

**THE BRITISH MUSEUM
MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
HELD ON 6 OCTOBER 2006
AT
THE RADISSON SAS HOTEL, AMSTERDAM**

PRESENT

Mr Niall FitzGerald KBE (Chairman)
Chief Emeka Anyaoku
Lord Broers
Sri Ronald Cohen
Sir Barry Cunliffe
Mr Francis Finlay
Miss Val Gooding
Mr Stephen Green
Ms Bonnie Greer
Dr Olga Kennard
Mr Richard Lambert
Mrs Edmée Leventis
Mr David Lindsay
Mr David Norgrove
Lord Powell
Mr Vikram Seth
Sir Keith Thomas

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr Neil MacGregor	- Director
Dr Andrew Burnett	- Deputy Director
Ms Zoe Hancock	- Head of Planning and Programmes
Miss Heidi Weeks	- Directorate Manager
Mr Simon Neale	- Head of Capital Projects and Estates (for item 3)
Mr Jonathan King	- Keeper Africa, Oceania and the Americas (for item 9)

The reports and minutes referred to below may contain exempt information within the meaning of Part II of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

PART I

1A APOLOGIES

1.1 Apologies had been received from Baroness Kennedy and Mr E Salama. Sir Ronald Cohen joined the meeting via telephone for item 2a only.

2A STRATEGIC OVERVIEW OF MUSEUM OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES TO 2012

2.1 The Director introduced the Strategic Overview. 2012 had been set as a target in part due to the Olympics and the impact on funding this will have.

The Director highlighted the fact that the aspirations set out in the document would need to be supported by greater resourcing, especially people. With the importance given to the development of new audiences and the Museum's position

internationally, investment in broadcasting, conservation and the Space Plan should be a priority.

- 2.2 The Board agreed that the Principles and Purposes set out on page three were true and correct.

It was agreed that there would be a discussion on Museum's position on entrance fees at a future meeting. A paper would be circulated in advance. Trustees agreed they should review their position on this matter every 2-3 years.

- 2.3 The Chairman asked Trustees to comment on specific sections of the Strategic Overview.

2.3.1 *Primary Objectives*

Trustees agreed that using the framework of the *Museum in Britain, in London and in the World* accurately encompassed the Museum's activity.

Broadcasting would form an increasingly important part of this activity. The Museum was in a strong position to negotiate with the broadcast media. The Director stressed that the curator's role would become broader as extra skills would be required to work successfully in this medium. The future role of broadcasting should be stressed more strongly in the document.

It was agreed that the Museum's aspirations to be an international museum should be stated more strongly in the document.

2.3.2 *Capacity*

A fuller discussion would be had on Museum salaries and concerns with regard to recruiting administrative and managerial staff, and on retaining academic staff.

2.3.3 *Money*

The Director reported that the full results of the Spending Review would not be known until August 2007.

Trustees agreed it was important for the Museum to be able to demonstrate it had a strong fundraising campaign and that a strong advocacy programme must be established.

2.3.4 *Technology*

The Board agreed that finding a partner in technology should be explored. The Museum was in a strong position to negotiate with potential partners.

2.3.5 *Extending Engagement*

Trustees agreed that the Museum's website was the clear place to build engagement and that its development would be a priority.

- 2.4 The Chairman invited Trustees to table any additional issues for discussion.

The brand value of the Museum was discussed and identified as an area on which to

focus.

The Director assured Trustees that systems were in place to monitor potential security threats to the Museum and that the Standing Committee received regular reports from the Head of Security.

The overall conclusion was that Trustees needed a more focused and specific plan that could demonstrate convincingly the case for increased and sustained government funding.

3A. THE MUSEUM SPACE PLAN

- 3.1 The Director introduced the Space Plan paper, addressing the two aspects of the project: the collections management centre and the temporary exhibition space.
- 3.2 The Board approved the Space Plan project outline.
- 3.3 The Chairman reported that a preliminary meeting of the Fundraising Committee had taken place. Trustee involvement in fundraising would be crucial.
- 3.4 The Board agreed that consideration should be given to the design of a 'green', 21st century building, which may be attractive to funders.

PART II

1. APOLOGIES

- 1.1 Apologies had been received from Lord Powell.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS AND MATTERS ARISING

- 2.1 *Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Trustees: 6 July 2006.* The Minutes were approved and the Chairman was authorized to sign them as a true record.

3. MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEES

- 3.1 The Minutes of the Standing Committee meeting held on 14 September 2006 were noted.

4. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

- 4.1 Francis Finlay declared an interest as a Director of Dubai Investment Group, a member of the Dubai Holding Group, in connection to the Museum's relationship with the Dubai Holding Group and with his work in Dubai.

5. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

- 5.1 The Chairman informed the Board that he continued to meet with Trustees, senior Museum management and external stakeholders and that he would report to the Board at the November meeting.

6. FORTHCOMING 18 MONTHS

- 6.1 The Director updated Trustees on forthcoming events and activity, including extensive broadcast activity.

Trustees proposed that a discussion on the political issues surrounding the abolition of the slave trade take place at the November meeting, supported by a paper detailing the programme of activity planned around this event. **(Action: Directorate)**

Francis Finlay requested that the issue of Transatlantic Trade be a point of discussion at the London meeting of the American Friends in November. **(Action: Directorate)**

Trustees requested a short briefing paper that would give guidance on the ways in which they can most usefully act as advocates for the Museum. **(Action: Directorate)**

7. MANAGEMENT REPORT

- 7.1 *Portable Antiquities and Treasure*: The Deputy Director expanded on the Museum's relationship with ebay and reiterated the value of the Museum having a clear acquisition policy.

Building Works: Simon Neale reported that a decision from Camden on the application for listed building consent to permit the temporary conversion of the Round Reading Room was expected at the end of October.

The Director reported that the Annenberg Foundation and the Paul Hamlyn Foundation had given consent for the change in function of the Room.

People: The Board conveyed its congratulations to Kusuma Barnett and John Curtis for the honours they received in the Queen's Birthday list.

8. CONSERVATION REPORT

- 8.1 The Deputy Director reported that the paper prepared by David Saunders was an interim document. Work was progressing towards a full annual account of the state of conservation of the collection which would be made to the Audit Committee and to the Board.

9. HUMAN REMAINS

- 9.1 The Board adopted the revised Policy on Human Remains subject to further points raised by Baroness Kennedy and further consideration being given to the wording regarding the exclusion of teeth.

The Deputy Director updated the Board on the status of the request from The National Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. This claim would require substantial research work into the objects as well as Maori mortuary practices.

The National Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa is acting with the New Zealand Government's authority, but the identity of the community on whose behalf the claim is being made had not been identified. **(Action: Directorate)**

A full initial report will be presented to the Board at the meeting on 23 November.

10. EXHIBITION PROPOSAL

10.1 The Director updated the Board on exhibition proposals for future consideration.

11. SCHEDULE OF FORTHCOMING EVENTS

11.1 The schedule of forthcoming events was noted.

12. AOB

12.1 A loan to the Royal Academy of Arts for the exhibition: *Divine Beauty: Bronzes of the Chola Dynasty of Southern India* was tabled for Board approval.

The Board approved the loan.

Date of next meeting: Thursday 23 November 2006

Chairman