

## **The British Museum Board**

### **Minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2010 at the British Museum**

#### **Present**

Mr Niall FitzGerald KBE (Chairman)  
Professor Sir Christopher Bayly  
Lord Broers  
Mr Francis Finlay  
Dame Liz Forgan  
Professor Clive Gamble  
Mr Antony Gormley  
Mr Stephen Green  
Mr George Iacobescu  
Dr Olga Kennard  
Baroness Kennedy  
Mr Richard Lambert  
Mr David Norgrove  
Lord Powell  
Lord Stern  
Ms Patience Wheatcroft

#### **In Attendance**

Neil MacGregor	Director
Andrew Burnett	Deputy Director
Chris Yates	Director of Administration
Mark Bates	Governance and Planning Manager (Secretary)
Joanna Mackle	Director of Public Engagement (from Item 7)
Katherine Moos	Spencer Stuart (observer)

#### **1. Introduction and apologies**

- 1.1 Apologies had been received from Chief Emeka Anyaoku, Ms Karen Armstrong, Sir Ronald Cohen, Miss Val Gooding, Ms Bonnie Greer, Ms Penny Hughes, Mrs Edmée Leventis and Professor Amartya Sen
- 1.2 The Chairman welcomed Katherine Moos of Spencer Stuart who would be helping with the Board performance review on a pro bono basis.
- 1.3 The Trustees joined the Chairman in congratulating the Director on being admitted to the Order of Merit.

#### **2. Minutes of Meeting 24 and 25 September 2010**

- 2.1 The minutes of the Board meeting held on 24 and 25 September 2010 were approved and the Chairman was authorised to sign them as a true record.
- 2.2 Matters arising:
  - 2.2.1 Item 3.2.1, Cyrus Cylinder loan: the Director reported that the exhibition in Tehran was very successful and continued to attract high numbers of visitors. The Iranian

authorities had requested an extension of the loan to the Iranian New Year in March 2011. The Chairman reported that the Standing Committee had agreed in principle to a new loan agreement, rather than an extension to the current agreement, and that this should include agreement by the Iranian authorities to a memorandum of understanding on future collaborations with the British Museum.

- 2.2.2 Item 5.2, Sir Ian Johnston had spent a day at the Museum as part of his induction to the Audit Committee, which had included a visit to the Orsman Road site.
- 2.2.3 Item 7.3, Zayed National Museum: Trustees had received a copy of the ZNM curatorial concept booklets. The Director would accompany Her Majesty the Queen on her visit to Abu Dhabi on 25 November when the ZNM building design would be unveiled.
- 2.2.4 Item 9.1, Research Strategy: a number of Trustees had signed up to support the new research themes. The themes would be discussed further at a future Standing Committee meeting.
- 2.2.5 Item 16.1, Events Schedule: the schedule had been expanded to include more Museum events and would be

part of the UK Now arts festival to be held in China in 2012.

- It had been agreed with DCMS that responsibility for the Portable Antiquities Scheme would transfer to the Museum from the Museum, Libraries and Archives Council with a 15% cut in funding from April 2011.
- The process of finding a replacement for the Director of Development was underway.
- A paper on endowments had been sent in draft to the Secretary of State, Jeremy Hunt, and would be circulated to Trustees.

**Action: Mark Bates**

## **7. Comprehensive Spending Review**

- 7.1 The Chairman thanked Trustees for their advocacy in support of the Museum during the Comprehensive Spending Review.
- 7.2 Chris Yates presented the impact of the Spending Review settlement on the Museum's financial position to 2014/15, and outlined plans to identify efficiencies, costs savings and income generation opportunities. He reported that there had been a very positive response from staff for savings and income generation ideas.
- 7.3 Chris Yates provided an update on DCMS' current thinking on providing access to the Museum's reserves which might entail the establishment of an independent trust. The Standing Committee would discuss this matter further at its meeting in December.

## **8. World Conservation and Exhibitions Centre**

- 8.1 Liz Forgan presented a paper on behalf of the WCEC Committee which recommended that the Board of Trustees give final approval to the WCEC with a budget of £135m and planned completion for the end of 2013.
- 8.2 Chris Yates presented a paper which set out the financial issues to be considered by the Board in reaching a decision on whether to proceed with the WCEC project.
- 8.3 In discussion, every Trustee present at the meeting spoke and the Chairman reported the views submitted by seven of the Trustees absent. There was unanimous support for the WCEC, and the Trustees were satisfied that there were sufficient contingencies within the project and the Trustees' wider portfolio to allow them responsibly to proceed with the project.
- 8.4 The Chairman thanked Trustees for their support for the project, in particular Liz Forgan and the other Trustees on the WCEC Committee. The Director thanked the Deputy Director and the WCEC project team for their hard work.

## **9. Loans**

- 9.1 The Board approved loans to the NY Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen, to the Seattle Art Museum, USA and to the University of Nottingham, Weston Gallery at Lakeside.

## **10. Zayed National Museum**

- 10.1 The Board noted the curatorial concept booklets for the ZNM.

**11. Future exhibition programme**

- 11.1 The Board noted the exhibition programme and requested further information on the programme of international touring exhibitions.

**Action: Mark Bates**

**12. Advocacy report**

- 12.1 The Board noted the Advocacy Report.  
12.2 Joann Mackle provided an update on *A History of the World*.

**13. Committee minutes**

- 13.1 The Board noted the minutes of the Standing Committee meeting of 9 September, the Audit Committee meeting of 1 July, the Nominations and Governance Committee meeting of 25 March and the WCEC Committee meetings of 28 June, 27 September and 29 October.

**14. Schedule of events**

- 14.1 The Board noted and approved the expanded schedule of events.

**15. Any other business**

- 15.1 The Chairman thanked Lord Powell and Stephen Green for their unique and invaluable contributions to the Board of Trustees and wished them well for the future.

**Date of next meeting: Thursday 24 March 2011**

\_\_\_\_\_Chairman

## **ANNEX**

### **Annex to British Museum Board minutes of meeting held on 18 November 2010**

#### **Item 5: Committee reports**

##### **Standing Committee 28 October 2010**

- The focus of the meeting was on the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review.
- The Committee approved new policies on Whistle Blowing, on Anti-Money Laundering and on Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Prevention.
- The Committee approved in principle the establishment of an independent body using the name of the British Museum in its title.

##### **Nominations & Governance Committee 25 September 2010**

- The Committee reviewed Board skills and forthcoming vacancies and decided that three new Trustees should be recruited to fill a current vacancy and those arising from Stephen Green's retirement in November and Richard Lambert's in June. The priority would be for people with fundraising, international or digital technology experience.
- It had been decided to keep the vacancy arising from Charles Powell's retirement in December open for now.
- The Committee recommended that the Register of Interests be tabled at all future Board meetings for review by Trustees to ensure that it is up to date.