

**THE BRITISH MUSEUM
MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
HELD ON 17 APRIL 2008
AT THE BRITISH MUSEUM**

PRESENT

Mr Niall FitzGerald KBE (Chairman)
Sir Ronald Cohen
Sir Barry Cunliffe
Mr Francis Finlay
Mr Stephen Green
Miss Val Gooding
Mr Antony Gormley
Ms Bonnie Greer
Dr Olga Kennard
Baroness Kennedy (up to and including item 7)
Mr Richard Lambert
Mrs Edmée Leventis
Mr David Lindsell
Mr David Norgrove
Lord Powell

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr Neil MacGregor	- Director
Dr Andrew Burnett	- Deputy Director
Ms Zoe Hancock	- Director of Projects and Planning
Mr Chris Yates	- Director of Finance and Administration
Mr Mark Bates	- Governance and Policy Manager
For item 7	- Mr Vivian Davies, Keeper, Ancient Egypt & Sudan - Mr Jonathan King, Keeper, Africa, Oceania & the Americas - Ms Jenny Newell, Curator, Africa, Oceania & the Americas - Mr Tony Doubleday, Head of Legal Services
For items 7&8	- Ms Joanna Mackle, Director Public Engagement

1. NW DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

- 1.1 David Lindsell reported on progress with the project. Final plans and budgets would be considered at the July Board meeting.
- 1.2 The Board noted that the project had received a “green” rating from the Office of Government Commerce’s recent Gateway review.

- 1.3 The Chairman thanked David Lindsell for agreeing to continue to serve on the North West Development Committee after his term as trustee comes to an end.

2. APOLOGIES

- 2.1 Apologies had been received from Chief Emeka Anyaoku, Lord Broers, Ms Penny Hughes, Mr George Iacobescu, Mr Eric Salama and Sir John Tusa

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

- 3.1 *Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Trustees: 22 November 2007.*

- 3.1.1 The Minutes of the Board meeting held on 22 November 2007 were approved and the Chairman was authorised to sign them as a true record.

- 3.2 *Matters Arising*

- 3.2.1 *Trustee Appraisals* – the Chairman advised the Board that he would complete trustees' appraisals in the next three months.

(Action: Chairman)

- 3.2.2 *Research Report* - this would be discussed at the July meeting.

(Action: Directorate)

- 3.3 *Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Board of Trustees: 27 February 2008.*

- 3.3.1 The Minutes of the Board meeting held on 27 February 2008 were approved and the Chairman was authorised to sign them as a true record.

- 3.3.2 There were no matters arising.

4. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

- 4.1 No conflicts of interest were reported.

5. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

- 5.1 *Meeting with the Secretary of State* – the Chairman reported on a constructive meeting in March with Andy Burnham and Margaret Hodge.

- 5.2 *Marketing Advisory Group* – the Chairman advised the Board that the Group, chaired by Joanna Mackle, had its first meeting in March.

- 5.3 *Meetings with the Chinese Ambassador* – the Chairman reported positive meetings with the Ambassador to discuss future relations between the Museum and China.

5.4 *Disposition of Trustees on Committees* – the Chairman informed the Board that he had reviewed membership of the Board committees and would discuss this with individual members in due course.

(Action: Chairman)

5.5 *Five Year Plan* - the Chairman advised the Board that the five year plan was nearing completion and would be presented to the full Board for discussion at the July meeting.

(Action: Directorate)

5.6 *Patrons* – the Chairman reminded the Board of the continuing need to increase the number of patrons.

(Action: Trustees and Director)

6. MANAGEMENT REPORT

6.1 The Board noted the content of the Management Report.

6.2 The Director informed the Board that visits for 2007/08 had exceeded 6 million, making the Museum the most popular visitor attraction in the UK. The Director also advised that *American Scene* had achieved excellent reviews and outstanding visitor numbers during its first weekend.

6.3. *Portable Antiquities Scheme* – the Board noted with concern the Minister for Culture’s decision to approve funding only for 2007/08 at £1.3 million, and to await the outcome of an independent review before approving funding for the following two years. BM would need to make it clear it could not accept responsibility for PAS without adequate funding.

7. MAORI HUMAN REMAINS – CLAIM BY TE PAPA TONGAREWA

7.1 The Trustees considered the request by the New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa under section 47 Human Tissue Act 2004 for the repatriation of:

1. Seven preserved tattooed heads¹;
2. Nine human bone fragments².

(“the remains”)

7.2 They considered the dossier of evidence, including the opinions of independent experts, which had been published on the Museum’s website and included the case submitted by Te Papa Tongarewa, in relation to the Museum’s policy, dated 6th October 2006.

7.3 They agreed that the remains were probably 100-200 years old; and that (in relation to paragraph 5.12 of their policy), Te Papa Tongarewa’s claim was endorsed by the New Zealand government.

¹ Oc1913,0519.1; Oc1921,1014.1; Oc1925,-.46; Oc,+1998; Oc,NZ.69; Oc,NZ.70; & Oc,NZ.71

² Oc1895,-.396; Oc1895,-.397; Oc1895,-.627; Oc1895,-.628; & Oc1895,-.630; Oc1895,-.630; Oc1895,-.631; Oc1895,-.633;& Oc1895,-.634

7.4 The Chairman reminded Trustees that the museum policy starts from a presumption of retention which can be outweighed in certain circumstances. They concluded that in the case of the seven preserved tattooed heads it was not clear whether or not a process of mortuary disposal had been interrupted or disturbed; and that it was not clear that the importance of the remains to an original community outweighed the significance and importance of the remains as sources of information about human history.

7.5 On the other hand, they concluded that it was very probable that the fragments of human bone had been part of a process of mortuary disposal, and that the importance of the remains to the claimants outweighed any likely public benefit of retaining the remains in the collection. Therefore they agreed that the nine human bone fragments should be transferred to Te Papa Tongarewa.

8. ADVOCACY

8.1 The Director of Public Engagement presented the paper: *Summary of the BM's advocacy/positioning programme for the next six months.*

9. LOAN TO VORDERASIATISCHES MUSEUM, BERLIN

9.1 The Board approved the loan to the Vorderasiatisches Museum, Berlin for the exhibition *Babylon*.

10. LOAN TO THE BOWES MUSEUM

10.1 The Board approved the loan to The Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle for the exhibition *Faith and Love: Picturing the Bible in Christian Art*.

11. MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEES

11.1 The minutes of the Nominations and Governance Committee meeting held on 22 November were noted.

11.2 The minutes of the Standing Committee meeting held on 13 December 2007 were noted.

11.3 The minutes of the Standing Committee meeting held on 31 January 2008 were noted.

11.4 The minutes of the Standing Committee meeting held on 13 March 2008 were noted.

12. SCHEDULE OF FORTHCOMING EVENTS

12.1 The schedule of forthcoming events was noted.

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13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 13.1 David Lindsell reported back on the Audit Committee meeting of 17 April. There had been improvements on internal control, and an Internal Control Committee had been established. The Committee would be reviewing skills required and making recommendations on amendments to the Governance Guide to the Nominations and Governance Committee.

(Action: Audit Committee)

- 13.2 The Director confirmed that signage and branding would be considered as part of the Visitor Experience project.
- 13.3 The Board offered its congratulations on the Museum's fundraising success and the performance of BMCO.

14. CLOSED SESSION

- 14.1 This section of the meeting was a closed session with no minutes recorded and only the Trustees in attendance.

Date of next meeting: Thursday 3 July 2008.

_____Chairman