



## NORWICH AREA MUSEUMS COMMITTEE

2.30 p.m. to 4.40 p.m.

7 June 2010

Present:	<b>City Councillors:</b> Bradford (Chair following election) Banham Bearman Fairbairn Little (A)	<b>County Councillors:</b> Councillor Ward (Vice-Chair following election) Nobbs Toms
Co-opted Non-voting members:	Councillor Bracey (Broadland District Council); Councillor Kemp (South Norfolk Council); Charlotte Crawley (East Anglia Arts Fund); Ceri Lamb (Friends of Norwich Museums); Felicity Hartley (Norfolk Contemporary Arts Society)	
Ex-officio member:	Councillor Dunn (Chairman, Norfolk Joint Museums Committee)	
Also present:	Jeanne Southgate (Costume and Textile Association)	
Apologies:	City Councillor Lay; and, County Councillors Hemsley, Mooney and Williamson.	

### 1. VISIT TO CARROW HOUSE TEXTILE AND COSTUME CENTRE

Members visited Carrow House, Textile and Costume Centre, before the meeting.

### 2. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

**RESOLVED** to appoint Councillor Bradford as Chair for the ensuing civic year.

### 3. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

**RESOLVED** to appoint Councillor Ward as Chair for the ensuing civic year.

### 4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

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

Councillor Bearman referred to the interesting and informative visit to Carrow House, Textile and Costume Centre, and asked what publicity was being undertaken to promote this facility.

The Norwich Museums Manager said that publicity of the opening hours was in hand but had been delayed because of the uncertainty surrounding the completion of the building works. Leaflets had been produced advertising specific events. It was expected that a user guide would be completed and available by next year.

## **5. MINUTES**

### **Attendance**

Councillor Little referred to the low attendance at the last meeting and requested that a record of members' attendance at this committee be made available.

**RESOLVED** to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 8 March 2010, subject to the following amendment in relation to Item 1, Minutes, Cost Examples Exhibition Displays, fifth paragraph, last sentence, replacing 30% with 35% so that the sentence reads:-

'They charged a commission on sales of 35%, which was good value compared to commercial galleries who charged 55-60%'

## **6. GENERAL UPDATE ON THE NORWICH MUSEUMS**

The Norwich Museums Manager presented the report and together with the Head of Museums and Archaeology answered members' questions.

In response to a question, members were advised that the increased visitor numbers in February 2010 were the result of initiatives such as the family focus weekends, which ran from Christmas to March; February half-term holidays, and the BBC History event. The increased attendance could also be attributed to the bad weather during this period. The reduction in school visits to the Regimental Museum could be due to events previously held there being held at another venue. Evacuee events for schools had been held at the Bridewell Museum this year.

During discussion members noted that many visitors to the Regimental Museum were connected to the regiment. Tickets could be purchased for the Regimental Museum only and visitors to the Castle Museum could visit the Regimental Museum if it was open during their visit. Visitor numbers for both museums were collected separately which was useful for the Museums and Archaeology Service and also for the Regimental Museum trustees.

In response to a question, the Norwich Museums Manager said that Chen Hong, who had been the Norwich Castle's artist-in-residence during May 2010, had donated a painting. A decision on where this would be displayed had not been made yet.

During discussion Councillor Bearman said that she considered that the use of the rotunda for concerts was a 'brilliant idea'. The Norwich Museums Manager said that the new desk and the refiguring of the café had made the area of the rotunda more usable for such functions.

Councillor Little said that he considered that the 'Beatles to Bowie' exhibition 'outstanding' but that the publicity surrounding it should ensure that it reached a wider audience and should include local radio. The Norwich Museums Manager said that the publicity had included leaflets and there had been good coverage in the local press, on this and the associated Bridget Riley exhibition.

The Head of Museums and Archaeology said that as well as the collection of school visitor numbers; there was also a new performance indicator that measured contact with schools, which included training for teachers and visits to schools. This was a helpful performance indicator which meant that the 20% of schools not engaged with the service could be targeted. In response to a question, the Head of Museums and Archaeology confirmed that the County Council's Finance and Business Support Manager would be factoring the committee's request for involvement in financial planning into the budget preparation.

**RESOLVED** to note the report.

## **7. SUNDAY MORNING OPENING AT NORWICH CASTLE**

The Head of Museums and Archaeology presented the report, and together with the Norwich Museums Manager, answered questions. Members were advised that Gressenhall was open on a Sunday.

During discussion members considered that it would be worthwhile undertaking a trial of Sunday morning opening. Councillor Kemp pointed out that he considered there should be an additional column in table included in Appendix 1 as the comparisons of museums were not like for like. People would go to the RAF Museum for itself, whilst others were in residential or business areas. Councillor Nobbs considered that it would be a desirable outcome if people who would have visited in the afternoon on a Sunday spent longer at the museum. Members also considered that as Norwich Castle was a flagship museum that benefited the wider area than Norwich, the County Council should fund the additional costs of the trial opening.

Felicity Hartley referred to the need to look at the demand for additional opening hours and the need to be specific whether this would lead to additional visitors or spread visitor numbers more thinly. The Head of Museums and Archaeology said that the 12 noon opening on Sundays had not been very popular. She suggested that a survey of existing users would be useful.

Members then discussed how a trial could be undertaken. Charlotte Crawley suggested that it should be during the run up to Christmas or that the opening should have a promotion such as offering lunch or brunch or two-for-one ticket offers. The Head of Museums and Archaeology said that in the run-up to Christmas was usually a quiet period and suggested that the summer might be better.

**RESOLVED** to ask the Head of Museums and Archaeology to:-

- (1) conduct a survey of Norwich Castle visitors on their views on Sunday opening;

- (2) seek additional funding from the County Council for a trial Sunday opening event at Norwich Castle.

## **8. OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADDITIONAL PROMOTIONAL EXTERNAL SIGNAGE**

(Chris Bennett, Conservation and Design Officer, Norwich City Council, attended the meeting for this item.)

The Norwich Museums Manager said that she worked closely with the Conservation and Design Officer on external signage for all the Norwich museums. Charlotte Crawley distributed copies of slides showing the existing external signage for Norwich Castle. The Norwich Museums Manager pointed out that the red/blue external signs would be replaced this year following consultation with members, Castle Mall and the Norwich Society.

The Conservation and Design Officer summarised the legislation surrounding Norwich Castle, which was both Grade I listed and a scheduled ancient monument. Applications for external signage would need to be submitted to English Heritage and as a local authority application to Go-East. He advised that he had already discussed and approved new locations for additional signage in recent years, including a large sign for exhibitions on the very visible building to the north of the Shirehall and further information on the museum attached to the two bridge gatehouses. Such advertisements would not normally be looked upon favourably for most buildings, however these cases it was taken into account in that the signs would be advertising cultural activities at Norwich Castle and were therefore of public benefit. He did not approve the use of tasteless banners across the bridge.

Detailed discussion ensued. Councillor Nobbs suggested that, as Norwich Castle was floodlit at night, advertising for temporary events could be projected on to the walls of the Castle. This would not harm the fabric of the building and was supported in principle by the Conservation and Design Officer. Members expressed concern that the existing external signage was inadequate in promoting the exhibits and cultural events at Norwich Castle. The use of pennants was also suggested and members were advised that the lampposts in Prince of Wales Road had been designed to allow for pennants to be hung from them.

During discussion Charlotte Crawley referred to the slides that she had circulated and said that the photographs had been taken in 2005 and had been used to demonstrate the difficulty of obtaining sponsorship for temporary events if the publicity did not give some benefit to the sponsor. She suggested the use of banners from the Keep and said that she would be willing to join the officers in talking to English Heritage about what was permitted or not. There was no signage for Norwich Museum visible from the La Rouen public house. The Conservation and Design Officer said that English Heritage was unlikely to approve signage that would obscure the view of the Keep and that temporary banners or pennants would need permanent structures erected on the Keep. Members considered that it would be appropriate to meet with a representative English Heritage and discuss the options for temporary banners and pennants to be hung from the Keep. The issues related specifically to Norwich Castle as an iconic

building and therefore it was a matter for this committee rather than the Norfolk Joint Museums Committee.

The Head of Museums and Archaeology suggested that the Head of Communications and Culture, Norwich City Council, should be consulted on the use of banners and pennants and whether there was a general strategy on the advertising of cultural events in Norwich. Information on Norwich Castle was included in the information posts provided by Norwich Heritage, Economic and Regeneration Trust (HEART).

**RESOLVED** to ask the:-

- (1) Norwich Museums Manager and the Design Conservation Officer to arrange an informal meeting with a representative of English Heritage at Norwich Castle and to invite members of this committee to attend;
- (2) Head of Museums and Archaeology to consult the Head of Communications and Culture on the advertising of cultural events;
- (3) Norwich Museums Manager to prepare a report on external signage to the next meeting of the committee.

## **9. BRIDEWELL MUSEUM UPDATE**

(Hannah Maddox, Project Curator and the Bridewell Community History Curator, attended the meeting for this item.)

The Norwich Museums Manager presented the report.

The Project Curator and Bridewell Community History Curator gave a presentation with the aid of slides on the overall museum and individual gallery design briefs, collections and display concepts and the available designs and building plan proposals. She could be contacted by telephone on 01603 493613 or by email [Hannah.maddox@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:Hannah.maddox@norfolk.gov.uk).

**RESOLVED** to note the report.

## **10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**RESOLVED** to note that the next meeting will be held on Monday, 18 October 2010 at 2.00 p.m. at City Hall.

CHAIR