NORWICH City Council

MINUTES

NORWICH AREA MUSEUMS COMMITTEE

14:00 – 15:30 **8 December 2015**

Present:	**City Councillors:**	**County Councillors:**
	Arthur (chair)	Morgan (vice chair)
	Blunt	Dearnley
	Maxwell	Hannah
	Price	Sands (M)
	Wright	
Co-opted Non-voting members:	Brenda Ferris (Norfolk Contemporary Art Society)	
	Ceri Lamb (Friends of Norwich Museums)	
	Amanda Geitner (East Anglia Arts Fund)	
	Councillor Buck (Broadland District Council)	
Apologies:	Councillor Thomas (Vi) (Norwich City Council)	
	Councillor Bremner (Norfolk County Council)	
	Councillor Hardy (South Norfolk District Council)	

1. Declarations of interest

Councillor Hannah declared an 'other' interest in that he was a Friend of Norwich Museums.

2. Minutes

RESOLVED to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 2015 subject to adding the following under item 3:

"The chair asked that if members of the committee would like presentations on a specific subject, to approach her. A request had been received from a member for information on medieval projects and how these could link in with partner working."

3. Norwich museums briefing for period September to October 2015

The head of operations and learning presented the report. He reminded members that if they would like anything specific in the briefing report to contact him and he would ensure that it would be included.

He reported that the Turner prize had been awarded to Assemble, a collective based in Liverpool, which had been involved in the 'Build your Own' exhibition. This would be used in publicity going forward. The 3D printers had been a particular draw for this exhibition, along with the sprout device on loan from Hewlett Packard. The chair

paid tribute to this particular exhibition as it showcased the work into prosthetic limbs which would make a real difference to people's lives.

The Viking's guide to deadly dragons would open on 6 February 2016 and run until 30 May 2016. The head of operations and learning said that this was a busy period in terms of volume of paying visitors. This would be a high quality exhibition and would allow the museums service to build on creative writing links with schools.

An application had been made to a new fund created by the Arts Council. A programme had been initiated in which three regional partners would work with the Arts Council to showcase exhibitions. Norfolk Museums Service (NMS) has a proven record of high quality, contemporary art shows and a successful bid for this funding of £600,000 would transform the way NMS could showcase contemporary art. The funding would cover 2016 – 2019 and NMS would be required to put on a number of shows drawing on the Arts Council collections. The success of the bid would be announced in January 2016 and the head of operations and learning would inform members of the outcome.

A craft fair had been hosted in the rotunda which had led to increased sales in the restaurant and similar events would be looked at for 2016.

In response to a member's question, the head of learning and operations said that NMS was always trying to widen the range of volunteering opportunities within the service and these opportunities would be advertised in the most appropriate way.

School visit figures remained high, although these had dropped slightly at Strangers Hall due to the Tudors being removed from the key stage 2 curriculum. This was the same picture around the country. Colly Mudie, learning manger, would attend the next meeting to update members on changes to the curriculum.

A budget savings plan was in place for 2016-17 but savings targets for 2017-18 and 2018-19 were awaited. Options were being reviewed around lone working but this would have less of an impact in Norwich as it would around the county. Individual risk assessments had been undertaken for each site and infrastructure for staff safety had been reviewed.

The operations manager said that WiFi had been installed in parts of the castle with a view to extending the coverage throughout the building in the future. A survey had been undertaken of the entire building so the access points could be purchased in the future with relative ease.

Brenda Ferris gave members an update on the activities of the Norwich Contemporary Art Society (NCAS). Sculpture for Norwich, a collaborative project between NCAS and the Norwich Society was intended to progress a piece of public art celebrating the work of the Norwich School, possibly being installed outside of Cotman's house. Various concepts had been explored with the final idea being glass panes with Norwich School inspired landscapes reflected in them. Unfortunately this concept could not be progressed as the glass panes proved to not be sustainable and the project was not viable. Sculpture for Norwich continued to look for other projects and would be collaborating with other organisations to develop a public art policy.

RESOLVED to:-

a) note the Norwich museums briefing for period September to October 2015,

b) ask the head of operations and learning to bring an report to the next meeting on Medieval projects and how these link with partner working,

c) ask the head of operations and learning to invite Colly Mudie, learning manger, to the next meeting to update members on changes to the curriculum,

d) ask the chair to write to Dr John Davies to thank him and his team on the work on the keep funding bid; and

e) ask the chair to write to Steve Miller, head of Norfolk Museum Service, to congratulate him on the Ancient House Museum, Thetford winning best visitor attraction under 50,000 visitors in the EDP Tourism awards 2015.

4. Suggestions for future areas of discussion

The chair reported that prior to the meeting; some members had walked from city hall to the castle following street signage. Members found that Norwich Castle was adequately signed form the city centre but had found no signage for the Museum of Norwich or Strangers Hall, which was concerning.

RESOLVED to ask the chair to write to Norwich City Council's planning department to ask them to look into the signage in the city for museums, and to ask them to replace the broken signage on Gentleman's walk at the foot of the marketplace.

CHAIR