

## The British Museum Board

### Minutes of Meeting 25 March 2010 Held at the British Museum

#### Present

Mr Niall FitzGerald KBE (Chairman)  
Ms Karen Armstrong  
Professor Sir Christopher Bayly  
Lord Broers  
Mr Francis Finlay  
Dame Liz Forgan  
Miss Val Gooding  
Dr Olga Kennard  
Mrs Edmée Leventis  
Mr David Norgrove  
Sir James Sassoon

#### In Attendance

Neil MacGregor	Director
Chris Yates	Director of Administration
Mark Bates	Governance and Planning Manager (Secretary)
Justin Morris	Director of Strategic Planning (Item 9)
Jane Whittaker	Head of Finance (Item 9)
Steve Gill	Director of Visitor and Building Services (Item 10)
Philip Marshall	Head of Commercial Department (Item 11)
Carol Hunt	Head of Membership (Item 11)
Maria Muller	Director of Development (Item 12)
Sukie Hemming	Director of Capital Development (Item 12)

#### 1. Reappointment of Chairman (closed session)

- 1.1 The Chairman and officials, except for the Director, were not present for the consideration of the reappointment of Niall FitzGerald as Chairman. Val Gooding chaired the discussion and sought the Director's views before asking him to leave the room.
- 1.2 Those Trustees present unanimously resolved to reappoint Niall FitzGerald as Chairman for a term coterminous with his appointment as a Trustee to 22 March 2014. However, as a number of Trustees were unavoidably absent, it was agreed that Val Gooding would ask those Trustees not present to ratify the decision formally.

**Action: Val Gooding<sup>1</sup>**

- 1.3 Welcoming him to the meeting, the Board warmly congratulated the Chairman on his reappointment.

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<sup>1</sup> All Trustees not present at the meeting ratified the Board's decision.

## **2. Apologies**

2.1 Apologies had been received from Sir Ronald Cohen, Chief Emeka Anyaoku, Mr George Iacobescu, Mrs Penny Hughes, Ms Bonnie Greer, Baroness Kennedy, Mr Richard Lambert, Lord Powell, Lord Stern, Mr Antony Gormley and Mr Stephen Green. Apologies had also been received from the Deputy Director.

## **3. Minutes of Meeting 19 November 2009**

3.1 The minutes of the Board meeting held on 19 November 2009 were approved and the Chairman was authorised to sign them as a true record.

3.2 Matters arising:

- Item 2.2: Andrew Dismore had re-presented his British Museum Act 1963 (Amendment) Bill to Parliament on 6 January (First Reading). The Bill was opposed cross-party and it was unlikely that there would be sufficient time for it to be debated by the current Parliament.
- Item 2.2: Cyrus Cylinder Loan - the Director reported that at a meeting he had with the Iranian Ambassador on 22 March, the Ambassador had acknowledged the Museum's reasons for postponing the loan to Tehran until July. The Director advised that Trustees would be asked in June to confirm the loan planned at the moment for July, taking account of a security assessment and contingency plans.

## **4. Declaration of Interests**

4.1 No interests were declared.

## **5. Chairman's Report**

5.1 The Chairman advised that he would be meeting the South African High Commissioner later in the day to discuss the proposed Mandela Day event to be held at the Museum on 18 July.

5.2 As a follow up to the recent Storage Review, the Board would be visiting the Orsman Road site on 1 July before its meeting.

5.3 The Chairman reported on committee membership: David Norgrove had resigned from the WCEC Committee because of new commitments; the WCEC Committee would be seeking to appoint a new member; and the Audit Committee was also considering co-opting external expertise.

5.4 The International Sub-committee minutes would be circulated to all Trustees.

**Action: Governance Manager**

5.5 The Investment Sub-committee had been asked to report to the Standing Committee and then the Board on the new investment portfolio. The sub-committee had decided to co-opt external members and to recruit a paid fund manager. Francis Finlay provided a brief update on investment performance.

5.6 The Chairman advised the Board that a final decision on the venue for the annual away meeting in September had yet to be made.

## **6. Reports from Permanent Committee Chairs**

- 6.1 The Chairman reported on the Standing Committee meetings held on 3 December 2009, 20 January 2010 and 2 February 2010 (see annex).
- 6.2 David Norgrove reported on the Audit Committee meeting held earlier in the day (see annex). The Committee recommended that the Board reviewed the Risk Register at its next meeting.
- 6.3 Val Gooding reported on the Nominations & Governance Committee meeting held earlier in the day (see annex). Trustees were encouraged to submit names of potential trustees for consideration by the Committee.

**Action: Trustees**

## **7. Management Report**

- 7.1 The Board noted the contents of the Management Report.
- 7.2 The Director thanked Edmee Leventis for helping receive the First Lady of Cyprus at the Museum on 19 March, and for her help, with that of Chief Anyaoku, in receiving the Ooni of Ife for the exhibition opening on 3 March.
- 7.3 The Director advised that it had been decided to proceed with the demolition of the Bindery and other temporary buildings on the proposed WCEC site.
- 7.4 The Director reported that DCMS had set up a review of the NDPB status of National Museums and Galleries. Chris Yates would be a member of the review team and would circulate a note to the Board on proposals for reducing regulation.

**Action: Chris Yates**

## **8. World Conservation & Exhibition Centre**

- 8.1 Liz Forgan wished to record her congratulations to the WCEC team for succeeding in obtaining planning permission from Camden Council in December.
- 8.2 Stage E and landscape design had commenced and a schedule for protecting the collection was being drawn up. The focus of activity over the next few months would be on fundraising.
- 8.3 The Chairman said that he had asked George Iacobescu to help consider options for these properties, taking into account that revenue from these was at the moment part of the long term business plan.

## **9. Operating Plan & Budget 2010/11**

- 9.1 Justin Morris presented the Operating Plan for 2010/11 which the Board approved.
- 9.2 Jane Whittaker presented a balanced budget for 2010/11 which the Board approved.
- 9.3 The Trustees re-confirmed the existing designations of funds agreed in July 2008 for the World Conservation and Exhibitions Centre (formerly the North West Development), Gallery Projects and Infrastructure, as well as the designation of the Trust Funds.

- 9.4 The Trustees asked management to designate any remaining reserves for essential capital and maintenance work, having first ensured that the level of general reserves at the end of the financial year 2009/10 complied with the policy agreed by the Board in July 2008 of holding between one and three months' expenditure as general reserves.

## **10. Space Plan**

- 10.1 Having considered the Space Plan at a presentation earlier in the day, the Board formally approved the plan and thanked Steve Gill and his team for their hard work.

## **11. Membership Strategy**

- 11.1 Carol Hunt presented the rationale and key elements of a new Membership Strategy which would help the Museum achieve a membership of 100,000 within five years. She outlined the areas where the Friends would need support from the Museum, in particular the need for a new Members' room. David Norgrove in his capacity as Chairman of the Friends strongly endorsed the strategy.

- 11.2 The Trustees welcomed the strategy and gave it their full support.

## **12. Fundraising and Revenue Generation**

- 12.1 The Chairman introduced his paper on fundraising and revenue generation which sought to capitalise on the Museum's recent success. He encouraged all Trustees to support specific proposals to secure a strong funding base, and to help identify further opportunities.

- 12.2 The Chairman advised that fundraising and revenue generation would be a standing item on future Board agendas.

**Actions: Governance Manager**

## **13. Board Performance**

- 13.1 This item was deferred to the next meeting.

## **14. Advocacy Report**

- 14.1 The Board noted the contents of the Advocacy Report.

## **15. Minutes of the Committees**

- 15.1 The Board noted the minutes of the Standing Committee meetings of 3 December 2009, 20 January 2010 and 2 February 2010; the Audit Committee meeting of 8 October; and the WCEC Committee meetings of 25 November 2009, 18 December 2009, 25 January 2010 and 22 February 2010.

## **16. Schedule of forthcoming events**

- 16.1 The Board noted the schedule of events.

**17. Any Other Business**

17.1 There was no other business.

**Date of next meeting: Thursday 1 July 2010**

\_\_\_\_\_Chairman

## **Standing Committee Report by Niall FitzGerald**

### Meeting 3 December 2009

The Committee asked the Director to write to the Conservative Party to express its concerns about the proposed merger of English Heritage and the Heritage Lottery Fund. A letter was sent to Jeremy Hunt in February.

The Committee discussed options for investment of the Museum's general funds with Francis Finlay, Chairman of the Investment sub-committee, and made recommendations.

The Quarter 2 Operating Plan report and Management Accounts were presented and discussed. A new format for the Management Accounts was approved.

The findings from the Museum's first Employee Opinion Survey were presented. The Committee expressed concern at the low response rate from staff in some departments and asked that priority be given to improving this for the next survey.

### Meeting 21 January 2010

The Committee discussed the postponement of the loan of the Cyrus Cylinder to Iran and agreed in principle to the loan after June 2010.

The Chairman reported on his meeting with George Osborne and Jeremy Hunt in December.

The Committee agreed that the Investment sub-committee membership should be expanded by co-option of outside expertise, and that paid fund managers should be appointed.

### Extraordinary meeting 2 February 2010

The meeting was held to consider a rescheduled date for the loan of the Cyrus Cylinder. The Committee agreed unanimously that the Museum should agree in principle to a loan in the second half of July 2010.

## **Audit Committee report by David Norgrove**

### Meeting 25 March 2010

The Committee had considered BMCo's commercial activity and were satisfied with its management of risk.

Revised whistleblowing, money laundering and fraud policies had been reviewed and would be presented to the Board for approval.

The Committee had considered proposals to improve storage management, particularly pest management.

## **Nominations and Governance Committee Report by Val Gooding**

### Meeting 25 March 2010

The Committee discussed the Chairman's reappointment.

The Committee considered the current composition of the Board and vacancies arising to the end of 2011. They received a progress report on the media Trustee recruitment exercise and considered a list of potential trustees with digital technology expertise.

The Committee considered succession plans for the senior management team and agreed that there should be a discussion about succession for the Director at the next Board meeting.