



MINUTES

NORWICH AREA MUSEUMS COMMITTEE

2pm to 3:15pm

4 March 2014

Present:

City Councillors:

Button (chair)
Ackroyd
Blunt
Boswell
Bradford
Maxwell

County Councillors:

Bremner (vice chair)
Dearnley
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)

Apologies:

County Councillors Sands (M) Morgan and Gihawi and Jennifer Holland

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2013, subject to noting that Councillor Blunt was present at the meeting.

3. THE NORWICH MUSEUMS – MEMBERS' BRIEFING MARCH 2014

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

Charlotte Crawley asked if more obvious signage for the Museum of Norwich could be added to the bottom of Bridewell Alley. The head of the museum service said that although the Heritage and Economic Regeneration Trust (HEART) were originally responsible for the signage, the museum service would look to make contributions towards new signs.

The museums manager updated the members on the first Bronze Arts Awards ceremony held at the castle. She said that the museums service was looking at working with the library service to share resources to promote and develop the awards. The scheme was in very early stages but she hoped that more work would be undertaken to promote awareness of the scheme over the coming year. Six out of eight of the museums trainees had found highly regarded work within the museums sector within three months of leaving the programme and the remaining trainees were hopeful of finding work very soon.

Brenda Ferris reported that the Norfolk Contemporary Art Society had held a successful auction and had raised over £9,000.

Charlotte Crawley gave an update on the digitisation project. She said that Lucy McNeil had approached the Friends of Norwich Museums to help towards funding the project to allow her to continue her work. The Town Close estate charity was able to contribute £15,000 towards the project which would allow Lucy to continue with her work and hopefully to hold an exhibition in the future. In response to a member's question, the head of the museums service said that he would look into the images being made available to buy as prints as a way of increasing revenue for the museum service. The images already digitised were available on the museum website and an agreement with Google's Arts project would allow people from around the world to create their own virtual exhibitions.

The head of the museums service said that Norfolk was the only museum service in England to have received funding from the 'catalyst' fund for developing fundraising skills. He hoped that this training would allow the museum service to become more self sufficient. He also said that the five year strategy was in the final draft stage and would be completed by 14 March 2014. Some copies would be printed for committee members, major funders and to keep on site but a digital copy would be circulated to everyone else. He encouraged members to forward the strategy to anyone they thought may be interested. Finally, he explained that the culturally exempt status that the museum service had adopted would mean that VAT charges on admission fees would be kept within the museum service. This would be a high value, low risk, revenue stream for the service for as long as it wished to be a culturally exempt body.

RESOLVED to note the report.

4. NMAS COLLECTIONS RATIONALISATION PROGRAMME 2010-14

The museums manager presented the report and explained the rationalisation process. She talked through the list of items and took member's questions on individual items. She explained that although some items were already in a super store at Gressenhall, ownership of the items would be transferred to Gressenhall.

RESOLVED to approve the rationalisation of the items listed in the report.

5. REPORT FROM CO-OPTED MEMBERS

Charlotte Crawley introduced a report on the East Anglian Arts Fund. She said that their main function was to raise money for art exhibitions which were mostly held at the castle but in some smaller venues as well. Around £20,000 was donated to the castle each year. The fund played an important role in strengthening relationships between local artists and Norwich castle. They also funded art master classes for A level art students to attend, paid for transport and supply cover for art teachers to allow them to attend the class with students.

The head of the museum service thanked the East Anglian Art Fund for their work and for being a critical friend. He said that there was huge value in having such support from an outside organisation.

RESOLVED to note the report.

6. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

RESOLVED to note the schedule of meetings for 2014-2015.

CHAIR