

# THE BRITISH MUSEUM BOARD OF TRUSTEES

## Minutes of Meeting, 25 & 26 September 2009, Segedunum Roman Fort, Baths & Museum and the Great North Museum

### Present

Mr Niall FitzGerald KBE (Chairman)  
Chief Emeka Anyaoku  
Professor Sir Barry Cunliffe (except Item 6)  
Mr Francis Finlay  
Dame Liz Forgan  
Miss Val Gooding  
Mr Antony Gormley (from Item 8)  
Ms Bonnie Greer  
Mrs Penny Hughes  
Dr Olga Kennard  
Baroness Kennedy  
Mr Richard Lambert  
Mrs Edmée Leventis  
Mr David Norgrove  
Lord Powell (from Item 8)  
Sir James Sassoon  
Lord Stern

### In Attendance

Neil MacGregor	Director
Andrew Burnett	Deputy Director
Chris Yates	Director of Administration
Mark Bates	Governance and Policy Manager (Secretary)
Steve Gill	Director of Visitor and Building Services (from Item 7)
Joanna Mackle	Director of Public Engagement (from item 7)
Justin Morris	Director of Strategic Planning (from Item 7)
Brian Oldman	Managing Director BMCo (from Item 7)
John Orna-Ornstein	Head of London and National Programmes (Item 7)
Roger Bland	Head of Treasure and Portable Antiquities (Item 7)
Jonathan Williams	Keeper, Prehistory and Europe (Item 7)
Martin Paisner	The Dorset Foundation (Item 7)

### Part One: 25 September, Segedunum Roman Fort, Baths & Museum, Wallsend

#### 1. Welcome

1.1 The Chairman warmly welcomed Sir James Sassoon to the Board of Trustees.

#### 2. Apologies

2.1 Apologies had been received from Ms Karen Armstrong, Professor Sir Christopher Bayly, Lord Broers, Sir Ronald Cohen, Mr Stephen Green, Mr George Iacobescu. Lord Powell and Mr Antony Gormley would be joining the Trustees for the second part of the Board meeting to be held on 26 September.

## THE BRITISH MUSEUM BOARD OF TRUSTEES

### 3. Minutes of Meeting 2 July 2009

3.1 The minutes of the Board meeting held on 2 July 2009 were approved and the Chairman was authorised to sign them as a true record.

3.2 Matters arising:

- Item 4.1: A list of potential dates for staff breakfast briefings would be circulated to Trustees.

**Action: Governance Manager**

- Item 4.3: A joint meeting with the V&A Board to discuss areas of common interest had been confirmed for 19 November. A list of V&A Trustees would be circulated.

**Action: Governance Manager**

- Item 6.2: The Director advised that Andrew Dismore's Holocaust (Return of Cultural Objects) Bill would be considered by the House of Lords in committee on 19 October. The Museum would support the bill as long as it retained a sunset clause. The Director of Public Engagement would be writing to members of the BM All Party Parliamentary Group, and would provide briefing to those Trustees who were members of the House of Lords.

**Action: Director of Public Engagement**

- Item 9.2: A schedule of research funding secured by the Museum over the last five years had been circulated to Trustees.

### 4. Declaration of Interests

4.1 Barry Cunliffe declared his interest, as a Commissioner of English Heritage, in the World Conservation and Exhibitions Centre.

### 5. Chairman's Report

5.1 The Chairman announced the establishment of an International Strategy sub-committee of the Standing Committee which would advise on the Museum's international strategy, in particular the Zayed National Museum project. The membership and terms of reference would be circulated to Trustees.

**Action: Governance Manager**

### 6. World Conservation and Exhibitions Centre

*Barry Cunliffe withdrew from the meeting for this item because of a conflict of interest.*

6.1 The Chairman announced that the North West Development had been renamed the World Conservation and Exhibitions Centre. Liz Forgan provided an update on progress since the refusal of the planning application by Camden's Planning Committee on 23 July. The architects had produced revised designs in response to the points raised at the Planning Committee. The new designs would be on public display in the Museum from 25 to 27 September, and it was hoped that following resubmission of the planning application in October, a planning decision would be made in December 2009.

## THE BRITISH MUSEUM BOARD OF TRUSTEES

6.2 Andrew Burnett presented the revised building designs. The key changes were: the sinking of pavilion 5 to ground level, to create underground floors for scientific facilities, and to allow an unobstructed view from the Arched Room; and the reduction in width by one metre of the exhibition pavilion. The Trustees approved the plans and agreed that they should be submitted to Camden's Planning Committee.

### 7. The Role of the British Museum in the UK

7.1 The Chairman welcomed Martin Paisner to the meeting and thanked him on behalf of the Trustees for the Dorset Foundation's very generous support for the Museum's regional partnership programme.

7.2 John Orna-Ornstein presented the Museum's partnership activity in the UK and outlined the strategy for future partnership work. This included the establishment of a number of partnership galleries, of which the Great North Museum's Egyptian Gallery would be the first; an active loans programme, with a focus on long-term loans; and an emphasis on sharing expertise, both nationally and internationally.

7.3 As an example of how the Portable Antiquities Scheme linked the Museum into a network of other institutions around England and Wales, Roger Bland focussed his presentation on the recent find of over 1500 items of Anglo-Saxon gold and silver found in Staffordshire by a metal detectorist. The find had been reported to a local Finds Liaison Officer, and the Museum would be providing support and advice to museums in the region on conservation and research of the find.

7.4 The Board endorsed the UK partnership strategy. In taking the programme forward, the Trustees felt that it was important to have clear criteria for selecting partners; that the relationship was as equal as possible, in particular that it was clear what the Museum would gain from the partnership; and that the public profile of the programme was strong.

### Post-Board discussion

Following official Board business, the Trustees and Martin Paisner met directors of some of the Museum's partnership museums: Alec Coles (Tyne & Wear Archives and Museums), Rita McClean (Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery), Maria Balshaw (Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester), Nick Merriman (Manchester Museum) and Janet Barnes (York Museum Trust). The discussion focussed on sharing collections through exhibitions, short- and long-term loans, and partnership galleries; working with international partners; and the Portable Antiquities Scheme.

## THE BRITISH MUSEUM BOARD OF TRUSTEES

### Part Two: 26 September, the Great North Museum, Newcastle

#### 8. Loan of Cyrus Cylinder to Iran

- 8.1 The Director reminded the Board that the Museum had made a commitment to loan the Cyrus Cylinder to the National Museum of Iran by the end of 2009. The Chairman sought the views of each Trustee present on the proposed loan in light of recent political developments in Iran. The Board confirmed its commitment to the loan in principle, but asked that the Keeper of Middle East be sent to Iran to carry out a risk assessment and to report back to the Board in November before a final decision was made.

#### 9. Committee Reports

- 9.1 The Chairman reported on recent Standing Committee business and Val Gooding reported on future Nominations and Governance Committee business (see Annex).
- 9.2 David Norgrove presented the key issues arising from the Audit Committee Annual Report. He also advised that he had been working with the Director of Administration to produce a reformatted set of management accounts for Trustees, and recommended that the format should remain unchanged for at least a year.

#### 10. Management Report

- 10.1 The Board noted the contents of the Management Report. The Chairman congratulated the Development team on having secured sponsorship for the major exhibitions planned for the next three years. Trustees also congratulated the Museum on progress with digitisation and the recent refit of shops.
- 10.2 The Board requested a report on the outcome of the staff opinion survey at a future Board meeting.
- Action: Director of Administration**
- 10.3 Francis Finlay reported on the performance of the Museum's investments over the last year against benchmarks.

#### 11. Advocacy Report

- 11.1 Joanna Mackle presented the key issues arising from the Advocacy Report, in particular the successful opening of the Moctezuma exhibition and the progress and expansion of the *A History of the World* project.
- 11.2 It was agreed to provide Trustees with briefing on the Day of the Dead event to be held on 1 November, and that one of the CBBC *Relic* recordings would be available for viewing at the next Board meeting.
- Action: Director of Public Engagement**

#### 12. World Conservation and Exhibitions Centre

- 12.1 Chris Yates provided an update on fundraising for the WCEC.

## THE BRITISH MUSEUM BOARD OF TRUSTEES

### 13. Zayed National Museum

- 13.1. Justin Morris presented the first ZNM quarterly report.

### 14. Information Risk Policy

- 14.1 The Board approved the Museum's new Information Risk Policy.

### 15. Loans

- 15.1 The Board approved a loan to the Centro de Exposiciones Arte Canal, Madrid.

### 16. Stewardship of the Collections Report

- 16.1 The Board noted the report, including the issues arising from IPM, and that it had been discussed by the Audit Committee. The Trustees agreed that they should spend more time considering the conservation of objects and suggested that the March 2010 Board meeting be held at Orsman Road.

***Action: Governance Manager***

### 17. Committee Minutes

- 17.1 The Board noted the minutes of the Audit Committee held on 7 July 2009. In relation to Item 9.2, it was agreed that regular reports on business continuity would be included in future Board agendas.

***Action: Director of Visitor and Building Services***

- 17.2 The minutes of the Nominations and Governance Committee held on 26 March 2009 were noted. It was agreed that a report on actions arising from the annual Board performance would be a standing item at future Nominations and Governance Committee meetings.

***Action: Governance Manager***

### 18. Events Schedule

- 18.1 The Board noted the schedule.

### 19. Any Other Business

- 19.1 The Chairman noted that this would be Professor Sir Barry Cunliffe's last Board meeting before his term as a Trustee ended on 3 October 2009. On behalf of the Trustees, he thanked him for his remarkable and very particular contribution to the Board over the last nine years.

### 20. Closed Session

- 20.1 The Chairman held a closed session with Trustees at which no members of Museum staff were present.

**Date of next Board meeting: Thursday 19 November 2009, 3.00 pm**

**THE BRITISH MUSEUM BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

\_\_\_\_\_ Chairman

**Note of reports from Committee Chairs at British Museum Board meeting, 26 September 2009**

**Standing Committee (Niall FitzGerald)**

The Standing Committee last met on 10 September.

- The first quarterly report of the Zayed National Museum project was presented.
- Progress with the World Conservation and Exhibitions Centre and options for taking the project forward were discussed. Revised designs were presented to the Committee and approved.
- The Operating Plan first quarter report was presented. Good progress was being made on most of the key targets and the Committee received assurances on actions being taken to address the few areas of concern.
- The Management Accounts and Investment report for the first quarter were presented. David Norgrove agreed to help in a review of the presentation of financial information to Trustees.
- The Director informed Trustees of a new memorandum of understanding between the BM and National Museum of Australia, which could lead to a significant loan by the BM for a major exhibition. The Committee agreed in principle to loans.
- Loans were approved to:
  - J Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles
  - Reiss-Engelhorn-Museen, Mannheim
  - National Museum of Taiwan
  - Shanghai Museum
  - Manchester Museum

**Audit Committee (David Norgrove)**

The Chairman summarised the annual Audit Committee report.

**Nominations and Governance Committee (Val Gooding)**

The Committee had not met since the last Board meeting. The main agenda items for the next meeting on 19 November were:

- The Chairman's reappointment as a Trustee.
- A discussion of skills needs arising to 2013.
- Approval of the annual board and Chairman performance assessment.