

THE BRITISH MUSEUM
MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
3 JULY 2008
AT THE BRITISH MUSEUM

PRESENT

Mr Niall FitzGerald KBE (Chairman)
Chief Emeka Anyaoku
Professor Sir Christopher Bayly
Lord Broers
Sir Ronald Cohen
Professor Sir Barry Cunliffe
Mr Francis Finlay
Ms Bonnie Greer
Ms Penny Hughes
Baroness Kennedy
Mr David Lindsay
Lord Powell
Sir John Tusa

IN ATTENDANCE

Neil MacGregor	Director
Andrew Burnett	Deputy Director
Zoe Hancock	Director of Projects and Planning
Chris Yates	Director of Finance and Administration
Mark Bates	Governance and Policy Manager

Item 2	Jeremy Hill, Research Manager
Items 8-11 & 17	Joanna Mackle, Director of Public Engagement
Items 11-16	Justin Morris, Head of Strategic Planning & Collections Services
Item 12	Lesley Fitton, Keeper, Greek & Roman
Item 17:	John Curtis, Keeper, Middle East
	Major General Barney White-Spunner
	Major Hugo Clark

1. PROFESSOR SIR CHRISTOPHER BAYLY

1.1 The Chairman welcomed Professor Sir Christopher Bayly to the Board as the British Academy's nominated Trustee.

2. RESEARCH REPORT

2.1 Jeremy Hill presented his paper, *Research at the British Museum 2005 to 2007*. The Board endorsed the central importance of good research for the Museum and the importance of recruiting and retaining good research staff.

3. APOLOGIES

- 3.1 Apologies had been received from Miss Val Gooding, Mr Antony Gormley, Mr Stephen Green, Mr George Iacobescu, Dr Olga Kennard, Mr Richard Lambert, Mrs Edmée Leventis, Mr David Norgrove and Mr Eric Salama.

4. DAVID LINSELL AND ERIC SALAMA

- 4.1 The Chairman advised the Board that David Linsell's and Eric Salama's terms as Trustees ended in September. He recorded his thanks for their contribution to the Board. He also thanked David Linsell for agreeing to stay on as an advisor to the North West Development Committee and the BMCo Board.

5. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

- 5.1 The Minutes of the Board meeting held on 17 April 2008 were approved and the Chairman was authorised to sign them as a true record.
- 5.2 It was reported that Te Papa Tongarewa had written to thank the Trustees for their consideration of the transfer of human remains from New Zealand, and to thank them for the decision to transfer nine bone fragments.

6. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

- 6.1 No new conflicts of interest were reported, but Barry Cunliffe recorded his interest in the North West Development as a Commissioner of English Heritage.

7. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

- 7.1 The Chairman reported that Margaret Hodge had recommended to the Prime Minister the reappointments of Helena Kennedy and Ronald Cohen for a further four years.
- 7.2 The selection panel for the three new Trustee posts had shortlisted candidates for interview on 16 July.
- 7.3 The Chairman congratulated all those involved in the launch of the Annual Review. This had been very well-attended and had attracted some excellent media coverage.
- 7.4 The Chairman was pleased to announce that the Director had agreed to renew his contract for a further five years to 2012. The Board welcomed this.

8. MANAGEMENT REPORT

- 8.1 The Board noted the contents of the Management Report.
- 8.2 The Director reported that the Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, would be opening the Hadrian exhibition on 23 July.

- 8.3 The Director reported that at a meeting with Margaret Hodge on 1 July, proposed legislation to allow national museums to deaccession objects deemed to have been spoliated during the Nazi era had been discussed..
- 8.4 The Director advised that a memorandum of understanding with Iran would be signed on 4 July.
- 8.5 The Director advised that there was likely to be a strike by some BM staff who were members of PCS and Prospect on the afternoon of 4 July over the 2007/08 pay settlement. It was anticipated that the impact on the public would be minimal.
- 8.6 The Board congratulated Museum staff on raising more than £8 million funding for redisplay of the permanent collections.

9. ADVOCACY

- 9.1 The Board noted the contents of the update of BM advocacy activity.

10. NORTH WEST DEVELOPMENT

(Barry Cunliffe did not take part in the discussion)

- 10.1. David Lindsell reported on progress with the project: the architects were finalising the re-design; discussions with English Heritage were ongoing; and a construction manager was being appointed. It was expected that a planning application would be submitted in the autumn.

11. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

- 11.1 *China* – the Director reported that Jane Portal was leaving the Museum to take up a post at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.
- 11.2 *Middle East* – Justin Morris reported on the Museum’s activity in the Middle East.

12. THE PARTHENON SCULPTURES

- 12.1 The Trustees reviewed recent discussions about the Parthenon Sculptures in the light of their fiduciary responsibilities and discussed recent developments including the following:
- The appointment of the PR agency Mandate by the Greek Government.
 - The recent Sir Stelios Haji-Ioannou EasyJet advertising campaign.
 - The forthcoming appointment of a professional campaigner to lead the campaign for the British Committee, now called Marbles Reunited (formerly Parthenon 2004).
 - The forthcoming opening of the New Acropolis Museum.
- 12.2 In the light of this discussion, the Trustees reaffirmed their position on the issue. The British Museum exists to tell the story of human cultural achievement throughout history. The Museum, more than ever now in the 21st Century, is a unique resource for the world: the breadth and depth of its collection allows the

world public to re-examine cultural identities and explore our complex network of interconnected cultures.

- 12.3 The Trustees continue to affirm that the sculptures are part of humanity's shared heritage and that they transcend cultural and national boundaries. The Trustees remain convinced that the current division of the surviving sculptures allows the best demonstration of this shared heritage. This division makes it possible for different and complementary stories to be told about them and their significance for the culture of the whole world.
- 12.4 They noted that roughly half of the sculptures were already destroyed by 1800; that the sculptures cannot now be reconstructed in their entirety; and that nobody proposes returning them to the building itself in their original position.
- 12.5 The Trustees welcomed the building of the new Acropolis Museum which will allow the Parthenon Sculptures that are in Athens to be displayed. They hope that relations between the BM and the new museum will continue to be cordial and collaborative.
- 12.6 To avoid any possibility of confusion on such a complex issue, Trustees made it clear that any discussions should take place only with the Greek Government directly or its formally authorised representatives, rather than with any other group.

13. ACQUISITIONS

- 13.1 The Board received the formal report of all acquisitions in the Acquisitions Register for 2007-8. It was agreed that the pattern of current acquisitions was a matter for future discussion.

Action: Directorate

14. RESERVES

- 14.1 Christopher Yates presented a paper on the designated reserves. The Board approved the proposed reserves policy and a number of adjustments to the reserves.

15. LOANS

- 15.1 A loan to the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire de la Ville de Genève for *Exposition Akhenaton* was approved.

16. THE STRATEGY

- 16.1 The Board discussed and approved the final draft of the Museum's new five year Strategy and agreed that, subject to a few minor changes, it should be published.
- 16.2 The Chairman advised that the Operating Plan and Budget would be discussed at the Board meeting in October.

17. IRAQ

- 17.1 Major General White-Spunner outlined cultural heritage work being carried out in Iraq by the British Army, with advice and support from John Curtis.
- 17.2 The Board noted this with interest and the Chairman thanked the Major General for attending the meeting.

18. STEWARDSHIP REPORT

- 18.1 The Board noted the Annual Stewardship of the Collection Report for 2007-08.

19. MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEES

- 19.1 The minutes of the Nominations and Governance Committee held on 17 April 2008 were noted.
- 19.2 The minutes of the Standing Committee held on 1 May 2008 were noted.
- 19.3 The minutes of the Standing Committee held on 12 June 2008 were noted.
- 19.4 The minutes of the Audit Committee held on 17 April 2008 were noted.
- 19.5 The minutes of the North West Development Committee held on 23 April 2008 were noted.
- 19.6 The minutes of the North West Development Committee held on 19 May 2008 were noted.
- 19.7 The minutes of the Investment Sub-committee held on 1 May 2008 were noted. The Chairman asked that the committee submit a formal report to the October Board meeting.

Action: Investment Sub-committee

20. SCHEDULE OF FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- 20.1 The schedule of forthcoming events was noted.

21. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 21.1 There was no other business.

Date of next meeting: Friday 3 and Saturday 4 October

_____Chairman