

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Minutes of the Meeting on 26 June 2014 at the Science Museum**

Present:

Dr Douglas Gurr (Chairman)
Lady Chisholm
Mr Howard Covington
Professor Dame Athene Donald
Lord Faulkner of Worcester
Professor Ludmilla Jordanova (by phone)
Mr Simon Linnett
Professor Averil Macdonald
Sir Howard Newby
Dr Gill Samuels
Mr James Smith

In Attendance:

Mr Ian Blatchford	Director, Science Museum Group (SMG)
Ms Jane Ellis	Finance Director, SMG
Ms Jean Franczyk	Director, MOSI
Dr Roger Highfield	Director of External Affairs, SMG
Mr Paul Kirkman	Director, National Railway Museum
Mr Jonathan Newby	Chief Operating Officer, SMG
Ms Jo Quinton-Tulloch	Director, National Media Museum
Ms E Helen Jones	Head of Strategy & Planning
Ms Sally MacDonald	Director (designate), MOSI

Apologies: Mrs Susan Fisher, Mr Andreas Goss, Lord Grade of Yarmouth, Mr Chris Swinson

Declaration of Interests: None

ACTION

BT 14/06 1 Draft minutes of previous meetings and matters arising

1.1 *a) Draft minutes of Board meeting on 4 March 2014*

The minutes of the meeting were approved and signed by the Chairman. There were no matters arising.

BT 14/06 2 Chairman's Business

2.1 All items were already on the agenda

BT 14/06 3 Director's Update

3.1 *a) Director's Report February 2014*

The papers that had been circulated previously were noted. In addition:

- An event associated with the Farnborough Airshow was to be held at the Science Museum as a corporate hire. Similar events elsewhere had, in the past attracted some protest. The Museum's messaging was to be circulated.
- The Chancellor and Prime Minister had used MOSI as the location from which to announce plans for an HS3 rail line – a good indicator of MOSI's standing both with Government and locally. It was noted that the Museum had merely been a venue; SMG has no view on HS3 *per se*.
- IB and PK were to meet Durham County Council representatives soon re Locomotion.

RH

3.2 *b) MOSI / Ordsall Chord*

The paper that had been circulated previously was noted. The compensation payment would only be made if the scheme were to be approved following the public enquiry. The agreed deal was a good one in the circumstances and the Board was thanked for its support throughout the negotiations.

3.3 *c) Development Report:* The papers that had been circulated previously were noted.

3.4 *d) Digital update*

- The Digital Review Group had met for the second time; it had been decided that it be further strengthened and would report to the Finance & Strategy Committee.
- A benchmarking exercise was underway and a range of activities was underway.
- It was recommended that SMG consider how to link to the emphasis on computing and coding in school curricula, and how to get public inputs to developments.
- Digitisation of collections was being reviewed separately.
- Trustees reported concern among the NRM Advisory Board and the Collections & Research Committee about the pace of collections digitisation and increasing online content, and about potentially missed commercial opportunities. It was recommended that representatives from these groups be invited to contribute to the Digital Review

RH

Group. It was emphasised that a degree of co-ordination across the Group was necessary, to be balanced with local autonomy.

RH

- The new Research Centre suggested a timescale for improving the digital offer.

3.5 *e) Management Accounts Summary*

The paper that had been circulated previously was noted.

3.6 *f) SMG Health and Safety Report*

- The paper that had been circulated previously was noted.
- Health and safety was considered at the Finance & Strategy Committee, where it would in future be first on each meeting agenda. The format of reports would be improved.

BT 14/06 4 Post Office Building

- 4.1 JS declared an interest in that he sat on advisory boards at Imperial College; this was noted but not considered to represent substantive conflict.
- 4.2 The paper that had been circulated previously was noted. A recommended path was suggested and the Board was asked to consider a means of reaching a decision when the time came.
- 4.3 SMG had invited offers by commercial property developers to partner the Museum in obtaining planning permission to convert the PO Block to residential use, with a view to subsequent sale. Offers had been received and were being assessed.
- 4.4 In parallel, Imperial College had expressed interest in acquiring the building for academic use, and had made a financial offer.
- 4.5 The factors to be taken into account in reaching a decision were discussed, including financial, legal, reputational, resources and timescales, and impact on other plans. **It was agreed** that acceptance of any offer needed to be agreed by the Board and an extraordinary meeting would be arranged in the near future.
- 4.6 **It was decided** that, in principle sale to IC offer was preferred, but at a higher price than was then being offered. IB and DG were authorised to convey promptly this to the President & Rector of IC. In the meantime the tender process for a commercial developer partner should continue.

DG, IB

BT 14/06 5 National Media Museum: the way forward

- 5.1 The paper that had been circulated previously was noted. The staunch support of Bradford City Council (BCC) was emphasised and the Board's approval of the future strategy for NMeM would enable SMG to take up the funding offered by BCC for an enhanced learning offer. In addition, approval was sought for capital investment of £1 million via a grant to be requested from the Science Museum Foundation to create a new interactive gallery.
- 5.2 The strategy aimed to deliver a new model for NMeM that was sustainable in the medium term (at least three years), though a bigger, longer-term vision should not be lost sight of. There would be renewed emphasis on STEM engagement for disadvantaged and under-represented communities, drawing on the strengths of the collections
- 5.3 Research had shown that the NMeM name was a potential barrier to engagement and should be changed.
- 5.4 JQT and the NMeM team were congratulated on having moved the Museum and local relationships forward so far in just one year. The paper presented a clear and compelling vision. **The Board approved** the NMeM strategy and also an application to the Science Museum Foundation for a grant of £1 million.

BT 14/06 6 Cosmonauts exhibition

- 6.1 The paper that had been circulated previously was noted. The exhibition was proceeding and expected to open in November 2014 and there was no reason to change course. The political situation was, obviously, beyond SMG's control, but SMG continued to monitor it and to maintain communication with the UK Government. A letter of comfort had been received from the Culture Minister. Otherwise, the main risks lay in the practical issues of achieving the complex loans in, and securing visas for Russian personnel within the tight schedule. There was also some financial exposure, which would increase as the project progressed, and potential for reputational damage during its run, especially if the political landscape were to change for the worse. The Museum was managing these risks. The

damage that could be done to political relations and the Museum's own reputation by unilaterally pulling out of the exhibition was such that this was practically inconceivable.

- 6.2 In discussion, the Board recognised the complexity of the exhibition organisation and of the diplomatic issues around it, but endorsed it as an example of cultural diplomacy. It was emphasised that the scale and scope of the exhibition meant that it would be a tremendous coup for the Museum to pull it off, and it afforded a huge opportunity to raise profile and prestige. The risks of not going ahead were enormous.
- 6.3 **The Board approved** the approach being taken to risk and media management for the *Cosmonauts* exhibition.

BT 14/06 7 SMG Annual Report & Accounts

- 7.1 The paper and draft document that had been circulated previously were noted.
- 7.2 **The Board approved** the SMG Annual Report & Accounts 2013/14 for final sign-off by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 1 July.

BT 14/06 8 Railway Heritage Designation Recommendations

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

BT 14/06 9 Reports from SMG Advisory Board and Committees

- 9.1 The minutes of meetings had been circulated where available and were noted. Only additional points or key points from oral reports are noted below.
- 9.2 *a) NRM Advisory Board*
- There was renewed momentum behind the York Central initiative and PK was looking at how it might impact on the masterplan for the Museum, and vice versa.
 - The *Mallard 75* events had been a triumph and the team was congratulated.
 - Progress on the *Flying Scotsman* restoration project was reported.
- 9.3 *b) MOSI Advisory Board*
Recent achievements included: the launch of *Collider*; the Chancellor's visit and announcement of funding for the temporary exhibition gallery; the online element of *Hooked*; multi-year funding for the Manchester Science Festival; the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Wellcome Trust; a number of improvements to the estate; and successful transfer of the SMG Finance operations hub to MOSI.
- 9.4 *c) Railway Heritage Designation Advisory Board*
A recipient was sought for the Glasgow Blue Train.
- 9.5 *d) Finance & Strategy Committee*
Although there was more work to do to achieve the cost savings and income targets, there were no major worries.
- 9.6 *f) SM Advisory Board*
Masterplan up to 2018 was reviewed, revealing its widespread impact. This should be presented to the Board. **IB**

BT 14/06 10 Future meetings

- 10.1 The paper that had been circulated previously was to be re-circulated as not all Trustees had received it. Meeting dates had been set up to 2018, and the 2014 Strategy Day was to be held in York. **HJ**

BT 14/06 11 Any Other Business

- 11.1 The Executive and staff of SMG were congratulated on an excellent year.
- 11.2 Dr Doug Gurr was warmly thanked for his unstinting support and hard work on behalf of SMG, as Trustee and then as Chairman since 2010.

Next meeting: Strategy Day, York, Wed 8 October, preceded by dinner on the evening of Tue 7 October

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