

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Minutes of the Meeting on 2 December 2015 at the Science Museum

Present:

Dame Mary Archer (Chairman)
Mr Howard Covington
Dame Athene Donald
Lord Faulkner of Worcester (RdF)
Ms Sharon Flood (ShF)
Professor Russell Foster (RIF)
Lord Grade of Yarmouth (to item 10)
Professor Ludmilla Jordanova
Professor Averil Macdonald
Professor David Phoenix
Mr Anton Valk
Lord Willetts of Havant
Dame Fiona Woolf

In Attendance:

Mr Ian Blatchford	Director, Science Museum Group (SMG)
Ms Jane Ellis	Finance Director, SMG
Mrs Susan Fisher (SuF)	Director of Development
Ms Jean Franczyk	Deputy Director, Science Museum
Dr Roger Highfield	Director of External Affairs, SMG
Mr Paul Kirkman	Director, NRM
Ms Karen Livingstone	Director of Masterplan and Estate
Ms Sally MacDonald	Director, MSI
Mr Jonathan Newby	Chief Operating Officer, SMG
Ms Jo Quinton-Tulloch	Director of NMeM
Ms Helen Jones	Head of Strategy & Planning (Secretary)

BT 15/12 1 Apologies for absence

ACTION

- 1.1 Mr Matthew d’Ancona, Mr Andreas Goss, Mr Simon Linnett

BT 15/12 2 Declarations of interests - None

BT 15/12 3 Draft minutes of previous meetings and matters arising

- 3.1 The minutes of the meetings on 6 October 2015 were approved.
- 3.2 Amended wording had been proposed for item 2.2 of the minutes of the Strategy Day discussion on 7 October 2015; the revised wording was tabled. The minutes were approved, with the revised wording.
- 3.3 Matters arising: All actions had been completed, were on the present agenda or were due to be addressed at a future Board meeting.
- 3.4 Feedback on the Strategy Day had been received. In general, it was positive, but the break-out session could have been better, and more opportunities for Trustees and Executive to mingle would have been appreciated. It had been suggested that the 2016 Strategy Day be held in Durham and Shildon.
- 3.5 **It was agreed** that an events calendar would be drawn up and uploaded to the file-sharing system, Huddle.

**HJ/SuF/
RH**

BT 15/12 4 Chairman’s business

- 4.1 The recommendations of the Remuneration Committee had been **approved** at the closed session of the Board meeting.
- 4.2 The paper that had been circulated previously was noted. In addition, the following people were congratulated:
- LJ and IB on the Editorial and article in the latest SM Journal;
 - SL on being appointed Chairman of the Independent Transport Commission;
 - JN, with JE and KL, on the effort put into preparing for the CSR settlement, in particular regarding Blythe House. The outcome was very satisfactory.
- 4.3 A Trustee recruitment process had been initiated with DCMS. Three specialist subjects had been identified: digital, property and museum collections/research. There was an overarching need to attract candidates with interests in the north of England, and to address the lack of ethnic diversity at Board level.

- 4.4 The SMG Strategy review process was going well. The time needed and range of topics to be considered had been extended. **It was agreed** that the refreshed strategy should be presented for signing off at the Board Strategy Day in early October 2016.

BT 15/12 5 Director's Report

5.1 a) Director's update

The paper that had been circulated previously was noted. In addition:

- SMG would consider whether the tax credit scheme suggested by Arts Council England could be beneficial;
- Potentially contentious relationships should be discussed by the Board; this would be covered in the forthcoming review of the SMG Ethics Policy. **SuF**
- Sir Peter Hendy had visited the *Cosmonauts* exhibition, providing an opportunity for a useful conversation about the York Central Project.
- With the financial pressures on Durham County Council in mind, and SMG's ambitions for NRM Shildon, LJ offered to provide a briefing on the local cultural context. **LJ**
- The CSR outcome confirmed SMG's confidence in the future of NMeM. JQT was congratulated and thanked for the work done so far on developing and implementing the new vision for the Museum.
- An update was given on the National Coal Mining Museum for England. RdF agreed to contact the local MP. **RdF**
- Suggestions were invited for people to invite to the *Cosmonauts* private views.
- The CSR announcement of funding to quit Blythe House was very welcome. A presentation was given that summarised SMG's collections housing requirements and some options for meeting them. It would be a huge, long-term project, but presented many opportunities and the next few months would be crucial. There would be a substantive discussion at the March 2016 Board meeting. **IB et al**

5.2 b) SMG Half-Year Report for financial year 2015/2016

The paper that had been circulated previously was noted. All actions and targets had been fulfilled or were on course.

BT 15/12 6 Financial Business

6.1 a) SMG Management Accounts

The papers that had been circulated previously were noted. The need to achieve efficiencies and increase income remained, despite the better-than-expected CSR outcome. The Board was assured that operational underspending was being tackled.

6.2 b) Audit & Risk Committee

- A report on the internal audit of collections had been circulated under item 15, and would be re-visited in the 2016/17 audit programme.
- Health and safety issues had been discussed in the Committee meeting, including the different incident rates at SMG sites and an apparent upward trend. Processes and reporting had improved, but more could be done to foster a more health-and-safety-conscious culture. **It was agreed** that consideration of health and safety at Board meetings would in future include reports of substantive action taken by the Executive in response to incidents and requests. **KL**

6.3 c) Finance Committee

- There was a query about allocation of costs in the project to create new conference facilities on Levels 4 and 5.
- The Investment Policy Statement (agreed October 2015) was being implemented: more detail could be recorded in the meeting minutes. JE and ShF could go through the Investment Policy Statement with any Trustee who required it. **JE**
- The committee had also considered exhibition planning and contingency budgets.

BT 15/12 7 Masterplan and Estate Committee

- 7.1 Procurement for the Maths and Interactive Galleries was progressing well.

BT 15/12 8 NMeM Cultural and artistic photography collection

- 8.1 The paper that had been circulated previously was noted. The aim was to make an announcement in January.
- 8.2 The rationale behind the recommendation was discussed; the rigour of the process and the thoughtful consultation with stakeholders were emphasised. The following points were made:
- The NMeM Advisory Board had expressed reservations about the transfer and anticipated that there would be a perception that the 'jewels' of the collections were being taken to London, notwithstanding recent investment in NMeM by Bradford City Council (BCC). In response:
 - o SMG was already making significant new investments in NMeM, over and above that of BCC, e.g. in the new interactive gallery and the IMAX cinema upgrade;
 - o The proposed transfer was based on sound principles of collections stewardship; the preferred recipient had greater capacity to care for the transferred collections and enable greater accessibility than was the case at NMeM;
 - o Photography collections of national significance would remain in the SMG collection at NMeM, offering great potential to support the Museum's new vision;
 - o The NMeM Advisory Board's emphasis on reviewing the collections proposed for transfer through the lens of the NMeM's STEM-focused vision was welcomed;
 - o Even after transfer of ownership, there was potential to retain some of the transferred material at NMeM through long-term loans or other arrangements;
 - The impact on Media Space would be taken into account;
 - The details of the transaction would be worked through once approval had been secured;
 - Overall it is a positive story regarding the future direction of NMeM with its focus on STEM and communications needed to be managed.
- 8.3 **The Board approved** the recommendation to rationalise the Photography Collections held at NMeM as described in the paper.

BT 15/12 9 Strategic financial planning

- 9.1 The CSR outcome was significantly better than expected and afforded an opportunity to investment in key strategic areas. Capital development plans for each site would be presented at the March Board meeting. Nevertheless, SMG was still subject to a real-terms cut of c. 7% over four years. Building financial resilience by being more efficient, making savings and growing income remained an imperative.

BT 15/12 10 SMG Financial Protocols - update

- 10.1 The paper that had been circulated previously was noted.
- 10.2 Following a discussion of financial thresholds and margins for flexibility, **it was agreed** that these should be reviewed by the Finance Committee.

ShF/JE

BT 15/12 11 Collections & Research Committee Terms of Reference

- 11.1 The paper that had been circulated previously was noted and the Terms of Reference were **approved**.

BT 15/12 12 SMG Collections Policies

- 12.1 *a) SMG Collections Development Strategy*
The paper that had been circulated previously was noted. The importance of active collecting and collections management was asserted and it was noted that a paper on a proposed acquisition fund would be presented to the March Board meeting. It was recommended that SMG's position on collecting archives be clarified: they were not generally acquired, though there were exceptions.
- 12.2 Subject to the above amendment the SMG Collections Development Strategy was **approved**.
- 12.3 *b) Collections information and access policy*
The paper that had been circulated previously was noted. Subject to proofreading and correcting the text, the Collections information and access policy was **approved**.

BT 15/12 13 Disposal of collections (Board of Survey Recommendations)

13.1 The paper that had been circulated previously was noted and the recommendations were **approved**.

13.2 The second paragraph under 'National Railway Museum' required clarification re the status and process for disposal of the Slam Door commuter 4-VEP coach.

HJ

13.3 The Board requested that, in future, information be provided on other aspects of collections, e.g. acquisition highlights, via the Director's Reports.

IB

BT 15/12 14 Railway Heritage Designation Advisory Board Recommendations

14.1 The paper that had been circulated previously was noted. The recommendations were **approved**.

BT 15/12 15 Minutes of sub-committee meetings

The papers that had been circulated previously were noted.

BT 15/12 16 Any other business

16.1 It was proposed that SMG consider identifying or creating opportunities to bring Trustees and Advisers together.

MA/HJ

Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 2 March 2016, Science Museum

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