

Area Museums Committee

Minutes

Friday, 27 March 2015 at 10:00

PRESENT: Councillor Robinson-Payne (in the chair), Councillors Collins, Connell, Jeal and Williamson.

Councillor Parkinson-Hare (Norfolk County Council), Mr J Steward, Eastern Area Manager of Norfolk Museums Service, Dr R Hanley, Western Area Manager of Norfolk Museums Service and Mr R Hodds, Cabinet Secretary at Great Yarmouth Borough Council.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Cutting.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on the 7th November 2014 were confirmed.

4. MATTERS ARISING

a) Great Yarmouth Preservation Trust Update

Councillor Williamson gave an update on Great Yarmouth Preservation Trust activities on the following:-

- 133 King Street
- 135 King Street
- The Cemeteries Project
- Hopton Ruin Church
- Town Wall Towers
- Vauxhall Bridge
- International Collaboration

- St Johns Church

5. YARMOUTH AREA MUSEUMS REPORT OCTOBER 2014 - FEBRUARY 2015

The committee considered the Eastern Area Managers report on Great Yarmouth Museums for the period October 2014 - February 2015.

The Eastern Area Manager reported in detail on the following issues in his report:-

- Visitor figures
- Youth projects
- Learning
- Temporary exhibitions at Time and Tide
- Museums storage and rationalisation
- Blackfriars Road office accommodation
- Restructure - Norfolk Museums Service

With regard to the item in respect of museums storage and rationalisation, Councillor Jeal sought an assurance that the items that were due to be relocated to Gressenhall would be shown to be items from Great Yarmouth.

The Eastern Area Manager reported that the Great Yarmouth provenance for these items would be duly recorded.

In respect of the item with regard to the restructure of the Norfolk Museums Service, Doctor Hanley reported on the reduction of funding for the service which had resulted in a staffing restructure being undertaken. As part of the restructure, management reorganisation had been agreed with 6 posts being deleted (3 area managers and 3 operation managers posts) and 4 new posts had been created namely Head of Operations and Learning, and three new Operation Managers posts (Norwich, Western and Eastern). Following the recruitment process, Doctor Hanley had been appointed Head of Operations and Learning and Mr A Smith had been appointed Operations Manager Eastern. Members are advised that the current Eastern Area Manager Mr J Steward had taken the difficult decision to step out of the recruitment process and would be pursuing a career beyond the Norfolk Museums Service. Dr Hanley recorded the Norfolk Museums Services thanks to Mr Steward for his significant efforts during his time as Area Manager at Great Yarmouth.

In discussing this matter, the committee expressed their concern with the lack of consultation that had been carried out with the Borough Council on the restructuring proposals. Dr Hanley confirmed that the Borough Councils Chief Executive Officer had been advised by letter on the 8th January 2015 of the Norfolk Museums proposals for restructuring. In response to a question from the Chairman as to whether the Eastern Area Managers post had been funded by the Borough Council, the committee were advised that the Service Level Agreement does make provision to contribute towards the Area Managers post so that in fact Great Yarmouth was part funding this position.

Whilst acknowledging that the Norfolk Museums Service had written a letter to the Borough Councils Chief Executive Officer, the committee expressed their concern that the Museums Service had not carried out a formal consultation process with the Borough Council on the significant changes that had been made to the staffing levels of the Museums Service. Dr Hanley confirmed that the Head of Norfolk Museums Mr

S Miller would be happy to speak with members about the proposed restructure.

Dr Hanley also reassured the committee that the Norfolk Museums Service would maintain their current level of commitment on all partnership matters with Great Yarmouth.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Eastern Area Managers report for the period October 2014 to February 2015 be received.
2. That the action taken by the Norfolk Museums Service in relation to the staffing restructure be referred to the Borough Councils Cabinet for consideration with a view to Cabinet looking at the current level of funding provision made by the Borough Council to the Norfolk Museums Service through the current Service Level Agreement.
3. That the Area Museums Committees thanks and appreciation be recorded to Mr James Steward for all his work as Eastern Area Manager over the past years, and that it be also recorded that he would be a significant loss to the Norfolk Museums Service.

6. DISPOSAL OF ARTEFACTS

The Eastern Area Manager presented a report on the Disposal of Artefacts.

RESOLVED:

That the proposals for the Disposal of Artefacts as detailed in the Eastern Area Managers report be agreed.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no further business.

The meeting ended at: 11:00