

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Minutes of the Meeting on 2 December 2013 at the Science Museum

Present:

Dr Douglas Gurr (Chairman)
Lady Chisholm
Mr Howard Covington
Professor Dame Athene Donald
Lord Faulkner of Worcester
Mr Peter Fell (Special Adviser)
Mr Andreas Goss
Lord Grade of Yarmouth
Professor Ludmilla Jordanova
Mr Simon Linnett
Professor Averil Macdonald
Dr Gill Samuels
Mr James Smith
Mr Chris Swinson

In Attendance:

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| Mr Ian Blatchford | Director, Science Museum Group (SMG) |
| Ms Jane Ellis | Director of Finance, SMG |
| Mrs Susan Fisher | Director of Development, SMG |
| Ms Jean Franczyk | Director, MOSI |
| Dr Roger Highfield | Director of External Affairs, SMG |
| Mr Paul Kirkman | Director, National Railway Museum |
| Ms Heather Mayfield | Deputy Director, Science Museum |
| Mr Jonathan Newby | Chief Operating Officer, SMG |
| Ms Jo Quinton-Tulloch | Director, National Media Museum |
| Ms E Helen Jones | Head of Strategy & Planning, SMG (Minutes) |
| Ms Louisa Burden | Head of Conservation & Collections Care (Item 4) |

Apologies: Sir Howard Newby, Ms Janet Street-Porter

Declaration of Interests: None

ACTION

BT 12/13 1 Draft minutes of the meetings on 21 October 2013 and matters arising

- 1.1 The minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman.
- 1.2 There were no matters arising that were not covered under the agenda

BT 12/13 2 Chairman's Business

- 2.1 It was the last meeting to be attended by Peter Fell, Special Adviser for MOSI. PF was thanked warmly for his contribution.
- 2.2 The biennial Board Effectiveness Review would be effected by circulation in the New Year of an evaluation paper by the Chairman.
- 2.3 Digital remained high on the agenda. There had been a well-received presentation at the Finance & Strategy Committee (F&SC) meeting on 15 November. A member of the committee was advising and a progress report would come to a future Board meeting.
- 2.4 A recruitment process for new Trustees would be initiated in 2014. The Chairman would undertake a skills analysis. The Board was reminded to consider diversity and inclusion.

RH (HJ)

BT 12/13 3 Director's Update

3.1 a) *Director's Report Dec 2013*

The paper that had been circulated previously was noted. Highlights included:

- A range of new financial freedoms for National Museums had been introduced by DCMS and Treasury;
- A substantial sum had been pledged for the exhibition, *Russia's Space Quest* (title tbc);
- *Collider* had received excellent media coverage and was doing well. It would be shown at MOSI and subsequently tour to international venues;
- There had been a very positive meeting with the new Director of the Wellcome Trust covering the SM Medical Galleries and leadership in the sector;
- Following a meeting with the Provost, SMG would seek further opportunities to deepen the relationship with University College London;
- SMG was to second a Learning team member into the European Space Agency team working on the mission of British astronaut, Major Tim Peake;

ACTION

- 3.2 In discussion:
- SMG was congratulated by Trustees on the launch event for *Collider* featuring Professor Stephen Hawking, Ian McEwan and Professor Nima Arkadi-Hamed. The event and the exhibition itself had raised the bar and the same approach needed to be taken re permanent galleries.
 - **It was agreed** that touring exhibitions should be discussed at a future meeting.
 - The suggestion of a “Science Davos” for London was noted, and the fact that a similar event was already planned in Manchester.
- 3.3 *b) Development Report*
The paper that had been circulated previously was noted. The HLF funding application for the exhibition, *The Wounded* had since been withdrawn and the exhibition was unlikely to be possible. The NRM was planning an exhibition and events to commemorate the centenary of the First World War.
- 3.4 *c) SMG Health and Safety Report*
The paper that had been circulated previously was noted.
- 3.5 *d) Mid-Year Report against 2013/14 SMG Plan*
The paper that had been circulated previously was noted. There were a few ‘red’ items but these were not substantive

HM (HJ)

BT 12/13 4 Conservation Policies

- 4.1 The papers that had been circulated previously were noted. It was also noted that the policy on Operating Historic objects had not been formally ratified by the Collections & Research Committee (CORE).
- 4.2 There was some discussion on definitions of ‘rare’, ‘unique’ and ‘working’, and how the policies related to certain case studies. The policy statements were not legally binding in themselves, but demonstrated that SMG had considered its approach to preservation, conservation and restoration as part of its statutory duties under the National Heritage Act (1983), and provided guidance for internal decision-making.
- 4.2 **It was agreed** that the SMG Policy and Procedures for Selecting and Operating Historic Objects from the Collections of the Science Museum Group be amended so that paragraph 2 of section 1 included a stronger statement of the public benefit of operating historic objects.
- 4.3 **The SMG policies for conservation and operation of historic objects were approved**, subject to the required amendment. Final approval of the latter was delegated to CORE.

HM, LB

LJ, LB

BT 12/13 5 SMG National & International Policies

- 5.1 The paper that had been circulated previously was noted. The SMG National Strategy would be reviewed in 2014 alongside the SMG International Strategy, and the SM Strategic Ambitions 2012-2022 would be extended to cover each SMG Museum, to ensure they were all aligned.
- 5.2 **The SM National Strategy was approved.**

BT 12/13 6 Strategic Financial Planning

- 6.1 An update was given. Phase 1 of the planned changes had been launched and was expected to yield £1.1 million of savings. More than 50% of the total savings were anticipated for phase 3, for which less detail had been confirmed to date. This work was the major priority for the Executive.

BT 12/13 7 Proposed application for loan financing

This item is recorded in a confidential annex to these minutes

BT 12/13 8 NMeM Strategic Ambitions

- 8.1 The paper that had been circulated previously was noted and a presentation was given that focused on: Action 1 - A commitment to a home in Bradford; Action 8 – Dramatically transform public circulation and orientation within the building; and Action 9 – Rationalisation of permanent galleries over two floors.

8.2 In discussion:

- It was reported that the NMeM Advisory Board strongly supported the compelling and coherent new vision;
- The plans were yet to be costed, but were expected to be in the region of £6-10m;
- Further follow-up was needed with all stakeholders, especially pressing hard on funding;
- The Museum's environs were being improved, including the police station opposite, but there was little that could be done about the large, busy roads. Signage should be improved immediately;
- The commercial cinema operation was under tender and it was important to get expert commercial advice in order to arrive at the best solution;
- Lesson must be learned from the Life Online project;
- The team was congratulated on doing such a lot of good work in a short time.

MG**BT 12/13 9 NRM Strategic Ambitions**

9.1 The paper that had been circulated previously was noted and a presentation was given. The core principle was to re-focus the NRM on being a museum and less like a heritage railway operator. There was to be a significant staff re-structure.

9.2 In discussion:

- It was reported that the NRM Advisory Board was fully behind the plans;
- The relationship with the City of York had changed;
- The road bisecting the site remained a major problem with a decision on its future anticipated in c. six months;
- Consideration must be given to future collecting and the fact that modern train units tended to be longer and less detachable;
- PK was congratulated on doing such a lot of good work in a short time.

BT 12/13 10 Future library & archives provision for the Science Museum

10.1 The paper that had been circulated previously was noted.

10.2 The proposed location for the new Research Centre was, at that point, the ground floor of the Wellcome Wolfson Building. It was expected that a schedule for quitting Imperial College would be agreed in January.

BT 12/13 11 Railway Heritage Designation Recommendations

11.1 The paper that had been circulated previously was noted. A sizable group of objects belonging to Transport for London (TfL) had been recommended for designation following TfL's voluntary inclusion within the scope of the statutory powers.

11.2 **The Board approved** the recommendations of the RHDAB.

11.3 **It was agreed** that a Group-wide acquisition policy for rail, including the relationship with other organisations should be drawn up and brought to a future board meeting.

11.4 The case of the missing painting previously reported had been resolved satisfactorily.

PK (HJ)**BT 12/13 12 SMG Remuneration Committee Terms of Reference**

12.1 The paper that had been circulated previously was noted and **the terms of reference were approved**.

BT 12/13 13 Reports from Advisory Boards and Committees

13.1 The papers that had been circulated previously were noted. Additional comments noted below where relevant.

13.2 *b) Audit Committee*

- The Committee had been assured that there was generally sufficient project management capacity, though it did need to be built up in some areas;
- SMG collections management was generally good, but needed to ensure that objects approved for disposal actually were disposed of;
- More generally, a mechanism for ensuring the Board decisions were implemented should be considered.

DG, HJ

- 13.3 c) *MOSI* **ACTION**
- Negotiations continued regarding the Ordsall Chord.
 - Manchester Science Festival had been a big success and current programme, including Brains and the highlights gallery, was strong.
- 13.4 **It was agreed** that a programme of fundraising priorities across SMG be brought to the March Board meeting. **SF (HJ)**
- 13.5 f) *Science Museum*
- The recently-opened exhibitions, Collider and 3D: Printing The Future, were considered excellent, and presentations on the new Maths and Medical projects were well-received;
 - Two new members had agreed to join: designer Helen Storey MBE and IC scientist, Prof Molly Stevens.
- 13.6 g) *National Railway Museum*
- A Memorandum of Understanding with Great Central Railways, subject to their fundraising for the new project;
 - The success of the *Mallard 75* events was highlighted, noting that the 'Great Goodbye' to the visiting A4 locomotives would be at Shildon in February 2014;
 - The *Flying Scotsman* was being worked on at the contractor's site and a progress report was due soon.

BT 12/13 14 Any Other Business

- 14.1 None

BT 12/13 15 Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday 4 March 2014, Science Museum, 16.00-19.00

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