

Public Document Pack

BRECKLAND COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the

BRECKLAND AREA MUSEUMS COMMITTEE

Held on Monday, 28 February 2022 at 10.00 am in
The Conference Suite, Breckland Council, Elizabeth House, Walpole Loke, Dereham,
Norfolk, NR19 1EE

PRESENT

Cllr Robert Kybird (Chairman)	Cllr Phillip Duigan (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr Claire Bowes	Cllr Terry Jermy
Cllr Harry Clarke	Mr M. Kiddle-Morris
Cllr Chris Harvey	

Also Present

Cllr Jane James
Cllr John Ward

In Attendance

Dr Robin Hanley	- Assistant Head of Museums
Mr Oliver Bone	- Curator of Kings Lynn and Thetford Museums
Jenny Caynes	- Project Officer, Norfolk Museums Service
	- Friends of Gressenhall Farm & Workhouse Museum
Ruth Tudge	- Democratic Services Officer

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1/22 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 November 2021 were confirmed as an accurate record.

2/22 APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Councillors Bushell, Eagle and Richmond and Andrew Smith and Keith Robinson.

3/22 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

4/22 URGENT BUSINESS

None.

5/22 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None.

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6/22 ANCIENT HOUSE MUSEUM REPORT

The Curator of Kings Lynn and Thetford Museums, Oliver Bone presented the report on activities at the Ancient House, Museum of Thetford Life covering the period from November 2021 to February 2022. He said that it felt really good for the Museum to be open and receiving visitors again after the long period of closure. He stated that all Norfolk Museums Service (NMS) had been closed and were now, on re-opening, offering a cautious approach with a focus on keeping staff and visitors safe through minimising the risk of transmission.

Building works at the former King's Head public house, a listed building next door to the Ancient House remained covered in scaffolding following the involvement of both Breckland District Council and the Health and Safety Executive. Repairs to the roof had been carried out in January 2022 and the scaffolding in front of the museum had now been removed, although the King's Head scaffolding still remained.

The museum had marked the 150th birth anniversary of Princess Catherine Duleep Singh, who had previously lived at Elveden Hall, with an exhibition in the hall of the Ancient House. Princess Catherine was the second daughter of the Maharajah Duleep Singh, the last Sikh ruler of the kingdom of the Punjab. The exhibition contained pop up graphics and artefacts on display, telling her story and featured a newly commissioned portrait of Princess Catherine by a leading contemporary artist Amandeep Singh, also known as Inkquisitive.

In March 2022, the television programme, the Antiques Road Trip would be visiting Ancient House to film Peter Bance at the Museum to talk about Princess Catherine. Mr Bone said that when television programmes had previously visited, when the programme aired it increased the visitor numbers shortly afterwards and looked forward to this happening as a result of the filming having taken place at Ancient House.

The main current exhibition was related to the Thetford Treasure, a hoard of gold and silver that had been found on the outskirts of Thetford in 1979. The British Museum had loaned items to the Ancient House for this display and had agreed to an extension until 2 May 2022 to allow more people to see the exhibition which included gold jewellery and inscribed and decorated silver spoons. The NMS were grateful to the Trustees of the British Museum for the loan of the Thetford Treasure. Also on display was a hoard of roman glass objects that had been painstakingly pieced together by conservator colleagues which came from the Hockwold Hoard of glass, pewter and copper alloy finds from the roman temple site. This display would continue until July.

Ancient House continued to be a part of the National Lottery-funded Brecks River and Fen Edge landscape project. They were currently working on a Vikings exhibition involving members of the Teenage History Group in choosing and curating artefacts and themes for display. It was hoped this would give a feel of early medieval Britain

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on the eve of the Vikings attacks that took place in the late ninth century. This exhibition should run from July and remain in place for a year.

Councillor Jermy said that all of the lecterns and roundels had now been replaced on the Heritage Trail in Thetford, one of which was dedicated to the Vikings and was very keen to link this in with the Ancient House exhibition as he felt this could encourage visitors in the Museum to go on the trail and people from the trail to visit the museum.

With the 100th Anniversary of the opening of the Ancient House Museum in 2024, work continued to make more of the unusual connections and to tell the story of the links between the Museum and the Maharajah Duleep Singh and his family. Mr Bone said he had been to London and seen a portrait of the Maharajah Duleep Singh painted by George Beechey when the Maharajah was approximately 13 years of age and before he came to England. Early discussions were taking place to enable the loan and display of the portrait at Ancient House which he believed would be a great draw for visitors. He said and they were approaching the National Lottery Heritage fund to find out the best way to fund the project.

Schools and teachers had been very keen to get back to in-person learning and workshops for school children and the Learning Officer, Melissa Hawker continued to be reactive to teachers needs and had adapted and developed bespoke sessions to support this.

The Ancient House Museum continued to use social media with both Twitter and Facebook followers increasing. Staff had developed the Ancient House YouTube channel to include 77 short films, many of which had been created during the pandemic period. The Museum also continued to provide online talks and events and had recently worked with the Commonwealth Graves Commission to look at their work and history.

In January the Museum held a hybrid event, a combination of both on-site and online which had been a book launch of a new children's book about Princess Sophia Duleep Singh which had enabled people to attend in person or from anywhere around the world.

The Museum was very pleased to welcome back the Teenage History Club and History Club which had restarted. During the pandemic the History Club had been on pause while the Teenage History Club had continued via Zoom. The Teenage History Club had planned a Covid-secure Escape Room for 5th March 2022 and all tickets had sold out.

Currently volunteering on site was still suspended but they were working closely with the volunteers to enable indoor volunteering to recommence as soon as it was possible and safe to do so.

The Friends of the Museum continued to support the Museum through fundraising and promoting the Museum in town.

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The Ancient House continued to feature on Radio Norfolk and with a regular slot in the monthly About Thetford magazine. The EDP provided a welcome boost to the museum's publicity around the Thetford Treasure exhibition and Dr Priya Atwal had written a piece for the BBC History magazine about the Ancient House which had resulted in a number of additional visitors.

Members of the Committee noted the report.

7/22 GRESSENHALL FARM & WORKHOUSE REPORT

Dr Robin Hanley, Assistant Head of Norfolk Museums Service, presented the report on activities for Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse that covered the period from November 2021 to January 2022. He explained that although the reporting period covered a period when the museum was closed to the general public, there had been lots of activity.

Dr Hanley thanked all museum staff across the region for working hard and responding creatively to work around museum closures and restrictions due to the pandemic. He felt that staff had been very imaginative and had been particularly inspired to develop a broad range of digital resources to support audiences, including resources for children and families and that the digital engagement had invited a significant expansion of social media activity.

The museum continued to put staff and visitors' safety as a priority and some guidance and infrastructure remained in place such as recommendations for the wearing of face masks, hand sanitizers and air circulation. It had been difficult, due to the age of the building, to ensure air circulation as there were no mechanical air systems in place so they were reliant on opening windows and doors which was not ideal due to the effect on the environment and security. The NMS had just taken receipt of some CO2 monitors across the service which would help manage spaces and assist in enabling volunteers to return to the museums. They were working closely with colleagues in the Norfolk County Council's Health and Safety Team around the thresholds and HSE guidance and information on how to read the monitors, and what action to take would be posted by the monitors to tell staff how to react to the warning signs.

As the site had been closed to the public during this reporting period, traditionally this was when any work was carried out across the museum and time was used for planning and preparation of events across the period ready for the re-opening of the museum. Gressenhall had organised several leisure learning short courses throughout the year. For this reporting period this included only one event which was an Apple Tree Pruning workshop for which tickets had been sold at full capacity.

The events programme for the 2022 season had been developed with events and exhibitions scheduled. The first event of the year would be an open season trail commencing on the day of opening which would be Monday, 14 March 2022, and would run for three weeks.

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Dr Hanley stated that there was an interesting exhibition planned for the summer called Georgie Meadows: Stitched Drawings a touring exhibition curated by the Welcome Collection, which would open mid-May and run until the end of the 2022 season. The exhibition collated together twenty textile artworks that explored personal experiences of ageing and dementia. Plans for an accompanying learning and events programme were being developed which it was hoped would include intergenerational work, a collaborative artwork and a series of talks. In addition, the previous season's exhibition More in Commons would be extended until early May 2022 to give more visitors the opportunity to see it following the Covid-19 disruption during 2021.

The new Gressenhall Curator, Rachel Kidd was assisting with the Farmer's Foundry Company steam engine project to get this up and running for the new season and a training plan was being developed to ensure it could be safely operated by volunteers during event days. It was felt that the steam engine would be a great addition to the Gressenhall collection and enable steam days and would also be a great draw for visitors.

With the support of the Friends of Gressenhall, two new Suffolk Punch horses had been purchased and welcomed to the farm by the Farm Manager Richard Dalton. Jack, 18 months old and Kingsman 9 months old and it was hoped that they would be on site for many years adding to the existing team of working horses at Gressenhall. It was important to manage the safety of the public with such large animals so it would take time to embed them and get them fully trained and they would work alongside the older, more established horses for learning. It would take a number of years for the young horses to become fully trained.

The new tree nursery being developed as part of the Gressenhall Environmental Hub project had been taking shape over the winter. The area had been fenced and now had raised beds and a poly tunnel was under construction. The nursery would be completed by late spring and the seed collected would be germinated, go into root trainers and then be planted in the raised beds. The long-term aim was to supply young trees to be planted at various sites around the county and supported the NCC ambition to plant a million trees for Norfolk as well as the DEFRA Trees Outside Woodland scheme. The outdoor landscaping volunteers had also been busy on site, assisting with several projects including the laying of hedges. These new hedges would help to create attractive stock proof boundaries around the farm. Work had also been undertaken in the woodland area to create pathways to improve visitor access. New bird boxes had also been installed. Later in spring an area of the farm would be sown with a special seed mix of nectar rich plants specifically to encourage bees. By using the site in different ways, it provided an opportunity to create a varied patchwork landscape that visitors could enjoy.

Maintaining and growing a strong social media presence remained a key priority for Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse and a digital report for the period had been provided.

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Helen Bainbridge, the Chairman of the Friends of Gressenhall said that they were working on developing their social media presence, which had been difficult when indoor volunteers were not yet allowed back on the site. They were pleased to be able to contribute with securing the two new Suffolk Punch horses and hoped to work on more projects and have more of a presence once volunteers were allowed back and to be able to attend more events.

The Chairman, Councillor Kybird thanked the Friends for their hard work during a very difficult time and was very much appreciative of their continued influence and support which did make a difference to the success of the museum.

Dr Hanley reiterated this and said they were hugely grateful for the support of the Friends of Gressenhall, not only for their support with the heavy horse programme but across the site in many other ways and were very appreciative and pleased to continue to work with the Friends on this partnership approach. Preparations were being made so that the museum would be ready to support the return of indoor volunteering once it was possible to do so safely. It was anticipated that this would be in the Spring and plans would include volunteer refresher training, individual risk assessments and IT upgrades.

Councillor Ward asked about the current state of the Panhard Car which was based at Gressenhall and if it remained road legal. Dr Hanley explained that the car had been actively maintained during the pandemic but that it had not been out and about as it normally would have been due to restrictions but would expect it to be engaging fully both on and off-site and fully operational again in 2022.

Dr Hanley said it had been pleasing to see the strong level of demand for schools to return to visiting museums. Feedback from school visits remained excellent and he felt that it demonstrated that over the years, teachers recognised that they received a good quality experience, felt that it was well managed, and that the learning outcomes were really strong.

The Kick the Dust: Norfolk Project, funded through the National Lottery Heritage Fund and delivered in partnership with a range of organisations including YMCA Norfolk, had continued to engage with young people aged 11 to 25 throughout the COVID-19 lockdown period. The project team had adapted their activities to support existing groups across Norfolk using digital means.

Total engagement numbers for the project from October 2018 to 31 January 2022 were 11,000 interventions, involving 3,538 individual young people taking part in 5,340 hours of quality activity. Of these interventions, 262 volunteering opportunities had been provided to 124 individual young people.

Since October 2018, the breakdown of project activity taking place in each NMS area was: 47% in the West (covering Kings Lynn, Thetford and Gressenhall), 28% in the East (covering Great Yarmouth, Cromer

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and Sheringham) and 25% in Norwich.

Throughout lockdown, project staff had continued to develop and deliver an online training offer for all staff and volunteers who supported youth engagement in NMS. In total 243 staff had taken part in training since October 2018, with 142 of those opportunities having taken part during the lockdown period.

Four young people had progressed onto the Kick the Dust bursary traineeship programme, with one Kick the Dust participant progressing onto the NMS Teaching Museum Traineeship Programme. Three other volunteers had taken on Young Ambassador and Young People's Champion roles to support Institutional Change within NMS.

The Digital Buddy programme continued to expand with six young people supporting five Norwich based curators and the Events and Visitor Programme Manager for Norwich Castle with social media.

Kick the Dust was set up as a three-stage journey (Player-Shaper-Leader), with young people developing transferable work-related skills and gaining experiences that they would struggle to find elsewhere, supporting them in securing employment. The project had been very tightly evaluated from the beginning with 12 other Kick the Dust projects across the Country.

The programme-wide evaluation had been commissioned by the National Lottery Heritage Fund from the evaluation specialists Renaisi.

Following their engagement:

- 80% of young people felt that there were jobs for young people like themselves to work in heritage with 13% not sure and needing to find out more. (Renaisi 67%).
- 90% of young people said they had learnt new and interesting things about heritage (Renaisi 85%).
- 85% of young people felt that heritage represented young people like them (Renaisi 73%).
- 81% of young people said they were more likely to become a volunteer because of their involvement in KTD (Renaisi 78%) and 81% stated they would be looking to take part in other local heritage events as a result of their engagement (Renaisi 73%).
- 96% of young people stated they felt welcomed and respected by staff (Renaisi 95%) and 84% felt a sense of achievement (Renaisi 82%).

Dr Hanley said that the project was not only about engaging with young people but that it was also about training new staff and building confidence in the wider staff field to ensure that engagements with young people across NMS were positive and it was good to see this coming through in the evaluation data.

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Planning was in place to consider the next steps for Kick the Dust and the NMS Youth Engagement strategy, with the potential to build in cross-county partnership working with another Kick the Dust project in Leicester.

Councillor Jermy said it would be really interesting to identify any figures that demonstrated that young people who had not been engaged with museums before and as a result of the project were now very involved and would continue to be so. Dr Hanley said that it had been one of the aspirations of the project to encourage young people into the scheme and guide them through the project through the various stages and would hope in the future to provide further information and data to track the success of the project and that being able to evidence this was important.

Councillor Jermy stated that Breckland Council were developing a Jubilee Bursary Scheme for individuals to access further education and felt that it might encourage some of the individuals who had been involved in the Kick the Dust project to access the funds to enable them to continue with further education should they wish to do so.

Members of the Committee noted the report.

8/22 UPDATE ON THE GRESSENHALL ENVIRONMENTAL HUB PROJECT

Dr Hanley and Jenny Caynes, Project Officer, NMS gave a presentation on the Gressenhall Environmental Hub.

Dr Hanley explained that the Environmental Hub would be a chance for Gressenhall to really be a focal point to help communicate some of the environmental messages to a wider audience and support some of the priorities. The Hub would:

- Communicate Norfolk County Council's Environment Policy, which addressed Gressenhall's response to climate change
- Promote engagement in NCC priority projects, such as 1 Million Trees for Norfolk
- Make space for creative collaboration and learning
- Provide flexible, useable spaces for NCC and partner colleagues for learning and sharing

The Environmental Hub was funded through the Norfolk County Council Capital Programme and would work closely with the NCC Environmental Team.

The Hub would be located in the South Wing at Gressenhall, previously home to the Historic Environment Team and the rooms were being reconfigured to create a large communal flexible teaching space, a location for 'messy' demonstrations and a meeting room. They had received guidance from Andrew Gayton, the Historical Buildings Officer from Breckland Council and none of the works being done were invasive.

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New technology would be installed in one of the rooms to allow flexibility for meetings, learning and presentations and the rooms would be available to be booked by others such as community groups and schools. The project included new accessible improvements to the building and the pathway access would be extended to provide level, easier access for all.

The Gressenhall Community Tree Nursery would also form part of the Environmental project. The works at the tree nursery was being funded separately by DEFRA and this also funded a dedicated Trees Outside Woodland Project officer on Union Farm who had recruited a team of 12 volunteers who had been meeting weekly since Autumn and had been preparing beds and gathering seeds.

One of the key aims of the project would be Learning & Engagement and a dedicated Learning Officer, Ben Earle had been appointed in late 2021 who had been working on engagement with HE students, three onsite workshops were in development and there had been an outreach programme pilot with two local primary schools.

It was hoped that the large-scale events at Gressenhall would allow the Environmental Hub to really engage with visitors. Public engagement days planned so far:

- Dereham Day – Saturday 14 May 22
- Bee Day – 22 May 22
- Open Farm Sunday – 12th June 22
- Heritage Open Day – 11 September 22
- Apple Day – 16 October 22
- Continued engagement with Norfolk schools

Special Event Days such as Apple Day, also provided the opportunity to invite partner organisations such as the Wendling Beck Environment Project to share information on their projects. The Wendling Beck is a tributary of the River Wensum which runs from south to north covering an area of 2000 acres. This would be a large-scale project working along with farmers and landowners on the regeneration of farming land to improve water and soil quality, including habitat creation and nature restoration and include other organisations such as the Norfolk Wildlife Trust, NCC, Norfolk Rivers Trust and the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group.

This project would also include improved walking and cycling routes from Dereham to Gressenhall, including the resurfacing from Mill Lane to Gressenhall Road. It was also planned to provide some foot bridges and sympathetic bird hides for public access at Dillington Carr.

The Chairman thanked Dr Hanley and Jenny for the presentation which he felt would be useful to all Members of Breckland Council and would organise the presentation to come back to a Full Council meeting.

Members of the Committee noted the report.

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9/22 NEXT MEETING

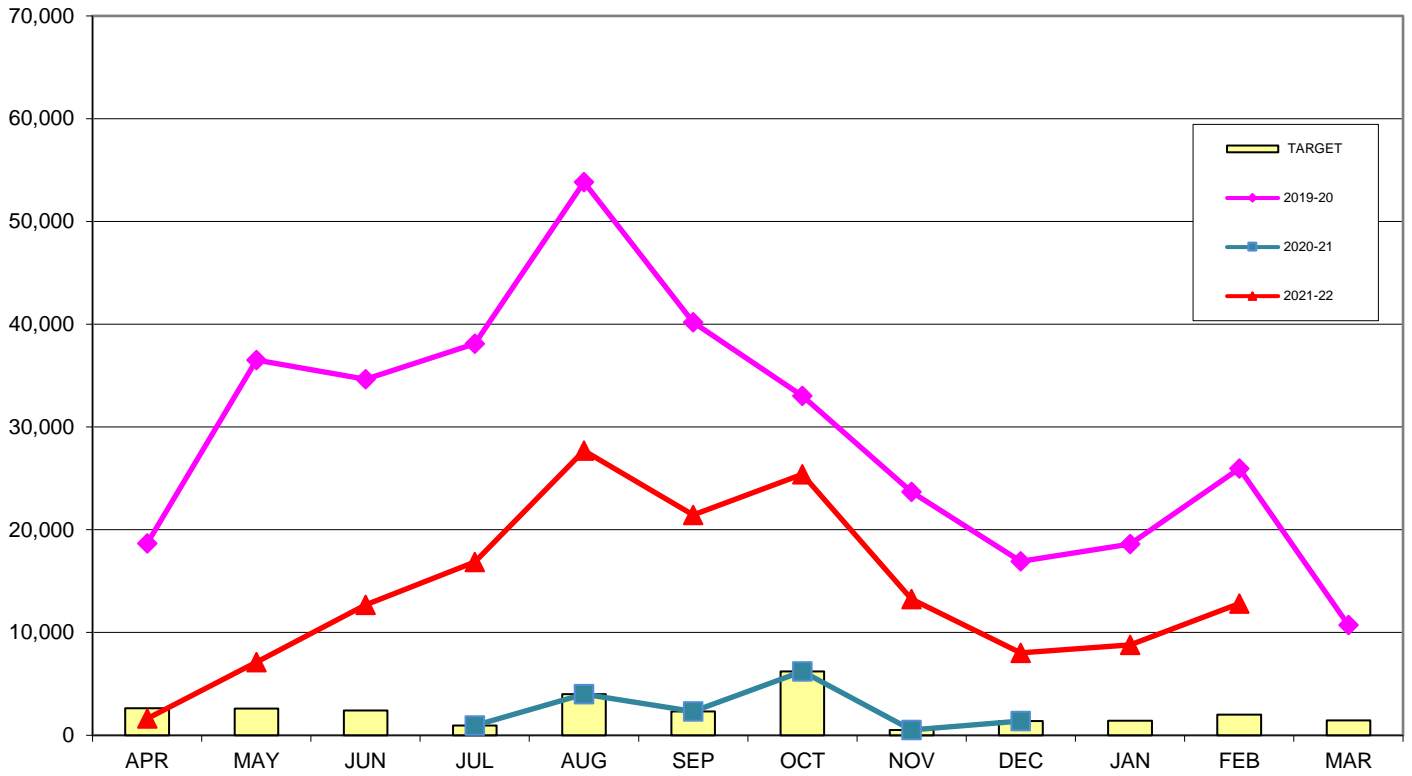
The arrangements for the next meeting to be held on Monday, 20 June 2022 were noted. Venue to be confirmed.

The meeting closed at 11.50 am

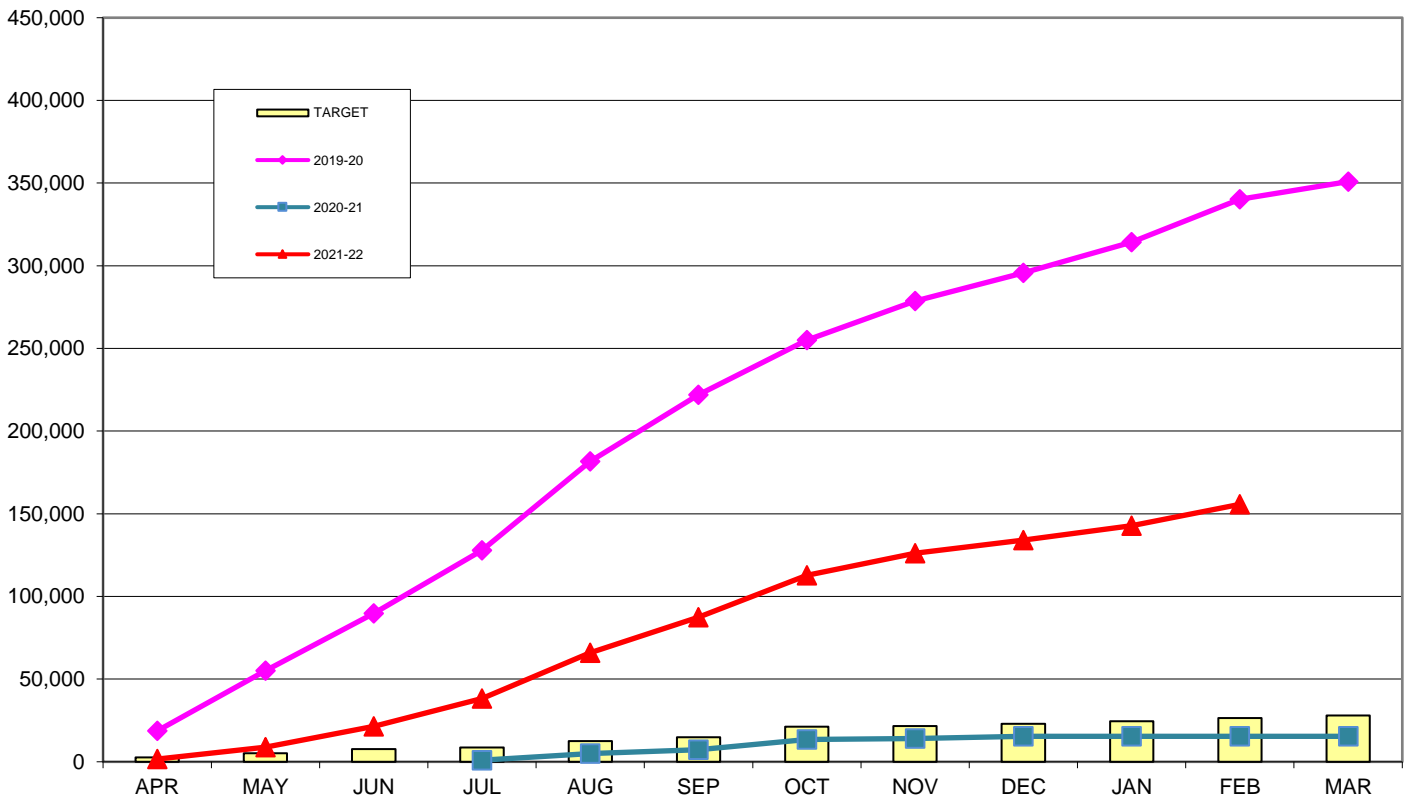
CHAIRMAN

NORFOLK MUSEUM SERVICE Minute Item 7/21
Actual Visits (Incl. all School visits)

3 year comparison by Month



3 year comparison - Cumulative



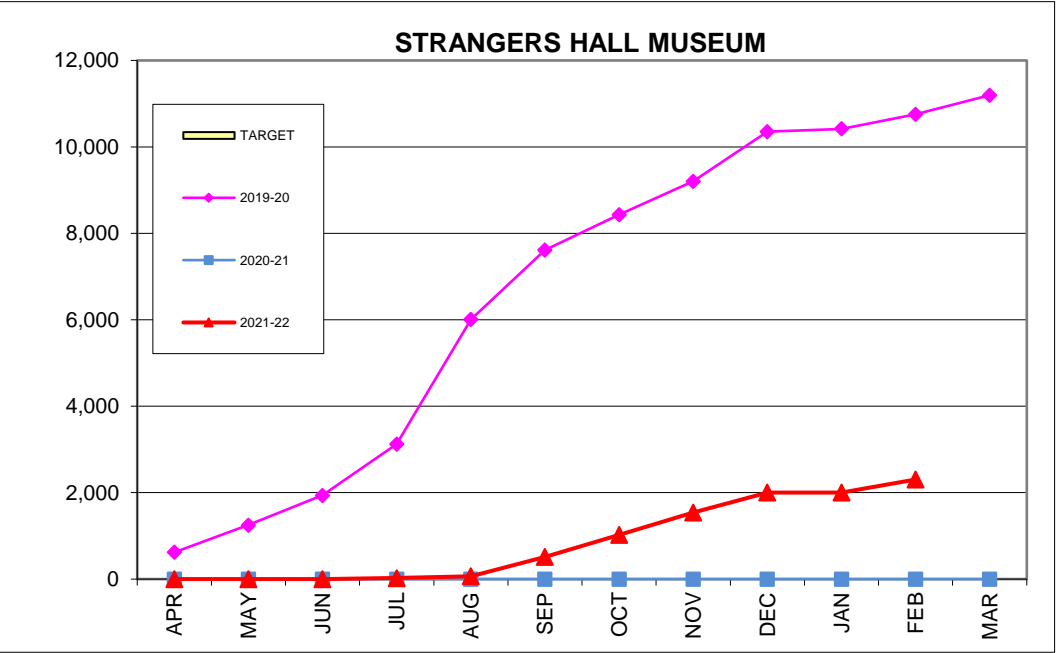
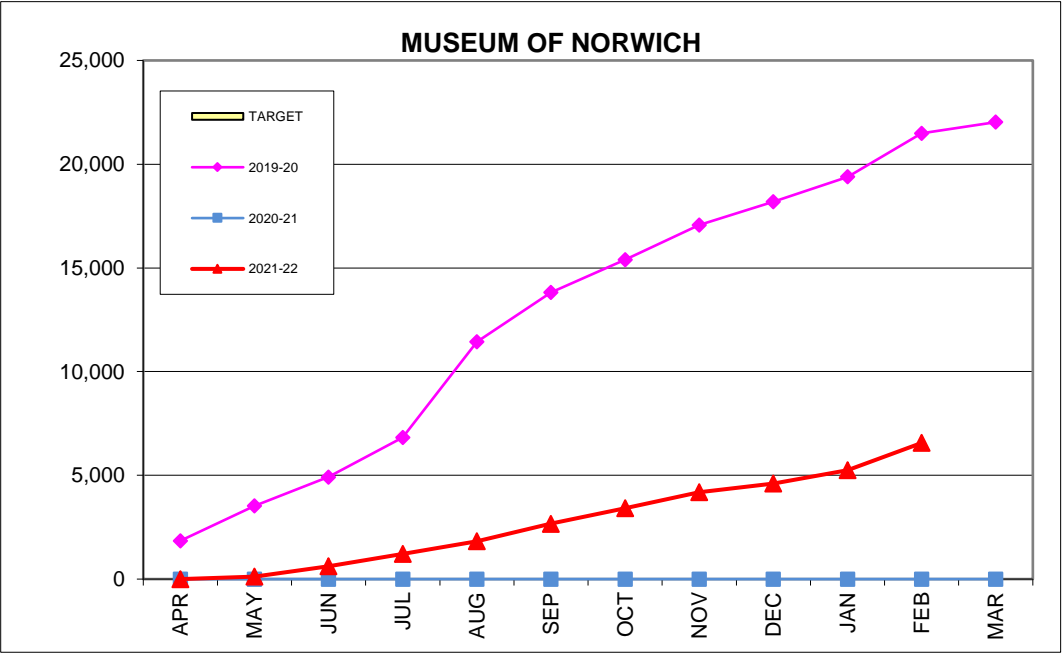
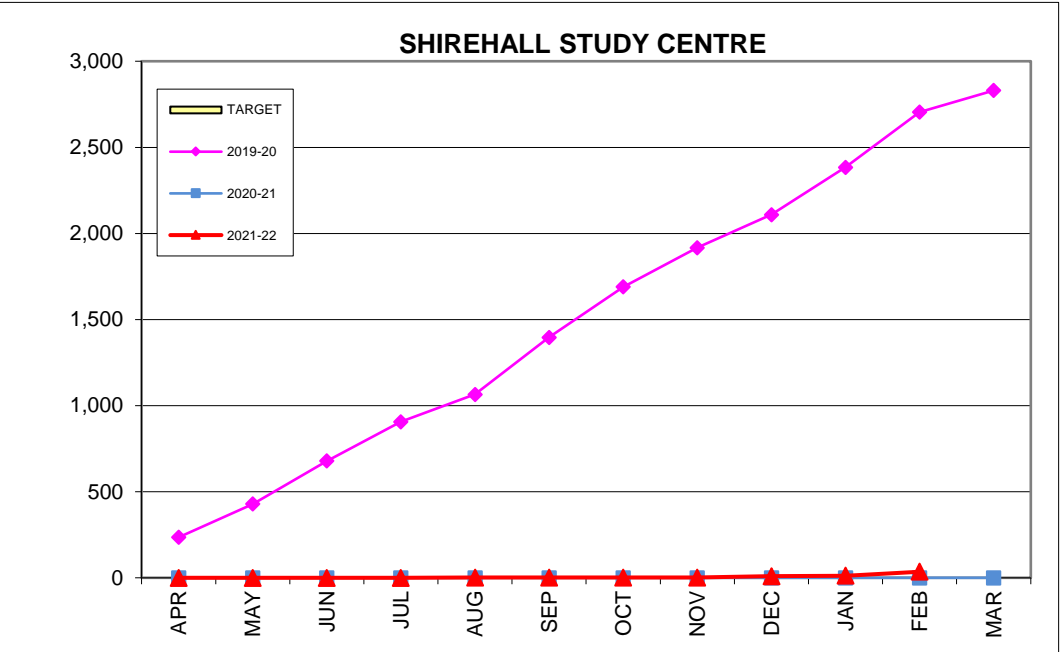
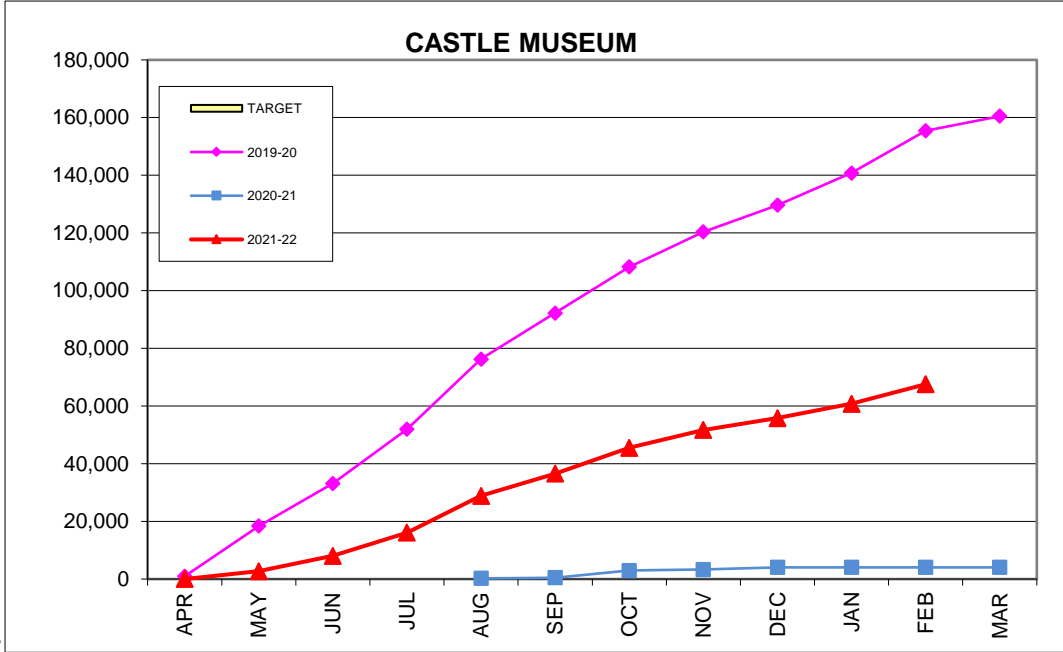
NORFOLK MUSEUM SERVICE
Visitors by Museum and County Total

			APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	YEAR TO DATE	TOTAL	
N O R W I C H	Castle Museum	2019-20	953	17,435	14,755	18,760	24,373	15,953	15,978	12,187	9,255	11,141	14,644	5,032	155,434	160,466	
		2020-21					245	238	2,454	357	756					4,050	4,050
		2021-22		2,732	5,309	8,053	12,796	7,652	8,964	6,226	4,068	4,962	6,790			67,552	67,552
	Norwich Castle Study Centre (Shirehall)	2019-20	235	194	249	228	159	331	294	227	192	275	320	126		2,704	2,830
		2020-21														0	0
		2021-22		0	0	0	2	0	0	0	7	3	23			35	35
	Museum of Norwich	2019-20	1,848	1,682	1,390	1,908	4,604	2,388	1,577	1,673	1,114	1,204	2,100	538		21,488	22,026
		2020-21														0	0
		2021-22		115	504	595	614	842	749	767	422	647	1,308			6,563	6,563
Strangers Hall	2019-20	619	631	687	1,187	2,880	1,607	817	772	1,153	64	338	441		10,755	11,196	
	2020-21														0	0	
	2021-22		0	0	24	39	450	508	521	460	0	302			2,304	2,304	
E A S T	Tolhouse Museum	2019-20	412	731	11	274	1058	912	394	163	20	106	114	80	4,195	4,275	
		2020-21														0	0
		2021-22		0	0	0	3	0	751	5	0	0	3			762	762
	Elizabethan House Museum	2019-20	1,326	1,771	1,186	1,380	1,687	1,768	1,172	0	37	33	53	40		10,413	10,453
		2020-21														0	0
		2021-22		249	546	863	1,181	1,205	2,160	30	38	102	34			6,408	6,408
	Time and Tide	2019-20	2,828	3,145	3,349	3,532	3,144	4,221	3,394	3,228	1,866	2,427	3,153	1,363		34,287	35,650
		2020-21				218	1,392	918	1,162	51	146		1,407			5,294	5,294
		2021-22		451	1,302	1,449	2,588	2,307	4,600	1,399	782	1,195	1,465			17,538	17,538
Cromer Museum	2019-20	1,744	1,847	1,856	2,323	2,479	2,120	1,254	130	41	234	160	423		14,188	14,611	
	2020-21														0	0	
	2021-22		231	574	994	1,438	1,232	984	80	16	57	114			5,720	5,720	
W E S T	Lynn Museum	2019-20	1,050	1,063	971	1,580	1,504	1,722	1,778	1,709	995	1,649	2,143	757	16,164	16,921	
		2020-21							629	18	247					894	894
		2021-22		308	736	906	1,614	1,446	1,316	1,381	889	899	1,289			10,784	10,784
	Ancient House Museum	2019-20	681	586	768	1,138	762	829	774	1,037	463	676	872	336		8,586	8,922
		2020-21														0	0
		2021-22		280	134	313	335	1,085	442	746	460	487	602			4,884	4,884
	Gressenhall Farm & Workhouse	2019-20	6,411	6,284	8,798	5,406	9,626	6,160	5,191	1,694	1,341	165	1,641	1,020		52,717	53,737
		2020-21				735	2,188	1,161	1,901	96	125					6,206	6,206
		2021-22	1,623	2,605	3,426	3,510	6,935	5,077	4,636	1,400	549	191	710			30,662	30,662
Norfolk Exhibition Programmes incl. King's Lynn Town Hall SLA	2019-20	570	1139	618	394	1552	2188	399	864	458	633	421	560		9,236	9,796	
	2020-21					173	3	68	2	116					362	362	
	2021-22		152	147	150	152	133	275	708	317	255	181			2,470	2,470	
		2019-20	18,677	36,508	34,638	38,110	53,828	40,199	33,022	23,684	16,935	18,607	25,959	10,716	340,167	350,883	
		2020-21				953	3,998	2,320	6,214	524	1,390				15,399	15,399	
		2021-22	1,623	7,123	12,678	16,857	27,697	21,429	25,385	13,263	8,008	8,798	12,821		155,682	155,682	
		TARGET	2,629	2,610	2,406	953	3,998	2,320	6,214	524	1,390	1,407	2,020	1,466	26,471	27,937	

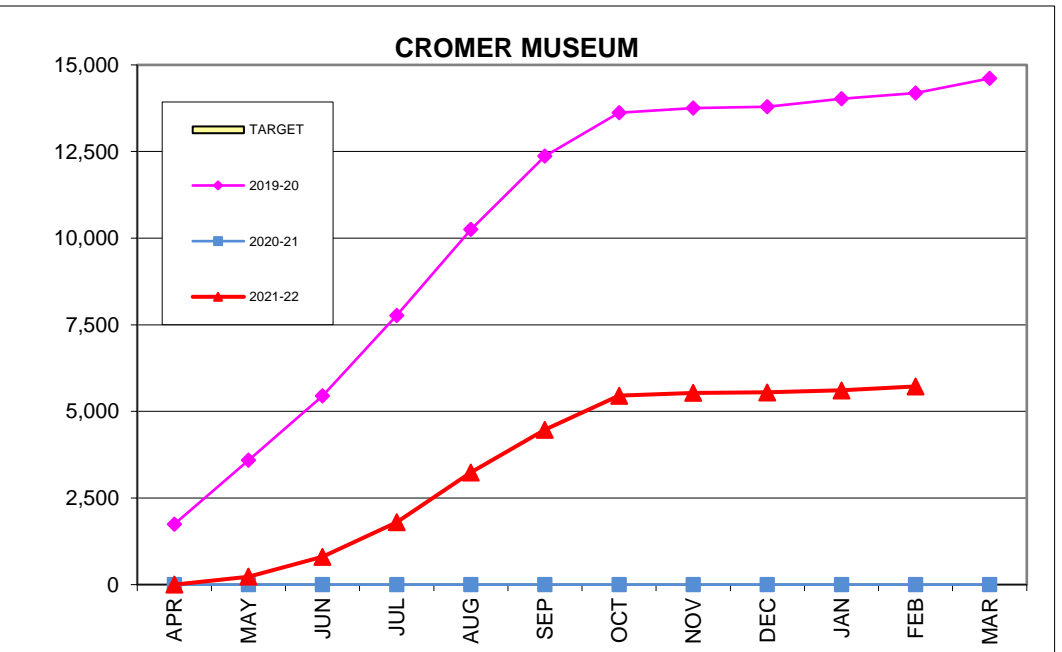
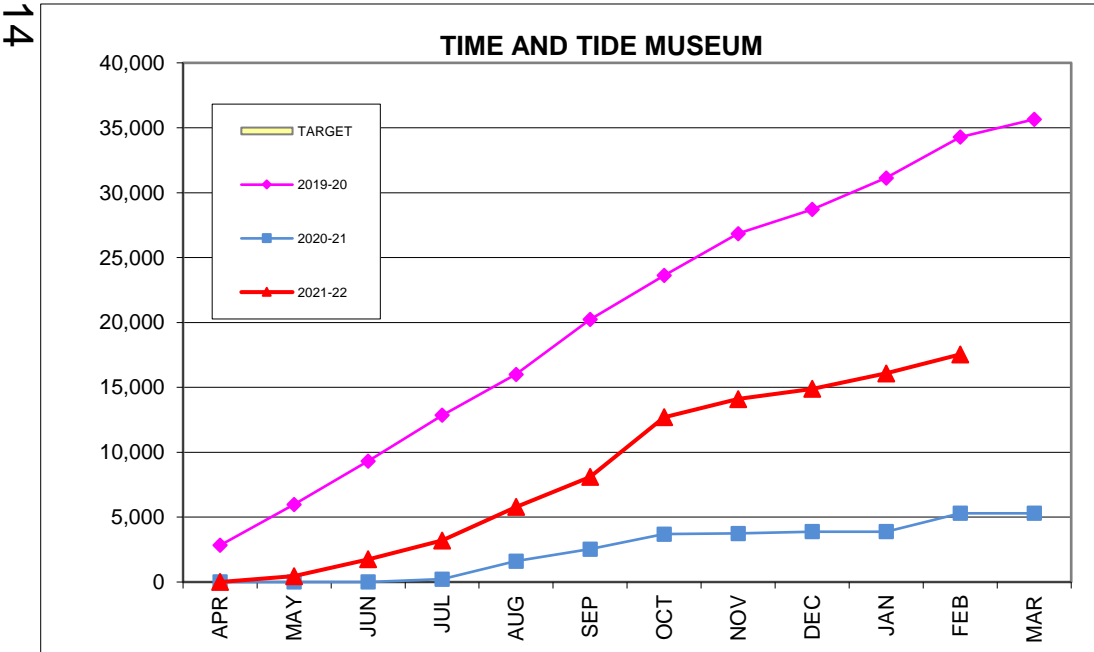
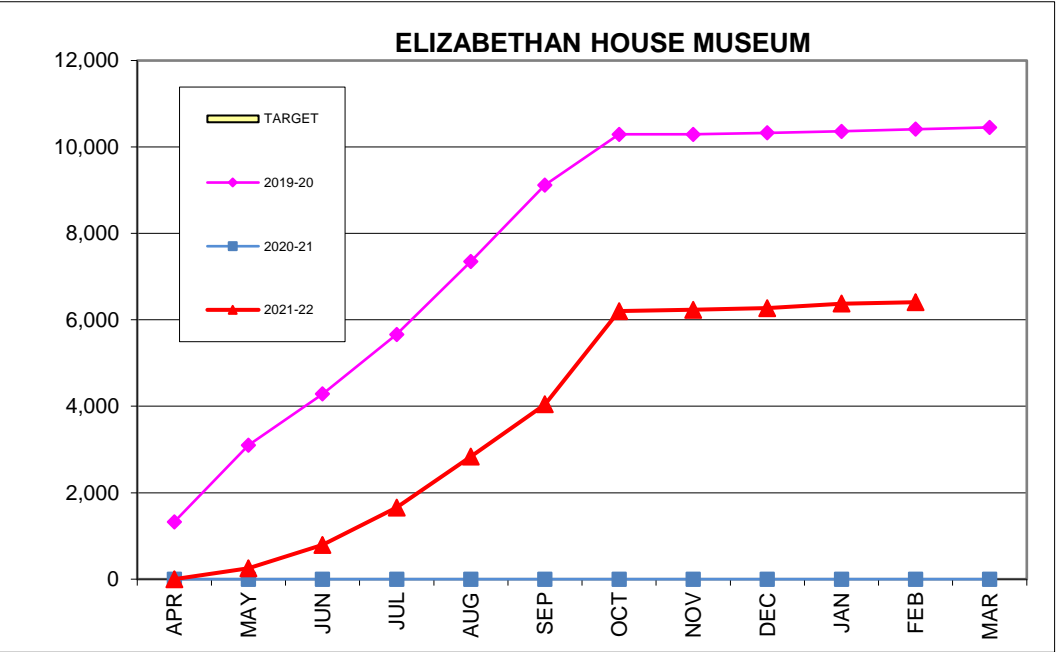
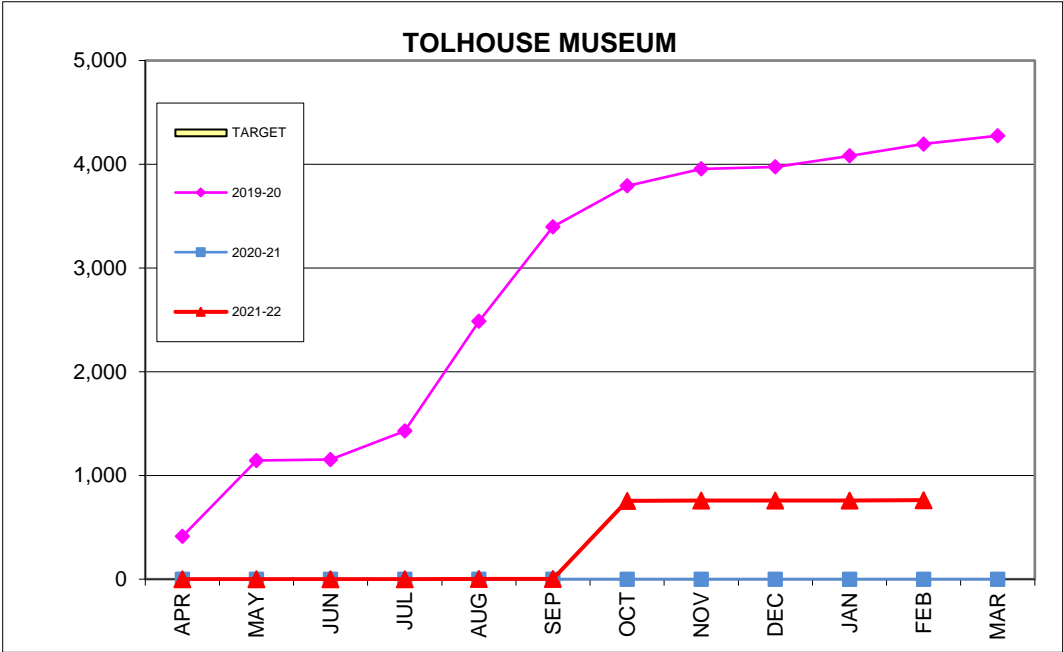
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NORFOLK MUSEUMS SERVICE CUMULATIVE VISITORS by INDIVIDUAL MUSEUMS

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NORFOLK MUSEUMS SERVICE CUMULATIVE VISITORS by INDIVIDUAL MUSEUMS



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NORFOLK MUSEUMS SERVICE CUMULATIVE VISITORS by INDIVIDUAL MUSEUMS

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