

The British Museum Board

Minutes of the meeting held on 24 March 2011 at the British Museum

Present

Mr Niall FitzGerald KBE (Chairman)
Chief Emeka Anyaoku
Ms Karen Armstrong
Lord Broers
Mr Francis Finlay
Dame Liz Forgan
Professor Clive Gamble
Miss Val Gooding
Mr Antony Gormley
Ms Bonnie Greer
Ms Penny Hughes
Dr Olga Kennard
Baroness Kennedy
Mrs Edmée Leventis
Mr David Norgrove
Lord Stern
Baroness Wheatcroft

In Attendance

Neil MacGregor	Director
Andrew Burnett	Deputy Director
Chris Yates	Director of Administration
Sukie Hemming	Acting Director of Development (Item 8)
Philip Marshall	Head of Commercial Department (Item 8)
Mark Bates	Governance and Planning Manager (Secretary)
Katherine Moos	Spencer Stuart (Item 15)

1. Introduction and apologies

- 1.1 Apologies had been received from Professor Sir Christopher Bayly, Sir Ronald Cohen, Mr George Iacobescu, Sir Richard Lambert and Professor Amartya Sen.

2. Minutes of Meeting

- 2.1 The minutes of the Board meeting held on 18 November 2010 were approved and the Chairman was authorised to sign them as a true record.

- 2.2 Matters arising:

- 2.2.1 Item 2.2.1, Cyrus Cylinder loan: the Director reported that he had been invited to attend the closing ceremony for the exhibition in Tehran in April. The event would also be attended by UK journalists who had been granted visas under the terms of the British Museum's memorandum of understanding with the National Museum of Iran.

- 2.2.2 Item 6.2, Director of Development appointment: Chris Yates updated the Board on progress.

3. Declaration of Interests

3.1 No interests were declared.

4. Chairman's report

4.1 The Chairman announced that Sir Martin Sorrell had accepted the Board's invitation to become a Trustee.

4.2 Antony Gormley had been reappointed as a Trustee on the nomination of the Royal Academy for a term of four years from 2 April 2011 with the approval of the Minister for Culture.

4.3 Francis Finlay had joined the Standing Committee from 3 March.

4.4 David Norgrove would be appointed Deputy Chair from 26 June to replace Richard Lambert.

4.5 The Board away meeting would be held from 30 September to 2 October in Oxford.

4.6 The Chairman reported on his discussion with the Secretary of State, Jeremy Hunt, about the Budget measures designed to help charities.

5. Committee reports

5.1 The Chairs of the Standing Committee, Audit Committee and Nominations and Governance Committee reported on committee business since the last Board meeting (see annex).

6. Management Report

6.1 The Trustees noted the Management Report.

6.2 The Director reported with great sadness the deaths of Claude Ardouin, Head of the Africa Section in the department of Africa, Oceania and the Americas, and Geoff Egan, Early and Post-Medieval Treasure Co-ordinator for the Portable Antiquities Scheme.

6.3 The Director drew attention to the increased threat of terrorism and the steps being taken by the Museum to protect visitors, and staff based on site and overseas.

6.4 The Director reported on the successful opening of the Afghanistan exhibition by President Karzai, which was also attended by the Foreign Secretary and the head of the British Armed Forces.

6.5 The Deputy Director reported on the opening of the *Body Beautiful* exhibition in Kobe, Japan which he had attended along with several Museum staff. He advised that all staff and Museum loans had been unaffected by the earthquake and tsunami.

7. Grants and Designations

7.1 After a full discussion and careful consideration, the Trustees agreed to make an unconditional grant to the British Museum Trust Limited restricted for the furtherance of the British Museum's charitable objects.

- 7.2 The Trustees re-confirmed the existing designations of funds agreed in March 2010 for the World Conservation and Exhibitions Centre, Gallery Projects, Infrastructure Projects and Capital & Maintenance Work, as well as the designation of the Trust Funds.
- 7.3 The Trustees asked management to ensure that the level of general reserves at the end of the financial year 2010/11 complies with the policy agreed by the Board in July 2008 of holding between one and three months' expenditure as general reserves; specifically the Trustees asked management to retain £12m as general reserves. Trustees agreed a further grant so that any remaining general reserves at the year-end, subject to Departmental Expenditure Limit budgetary restrictions, would be granted unconditionally to the British Museum Trust Limited, restricted for the furtherance of the British Museum's charitable objects.

8. Financial Sustainability Programme

- 8.1 Chris Yates presented the key elements of the Museum's Financial Sustainability Programme designed to address a structural deficit arising from the Government's reduction in grant-in-aid to 2014/15.
- 8.2 The Board approved the closure of the Museum to the public on Thursday evenings.
- 8.3 Philip Marshall provided an update on the Commercial department's planned activity over the next five years. Sukie Hemming provided updates on fundraising for permanent posts and gallery refurbishments. She also reported that the World Conservation and Exhibitions Centre had recently secured funding from Citi and the Clothworkers' Foundation, and a combined gift from the Family of Constantine Leventis and the A.G Leventis Foundation.
- 8.4 The lead Trustee for each of the Museum's revenue-generating projects provided an update.

9. Operating Plan and Budget 2011/12

- 9.1 The Museum's Operating Plan and Budget for 2011/12 were provisionally approved by the Board and would be discussed at the next meeting.

Action: Board Secretary

10. Loan

- 10.1 The Board approved a loan to the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden (ref. 1695)

11. Future exhibition programme

- 11.1 The Board noted the exhibition programme.

12. Advocacy Report

- 12.1 The Board noted the Advocacy Report.

13. Committee minutes

- 13.1 The Board noted the minutes of the Standing Committee of 28 October, 9 December and 20 January; the Nominations and Governance Committee of 25 September and 15 December; and the Audit Committee of 26 October.

14. Any other business

- 14.1 The Chairman thanked Richard Lambert in his absence for the enormous contribution he had made to the Board over eight years, and on behalf of the Trustees wished him well for the future.

15. Board Performance Review

- 15.1 A closed session with the Director was held where Katherine Moos of Spencer Stuart presented her report of the British Museum Board Performance Review 2010.

Date of next meeting: Thursday 30 June 2011

_____ Chairman

ANNEX

Annex to British Museum Board minutes of meeting held on 24 March 2011

Item 5: Committee reports

Standing Committee report from Niall FitzGerald

9 December 2010

- The Quarter 2 Operating Plan report and Management Accounts were discussed.
- A new WCEC project management contract was approved to ensure business continuity.
- The Committee agreed in principle to the establishment of the BM Trust, subject to further legal advice.

20 January 2011

- A progress report on the Financial Sustainability Programme was received.
- Legal advice on establishment of BM Trust was presented.

3 March 2011

- The Quarter 3 Operating Plan report and Management Accounts were discussed.
- An update on the Zayed National Museum was received.
- The Committee considered the risks to the BM of the current political unrest in the Middle East.
- A progress report on Membership was received.
- Lord Stern provided a Research Strategy progress report

Audit Committee report from David Norgrove

- The Committee had considered the risks associated with the WCEC project.
- The risks to the Collection had been considered, in particular storage and the system for monitoring missing or misplaced items.

Nominations & Governance Committee report from Val Gooding

15 December 2010

- The Committee approved the role specification for some Prime Ministerial appointments.

17 February 2011

- Prospective candidates for two Prime Ministerial appointments were considered.
- The Committee approved the appointment of Sir Martin Sorrell.
- The Committee agreed that Trustee succession planning should be a standing item at future Standing Committee meetings.

24 March 2011

- The Committee discussed the outcome of the Board Performance Review 2010.