L Bambridge and M Chenery of Horsburgh

Ex-Officio Non-Voting Members

Councillor J Ward, Norfolk Joint Museums Committee
Councillor R Kybird, Norfolk Joint Museums Committee

Officers

Oliver Bone, Lynn Museum
Robin Hanley, Norfolk Museum Service

The Vice Chair took the Chair in the Chair's absence and Councillor M de Whalley was appointed Vice Chair for the meeting.

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Borough Councillors P Bland, T Bubb, Mr B Davison, Phillip Eke, Tourism Support Officer and Lindsey Bavin, Manager of True's Yard Museum.

County Councillor L Bambridge explained to the Committee that Lindsey Bavin had accepted a part time role of Museum Enterprise Manager at the Cambridge Museum of Technology which meant Lindsey would be working part time for True's Yard going forward. County Councillor L Bambridge confirmed she would be happy to represent True's Yard in her absence as she was a Trustee, for this meeting and any future meetings.

2 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2024 were agreed as a correct record.

3 **MATTERS ARISING**

Councillor M de Whalley provided the Committee with an update on the Beuy's Acorns Project and explained that officers were still working on the proposal and Councillor M de Whalley added he had reminded officers that Norfolk Museum Service had expressed an interest and confirmed they would be notified in due course as the Project proposals progress.

4 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

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

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The Curator of the Lynn Museum introduced the report on the King's Lynn Museum activities in the period from March to May 2024. A copy of the report is attached to the minutes.

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

- Exhibitions and events at Lynn Museum
 - Current Exhibition: The Moon: Meet our Nearest Neighbour
 - Forthcoming Exhibition: Woof! A Celebration of Dogs
 - Family events
 - Family Trails
 - Mini Museum
 - Coffee Mornings
 - Talks Programme

The Chair asked the Committee if they had any questions or comments in relation to those areas of the report.

The Chair, Councillor A Kemp raised a question in relation to the current exhibition, The Moon: Meet our Nearest Neighbour and asked whether any schools had visited the exhibition. In response, the Curator of the Lynn Museum confirmed the exhibition had been very popular with families and children. He added they had received interest from schools. The Committee was informed that they had record breaking attendance for some of the family events which they had relating to The Moon themes.

The Chair, Councillor A Kemp raised a further question in relation to the forthcoming exhibition, Woof! A Celebration of Dogs and asked whether they planned to have any pictures by the 18th century artist George Stubbs as he was very good at depicting animals. In response,

the Curator of the Lynn Museum explained they did not have George Stubbs in the object list but did have work by Sir Edwin Landseer who was the Victorian artist noted for historic paintings of dogs.

In response to a further question raised by the Chair, Councillor A Kemp, the Curator of the Lynn Museum confirmed they did not have the artist Anthony van Dyck on the list but referred to the report and explained they had work by David Hockney which they were borrowing from the Tate Gallery.

County Councillor L Bambridge referred to the current exhibition, The Moon: Meet our Nearest Neighbour and mentioned that she had received good feedback on this exhibition. She also referred to the forthcoming exhibition, Woof! A Celebration of Dogs and was very impressed with the loan of artwork by David Hockney.

Councillor R Kybird asked whether dogs were welcome at the forthcoming exhibition, Woof! A Celebration of Dogs. The Curator of the Lynn Museum confirmed assistance dogs for visually impaired people would be welcome but explained they did not have a programme in place to encourage other dogs into the Lynn Museum. The Assistant Head of Museums added and explained the reason for this was because they did not want to encourage pests and want to minimise the risk to the collections within the Lynn Museum.

County Councillor L Bambridge referred to the coffee mornings and asked why the one on the 26th April 2024 only had 10 participants. The Curator of the Lynn Museum explained the coffee mornings did vary in numbers from time to time but was unsure of the reason why that coffee morning was lower with participants. He added they did review the events programme and the themes on a regular basis to check on the progress and try different ideas but confirmed he would feed that back to the team at the Lynn Museum.

The Chair, Councillor A Kemp asked how much effort they were making to encourage people from care homes to attend the coffee mornings. The Curator of the Lynn Museum highlighted they wanted to offer the Museum Service to all sectors of the community. He explained they did have contacts at care homes and added they did make contact with them to let them know but highlighted there was always more they could do with publicity and would continue to work on that.

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

- Newman Legacy project
- Other Museum developments
 - Publicity and promotion
 - NMS Teaching Museum Trainees
 - Building Work at Lynn Museum
 - Retail offer at Lynn Museum

- Support for National Lottery Open Week

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

The Chair, Councillor A Kemp referred to the retail offer at the Lynn Museum and raised questions around how they were promoting it, how they were expanding the offer there and whether there were ways to improve it. The Curator of the Lynn Museum confirmed it was going really well at the Lynn Museum. He explained they had at the Lynn Museum and Gressenhall Museum material relating to the Taylor's Seed Shop which was in the town and added they were working with the NMS Retail Manager on developing new cards and new lines relating to Taylor's of Lynn. The Assistant Head of Museums added this was an area which they had been focusing on within the Norfolk Museums Service (NMS). The Committee were informed the NMS Retail Manager, Harriet Johnson had been working really well with the site teams across the service to make sure the retail offering matched any collections or forthcoming exhibitions and events. The Assistant Head of Museums explained they were looking at ways to develop the product line and highlighted the NMS Retail Manager was working hard to move away from cheaper imported material and work more with UK based suppliers, particularly Norfolk suppliers to offer more bespoke material. The Assistant Head of Museums referred to a question raised by Councillor A Bubb at a previous meeting in relation to the Seahenge mugs and explained they were about to launch the new range of Seahenge mugs and highlighted at the bottom of the mugs it clearly said which Museum it related to.

Following on from the question raised by the Chair, County Councillor L Bambridge commented that she had seen the retail offer promoted on Twitter, especially around Christmas time as she went to get some Christmas cards as a result. In response, the Assistant Head of Museums explained social media had been a really good way at promoting what was offered through the shops and agreed with the Chair, Councillor A Kemp that they should continue to be alert to that and use social media and other channels to raise awareness of what they had got.

County Councillor J Ward added he received messages every week on Facebook in relation to the museums and suggested it would be a good idea to pick a few things out of the shop and promote it via that social media channel as well.

The Assistant Head of Museums drew the Committee's attention further to the following areas of the report:

- Borough Council partnership working

The Assistant Head of Museums highlighted to the Committee within that section of the report that they had now recruited the successor for

Rachael Williams and explained Elizabeth Joice, who came from a teaching background, had joined the post at the end of April and added her initial priorities were around re-building the work with schools at the Stories of Lynn. The Assistant Head of Museums explained to the Committee that going forward they would ask Elizabeth Joice to provide a report for the Committee in the same way that Rachael Williams used to do if the Committee agreed to this and added the report would also include information around the visitor numbers for the Stories of Lynn. The Assistant Head of Museums confirmed they would ask Elizabeth Joice to provide a report for the next meeting. The Committee were informed that Elizabeth Joice would be going off on maternity leave towards the end of the year but explained they would be recruiting someone to cover the role.

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

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

In response to a question raised by the Chair, Councillor A Kemp, the Assistant Head of Museums confirmed they continued to work really closely with Children's Services colleagues and explained the Kick the Dust coordinator met on a regular basis with those colleagues and the Committee were informed they were always alert of opportunities to both involve them and to make them aware of what they were doing.

The Chair, Councillor A Kemp suggested that as Members they could write testimonials for the funding if that was to be helpful and commented that the Kick the Dust project demonstrated the power and relevance of the Museums Service in helping young people with the greatest challenges in building confidence and work related skills and added it was a fantastic project. In response, the Assistant Head of Museums explained they were always looking for further opportunities to develop Kick the Dust but highlighted that at the moment, the core activity was funded until 2027 by Arts Council England.

County Councillor L Bambridge commented and mentioned that she had seen the evidence of Kick the Dust and expressed how valuable it was and to get as much funding for it as possible.

In response to a question raised by County Councillor M Chenery of Horsburgh, the Assistant Head of Museums explained that through public health, they had been linking into a number of potential partner organisations and the Kick the Dust coordinator had been working really hard to develop new partnerships such as the Mental Health Trust. County Councillor M Chenery of Horsburgh commented that the Deputy Chief Executive for Norfolk and Suffolk was very keen. The Assistant Head of Museums confirmed he would contact them.

The visitor figures for the period February to the end of March 2024 were circulated to the Committee at the meeting and noted. The Curator of the Lynn Museum highlighted to the Committee that the Lynn Museum reached a total of 23,881 visitors in 2023-24 and was very pleased with the figures. He added that they received more visitors in the winter months than the summer months and that the busiest month was February due to the February half term events. A copy of the visitor figures is attached to the minutes.

Councillor M de Whalley shared with the Committee the Stories of Lynn visitor figures which he had received from Councillor Simon Ring, Cabinet Member for Tourism, Events and Marketing via Alive West Norfolk following their last meeting. Councillor M de Whalley highlighted the figures were not complete but were an indication. The Committee were informed that in April 2024, the Stories of Lynn received 793 visitors and in May 2024, they received 734 visitors. Councillor M de Whalley explained the figures did not include school visitors as Alive West Norfolk were awaiting information for May from Norfolk County Council as they recorded this data and would then share it with staff at Alive West Norfolk. Councillor M de Whalley had also received visitor figures in relation to the Tourist Information Centre and the Committee were informed that in April 2024, they had received 1,101 visitors and in May 2024, they received 1,000 visitors.

County Councillor J Ward asked whether they had got the Stories of Lynn visitor figures for the previous year. In response, Councillor M de Whalley confirmed they had historic information dating back to when the Stories of Lynn first opened and also some very historic Tourist Information Centre data was available and added if they wished to look at any historic information, they could request it through the staff at Alive West Norfolk. Councillor M de Whalley confirmed he would request it and informed the Committee there was the offer of this information being provided going forward.

In response to a question raised by the Chair, Councillor A Kemp in relation to whether there were any plans to refresh the Stories of Lynn, the Assistant Head of Museums explained this sat with the Borough Council and highlighted whilst they would be happy to support the Borough Council to redevelop heritage assets, it would need to be instigated by Borough Council colleagues.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Head of Museums and the Curator of the Lynn Museum for the report.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

County Councillor L Bambridge presented the report of the Museum Curator at True's Yard in her absence. A copy of the report is attached to the minutes.

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

- Visitor Numbers

The Committee were informed that True's Yard had done very well with an increase in visitor figures and County Councillor L Bambridge highlighted that the report also indicated that the largest demographic of visitors continued to be of an older audience.

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

- Temporary exhibitions and events at True's Yard Fisherfolk Museum
 - Exhibition Programme
 - True's Talks
 - Pat Midgley Memorial Lecture
- Partnerships
 - The Festival of Archaeology
- Learning and Outreach
 - Half term Activities

The Chair, Councillor A Kemp asked whether the school trips were included within the True's Yard visitor figures. County Councillor L Bambridge confirmed they did but highlighted there were very few school trips at the moment.

The Chair raised a further question in relation to The Festival of Archaeology and asked whether there was anymore information around that item. County Councillor L Bambridge wasn't able to provide anymore information but confirmed she would get more information on this in the future.

Councillor M de Whalley referred to the Pat Midgley Memorial Lecture and asked whether they could give an idea of what Dr Jago Cooper would be speaking about at the Lecture. County Councillor L Bambridge was unable to provide this information but confirmed she would find out more from Lindsey Bavin and if received a response would email the further information to Councillor M de Whalley.

The Chair, Councillor A Kemp asked how easy it was for people to research their ancestry and on which days it was open and whether there was a charge. County Councillor L Bambridge confirmed it was free of charge and took place on Saturday mornings. She explained if anyone was interested, they should ring up to make sure there was going to be someone there.

The Chair then referred to the history project in relation to the Northenders and asked whether there was an update on this. County Councillor L Bambridge confirmed this was ongoing.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

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

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In the absence of the Senior Tourism Support Officer, the Chair, Councillor A Kemp asked the Committee to put forward any questions to Phillip Eke, Senior Tourism Support Officer if they had any in relation to the report.

Councillor A Kemp commented that Phillip Eke, Senior Tourism Support Officer had been doing some work around the West Lynn Pavilion which she explained was a tiny museum which had pictures up within it of West Lynn.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

8 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Councillor M de Whalley thanked the Assistant Head of Museums and the Curator of the Lynn Museum for the tour of The Moon: Meet our Nearest Neighbour Exhibition which they had prior to their meeting that afternoon.

Councillor M de Whalley asked whether a tour could be arranged to visit the Aickman's Yard to see the stored exhibits. The Assistant Head of Museums confirmed they could facilitate this.

The Chair, Councillor A Kemp asked whether contact could be made with the Manager of True's Yard Museum to see if a visit could be undertaken by the Committee.

9 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Area Museums Committee would be held on 16th September 2024 at 2.00pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, King's Lynn.

The meeting closed at 3.20 pm