



NORWICH
City Council

NORWICH AREA MUSEUMS COMMITTEE

2:10pm–4:05pm

29 September 2008

Present:	<u>City Councillors</u>	<u>County Councillors</u>
	Councillor Bradford (Chair)	Councillor Nobbs (Vice-Chair)
	Councillor Banham	Councillor Dunn
	Councillor Bearman	Councillor Hacker
	Councillor Fairbairn	Councillor Hemming
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	County Councillor Virgo (on behalf of Councillor Mackie)	
	Vanessa Trevelyan (Head of Museums and Archaeology)	
	Rachel Kirk (Norwich Museums Manager)	
	Emma Taylor (Norwich Museums Development Officer)	
	County Councillor Gretton (Chair, Norfolk Joint Museums Committee)	
	Vivienne Weeks (Chair of Costume and Textile Association)	
Jeanne Southgate (Costume and Textile Association)		
Apologies:	Councillor Wyatt	
	Nichola Johnson (Sainsbury Centre)	

1. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING ON 16 JUNE 2008

A member asked if the Committee could be updated on the issue of Co-Opted Representatives. The issue was that the Norwich Area Museums Committee had six co-opted members while the constitution only allowed for five.

A Working Group to look at this issue had been set up at the Norwich Area Museums Committee meeting on 16 June 2008. The Working Group had met and had produced a report, which was tabled. The Head of Museums and Archaeology who was a member of the Working Group said she had been unaware of this meeting.

Discussion ensued during which The Head of Museums and Archaeology said that there was some confusion relating to the position in respect of Co-Opted Members as the Working Group's report suggested that it was an individual that was co-opted rather than the organisation which was not the case. She therefore suggested that

she report back to the next meeting to clarify the position and to enable the Committee to resolve the anomaly of the additional co-opted member.

RESOLVED to:-

- (1). agree the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 16 June 2008.
- (2). note that The Head of Museums and Archaeology would report back to a future meeting of the Committee on the position in respect of Co-Opted Members.
- (3). that on future agendas, the name of the organisation or association be listed after a member's name.
- (4). to record the appreciation of the Committee to Brenda Ferris for her contribution to the Norwich Area Museum Committee.

2. GENERAL UPDATE ON THE NORWICH MUSEUMS

The Norwich Museums Manager presented the report and answered questions about the work of the Norwich Museums Service over the past 3 months and forthcoming events as follows:-

Visitor Numbers

The Norwich Museums Manager circulated figures detailing visitor numbers and targets for the period April to August 2008/09. The Head of Museums and Archaeology advised members that the Royal Norfolk Regimental Museum was actually on target to achieve the predicted visitor levels this year, as the overall targets took into account a recent planned closure of the Castle link for several months. However, the figures given had automatically spread the target required across the full year, which created a false impression that the museum was behind target.

RESOLVED to note the position.

Norwich Castle

In response to a question, the Norwich Museums Development Officer advised that Norwich HEART were currently looking at the possibility of using the big screen at Chapelfield for advertising.

Members and Officers discussed the problem of pest infestation, what remedies could be used since the abolition of certain pesticides and it was explained that the issue is affecting the whole museum sector, not just the Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service (NMAAS).

RESOLVED to:-

- (1). note the report
- (2). to arrange a viewing of the Arts of Living Gallery by members at the next meeting of the Committee on 1 December 2008.

Strangers Hall

In response to a question, the Norwich Museums Manager advised that entry to Strangers Hall was not free of charge. Strangers Hall currently opened on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

RESOLVED to note that in future reports the Norwich School of Arts and Design (NSAD) should be referred to as the Norwich University College of the Arts.

Carrow House Textile and Costume Centre

The Norwich Museums Development Officer advised that while Carrow House was closed, a huge amount of work was being carried out going through every box checking and cataloguing objects. In answer to a question, The Head of Museums and Archaeology said that detailed line drawings of costumes were available to assist researchers, and were actually sometimes more useful than photographs as costume is difficult to photograph successfully.

RESOLVED to note the position.

Bridewell Museum

In response to a question as to whether the shop could be re-located while the Museum was closed, the Norwich Museums Manager advised that the shop staff were due to move to Strangers Hall whilst the shop would be used as a site office. Subject to an assessment of the budget requirements involved, Strangers Hall might be opening more days during the week and could provide a focus for events and group activities previously featured at the Bridewell Museum. A member suggested that enquiries be made with the Council as to the availability of a vacant retail property in the City to temporarily accommodate the shop.

In response to a question as to whether the cobbled surface of the Courtyard would be changed, the Head of Museums and Archaeology said that they would have to look at the overall plan and would need to balance access issues and use of the space. The architects would design a suitable surface in association with conservation officers and English Heritage.

RESOLVED to:-

- (1). note the position
- (2). ask the Norwich Museums Manager to look into the possibility of re-locating the shop and report any findings at a future meeting.
- (3). ask the Head of Museums and Archaeology to advise the Committee of any proposals for the surface of the Courtyard at a future meeting.

Norwich Learning Team

Discussion took place on whether members and City Council officers could support the Summer Schools by attending future presentations. The Head of Museums and

Archaeology said however that she was under the impression that only Portfolio Holders had been invited in the past.

RESOLVED to ask the Norwich Museums Manager to investigate if all Members and City Council officers can be invited to attend future presentations at Summer School and report back at a future meeting.

3. NORWICH MUSEUMS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

The Norwich Museums Manager presented the report and updated Members on the Norwich Museums Development Programme as of September 2008.

In response to a question about complaints made about the poor lighting in the Crome and Cotman Galleries at the Castle, the Norwich Museums Manager advised that the lighting on the suspended ceilings was no longer safe to maintain and had had to be turned off. The smoke and intruder alarms had been updated as a priority and the lights would be looked at as the next project.

RESOLVED to:-

- (1). note the report
- (2). note that the sentence on the seventh line of the last paragraph of Page 17 of the report should read 'There have been a number of meetings between potential English partners, including Medway Council who have put themselves forward'.

4. COLLECTIONS REVIEW AND RATIONALISATION PROCESS

The Head of Museums and Archaeology presented the report. She advised members of the background to the collections review and rationalisation process and referred to the manual fire engine and metal lathe that had been recommended for disposal as outlined in Appendix B.

Discussion then took place on the items that had been sent to the Canterbury Museum, Christchurch, New Zealand on "permanent loan" in 1948.

RESOLVED to recommend to the Joint Museums Committee that these items should be de-accessioned following NMAS procedures.

5. REVIEW OF NORWICH CASTLE FLAG

The Norwich Museums Development Officer presented the report and updated Members on the options for designing a new flag for Norwich Castle.

Councillor Banham presented recommendations on behalf of The City of Norwich Civic Association as set out in a letter that was tabled at the meeting. Members of the Civic Association had commented that any flag should continue to display the castle and lion and contain elements of the Norwich City coat of arms and suggested that any new flag should be in the form of a medieval gonfalon.

Discussion then ensued on the proposal detailed in the report and the recommendations from The City of Norwich Civic Association. Overall a majority of

those present expressed a preference for the use of the union flag as recommended in the report.

RESOLVED to:-

- (1). accept the recommendation on page 44 of the report subject to the following amendment:

‘Flying the Union Jack on a regular basis except the flag of St. George on St. George’s Day, and any other appropriate flag as requested by the Civic Office at Norwich City Council’.

- (2). ask the Head of Museums and Archaeology to supply the Committee Officer with a list of dates when Norwich Castle flies the Union or other official flag for circulation to Members before the next meeting.

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED to hold the next meeting on Monday 1 December 2008 at the Norwich Castle with an escorted Tour of the Arts of Living Gallery following the meeting.

CHAIR