

Norwich area museums committee

Date: **Tuesday, 09 December 2014**
Time: **14:00**
Venue: **Mancroft room**

City Hall, St Peters Street, Norwich, NR2 1NH

For further information please contact:

Committee members:

Norwich City Council: Councillors Blunt, Bradford, Button, Price, Maxwell and Wright

Norfolk County Council: Councillors Bremner, Dearnley, Gihawi, Morgan, Sands (M) and Watkins

Co-opted non-voting members: Brenda Ferris (Norfolk Contemporary Arts Society), Charlotte Crawley (East Anglia Arts Fund) and Ceri Lamb (Friends of Norwich Museums), Councillor Bracey (Broadland District Council), Councillor Hornby (South Norfolk Council)

Committee officer: Andy Futter
t: (01603) 212029
e: andyfutter@norwich.gov.uk

Democratic services
City Hall
Norwich
NR2 1NH

www.norwich.gov.uk

Information for members of the public

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For information about attending or speaking at meetings, please contact the committee officer above or refer to the council's website.

Agenda

1 Appointment of chair

2 Appointment of vice chair

3 Apologies

To receive apologies for absence

4 Public questions/petitions

To receive questions / petitions from the public (notice to be given to committee officer in advance of the meeting in accordance with appendix 1 of the council's constitution)

5 Declaration of interest

(Please note that it is the responsibility of individual members to declare an interest prior to the item if they arrive late for the meeting)

6 Minutes 5 - 6

Purpose - To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2014

7 Members briefing paper to December 2014 7 - 16

(Report of the Norwich museums manager)

Purpose - To update members on the work of the Norwich museums to December 2014

8 NMS Collections Rationalisation standard report 17 - 22

Purpose - to approve the rationalisation of the items listed in Annex 2.

Date of publication: **Tuesday, 02 December 2014**



MINUTES

NORWICH AREA MUSEUMS COMMITTEE

2:05pm to 3pm

17 June 2014

Present:

City Councillors:

Button (chair)
Blunt
Bradford
Brociek-Coulton (substitute for
Maxwell)

County Councillors:

Bremner
Dearnley
Watkins

Co-opted Non-
voting members:

Brenda Ferris (Norfolk Contemporary Art Society) and Charlotte
Crawley (East Anglia Arts Fund)
Councillor Bracey (Broadland District Council)
Councillor Hornby (South Norfolk Council)

Apologies:

County Councillors Sands (M) and Gihawi and City Councillors
Price and Maxwell

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

As Norfolk County Council had not yet made their appointments for the civic year, a chair was appointed for this meeting only.

RESOLVED to appoint Councillor Sally Button as chair for this meeting.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES

A member asked if there had been any developments with replacing and updating signage. The head of the museum service said that a two pronged approach was being undertaken. A museum bike was to be chained to railings outside the Museum of Norwich with signage attached and he was also in discussions with the executive head of communications, customers and culture at Norwich city council to update the finger posts.

RESOLVED to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 4 March 2014.

4. THE NORWICH MUSEUMS – MEMBERS’ BRIEFING JUNE 2014

Rachel Kirk, the museums manager presented the report and answered member’s questions.

She reported that the high visitor figures recorded at Norwich Castle had meant that the secondary spending the gift shop and café was also higher than usual. Visitor numbers had increased by 22% on this time last year.

She confirmed that due to the support of the Friends of Norwich Museums, Strangers Hall would continue to have increased opening hours and would be open Wednesday through to Saturday until the end of September.

In response to a question from a member, the Norwich museums manager said that a ticket offer would be trialled with a half price voucher being given for the Museum of Norwich and Strangers’ Hall with every ticket purchase at Norwich Castle. She said that a ‘rover’ ticket for all three museums had been trialled in summer 2013 but had not been as successful as hoped. The Head of museums said that as Norwich was a tourist destination, they wanted to give some flexibility to the ticket offer. Online ticketing would also be looked into in the future.

A member asked if school visits took place at all three museums or just the castle. The museums manager explained that visits were guided by the curriculum and which areas each museum covered, and that the recent Roman exhibition fitted in with the current curriculum, leading to a higher number of school visits to the castle this year. The museums service worked closely with schools to tailor activities and were in the process of developing new sessions which focused on archaeology and mathematics.

Members were given an invitation to the opening of the ‘inspired by birds’ exhibition. Brenda Ferris said that the activities happening at the castle had inspired other organisations such as artists at the Norfolk Contemporary Art Society who were currently working with feathers.

The head of the museums service updated the members on the strategic developments. He said that if the ACE funding is awarded to the museums service, they would be able to continue at the same level of activity with large exhibitions, working with schools and looked after children. This funding supported the whole of the service and not just the castle. It was expected that he would be told in early July if the funding bid had been successful and he would update members as soon as possible.

An application had also been put in to be a ‘Bridge organisation’ to develop the relationship between the Arts Council and schools.

RESOLVED to note the report.

CHAIR

The Norwich Area Museums Committee

Briefing Paper December 2014

Visitor Numbers 2014/15 – See Appendix 1

Visitor numbers across all three sites were lower this October than in 2013/14, nearly 11% lower at Norwich Castle. This was largely due to lower visitor numbers over the half-term school holiday as a result of the unseasonably warm, dry weather and high levels of Halloween event competition across the city. However, visitor numbers across the Norwich Museums to 31st October remain 10% higher than for the same period in 2013/14. The increase is due to the significant and cumulative rise in visitor numbers at Norwich Castle where numbers were still up by 14% at 31st October compared with the same period last year,

The high visitor numbers at Norwich Castle has been reflected in good admission income and secondary spend in the Castle's café and shop.

Visitor numbers to date at the Museum of Norwich and Strangers' Hall continue to be slightly lower than in 2013/14 as reported at the June AMC meeting, although the September figures at both sites were very good, large as a result of a very successful Heritage Open Day weekend.

The Friends of the Norwich Museums are still considering whether to provide financial support to enable Strangers' Hall to open for additional days – Thursdays and Fridays – from June to September 2015. The final decision will be taken at the Friends' Committee in January.

School Numbers 2014/15 - See Appendix 2

School visits to the Norwich Museums to the end of October were 14% higher than for the same period last year.

Bookings are generally going well for the new academic year, however, changes to the National Curriculum are beginning to have an impact, particularly at Strangers' Hall where the core school offer is Tudors. This subject is no longer taught at Key Stage 2 Primary age, and despite adapting the session to focus on other areas of the curriculum, e.g. local history and important people, bookings have dropped considerably. Colleagues from other museums across the Country have reported a similar situation.

However, more positively, the new curriculum does play to Norwich Castle's strengths where school visits are up by 20%.

OTHER LEARNING SERVICES NEWS

A 12 week **Youth Offending Team** programme ran from October to November at Norwich Castle, finishing with a presentation on Friday 20th November.

Strangers' Hall and The Museum of Norwich are hosting this autumn's Saturday morning **Museum Club**.

The **Youth Forum** meet monthly and ran the first ever gaming session for over 14s **Gaming in the Castle** on 15th November. The event was a sell out and one is planned for spring. They are also working with **Equal Lives**, a disabled youth forum on a photography project inspired by the Wonnacott and Lessore exhibition.

The **Young Events Volunteers Group** meet monthly and develop and deliver activities for the public programme.

A **Routes into Museum Work Day** is taking place on 13th December. This will provide secondary age young people the opportunity to find out about career opportunities in museums. This event has been developed as an alternative to providing work experience placements, as we are unable to meet the demand for work experience placements but wanted to find a way to provide support and information.

CURRENT EXHIBITIONS

Norwich Castle's Norwich Union and Bernard Matthew Galleries **JOHN WONNACOTT AND JOHN LESSORE** **The Life Room and the City** to 4 January 2015

Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery has joined with Norwich University of the Arts to celebrate the iconic art school's 170th year. This is an exhibition of the work of two important British painters, John Wonnacott and John Lessore, and the paintings they made in and around the art school while they were teaching there in the early 1980s. Wonnacott and Lessore were invited to Norwich Art School to develop a Life Room – a space where students could be trained in drawing from observation.



They created two Life Rooms where they also made their own work. As well as figure painting, the artists were inspired by the city around them. Many of their paintings feature much-loved Norwich scenes and are on loan from major museums and collections. This exhibition will explore ideas about how we teach art whilst placing the work of Wonnacott and Lessore within the context of British painting of the 20th century.

The exhibition is curated by Lynda Morris and an accompanying show '**John Wonnacott and John Lessore, About Life**' will be held at the Norwich University of the Arts Gallery (NUA) on St. Georges Street from 4 November 2014 – 10 January 2015

Norwich Castle's Rotunda Display Case **LETTERS HOME** To July 2015

Letters Home - a new temporary case display in Norwich Castle's Rotunda, reveals what life was like for Norfolk soldiers and their families during the First World War through a collection of poignant and moving personal letters.

Around 12 million letters were sent to the front lines each week and it took, on average, two days for a letter to reach the Western Front from England.

The experience of Norfolk soldiers takes centre stage in **Letters Home** until July next year.

Letters Home draws on the Royal Norfolk Regimental Museum's archive and this is the first time that much of this material has been on public display. It explores significant moments in the lives of soldiers and their families throughout the war, and offers visitors a sense of what life was like for families waiting for news and the different ways in which they found out about a soldier's life and death in the First World War.

Written communication was vitally important during the First World War and the value of letters is revealed in a collection of correspondence kept by Captain John Hammond, a company commander in the 7th (Service) Battalion, the Norfolk Regiment. Like many officers serving at the front, it was his duty to write to next of kin, offering information and comfort in their loss. Unusually, he kept the letters that families sent in return and these poignant letters show the distress that wives and parents went through and the great uncertainty that they faced.

When lines of communication were hindered, for example for Prisoners of War, many soldiers kept diaries to record their thoughts and experiences. Private Robert Sheldrake kept his prison camp diaries hidden in the false bottom of a cardboard box filled with books and keepsakes to avoid detection by the guards at Zwickau PoW camp in Germany.

Museum of Norwich at the Bridewell

FABULOUS 1950S FASHION

Saturday 15th November 2014 to Saturday 3rd January 2015

A modest exhibition in the Museum's 20th Century gallery showing how fashion designers and film stars influenced everyday style in the 1950s.

LOOKING FORWARD at Norwich Castle



HOMAGE TO MANET

31 January – 19 April 2015

An exhibition developed around a loan of an Edouard Manet (1832 – 1883) painting owned by the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford *Portrait of Mademoiselle Claus* 1868.

The exhibition will include a number of loans from Tate, the British Museum, The Manchester City Art Gallery, the Royal Academy and private collections including works by Claude Monet (1840 – 1926) John Singer Sargent (1856 – 1925), Walter Sickert (1860 – 1942) and Philip Wilson Steer (1860 – 1942)

- **Summer 2015: Jeff Koons.** A touring exhibition from the Artist Rooms Programme.
- **Autumn 2015 Digital/New Media exhibition**
- **Spring 2016: How to Train Your Dragon - A Vikings Guide to Deadly Dragons.** An exhibition from the National Centre for Children's Books on the book by Cressida Cowell.
- **Summer 2016:** Leading venue with Norwich University of the Arts for **The British Art Show**
- **Spring 2017: Small Stories Dolls' House and the History of the Home.** A V&A Museum of Childhood touring exhibition.

Exhibition proposals under discussion

- Rembrandt in Autumn 2016
- Building a touring exhibition around the Paston Treasure painting in 2018 in collaboration with Yale University, USA.

Coming next to the Museum of Norwich

Next year, the celebration of 200 Years of Colman's continues, and [Norwich HEART](#) have just agreed that we can display their exhibition of the history of the company and workers stories from January through to March 2015, following its outing at the Forum and Fusion screen this November. The exhibition will complement the existing displays perfectly, and provide an opportunity to run talks alongside the displays.

Events

REPORTING BACK

There have been a wide range of events to suit all audiences during the autumn. At Norwich Castle adult audiences have been able to choose from Tuesday lunchtime talks, an exhibition conference, Creative Writing, Art, Archaeology and Costume and Textile workshops, talks and handling sessions. Family audiences were treated to *Spooky City*, a programme of events over the October half-term culminating in a Parade from the Castle to The Forum.



We've also participated in national schemes including *The Big Draw*, when families helped to create a giant community artwork of the city, and *Museum Takeover Day*, where the Brownies were invited to take over our jobs, from giving talks in the galleries to tannoy announcements. *Takeover Day* is run by the **Kids in Museums** campaign to celebrate children and young people's contribution to museums, galleries and historic homes. Takeover Day at Norwich Castle is being used by *Kids in Museums* as a case study for best practice.

Christmas kicked off on 29th November with a First World War day inspired by the Christmas truce of 1914 called *Christmas in the Trenches*. This included a talk a book signing session with Michael Foreman, author of the children's First World War classic *War Game*.

The Museum of Norwich and Strangers' Hall have also been busy on the events front, with activities to support The Big Draw, together with talks, drawing, puppet show and puppet making and shoe design workshops

Norwich Castle on national television and radio



An Episode of the new series of ***Digging For Britain***, to be broadcast in November on BBC 4 was filmed in Norwich Castle Keep one evening in September. The programme is a magazine of recent finds and work in British archaeology, presented by Professor Alice Roberts and ex-Time Team digger Matt Williams. In addition to the various stories covered, the programme will be looking at associated stories from the Castle, including relating some Roundhead graffiti in the Keep's fighting gallery, to a number of items from our

In particular, some of the more recent high-profile acquisitions will be featured, including a spectacular Middle Bronze Age dirk and a hoard of Anglo-Saxon gold bracteates. This was a fantastic opportunity to advertise the richness of both our archaeology collections and the museum more generally, as well as providing us with income from a facility fee. While the filming was highly concentrated, with a string of archaeologists coming in to discuss their work with the presenters, it was also a long night.

Norwich Castle also captured the interest of the BBC's ***Celebrity Antiques Road Trip***. The presenters drove up to the Castle in their vintage car on Sunday 19th October to make a film clip about our Egyptian collections for the show. They were particularly interested in connections with Rhyder Haggard and spoke to Research Associate and Egyptology expert Faye Kallionitis.

Anglo Saxons farming implements and Norwich Castle Battlements featured at the beginning of **Radio 4's Gardeners' Question Time** last week, providing an introduction to the programme which was recorded at the Assembly House.

LOOKING FORWARD

Father Christmas will be in his workshop at Strangers' Hall on 13th and 20th December, and all three Norwich Museums will be running Christmas themed craft activities on the run up to and during the Christmas holiday period.

The Spring 2015 **What's On** will be available before Christmas. In addition to a programme of activities including Tuesday lunchtime talks, to support the exhibition *A Homage to Manet*, there is a large and varied programme of events and activities across the three Norwich Museums to meet the interests of all visitors. In partnership with RSPB we are running another Big Garden Birdwatch weekend on 24th January, where children will go free and all other visitors will be able to take advantage of the Pop in for £2.00 at any time over the weekend.

Please pick up a What's On or see the website www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk for details.

Access to Collections

New Collections Website

NMS' new collections website is now live. The new site, accessible via the 'Search our Collections' button on each page of the NMS website, offers online visitors a rich new way to engage with the collections. (www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk) The new site features stunning photography of star objects and the opportunity to learn more about some of the intriguing stories behind them. Supported by funding from Arts Council England and the Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund, the website will initially feature 87,000 records from a total of three million objects in NMS's nationally and internationally important collections. More records will be uploaded over the coming weeks and months. In addition, 150 key objects from the collections have been chosen for special treatment, to give visitors a flavour of the riches the collections hold. Visitors will be able to find out more about these key objects by clicking on themes such as 'Tied to the Sea', 'Prestige and Power', 'Faith and Ritual' and 'Conflict and War'. Several categories explore significant aspects of Norfolk including 'Industrious Norfolk', 'Norfolk Collectors' and 'Inspired by Norfolk'. The new site was launched at an event at Norwich Castle on 31 July, with Nick Poole, CEO of the Collections Trust giving the keynote speech.

Other News

Finalist is 2014 EDP VisitNorfolk Tourism Awards

Norwich Castle was a finalist in the [Business Impact](#) category of the 2014 EDP VisitNorfolk Tourism Awards for the "hugely successful" Roman Empire: Power and People exhibition. The Awards, celebrating their 10th year this year, recognise excellence in an industry which is vital to the county's economy, contributing £2.8 billion a year and employing around 50,000 people.

Great British High Street Award

The Lanes was selected as the winner for the City Category of the Great British High Street Award and will receive a share of £50,000 and dedicated support and mentoring from industry experts. This national and highly prestigious award received over 135 entries across the UK and the Lanes faced huge competition to win. Receiving this award is a fantastic achievement for the Norwich Lanes and Norwich BID who have received recognition on a local and national level. The judges were impressed by the "partnership with traders and Norwich BID to develop a strong brand, organising a series of innovative events and marketing campaigns." One of those key partners is the Museum of Norwich, it hosted a visit from the judges from the Cabinet Office in October and they were obviously impressed by what they saw as David Cameron even favourited one of Curator Jenny Caynes' tweets supporting the Lanes bid to win.

Commercial developments

Norwich Castle and Strangers' Hall are now licensed to hold wedding ceremonies, and are embarking on an exciting new chapter, working with professional wedding planner, Event-House, to develop wedding packages for these unique venues.

A venue hire offer has been developed for Norwich Castle. Full details are available in a new brochure which is also available to download from the web-site.

Norfolk Museums Christmas Cards



Strangers' Hall has a large collection of greetings cards, including the comic Valentines on show at the Museum of Norwich at the Bridewell, and Christmas cards from the Victorian period up to the 1990s. A range of twenty lovely examples are now available for sale in the run-up to Christmas in NMS museum shops.

A View from Norwich Castle Battlement leaflet has been developed to support Battlement tours and is also available for purchase separately.

Strangers' Hall opening hours

In order to diversify its income streams and increase revenue, Strangers' Hall is now available for wedding and civil ceremonies and receptions. The most popular day for weddings continues to be Saturday, and to be able to provide visitors with a clear and consistent message regarding Strangers' Hall's core opening hours, public opening will move from a Saturday to a Sunday from 1-4.30pm. Visitors won't be losing out though, as there are plans to enhance the visitor offer on the fourth Sunday of every month by bringing the building to life with music and other activities.

Roll of Honour

We are working closely with Norwich City Council to raise funds to restore the Roll of Honour and to relocate it from the Norwich Castle Keep to the City Hall where it will be more publically accessible. Visitors to City Hall and Norwich Castle will also be able to uncover the stories of the soldiers listed on the Norwich Roll of Honour in a digital format.

Strangers' Hall Discovery



Initial dismay about the temporary closure of one of our main display rooms for ceiling repairs following leaks was mitigated by the promise from NORSE of carrying out some long-needed additional work on a gable in the Coach-house courtyard. But what should have been a simple repair however, turned into a major headache when it was discovered that the timbers in that part of the building had been severely affected by wood-boring beetle.

However, there was a silver lining. A specialist Norse team whilst working to resolve the problem discovered, during the course of removing the old render two new early windows at first and second floor level, one complete with original mouldings. These are thought to be of 16th/ 17th century date and help us establish a better idea of the original form of the building at the west end of the Great Hall. Following treatment and timber replacement, several hundred hand cut laths have been fixed to be followed by re-rendering with lime plaster which will allow this part of the building to breathe again and help prevent future problems.

The Rudham Dirk

A rare Middle Bronze Age weapon, one of only six known from Europe, has been saved with the support of a grant of £38,970 from the National Heritage Memorial Fund. The award, made to Norfolk Museums Service, has allowed the Rudham Dirk, a ceremonial artefact, to come into public ownership and be placed on display in Norwich Castle.

The Dirk was actually found about twelve years ago, when ploughed up in a field in East Rudham, north Norfolk. Taken home as a curio, the farmer, who wishes to remain anonymous, used it as a doorstep to his office. He was on the verge of throwing it away when a friend suggested he should take it to be identified. At Norfolk's Identification and Recording Service, which runs the county's Portable Antiquities Scheme from its base in Norfolk Museums Service's Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse, it was seen by Dr Rogerson, senior historic environment officer and Finds Liaison Officer Erica Darch. They were able to recognise the dirk's date and importance immediately. Negotiations were subsequently opened between the landowner and Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery and a final sale price of £40,970 agreed. Grants from the National Heritage Memorial Fund and the Norfolk and Norwich Archaeological Society have enable the dirk to be secured for the nation

Norfolk Museums Development Foundation

The Norfolk Museums Development Foundation is a new independent organisation that has been established to help Norfolk Museums Service to secure a diverse and sustainable funding base for the future. The foundation is a company limited by guarantee and a Registered Charity. A highly skilled and experienced Board of Trustees have been appointed and they met for their first board meeting this in October.

Arts Council Funding ACE

Norfolk Museums Service has been successful in its bid to continue leading on developing the museum sector in the East of England. NMS is one of nine partners nationally to receive funding from Arts Council England to provide professional support, advice and guidance to museums to raise standards across the sector. NMS has been awarded £1,188,000 over the next three years for this important work.

The latest award recognises NMS' leadership role in the wider museum sector, and the service's track record of working with museums of all shapes and sizes in the past few years to improve standards. In the last year alone NMS has worked with 93% [153] of the region's Accredited museums through its innovative skills sharing scheme SHARE Museums East, delivering training and support to over 1,000 museum staff and volunteers last year.

For more information visit: <http://sharemuseumseast.org.uk/>

If you want to discuss any matters in this briefing please contact

Rachel Kirk rachel.kirk@norfolk.gov.uk

For further information about the Norwich Museums, their services and programmes check out the website on www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk where you can also sign up to receive regular e-bulletins.

MUSEUM VISITS 2014/15		APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	Total to 31 Oct	Annual TOTAL
Norwich Castle	2012/13	21,242	12,846	15,198	18,019	19,998	14,202	14,469	115,974	182,984
	2013/14	17,529	15,710	11,797	14,473	21,492	13,130	19,626	113,757	193,646
	2014/15	21,515	18,211	13,826	18,268	26,946	15,086	17,621	131,473	131,473
Strangers' Hall	2012/13	764	650	677	687	876	978	1,085	5,717	8,902
	2013/14	735	880	1,107	1,042	1,413	1,281	1,025	7,483	11,170
	2014/15	145	624	853	1,105	1,418	1,660	757	6,562	6,562
Museum of Norwich at the Bridewell	2012/13	CLOSED	CLOSED	75	2,745	3,015	2,379	1,609	9,823	16,473
	2013/14	1,556	1,518	953	1,152	1,667	1,250	1,400	9,496	14,707
	2014/15	1,014	1,276	954	1,269	1,595	1,808	1,288	9,204	9,204
NORWICH MUSEUMS TOTAL	2012/13	22,184	13,573	16,048	21,608	23,996	17,701	17,331	132,441	208,466
	2013/14	20,057	18,293	14,057	16,845	24,686	15,788	22,271	131,997	221,777
	2014/15	22,674	20,111	15,633	20,642	29,959	18,554	19,666	147,239	147,239

APPENDIX 2

SCHOOL VISITS 2014/15		APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	Total 31 Oct	Annual TOTAL
Norwich Castle	2012/13	565	1,788	1,576	1,900	83	619	1,320	7,851	17,732
	2013/14	668	1,066	1,897	1,088	0	537	1,794	7,050	17,485
	2014/15	1,007	1,060	2,037	1,474	60	1,039	2,049	8,726	8,726
Strangers' Hall	2012/13	0	154	160	145	0	0	431	890	1,992
	2013/14	59	181	232	152	0	0	371	995	2,395
	2014/15	9	73	160	111	0	58	164	575	575
Museum of Norwich at the Bridewell	2012/13	0	0	0	0	0	33	62	95	290
	2013/14	0	144	86	0	0	67	67	364	754
	2014/15	29	63	183	106	0	84	24	489	489
NORWICH MUSEUMS TOTAL	2012/13	565	1,942	1,736	2,045	83	652	1,813	8,836	19,968
	2013/14	727	1,391	2,215	1,240	0	604	2,232	8,409	20,634
	2014/15	1,045	1,196	2,380	1,691	60	1,181	2,237	9,790	9,790

NMS Collections Rationalisation Programme 2010-14

Report by the Head of NMS

Summary

As part of its strategy to review service needs and reduce costs NMS has an ongoing Collections Rationalisation programme whereby collections are assessed on a regular basis and those that are not suitable for future display or study needs are found alternative homes. This will ensure that the NMS:

- Reduces its accommodation needs to the minimum necessary for the safe and accessible storage of collections, in order to reduce the financial and staffing burden of collections care
- Ensures that all collections are accessible and used on a regular basis for the benefit of the public

Annex 2 sets out the latest list of items which have been assessed as surplus to NMS' requirements as being of poor quality, or of limited interest, or more relevant to another museum collection.

The programme is following best practice as advised by the Museums Association's Code of Ethics and Arts Council England's Museums Accreditation Standard.

Recommendation

That members approve the rationalisation of the items listed in Annex 2.

1 Background

NMS has an ongoing Collections Rationalisation Programme whereby collections are assessed on a regular basis and those that are not suitable for future display or study needs are found alternative homes (see Annex 1). This is with the aim of:

- Reducing NMS' accommodation needs to the minimum necessary for the safe and accessible storage of collections, in order to reduce the financial and staffing burden of collections care
- Ensuring that all collections are accessible and used on a regular basis for the benefit of the public

The policy was considered and approved by the Norfolk Joint Museums & Archaeology Committee on 14 January 2011.

2 Collections review

The objects listed *in Annex 2* have been identified as candidates for deaccessioning and disposal. The list has been scrutinised by the NMS' internal Rationalisation Committee, which comprises the Chief Curator, Collections Development Manager, the Senior Conservation Officer and the Registrar. Where possible these objects will be found a home in another museum or cultural institution.

3 Resource Implications

3.1 Finance

It is anticipated that this programme will identify savings of up to £15,000 a year. NMS will fund any necessary revenue or minor capital expenses resulting from moving in or out of accommodation out of efficiency savings. There will be a risk to budgets if the projected savings are not achieved.

3.2 Property

NMAS will vacate one leased and one NCC-owned building with advice from NPS.

4 Other Implications

4.1 Equality Impact Assessment

NMS puts diversity, equality and community cohesion at the heart of service development and service delivery. It aims to ensure that activities included in the service plan are accessible to diverse groups in Norfolk and that all policies, practices and procedures undergo equality impact assessment. These assessments help the service focus on meeting the needs of customers in relation to age, disability, gender, race, religion & belief and sexual orientation.

This review of collections aims to improve accessibility. Principles of representation and equality will guide the selection of objects for disposals, which will all be offered in the first instance to other Accredited museums.

4.2 Health and Safety Implications

The rationalisation programme will improve health and safety conditions for staff by removing risks in overcrowded stores.

4.3 Any Other implications

Officers have considered all the implications which members should be aware of. Apart from those listed in the report (above), there are no other implications to take into account.

5 Section 17 – Crime and Disorder Act

All NMS service plans take account of the need to address the issues of social exclusion, one of the key triggers for crime and disorder. Many of the museums are located in areas of social deprivation and their development is part of an integrated regeneration strategy. By providing services that are accessible to local people, by encouraging participation by young people at risk of offending, by assisting schools in improving pupil attainment, by generating pride in the local heritage, NMAS is making a substantial contribution towards reducing crime and disorder in Norfolk.

6 Action Required

That members approve the rationalisation of the items listed in Annex 2.

Annex 1: Strategy for rationalising NMS collections

1 Introduction

As part of a regular programme of good collections care all museum collections will be reviewed to ensure that objects conform to standards of high priority and top quality. All material that does not conform will be disposed of. This paper sets out how the review will be undertaken. The key elements of the process outlined below are required under the Museum Accreditation Scheme, the UK standards scheme for museums that ensure good practice is followed in all publicly funded museums.

The policy of the NMS is to preserve and interpret Norfolk's history while also providing a window on the world for the people of Norfolk. The NMS has rich and diverse collections and is ranked within the top 2.5% of non-national registered museums. These collections are held in trust on behalf of current and future generations. The collections housed in the Castle Museum & Art Gallery and the Shirehall Collections Study Centre have been Designated by the DCMS as being of national significance. Fifty museums out of over 2,000 Accredited museums have received this distinction, and a challenge fund has been established by the DCMS to support the work of Designated collections. The NMS has received £742,000 since the Fund was created in 1999 towards improving the quality of collections, making it accessible on-line, and improving our displays.

Collecting within the NMS is undertaken in accordance with the Collecting Policy, which is reviewed and approved by Committee every five years. This sets out the strengths of the collections, areas for future collecting and constraints on collecting, such as resources, space such as resources, space and expertise. Cromer Museum, for instance, will only acquire material that provides information about the history of Cromer not currently held within the museum. Thus, duplicates or material that is historic but not otherwise interesting or informative, will not be acquired. This does not preclude collecting outside the terms of the Policy in exceptional cases, such as the West Runton elephant, which is within the terms of the Collecting Policy but of unusual size and national importance. A similar exception is the famous teapot collection of over 3,000 examples is now a nationally important collection without parallel elsewhere in the country and supports the study of styles in ceramic design. It is also a good marketing "hook" for visitors and spreads the fame of Norfolk throughout the world through a series of international travelling exhibitions funded by Twinings.

2 Using collections

The Core collections basically fall into three categories, with different levels of access:

- 1. Display material** represents the best or most significant items in the collections and is easily accessible by all people visiting the museums. Gallery displays are highly interpreted to attract the interest of the general visitor and, hopefully, enthuse them. The Egyptology collection at Norwich Castle "earns its keep" by providing an interesting display for the general visitor and an important resource for schools, which are able to study this part of the national curriculum from real objects in their local museum.
- 2. Study collections** provide depth for people who want to learn more about a specific subject. The emphasis is on presenting as many objects as possible for study. Improved study facilities are being provided at Collections Study Centres, such as the Shirehall, Carrow House or Gressenhall, where collections are

available in reference galleries. Objects are either freely accessible when the museum is open, on open storage (easily accessible with an appointment or on regular open days) or in study rooms (open on set days a week).

3. **Long-term research material** is needed as evidence for current or future research and only needs to be available on an appointment basis. This can be contained in high density storage, thereby making the most cost effective use of space. It is debatable how much of this material is needed but museums have a responsibility to future research to ensure that important evidence is not destroyed unnecessarily. New analysis techniques are being developed all the time and often unprepossessing samples from a Roman midden or pieces of fire-damaged stone can provide important information. "Seahenge" is a case in point. The timbers are over 4,000 years old and have been damaged by the action of the tides but English Heritage has been able to determine the year and month in which the trees were felled, and how many individual people worked on them. However, we can't keep everything and a balance needs to be struck between keeping enough for future needs but not so much that there are no resources to do anything else.

Items not retained for the Core Collection are categorised as follows:

4. **Working or demonstration material** Objects are put to working use or demonstration use at or on behalf of the museum. Items may require sufficient restoration to satisfy for example health and safety requirements, functionality, and should take account of presentation issues of object preservation/restoration within the museum environment. They should be used under defined conditions that are stated in their documentation.
5. **Education, handling and loan collection** Objects are included for educational reference material only, including loans. There is an implied deterioration through usage over time.
6. **Set dressing and cannibalisation** Objects are used as set dressing for on-site activities of the museum, following the principal of ultimate disposal by the 'back to nature' route.
7. **Dispersal** Objects are sold or given away to others. We shall follow MA and Registration guidelines. There will be a presumption that objects will remain in the public domain and offered initially to similar institutions at whichever location provides the best balance of care, context and access.
8. **Disposal** Following MA guidelines objects are scrapped or cannibalised for reference material or restoration use.

3 The rationalisation programme

The rationalisation programme will particularly concentrate on identifying which material should fall in category 3 and below. Material in category 2 will also be reviewed as it is likely that there is some material which, over the years, has become surplus to requirements. Material in category 1 will have been reviewed when a decision was taken to put it on display. The NMS has an ongoing programme of renewing or refreshing displays which allows for changing objects on display and assessing their importance.

3.1 First steps in the rationalisation programme

The Collections Development Manager will be responsible for the review programme. Other staff to be involved include:

- Chief Curator
- Head of Conservation or Senior Conservator

- Staff with curatorial responsibility for collections at specific sites, e.g. Curator of the museum
- Subject specialists

The first step will be to agree a review process and timetable with staff and identify staff teams to carry out the review. The timetable will be affected by major developments currently underway or in the planning cycle that will determine the availability of staff.

3.2 Identifying material for rationalisation

We shall particularly examine material in the following categories to consider them for rationalisation:

- Does not fall within the current collecting policy.
- Unethically acquired material.
- Loan material no longer required for display.
- Does not provide important information about Norfolk and its history.
- Is irrelevant to the collection.
- Has no reasonable expectation of being useful for display or research.
- Is unaccessioned (ie has not been properly recorded).
- Is unprovenanced (ie has no background information to provide a context).
- Is of poor quality compared with other examples in the collection.
- Has deteriorated beyond any useful purpose (eg through decay or infestation. This might be a textile item that has rotted or a natural history specimen that has an infestation)
- Poses a threat to other objects or people (eg by contamination. This might be WW2 gas masks with degraded asbestos filters or radio-active geological specimens).
- Is an unnecessary duplicate.
- Where there is no reasonable expectation that NMS will be able to provide suitable levels of curation or collections care.
- Is of good quality but would fit better into another museum's collection (eg Archaeological material has been recently transferred to West Stowe Anglo-Saxon Village.
- May be more appropriate to the NRO or NLIS.

Meeting one of the above criteria does not automatically condemn any object. Each object will be considered on its merits. There may well be good reasons why objects that fall into one or more of the above categories should be kept, but they will be critically examined and justified.

3.3 Options for disposal

There are several ways in which material that is not suitable for the NMS core collections might continue to fulfil a useful purpose including:

- Transfer to a handling collection for use with schools or the public
- Working machinery can be used to engage the public and demonstrate historic practices

Other alternatives include:

- Transfer to another Accredited museum by gift or sale
- Return to donor or lender
- Transfer to another public institution by gift or sale
- Repatriation to country of origin
- Charitable donation

- Cannibalisation or set dressing
- Sale on the open market, or
- Destruction (as a last resort)

3.4 Process for decision taking

The process for taking decisions about disposal is time consuming but it is important to ensure that

- all legal responsibilities are fulfilled,
- that the sensibilities of donors are respected,
- that the political views of the partners in the Joint Museums & Archaeology Agreement are taken into account, and
- that the public retain confidence in the NMS and the County Council as trustees of Norfolk's heritage.

3.5 The process of selection for disposal will be as follows:

- Objects for disposal will be identified by staff with curatorial or collections care responsibilities at each site, assisted by subject specialists as appropriate
- Documentation will be checked to confirm that the NMS is the legal owner of the items and is legally free to dispose of them (there may be conditions attached to a bequest etc)
- Permission for disposal will be sought from the Joint Museums & Archaeology Committee
- The views of particularly interested groups or organisations will be sought
- If material was acquired or conserved with grant aid, contact will be made with the grant funding body to establish whether the funder has any requirements or views on the disposal. Reimbursement of grant aid is a standard requirement unless the object is to be transferred as a gift to another Accredited museum.

3.6 Process for disposal of accessioned material

Once Committee has agreed the list of proposed disposals the following steps will be taken:

- As required by the conditions of the Museum Accreditation Scheme, a notice will be placed in the Museums Journal or on-line equivalent, and any other appropriate specialist publication, advertising the availability of significant material to other Accredited museums.
- Direct contact will be made with any Accredited museums or other public institutions that would have a particular interest in any of the objects.
- If no Accredited museum is interested and the material was donated within the last 20 years, attempts will be made to contact the donor to return the item.
- Material in which no interest is expressed will be either sold or destroyed.
- Complete records of all transactions will be kept.