

LARGER PRINT COPY AVAILABLE PLEASE TELEPHONE: 01493 846325

NELSON MUSEUM MANAGEMENT BOARD

26 July 2013 – 10.30am

PRESENT:

Councillor K Robinson-Payne (Chairman) and Councillor M Jeal.

Ms H Bentley (Nelson Museum Curator), Mrs M Hartley (GYBC Culture, Leisure and Sport Manager), Mr J Steward (Eastern Area Manager – Norfolk Museums Service) and Miss S Davis (GYBC Senior Member Services Officer).

Mrs J Woolston (Book-keeper) also attended.

An apology for absence was received from Mr B Turner (Ben Burgess Trustees),

1. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 June 2013 were agreed, subject to the addition of the Eastern Area Manager's apologies for absence.

With regard to item 3 of the minutes, concern was expressed that this Board had received a minute extract from the recent Great Yarmouth Preservation Trust meeting without the minutes having been approved by the Trust. Reference was made to Resolution (ii) and it was agreed that the Senior Conservation Officer would be asked to progress the repairs as soon as possible.

In relation to the opportunity for a volunteer representative to attend Board meetings, it was agreed that the Curator would discuss how best an appointment could be made with the Chairman.

RESOLVED:

That the Senior Conservation Officer be asked to progress the issue of repairs to the buildings as soon as possible.

2. UPDATE ON CURATOR'S POST

The Chairman reported that interviews for the new Curator had been held and it was hoped an offer would be made to the successful candidate shortly.

3. CURATOR'S REPORT

The Board considered a tabled report from the Curator covering activities in June and July 2013.

A discussion ensued in relation to the fact that overall the number of visitors was falling, although they had risen in June. It was added that the shortlisted candidate for the Curator position had been able to demonstrate how they had increased visitor figures in their existing job and hopefully it would be possible for their experience to increase the Museum's numbers. The Curator reported that marketing had been reviewed which might also help to increase the numbers, although about 100 visitors had been lost per month since the Museum no longer had Heritage Quarter passes. The point was also made that the Heritage Partnership had not met this year which meant that it had not been possible to get a co-ordinated approach to raising Museum visitor numbers generally across the Borough. Clarification was sought as to how the Board could manage the Museum without access to income figures and it was agreed that Councillor Jeal would raise this issue with the Trust and ask them to be provided.

With regard to the procurement of a new Credit Card machine, the Board considered the quotes and the point was made that having this facility available might encourage visitors to purchase higher cost items such as books. It was agreed that a 12 month contract would be entered into and in the meantime other options could be explored that might be cheaper.

In relation to the Nelson's Monument, it was agreed that the facility to purchase tickets should be advertised with a sign created to that effect.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That comparison visitor figures over the last few years be presented to the next Board meeting.
- (ii) That the Trust be asked to provide income figures to enable the Board to manage the Museum more effectively.
- (iii) That the lowest quote from Pitney Bowes for a credit card machine be accepted for a period of 12 months.
- (iv) That the Curator arrange for a sign to be created indicating that tickets for the Nelson's Monument could be purchased from the Museum.

4. FUNDING

The Curator reported that she had recently met with Paul Cheeseman to discuss the funding bid for a Lifelong Learning Officer and had obtained useful statistics and ideas for a final end project. With regard to the Lydia Eva, discussions were on-going with the Trust on ways to work together and link with the Middlegate/Nelson Ward communities in order to drive forward events and generate volunteers that could help support both projects. The Curator reported that she hoped to submit a Big Lottery Fund bid for £120K before she left at the end of August. Although the proposed activities had not yet been fine-tuned, Paul Cheeseman had suggested that the Museum work closely with the Town Centre Partnership and Tourism to obtain a visible "signpost" person to direct visitors around the town towards the Museum.

5. HEALTH AND SAFETY/MAINTENANCE

Members were informed that a volunteer was currently renovating one of the puzzle-cubes which had been broken by two boys. It was noted that one of them had come forward and was willing to help out at the Museum as atonement. A suggestion was made that the Police should be asked to prosecute the second individual who had not made contact with the Museum.

Reference was made to the fact that one of the fire doors was not closing properly and would cost £347 to replace.

RESOLVED:

That approval be given to the fire door being replaced.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(a) Car Park During Maritime Festival

A suggestion was made that the Council should be asked to close the car park adjacent to the Museum during the Festival as it was run by them on behalf of the Preservation Trust.

(b) Photography in the Museum

Members were asked whether the existing policy to ban photography should be upheld bearing in mind it was difficult to enforce with the prevalent use of cameras on mobile phones. The Eastern Area Manager reported that the Museums Service had the same issue and had decided to only enforce a ban on flash photography in case it damaged any fine art.

RESOLVED:

That the ban on photography be relaxed and a sign be erected to discourage any flash photography.

(c) Book-keeper

Janet Woolston the new volunteer Book-Keeper was welcomed to the meeting.

7. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting would take place on a date to be arranged once the new Curator was in post.

8. CLOSURE OF MEETING

The meeting ended at 11.15am.