

Area Museums Committee

Minutes

Thursday, 24 October 2013 at 14:00

Attendees:

Mr Barry Coleman (Member), Mr Bert Collins (Member), Mr Michael Jeal (Member), Mrs Kerry Robinson-Payne (Chairman), Mr Bernard Williamson (Member)

Apologies for Absence:

Mrs Marlene Fairhead (Member)

Absent:

Mr Barry Cuncliffe (Member)

Also in attendance at the above meeting were:

Norfolk County Councilor's Castle, Hacon and Rex-Parkinson Hare.

Steve Miller (Head of Norfolk Museums), James Steward (Area Museums Manager) and John Simpson (Project Officer Norfolk Museums).

Darren Barker (Conservation Officer) and Karline Smith (Senior Member Services Officer).

1 Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Fairhead.

2 Election of chairman

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Robinson-Payne be appointed as the Chairman of the Area Museums Committee for the 2013/14 municipal year.

3 Election of vice-Chair

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Rex-Parkinson Hare be appointed as the Vice-Chair for the 2013/14 municipal year.

4 Minutes

That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 May 2013 were confirmed.

5 Eastern Area Manager's Report July - September

The Eastern Area Manager took members through the report which they had received with the agenda which provided information about work undertaken by Great Yarmouth Museums for the period July-September 2013.

1.0 NMAS - Five Year Strategy

NMAS is currently developing a new five year strategy to ensure a strong vision for the future, making the best use of limited resources and with an innovative partnership approach across all areas of the Museum's work. The strategy will involve key stakeholder, officer and member consultation to ensure the ambitions and priorities of the Service going forward reflect the challenges and opportunities of the current period in which we operate. Through member involvement NMAS will seek to ensure that our Service ambitions are clearly stated in line with Borough, County and external funders strategic priorities whilst ensuring our services are defined by sector leadership, excellence in our programming, developing audiences and service users, working towards sustainability and inspiring young people with a world class collection.

2.0 Staff

We are currently recruiting for the Operations manager post vacated in August. This post holder will be responsible for building maintenance and security, leading the visitor service team across the four sites of the Eastern area operation in addition to delivering a vital role in supporting our commercial ambitions, notably in driving up retail income and exploring other means of income generation. Selected candidates will be interviewed at Great Yarmouth Town Hall on Friday 18th October.

3.0 Visitor figures

Visits to the Time and Tide Museum, during the period July – September 2013 totalled 8,531 thereby showing a significant 11% increase on the same period in 2012.

Visits to the Elizabethan House Museum, during the period totalled 4,682

thereby showing a 9% increase on the same period last year.

Visits to the Tolhouse museum, during the period totalled 2,374 thereby showing a 10% decrease on the same period last year. It should be noted that the opening times for the Tolhouse museum have been reduced this year by 15%.

4.0 2014 /15 Museum admission and opening times

The admission charges for 2014/15 will be amended as follows, with effect from 1st April 2014. The proposed changes are based on the consideration of the current core visitor profile at each site in addition to the potential for growth in visitors and associated admission income during the next financial year. A fundamental consideration in the agreement of admission prices is that of ensuring our sites and services remain accessible and affordable to the residents of Great Yarmouth and Norfolk.

Site	Proposed 2014-15 (£)	Current 2013-14 (£)
Time and Tide Museum	Full 4.95 Concession 3.95 Child 3.50 Family (2A+2C) 12.00 Family (1A+ 2C) 9.00	Full 5.20 Concession 4.20 Child 3.70 N/A N/A
Elizabethan House	Full 4.50 Concession 3.50 Child 2.50 Family (2A+ 2C) 10.50 Family (1A+ 2C) 7.00	Full 3.90 Concession 3.30 Child 2.00 N/A N/A
Tolhouse Museum	Full 3.50 Concession 2.95 Child 1.95 Family (2A+ 2C) 8.00 Family (1A+ 2C) 5.50	Full 3.60 Concession 3.00 Child 2.00 N/A N/A

It is proposed that museum opening times in 2014 -15 will remain the same at all three museums as this year with the exception that the Elizabethan House Museum will extend opening hours on Sundays and will reduce opening on Saturdays between April – October 2014.

5.0 Heritage Open Days

Both the Elizabethan House and Tolhouse Museums participated in this year's Heritage Open days (12-15th September) joining many of the town's other historic sites in this annual 'behind the scenes' celebration. In the genteel surroundings of the Tudor Merchant's House on South Quay and the torturous chambers at the Tolhouse, Great Yarmouth museums' staff invited visitors to experience life in the town spanning 800 years.

A variety of themed events were staged at each site and visitors responded positively to the opportunity to see parts of the buildings that are otherwise inaccessible during regular opening times. The growing profile of the Borough's participation in this national initiative has made Great Yarmouth a key part of the County's heritage trail. Over 1,050 visits were recorded showing an increase on last year's event of 35%.

6.0 Museum Learning

The diverse learning programme supports the needs of both adult learners and local schools in the Borough. Learning staff provide an immersive learning experience that is both enjoyable and which enables both key stage and life long learning to take place in a variety of informal learning settings.

During the period Great Yarmouth museums received a total of 1,965 organised school visits showing a significant increase of 25% on the same period in 2012. The majority of these visits were received at Time and Tide as a result of the Museums and schools programme.

6.1

Presentation on ACE Museum & Schools / *Stories from the Sea* programme by John Simpson-Wedge (Project Officer, Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service)

In 2012 Great Yarmouth Museums received £180k from the Department for Education through Arts Council England for a three year programme, Museums and Schools (until 2015). The aim of the programme is to increase high quality educational visits to local museums and galleries by schools in areas of low cultural engagement. As a result it is expected that Great Yarmouth school children will develop a greater understanding of their local

heritage and its significance, and improve their educational attainment.

6.2 Youth engagement

One of the key priority areas at Great Yarmouth museums for the Major Partner Museum programme (funded by Arts Council England) is youth engagement (16-24). The principal aims of the programme are that more local children will access cultural activities at our museums through youth engagement opportunities and a comprehensive schools service. It is also anticipated that more young people will be inspired by our museum collections and will take a more active role in museum services, becoming co-producers not just consumers.

One of the recent projects, named #Generation produced two photographic displays installed at Time & Tide and Great Yarmouth Library (16th – 22nd July). Students from Great Yarmouth High School captured family life in a single photograph and explained why it was meaningful to them. Working alongside photographer Paul Osborne students took part in two workshops. They borrowed DSLR cameras for one night and took lots of photographs. Then each student made a voice recording, assisted by BBC Voices, about their chosen photo. Students named this exhibition #Generation and it eloquently reflects Yarmouth families in 2013 through the eyes and words of local teenagers. Photographs and voice recordings will remain on display at Time & Tide until November 2013.

7.0 Display development

The final stage of re-developing the seaside holiday display at Time and Tide has now been completed with the addition of an Edwardian bathing machine structure which we have used to display collections on the theme of 'a day at the seaside' and brings together, costume, accessories, games and programmes from the 1940s – 1960s.

As part of this redisplay the museum recently took delivery of a new automata created by artist, and toy-maker, Ron Fuller. This depicts a collection of seafront attractions from the past that includes the Revolving Tower that was situated by the Britannia Pier until WWII until being demolished and recycled for the war effort. The former Hotchkiss Railway that enabled visitors to cycle along the promenade in the 1900s and the famous Joyland snail rides, built in 1949, also feature. The automata, which operates on receipt of 20 pence also features Admiral Nelson doing battle with a band of pirates and Britannia, from Nelson's monument, dances in the foreground. The exhibit has proved an instant success with visitors of all ages.

8.0 Temporary Exhibitions

Frayed: Textiles on the Edge opens on 10th October 2013. This exciting and

unusual exhibition explores historic and contemporary textiles, examining issues of individual self expression and mental health through stitch. At the heart of the show are some of Norfolk Museum & Archaeology Service's most fascinating and poignant objects, including:

Two embroidered 'letters', each over three metres long and entirely covered in text, made by Lorina Bulwer whilst an inmate in the lunatic wing of Great Yarmouth Workhouse between 1901-5.

the extraordinary counterpane and bed hangings made by Anna Margareta Brereton while in deep mourning for the loss of her two children in 1801.

This will be the first time the Lorina Bulwer samplers have been displayed together - the second sampler is being loaned by the Thackray Museum, Leeds - and also the first time that the NMAS sampler has been displayed in its entirety. Alongside these will be significant loans including a piece by artist Tracey Emin and Elizabeth Parker's sampler from the V&A collections which, like the Bulwer sampler, has been an inspiration for contemporary artist's work.

The exhibition will allow each object to speak for itself, with interpretation focussing on the biography of the maker and the context in which it was made. This is in keeping with the deeply personal resonance of many of the pieces on display, such as the Parker sampler which is known by the name of its maker, rather than by the title of the work location of its creation.

Issues of mental health, grief and long term illness will be articulated in part by the inclusion of contemporary works, including Tracy Emin and Sara Impey. This will enable these issues to be explored both in a historical context, and also will demonstrate that textile arts are still a means of personal testimony and therapy and that these historic objects have been a hugely important influence for artists working with textiles.

RESOLVED:

(i) That it was agreed that at a future meeting the youth engagement officer would be asked to attend to explain the engagement work that they are carrying out.

6 Curatorial Summary July - September 2013

The Committee considered the curatorial report relating to collections management work completed during the period.

7 Presentation on Stories from the Sea Project by John Simpson-wedge, Project Officer, Norfolk Museums

The Norfolk Museums Project Officer gave a presentation on the stories from the Sea Project reporting that the aim of this was to get 4,500 children to make 13,500 visits to museums and this was in conjunction with the Royal Museum of Greenwich as the

sponsor. They had worked with 13 schools to look at literacy. Each child received a return pass to Time and Tide which lasts for 18 months and they can take an adult with them.

There are two projects:-

(i) Pirates

For reception years 1 and 2 children. The museum has a poet and a drama person so that the children can meet a real life Pirate, write stories, hold items or treasure and a teachers pack was also issued.

(ii) Shipwrecked

Connections with Captain Manby, Casiter and Gorleston/Great Yarmouth Lifeboat were explored.

Further details were available on www.rmg.co.uk/storiesfromthesea.

Results and Feedback:-

1,334 children signed up who have made 2,337 visits. The explorers project would follow.

8 Update from Senior Conservation Officer

Darren Barker reported on the Cemeteries Project stating that this had delivered 3500 training hours, had engaged 300 volunteers and carried out the full and comprehensive repair of 50 monuments. 20 trainees had completed 2 modules of conservation training including survey, recording, analysis, masonry repairs, stone conservation, flint knapping and blacksmithing. 2 of the trainees had been taken on as apprentices on another trust project, 4 others were directly employed by the trust to carry on working in the cemeteries, 1 had gone onto further education in conservation and 1 had enrolled on a Princes Trust scheme. The project now provides training for 25 Great Yarmouth College students one day a week who are working towards an accredited heritage certificate. The project was shortlisted to the final 5 from 900 entries in the national Heritage Angels Award and although didn't win was highly praised by the judges.

St Georges was completed and the conservation section was awarded a commendation from the National Heritage Angels Awards 2013 for their contribution to the repair and conservation of the chapel.

The Conservation Officer then spoke of St Georges and King Street Townscape Heritage Initiative Scheme an area based conservation led regeneration scheme funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, grant assisting building repair and reuse and community engagement.

133 King Street a grade II listed building at risk was bought by the Preservation Trust in 2012, the building is currently being repaired for reuse as an art gallery, artist studios and residential units. The project was providing a range of training opportunities and was funded by the King Street THI scheme.

135 King Street a grade II listed building at risk with significant structural problems bought by the Preservation Trust in 2013. Plans were currently being prepared for repair and reuse for officers and residential accommodation. The project would be funded by the King Street THI scheme.

The Great Yarmouth Preservation Trust was working in partnership on Hopton Ruined Church to deliver consolidation and repair of the grade II ruined church and use this as a training initiative as funding had been awarded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and English Heritage and works on site are due to start in the new year.

The Borough Council was working in partnership with the Preservation Trust on Vauxhall Bridge and the first phase of repairs had been carried out.

The Conservation section was preparing the initial works to bid for funding to undertake the repair and reuse of the grade II listed Winter Gardens building. It was hoped the building could be reused as a winter gardens for plants, providing an alternative offer along the Seafront and funding was being sought from the Heritage Lottery Fund and English Heritage.

The Conservation sections was currently exploring opportunities for restoration work at the Waterways.

Work to repair and reuse two town wall towers for holiday accommodation were progressing. English Heritage supported the proposal in principal and quotations to carry out the works were being received for appropriately skilled contractors.

Repairs continued to the medieval town wall at Blackfriars, Northgate and Market Gates.

Earlier this year the town hosted five Estonian conservation students who spent two weeks working on preservation trust projects.

9 Any other business

The Head of Area Museums reported that a new website had been launched and it was recommended for independent museums.

The Arts Council are now about to launch their next round of Strategic Funding for around £1/2m.

The meeting ended at: 15:40