

THE BRITISH MUSEUM
MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
20 NOVEMBER 2008
HELD AT THE BRITISH MUSEUM

PRESENT

Mr Niall FitzGerald KBE (Chairman)
Chief Emeka Anyaoku
Ms Karen Armstrong
Professor Sir Christopher Bayly (to item 7)
Lord Broers
Sir Ronald Cohen (to item 6)
Professor Sir Barry Cunliffe (except item 7)
Mr Francis Finlay
Dame Liz Forgan
Miss Val Gooding
Ms Bonnie Greer
Mrs Penny Hughes
Mr George Iacobescu
Dr Olga Kennard
Baroness Helena Kennedy
Mr Richard Lambert (to item 8)
Mrs Edmée Leventis
Mr David Norgrove
Lord Powell
Lord Stern
Sir John Tusa

IN ATTENDANCE

Neil MacGregor	Director
Andrew Burnett	Deputy Director (to item 8)
Chris Yates	Director of Finance and Administration (from item 5)
Joanna Mackle	Director of Public Engagement (items 6 & 7)
David Lindsell	North West Development Committee Chairman (item 7)
Maria Muller	Director of Development (item 8)
John Curtis	Keeper Middle East (item 9)
Chris Denvir	Information Manager (item 14)
Helen Watts	BMCo Head of Finance & Administration (item 18)
Mark Bates	Governance and Policy Manager
Cassie Brown	Director's Office (observer from item 5)

1. INTRODUCTION & APOLOGIES

- 1.1 The Chairman warmly welcomed Lord Stern to his first Board meeting.
- 1.2 The Chairman noted that this would be Sir John Tusa's last Board meeting before his term as a Trustee ended on 24 March 2009. On behalf of the Board, he thanked Sir John for his outstanding contribution to the Board.
- 1.3 Apologies had been received from Antony Gormley and Stephen Green.

2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING 3 AND 4 OCTOBER

- 2.1 The minutes of the Board meeting held on 3 and 4 October were approved and the Chairman was authorised to sign them as a true record.
- 2.2 Matters arising:
- Item 3.2.2 – the Director advised that a national PCS strike scheduled for 10 November had been cancelled, but that strike action could be called again up to mid-December.
 - Item 6.2 – the Director reported that the outcome of the Portable Antiquities Scheme review had been very favourable, including additional funding secured up to 2010/11. The Chairman congratulated all those involved.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

- 3.1 Barry Cunliffe declared a conflict of interest in relation to the North West Development (item 7) because of his role as acting Chairman of English Heritage. It was agreed that he would withdraw from the meeting for that item.
- 3.2 Val Gooding noted a potential conflict of interest in relation to the *A History of the World* project because of her role as a non-executive director to the BBC's Executive Board.

4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

- 4.1 The Chairman reflected on the progress of the Museum during the last two years and outlined some of the challenges for the future.

5. MANAGEMENT REPORT

- 5.1 The Board noted the contents of the report. Trustees approved the new format and confirmed that the report was useful.
- 5.2 The Director described the possible acquisition of a collection of ivories; and highlighted:
- the very positive press coverage of *Babylon* and the capacity visits during the first weekend of the exhibition; and
 - the 2008/09 pay remit which had been submitted to the Treasury for approval with DCMS support.

6. ADVOCACY

- 6.1 The Board noted the contents of the Advocacy Report.
- 6.2 The Director of Public Engagement highlighted:
- the success of the press visit to Iran in preparation for the Shah 'Abbas exhibition;
 - *Statuephilia* was attracting new audiences to the Museum;
 - the Museum was working in full partnership with the BBC on *A History of the World* following the signing of the contract;
 - plans for marking the 250th anniversary of the opening of the Museum to the public.

7. NORTH WEST DEVELOPMENT

Barry Cunliffe withdrew from the meeting for this item.

- 7.1 The Chairman of the North West Development Committee reported that the Museum was working with the London Borough of Camden and English Heritage to find an appropriate design solution which would combine the objectives of the development with townscape, conservation and listed building considerations. The Board noted the current position.
- 7.2 The Chairman announced that Liz Forgan would be joining the North West Development Committee.

8. IMPACT OF THE ECONOMIC SITUATION AND FUNDRAISING STRATEGY

- 8.1 The Board noted the paper summarising the potential impact of the current economic situation on the Museum and the proposed mitigating actions.
- 8.2 The Director of Development outlined the new fundraising strategy and the challenges faced under the current economic climate. The Board approved the strategy, and the Chairman asked for a further discussion at the Standing Committee on 11 December.

Action: Director of Development

9. MIDDLE EAST PARTNERSHIPS

- 9.1 The Director provided a progress report on negotiations with potential partners in the Middle East.
- 9.2 John Curtis gave a presentation on proposals for working with the Middle East.

10. GOVERNANCE POLICIES & PRINCIPLES

- 10.1 The Board approved revisions to the British Museum's Governance Policies and Principles.

Action: Governance Manager

11. LOANS

- 11.1 The Board confirmed that they were content for the loan to the Courtauld Gallery originally approved at the Standing Committee of 12 June 2008 to proceed on the understanding that the loan would be covered by the minimum liability provisions of the UK Government Indemnity Scheme.
- 11.2 The Board approved loans to:
- the Art and Exhibition Hall, Bonn
 - the Yale Center for British Art, New Haven
 - the Galleria Nazionale delle Marche, Palazzo Ducale

12. AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT

- 12.1 The Board noted the contents of the report.

13. BOARD PERFORMANCE

- 13.1 A questionnaire to assess the performance of the Board was tabled. The Chairman requested that all Trustees complete the questionnaire. The Governance Manager would submit an analysis of returns to the Nominations and Governance Committee for the Board to consider on 26 March 2009.

Action: Trustees and Governance Manager

- 13.2 The Chairman informed the Board that Val Gooding had agreed to conduct an assessment of his performance as Chairman.

Action: Val Gooding

14. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

- 14.1 Chris Denvir reported the Information Commissioner's decision about a Freedom of Information request to the Museum by Chris Hastings ruled that a letter from the Director inviting the Greek Ambassador to visit the Museum should be disclosed - this had now been released. –

15. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

- 15.1 Minutes of the Audit Committee of 16 October and North West Development Committee of 29 October were noted.

16. SCHEDULE OF FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- 16.1 The Board noted the events schedule.

17. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 17.1 The Director of Administration tabled a paper inviting the Board to approve a Bank Mandate to open an account with HSBC Bank plc. The Board approved this and noted there was no conflict in HSBC being a sponsor of Museum activities.

GENERAL MEETING OF BMCo SHAREHOLDERS

18. AMENDMENT TO ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION

- 18.1 Helen Watts presented the outcome of a review of the memorandum and articles of association of the British Museum Company Limited, following the recent enactment of the Companies Act 2006. The directors of BMCo proposed resolutions to amend the articles of association on a number of administrative matters, including the company dispensing with the need to hold annual general meetings.
- 18.2 Helen Watts also advised the meeting that the directors of the company were seeking authority to approve Directors' conflict of interest under section 175(5)(a) of the Companies Act 2006.
- 18.3 The resolutions were passed by the Company.

Date of next Board meeting: Thursday 26 March 2009, 3.00 pm

Chairman