



Norwich Area Museums committee

14:00 to 15:10

13 December 2016

Present:	City Councillors: Davis Kendrick (substitute for Brociek-Coulton) Maguire Price Thomas (Vi)	County Councillors: Hannah (Vice chair in the chair) Bremner Morgan Sands
Co-opted non-voting members:	Brenda Ferris (Norfolk Contemporary Art Society), Ceri Lamb (Friends of Norwich Museums), Councillor Buck (Broadland District Council) and Councillor Ward (ex officio member)	
Apologies:	City Councillors Brociek-Coulton (chair) and Jones (T), County Councillor Dearnley Amanda Geitner (East Anglia Arts Fund) and Councillor Hardy (South Norfolk District Council)	

1. Public questions/petitions

There were no public questions or petitions received.

2. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes

Brenda Ferris queried when an update would be given to the committee on the Magritte discovery. The operations manager said that this would be brought to the March meeting of the Norwich Area Museums Committee.

Subject to noting a spelling mistake in the second paragraph of page five of the agenda which read 'form' rather than 'from' it was:-

RESOLVED to agree the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 13 September 2016.

4. Norwich Museums briefing for period August to December 2016

The head of development presented the report. During discussion the officers referred to the report and answered members' questions.

She said that an evaluation of the British Art Show had been completed and over 90,000 people had visited the exhibition with 40,000 of these visiting Norwich Castle. It had attracted a different audience with a younger profile. The opening night had been scheduled for the same night as the EU referendum so unfortunately, the exhibition did not get the level of media coverage that had been hoped for.

A member commented that it was encouraging to see that 33% of the visitors had postcodes outside of Norfolk.

The head of development said that there was a good turnover of displays within the castle and highlighted some of the upcoming exhibitions.

She said that the Olive Edis exhibition would be going on a tour of North Norfolk and would be shown at Sheringham museum as one of the venues.

There would be an exhibition on Nelson from the end of July 2017 which would be an in house exhibition. The recent Manet exhibition had been the most visited at the castle but officers were hoping that the Nelson exhibition would top this in terms of visitor numbers. The Norwich School had been approached and some of their memorabilia would be on display along with Nelson's Nile coat. The operations manager said that usually exhibitions were planned around three years in advance and would run for at least six months. Due to unforeseen circumstances, the Nelson exhibition had only recently been decided upon. He said that marketing and promotion for it would begin in the near future.

In response to a member's question, the head of development reassured the committee that as the curator for this was a social historian, the exhibition would not just focus on Nelson as a hero but also on Nelson as a person.

A Rembrandt exhibition would follow the Nelson exhibition with over ninety etchings from the Norfolk Museums Service collection, along with other paintings from national galleries on display. Links with the Dutch community had been explored and the collection would be opened by the Dutch ambassador. In response to a member's question, the head of development said that links with Strangers' Hall and historical Dutch immigration had been thought about and the museums service was exploring sponsorship options for marketing.

The operations manager said that there was an average of 2000 – 3000 extra visitors to Norwich Castle as a result of holding weddings in the benefactor's room. Registry office bookings had gone up by twenty percent as a result of the ceremonies being held in the castle. Members welcomed this as it provided an extra income stream for the museums service.

Fewer weddings had taken place at Strangers Hall than anticipated and the museums service had ceased its contract with the event provider and were about to

tender for a new company. It was anticipated that this appointment would be made by the end of the financial year.

Members were given an update on the keep project and the operations manager said that dates for the second round applications had been pushed back slightly due to the volume of work involved. The head of development said that Norwich City Council had been consulted on the project as well as many local heritage groups.

In response to a member's question, the operation manager said that work was being undertaken on recording the current state of the keep before the project began. A new research assistant had been appointed and was working on this. The building had been digitally mapped and there were some timbers in the keep that would have to be retained and stored.

He added that the new design of the keep would mean that the building was compartmentalised, rather than being such a wide open space and this would help with heat and energy consumption. Strategies, including the environmental strategy were in the process of being developed and member input was welcomed.

Members praised the work of the teaching museums and members were encouraged to visit the castle during these sessions to experience them. The head of development said that Norwich Castle was a case study on one of the GCSE history papers which had increased the number of school visits from children on GCSE age. Members asked for an update on the work of the teaching museums work at the next Norwich Area Museums meeting.

Hannah Henderson, curator at the Museum of Norwich at the Bridewell gave members an overview on the work being undertaken around dementia friendly museums.

She said that the project began with pilots undertaken with the NHS and the library service. The museums service had worked with the library service to develop memory kits that could be used by families. They realised that this could be used in outreach work and wrote instructions for the kits on how to use them at home. It was realised dementia patients could benefit from visiting the museum and sharing memories.

Sessions would be run in the future hosting a small group of dementia patients to trail new approaches. The sessions would be less structured and feedback on all aspects would be encouraged. A welcome walk would also be held once a month which would be free of charge and would be a chance for patients to enjoy the collections and tea and cake with a family member.

In response to a member's question, Hannah Henderson said that extra funding had been applied for, however, with training for key staff and reviewing how business was conducted, she said that the programme should be able to be delivered with existing resources.

RESOLVED to:

- (1) Note the Norwich museums briefing period August to December 2016;

- (2) ask officers to bring an update on the teaching museums to the next meeting;
and
- (3) ask the head of operations to circulate school visitor numbers.

CHAIR