



NORWICH AREA MUSEUMS COMMITTEE

14:05 to 14:50

10 March 2015

Present:

City Councillors:

Button (chair)
Blunt
Bradford
Price
Maxwell

County Councillors:

Dearnley
Morgan

Co-opted Non-voting members:

Councillor Bracey (Broadland District Council)
Brenda Ferris (Norfolk Contemporary Art Society) and
Rory Quinn (Friends of Norwich Museums) – standing in for Ceri Lamb

Also present:

Councillor Ward (Norfolk County Council representing Joint Museums Committee)

Apologies:

County Councillors Bremner, Gihawi, Sands (M) and Watkins;
Ceri Lamb (Friends of Norwich Museums) Charlotte Crawley (East Anglia Art Fund) and Councillor Hornby (South Norfolk Council)

1. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2. Minutes

RESOLVED to agree the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting on 9 December 2014, subject to noting that Councillor Ward was present at the meeting.

3. Members briefing paper to March 2015

The Norwich area manager presented the report. She reported that the visitor figures for the Homage to Manet exhibition had reached 197,000 as of 9 March 2015. She said that due to Strangers' Hall being available for wedding ceremonies, weekend opening hours for general visitors had been changed to Sundays rather than Saturdays. She confirmed that the first wedding had been booked and that there was much interest in this service. Rory Quinn said that the Friends of Norwich Museums had put extra volunteers into Strangers' Hall and had been concerned that the change of opening hours from a Saturday to Sunday would result in decreased visitors but this had not been the case.

An upcoming exhibition on Edith Cavell would link into the World War One display.

A crowdfunding campaign was underway to fund the Paston Treasures exhibition and 49% of the total needed had been raised so far. The head of museums said that if the total needed was not reached, the project would be set back and all donations would need to be returned. In response to a member's question, he said that a group of local school children had organised a fundraising activity and asked members to attend if possible.

The project to relocate the City's Roll of Honour had raised £10,000 so far and further funding was awaited from the Geoffrey Watling charity. A member expressed concern that when similar projects had been undertaken by different authorities, names had been found to be missing. The Norwich area manager said that there had been much research undertaken around the Roll of Honour and the museums service was not aware of any missing names.

The head of museums service said that £1 million had been received from the Prime Minister to support the development of the Keep at Norwich Castle. There was likely to be a deadline for this spend so the programme was being accelerated. A structural survey of the Keep was planned along with an archaeological dig and a virtual fly through. An application would be put in to the Heritage Lottery Fund for the majority of the funding. This would be done by the end of the year with a First Round decision expected in April 2016.

In response to a member's question, the head of museums said that the Norfolk Museums Development Foundation had no governance role and was focused on fundraising and development matters. The Foundation would report to the Norfolk joint museums committee and regular updates would be brought to the Norwich area museums committee.

Brenda Ferris said that the Norfolk Contemporary Art Society (NCAS) was having an exhibition of the works of Ana Maria Pacheco (former head of fine art at Norwich University of the Arts) at four sites around the city, Norwich Cathedral, the Cathedral of St John the Baptist, The Norwich University of the Arts and Norwich Castle.

The head of museums gave members a verbal update on the savings needed for 2015 – 16 and the restructure of the museums service staff. He gave his sincere personal thanks to Rachel Kirk, Norwich area manager for the immense amount of support and hard work given to him and to the museums service. This was echoed by the committee.

Brenda Ferris reported that NCAS was concerned about the loss of an exhibitions officer as part of the restructure, as this officer had been instrumental in the continuing success of exhibitions. Without this post, there had been concern that there would be a loss of quality regarding contemporary art at the castle. NCAS had been approached about sharing the cost of the exhibition officer post for one year with the East Anglia Art Fund and had agreed to this proposal.

RESOLVED to:

- 1) note the members briefing paper to March 2015; and

- 2) record the committee's thanks to Rachel Kirk, Norwich area manager for her hard work and contribution to the museums service during her time in the post.

CHAIR