



NORWICH AREA MUSEUMS

2.05 p.m. - 3.05 p.m.

26 January 2009

Present: City Councillors County Councillors
Councillor Bradford (Chair) Councillor Dunn
Councillor Banham Councillor Hacker
Councillor Bearman Councillor Hemming
Councillor Fairbairn

Co-opted Non-
Voting Members District Councillor Bracey (Broadland District Council)
Charlotte Crawley (East Anglia Art Fund)
Felicity Hartley (Norfolk Contemporary Arts Society)
Rosemary Salt (Friends of Norwich Museums)
District Councillor Savage (South Norfolk District Council)

Also in attendance Vanessa Trevelyan (Head of Museums and Archaeology)
Rachel Kirk (Norwich Museums Manager)
Emma Taylor (Norwich Museums Development Officer)
Jeanne Southgate (Costume and Textile Association)
Andy Emms (Democratic Services Manager, Norwich City
Council)

Apologies: County Councillor Nobbs
County Councillor Mackie
County Councillor Gretton (Chair, Norfolk Joint Museums
Committee)

1. CITY COUNCILLOR JOHN WYATT

The Chair referred to the recent death of Councillor John Wyatt, who had been a member of the Committee. The Chair paid tribute to Councillor Wyatt on behalf of himself and Councillor Nobbs and members observed a minutes silence in his memory.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED to agree the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 29 September 2008.

3. CO-OPTED NON-VOTING MEMBERS

The Head of Museums and Archaeology presented the report reviewing the current co-option arrangements on the Committee.

The Head of Museums and Archaeology advised members that since the last meeting, she had received a resignation from the co-opted non voting representative from the Sainsburys Centre. However, the partnership between the Museums Service and the Sainsburys Centre still remained and they would continue to work together.

Some members suggested that the Costume and Textile Association should replace Broadland District Council as a co-opted non voting representatives in view of the support they gave the Museums Service. Other members were satisfied with the recommendations as contained in the report.

RESOLVED to:-

- (1) ask the Head of Museums and Archaeology to provide the Committee with updates on the activities carried out by the Sainsburys Centre at future meetings.
- (2) continue to invite the following organisations to nominate a representative to be co-opted as a non-voting member of the Committee:-
 - South Norfolk District Council
 - Broadland District Council
 - Friends of Norwich Museums
 - East Anglia Art Fund
 - Norfolk Contemporary Arts Society
- (3) invite the Costumes and Textile Association to nominate a representative to be an observer to the Committee to be given equal opportunity to contribute to the debate as the non-voting co-opted members.

4. GENERAL UPDATE ON NORWICH MUSEUMS

The Norwich Museums Manager presented the report and answered questions about the work of the Norwich Museums Service since the last meeting and forthcoming events as follows:-

Visitor Numbers

The Norwich Museums Manager outlined the visitor numbers and target numbers for the period April 2008 to March 2009.

In response to a question, she said that visitor spending had reduced and this had been most noticeable in the museum shop and café.

RESOLVED to note the position.

Norwich Castle

The Norwich Museums Manager advised the Committee that in November 2008, Norwich Castle had hosted a successful fashion show in association with Jarrolds who had since confirmed that they planned to stage another show at the Castle.

Charlotte Crawley said that staging such events was a valuable way of raising funds and during the autumn season of contemporary art shows they had sold £40,000 worth of art. Two thirds of this went to the artist and one third was taken as commission which was put back into the exhibition programme. £5,000 had been raised from commercial sponsorship and £5,000 raised from artist's submission costs.

In response to questions, the Norwich Museums Manager said that she had not yet received any official evaluation from the new Arts and Living Gallery as it had only been open to the public since 19 January 2009 with the official opening not due until March. However, the general feedback from the front of house staff had been very positive. She said that since the Committee had visited the exhibition in December 2008 the introduction panel, audio interpretation and text panels had been installed which would make the exhibition clearer should members wish to visit again.

RESOLVED to:-

- (1) note the position.
- (2) record the Committee's thanks to the Castle Museum for arranging the visit to the Arts and Living Gallery in December 2008 and to congratulate the Museum on the exhibition.

Strangers Hall

In response to a question, the Norwich Museums Manager said that from 1 April 2009, Strangers Hall would be opening Wednesdays to Saturdays from 10:30am to 4:30pm and that staff from the Bridewell Museum would be moved to Strangers Hall to accommodate this. She said that they were hoping to raise audience numbers and the range of visitors plus being able to receive more school visits. Over the next two years they would be putting a business case together for the continuing opening of the extended hours.

In response to a question, the Norwich Museums Manager said that the extended opening would be publicised in the new leaflet for the Norwich Museums due out in April.

RESOLVED to note the position.

Royal Norfolk Regimental Museum

The Norwich Museums Manager said that over the next three weeks, items would be added to the displays. The Head of Museums and Archaeology said that a donation of £5,000 had been received from the Friends of Norwich Museums towards the 'Their Past Your Future: Norfolk Men on National Service' display.

RESOLVED to note the position.

Bridewell Museum

The Norwich Museums Manager said that a Display Group would be meeting and would be looking at putting together the engagement programme for the museum.

The Chair said that as raised under public questions at the last meeting of the Joint Museums Committee, the Industrial Archaeology Society had been unhappy that they had not been consulted on the exhibits at the museum. The Norwich Museums Manager said that they had been invited to attend consultation meetings when putting in the bid and that they would be one of the groups that would be consulted in the future.

RESOLVED to:-

- (1) note the position
- (2) ask the Norwich Museums Manager to report of any progress with the re-development of the Bridewell Museum to future meetings.

Norwich Learning Team

In response to a request for further information on the seminars that were recently advertised for the over 55's, the Norwich Museums Manager advised that the sessions were to take place at the Shirehall, Norwich Castle Study Centre on various Thursdays and would involve different curators and different displays. Spaces had been limited and the sessions had been advertised via the email contact list and had booked up quickly so no further publicity was required. The lead officer on the project was Ruth Burwood.

The Norwich Museums Manager said they had already had interest from people for future sessions and they would be holding another 6 or 8 over the course of a term. They would also consider looking at additional sessions to be held in the Castle adding the option of tea and cakes into the package.

RESOLVED to note the position.

5. CASTLE MOUND / CITY PLAQUES

A member said that the tree located directly in front of the Castle facing City Hall needed attention due to ivy and members discussed their concerns about the upkeep of the vegetation and gardens on the Castle Mound. In response to a question, the Chair said that Norwich in Bloom may be able to give advice on the possibility of planting daffodil bulbs on the mound.

Rosemary Salt said that the plaques that could be found on public houses around the City were the work of Murray Scott, an Italian prisoner of war who married a local girl. More information on these could be obtained from Vicky Manthorpe at the Norwich Society.

RESOLVED to ask the Committee Officer to:-

- (1) contact the Council's Arboricultural Officer to report the ivy problem on the tree in front of the Castle.

- (2) ask the Head of Community Services at Norwich City Council to update the Committee on the work being carried out at the Castle Mound in connection with Community Safety.

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members discussed the possibility of holding meetings at different venues including the Broadland District Council Offices.

RESOLVED to:-

- (1) hold the next two meetings at 2:00pm on Monday 15 June and Monday 28 September 2009.
- (2) ask the Norwich Museums Manager to check the possibility of holding the meetings in the Auditorium of the Castle Museum and to advise the Committee Officer accordingly.

CHAIR