



## NORWICH AREA MUSEUMS COMMITTEE

2.00 p.m. - 3.50 p.m.

30 November 2009

Present:	<u>City Councillors</u> Councillor Bradford (Chair) Councillor Banham Councillor Bearman Councillor Fairbairn Councillor Lay Councillor A.Little	<u>County Councillors</u> Councillor Ward (Vice-Chair) Councillor Mooney Councillor Nobbs Councillor Scutter (sub for Councillor Williamson)
Co-opted Non-Voting Members	District Councillor Bracey (Broadland District Council) Felicity Hartley (Norfolk Contemporary Arts Society) Rosemary Salt (Friends of Norwich Museums)	
Also in attendance	County Councillor Dunn (Chairman, Norfolk Joint Museums Committee) Rachel Kirk (Norwich Museums Manager) Emma Taylor (Norwich Museums Development Officer) Vivienne Weeks (Chair of Costume and Textile Association)	
Apologies:	County Councillor Williamson Charlotte Crawley (East Anglia Art Fund) District Councillor Kemp (South Norfolk District Council)	

### 1. CITY COUNCILLOR JENNY LAY

**RESOLVED** to welcome City Councillor Jenny Lay back to the Committee after her absence due to illness.

### 2. MINUTES

#### Update on Castle Mound, Castle Gardens and Community Safety

An update on the work taking place on the Castle Mound and Castle Gardens was tabled to members. Members were advised that the issue of Community Safety would be discussed at the Scrutiny Committee on 10 December 2009 as part of the item on the Safer Norwich Partnership 6 Monthly Performance Data.

#### HEART Funding for New Signage

The Norwich Museums Manager said that The Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service would be funding and organising the replacement of the main signage in the Castle Meadow entrance to the Museums. HEART funding may be available to support other signage requirements in the future.

**RESOLVED** to:

- (1) note the updates as minuted above;
- (2) agree the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2009 subject to the addition of City Councillor Antony Little to the list of those in attendance.

**3. 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 and Admissions Income**

The Norwich Museums Manager outlined the visitor numbers, target numbers and admissions income for the period from April to October 2009 including the additional figures that had been requested by members at the previous meeting.

A member said that the target figures that had been set were not challenging and referred to the figures for Strangers Hall as an example. The Norwich Museums Manager said the targets were set by the Head of Museums and Archaeology, who had been unable to attend the meeting, and the Head of Finance at County Council. The figures took into account the current economic climate and they also could not make assumptions that figures would increase year on year. She said that after the targets for Strangers Hall had been set, it had been decided that they would open an additional two days which had contributed towards the higher figures for this year.

In response to questions, she said museums staff would challenge any person who said they were only visiting the café if they were then seen touring the exhibits without paying the entrance fee. She said the 'Pop in for a Pound' had been very popular during lunchtimes and the last hour of the day and for people who only wished to visit a temporary exhibition without the need for the full three hour tour.

She clarified the meaning of the wording 'groups' and 'schools' and said only schools from Norfolk did not pay an entrance fee. Bursaries up the value of £75 were available from Renaissance in the Region to assist schools in paying transport costs. Museums Officers had formed working relationships with individual teachers at several schools and a partnership had recently been established with a secondary school to pilot a session on the History of Medicine which would be rolled out to other schools if successful.

In response to a request for clarification about the figures for the Regimental Museum, the Norwich Museums Manager said separate figures were provided for visitors who had entered the Regimental Museum via the main Castle Museum. She noted that it was not possible for people to be able to enter the Castle Museums

from the Regimental Museum due to Health and Safety issues as access was via a steep and lengthy spiral staircase.

**RESOLVED** to:-

- (1) ask the Norwich Museums Manager to include the following information in future reports:-
  - (a) total yearly income statistics comparisons for the previous years target figures;
  - (b) make notations against individual museums or study centres if any galleries or exhibitions were to be closed at any point in the year;
  - (c) break down group visits into groups and non-Norfolk schools;
  - (d) regular MORI polls of Castle visitors, giving the Committee a full picture of the MORI findings.
- (2) ask the Norwich Museums Manager to check if Norfolk schools paid entrance fees to visit any museums outside the county;
- (3) ask the Head of Museums and Archaeology and the County Council Head of Finance attend an additional meeting of the Committee in early January 2010 to explain the decisions and the process for setting the targets for the visitor numbers;

### **Carrow House Costume and Textile Centre**

In response to a question, the Norwich Museums Manager said the centre had just been re-opened and the official launch would take place in the New Year. An events programme was in place. It would be publicised via the website, e-Bulletins and a new information leaflet would be produced. The Norwich Learning Team would use their contacts at secondary schools and colleges in order to arrange learning visits and to organise an events programme.

**RESOLVED** to

- (1) note the position;
- (2) arrange a visit of the Committee to visit the Costume and Textile Centre and to invite Ruth Burwood, Norwich Museums Costume and Textile Curator to give a presentation.

### **Norwich Castle Study Centre**

In response to a question, the Norwich Museums Manager said groups other than those aged over 55 attended seminars and events. They also targeted other specific groups of people and the events were widely publicised. A member suggested the group numbers could be increased to a maximum of 12 people rather than 10 to allow for those people who did not turn up on the day.

**RESOLVED to:-**

- (1) note the position
- (2) note that the last sentence of the second paragraph under point 2.4 on page 13 of the report, should read 'The introductory sessions delivered to tutors at NUCA have led to a boost in the number of NUCA students accessing collections at the study centre.'

**Customer Service Week at Norfolk County Council – 5 to 11 October 2009**

The Norwich Museums Manager said officers who took part in Customer Service Week were in the process of analysing the comment slips they had received. The information would be used to improve the way that services were delivered.

**RESOLVED to:-**

- (1) note the position
- (2) note that Rosemary Salt, Friends of Norwich Museums wished to assist at Customer Service Week in 2010.

**Living Galleries Exhibition at the Castle Museum**

In response to a question, the Norwich Museums Manager said the Living Galleries Exhibition visited by the Committee in December 2008 had proved very popular with visitors.

**RESOLVED** to ask the Norwich Museums Manager to provide further information on the feedback from the exhibition at a future meeting of the Committee.

**Temporary Exhibitions Programme**

In response to questions, the Norwich Museums Manager said when deciding on future exhibitions, the Programming Committee would take into account what had proved popular in the past considering both in-house and touring exhibitions and would also consult with the public for what they would like to see. They would consider what funding was available and temporary exhibitions would be funded externally. Exhibitions such as art displays would be easier to raise funding for than those that would require cases that an object display would need.

**Bridewell Museum Redevelopment**

She said the new gate into St. Andrews Hill was the responsibility of Norwich City Council. David Gurney, County Council Archaeologist had looked at the cobbles in the courtyard area and confirmed that they had little historical significance and it was proposed that paving slabs could be placed on top without removing them. The details of this were included in the building plans which included a new accessible entrance and further access improvements around the building. These had which been submitted for planning permission and listed building consent.

**RESOLVED to:-**

- (1) note the position;
- (2) ask the Norwich Museums Manager to provide an example at a future meeting of the Committee to show the cost difference between a wall mounted temporary exhibition and one that required casing.

**Civic Coach**

In response to a question, the Norwich Museums Manager said they were made aware of the moth infestation of the Civic Coach approximately 18 months ago and they had been liaising with the City Council Civic Office since then with regards to raising funding for treatment. The coach was due to be treated in the New Year. She said the City Council owned the coach and that it was currently being kept at Strangers Hall but a new home was required to prevent further moth infestation.

Members expressed concern about the length of time it had taken to arrange the treatment of the Civic Coach and the search for a new suitable home. The Civic Coach was of great historical importance and should be kept somewhere where it could be viewed by the public.

**RESOLVED** to ask the Chair to write to the Leader of the City Council on behalf of the Committee to express the views minuted above.

**Natural History Gallery**

The Norwich Museums Manager said the formal opening of the Natural History Gallery, formerly the Mammal Gallery, would take place on Wednesday 16 December 2009 and an invitation to the opening had been sent to all members of the Committee.

**RESOLVED** to note the position.

**4. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

**RESOLVED to:-**

- (1) ask the Committee Officer to liaise with the Norwich Museums Manager and contact members accordingly to arrange the additional meeting in early January 2010;
- (2) agree the dates of subsequent meetings as follows:-
  - Monday 8 March 2010 at 2:00pm
  - Monday 7 June 2010 at 2:00pm
  - Monday 18 October 2010 at 2:00pm

CHAIR