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BRECKLAND COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the

BRECKLAND AREA MUSEUMS COMMITTEE

Held on Wednesday, 19 July 2017 at 2.00 pm in
Gressenhall Farm & Workhouse Museum, Fakenham Rd, Gressenhall, Beetley,
Dereham NR20 4DR

PRESENT

Councillor C Bowes

Mr H. E. J. Clarke (Chairman)

Mr P. R. W. Darby

Mr R.G. Kybird

Mr P.J. Duigan

Mr W. R. J. Richmond (Vice-Chairman)

In Attendance

Dr. Robin Hanley

Hannah Jackson

Samantha Johns

- Head of Operations and Learning
- Operations Manager - West
- Collections and development Manager

- Democratic Services Officer

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9/17 CHAIRMAN

Resolved that Councillor Clarke be appointed Chairman for the ensuing year.

10/17 VICE-CHAIRMAN

Resolved that Councillor P Duigan be appointed Vice Chairman for the ensuing year.

11/17 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 February 2017 were confirmed as a correct record.

12/17 APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from David Blackburn, Oliver Bone and Councillor Eagle (NCC).

13/17 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY)

The Chairman congratulated Councillor Richmond on his appointment as Vice Chairman.

He thanked Gressenhall Museum staff for the comprehensive and informative tour of the Collections Gallery.

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14/17 URGENT BUSINESS

None.

15/17 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None.

16/17 ANCIENT HOUSE, MUSEUM OF THETFORD LIFE REPORT

Dr. Robin Hanley presented the report for the period March – June for Ancient House Museum Thetford.

- 1.1 Thetford Remembers 1914-1918. He advised on 11th November 2018 Ancient House would be involved with Thetford Town Councils evening beacon lighting event to mark the centenary of the Armistice.
An exhibition was planned for Ancient House representing the peace and aftermath of the First World War and would contribute to Norwich Castle's event running from August 2018 to early 2019. He advised that Kate Thaxton, Curator, would bring together all local commemorative exhibitions.
- 1.3 The Story of Thetford Pulp Ware Exhibition. He advised the exhibition would end December 2017 and had been supported by Arts Council England (ACE).
- 2.1 He confirmed work was continuing to create a permanent gallery dedicated to Duleep Singh. Working with Essex Cultural Diversity whose focus was celebrating diversity, a Punjab festival was planned for July 2018. He advised funding schemes offered by Heritage Lottery and ACE were being investigated.
- 2.2 The new temporary exhibition, to open at Ancient House December 2017 was planned to be "Handmade". The display would cover different material with sections on textiles, ceramics, wood, metal and stone.
- 3.1 Holiday activities. An events flyer had been produced promoting activities during the school summer holidays. This flyer had been widely distributed and sent to local schools.
- 3.4 The current programme of learning opportunities for schools remains relevant and current to the needs of the schools in a demanding time with budget and curriculum changes. In total across the 10 museum sites there had been 50,000 school children visit. 2331 of these visited Ancient House. It was noted that elsewhere in the Country school visit numbers had decreased but had increased at Ancient House.
- 4.2 A column remained present monthly in the Thetford and Brandon Times newspaper. This highlighted the exhibitions and events at Ancient House and proved the venue was effective at being kept

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in the public eye.

4.3 Social media. Ancient House currently had 2481 Twitter followers and 551 likes on Facebook. It was highlighted that both the History Club and the Teenage History Club raised awareness of the Museum through Social Media. He advised Melissa Hawker kept alert to local and national social media campaigns, "Kids in museums" take over days had been very effective in their use of social media to highlight the Museum.

5.2 The Museum remained part of the "Teaching Museum Programme". Trainees joined for 12 months on a paid scheme with a development programme. He advised trainees need no formal qualifications just an enthusiasm for museums and heritage. Sam Bellotti is the current trainee, with time being spent at both Lynn Museum and Ancient House. The previous trainee Imogen Clarke had now started a full time job at the Fan Museum.

Account funding – Over the last three years Norfolk Museum Services had received £4 million in funding through the Arts Council England's "Major Partner Museum" programme. He advised that from April 2018 this funding stream would come to an end, and an application had been made in February 2017 with the Arts council to be a "National Portfolio Organisation". Announcements were made in June, many museums applied and he was pleased to report that Norfolk Museum Services application had been approved. This meant funding of £4.8 million over 2018-2022 and covered the cost of temporary exhibitions.

As a service they had been successful in their application for a Heritage Funding, "Kick the Dust" was a long term project engaging with young people. They had managed to secure £750,000 to deliver the project over 4 years. They would work in partnership with YMCA and Creative Collisions Great Yarmouth.

Cllr Clark thanked Robin for the report. He queried how long the handmade exhibition would run for.
RH advised they have one exhibition a year.

Cllr Clark asked what the dates were for filming and airing of "Antiques Road Trip" as it was reported they would be filming at Ancient House.

HJ advised there were no dates set but an initial discussion had taken place.

Cllr Clark requested that a transmission date be advised when known so panel members could watch it. He congratulated the team on their successful funding bids.

Cllr Darby queried if the First World War exhibition at Norwich Castle was confined to Norfolk Museums as he was aware Bishop Bonners Museum in Dereham had a good collection of pieces.

RH confirmed the focus was on Norfolk Museum sites but there

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was an opportunity to work with other museums.
Cllr Darby also pointed out that Gressenhall Museum was a Prisoner of War camp for two years, 100 years ago.
RH explained that the exhibition at Norwich Castle had links to Swanton Morley Barracks and looked at the difficulties faced by servicemen and their families in the First World and today.

Cllr Darby queried the reason for low visitor figures at Lynn Museum.
RH explained that there had not been a drop in paid admissions but there had been a drop in family admissions and free admission days. He advised the Time and Tide museum had performed very well. There was a Titanic exhibition there currently and this had increased both the school visitor numbers and paid visitor admission numbers.

Cllr Ward queried how well the Teenage History Club was attended.

RH advised there was succession planning in place so History Club members could join the Teenage Club as the older members left. He confirmed there was a waiting list to join the History Club.

Cllr Kybird asked which umbrella the Saturday Science Club sat.
RH advised there were currently no Saturday Science Clubs running within Norfolk Museum Service Sites although Saturday Art Clubs were held in Norwich and Great Yarmouth.

17/17 GRESSENHALL FARM AND WORKHOUSE REPORT

Hannah Jackson – Operations Manager West presented the report for Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse to members.

Cllr Clark noted that 137 visitors visited Gressenhall on the Lottery Players preview day that had stated it was their first visit, he queried whether the reason for their visit that day had been captured.
HJ advised that the event had been free of charge to Lottery Players and had been picked up by the local press and social media. It was understood these visitors used the free entry as an opportunity to visit.

Cllr Richmond noted the marquee was in the ground and were people using it for wedding service and reception.
HJ confirmed the most recent wedding used the Chapel only for their service. There were three more weddings booked for 2017 and they were all using the site for the service and reception. She advised they respond to the needs of each individual couple.
Cllr Richmond asked who provided the catering.
HJ confirmed the Mardlers Rest café on site was used for all catering needs.

Cllr Ward queried on the flyer it stated the only assistance dogs were permitted on site and was this a new rule.
HJ confirmed it was in place prior to her employment and she

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understood the policy was driven by livestock issues.

Cllr Richmond advised that it would soon be the bi-centenary anniversary of the Suffragette movement and were there any events planned for this.

RH confirmed that it was being looked at for Norwich, the Shirehall had submitted a draft bid for Heritage funding however he would feedback the potential for an event at Gressenhall.

Cllr Clark queried if the recent Symphonic concert would run again in future years.

HJ advised there had been 270 visitors at the evening performance and would explore future opportunities.

RH commented that the logistics for holding the event were comprehensive and to replicate it at the same high standard would require additional funding.

Cllr Darby advised he attended the concert and had thoroughly enjoyed it.

**18/17 COLLECTIONS REVIEW AND RATIONALISATION PROGRAMME
2015-18**

Samantha Johns – Collections and Development Manager presented the report.

Cllr Clark queried if the preferred option for the items listed was to transfer to another museum as opposed to disposal.

SJ confirmed if items couldn't be transferred the museum would retain them rather than dispose of them.

Cllr Ward queried if item 35 was an incorrect photograph.

SJ confirmed it was. The item is a clock and not a soda syphon as pictured, it was an incorrect image link.

Cllr Ward asked if the Museum service had a cigarette machine in the collection.

SJ advised there was no specific note confirming the service had one in the collection however the one listed did not fit with the collection policy and had no local connection.

SJ advised the items would be advertised through the Museum Journal. She suggested that at the next Breckland Area Museum Partnership meeting held at Gressenhall, members might wish to have a tour of the collection store to view the items and storage.

Resolved that the objects listed in the report be advertised for transfer or disposed of.

The meeting closed at 15:40

CHAIRMAN