Minutes

The British Museum Board Meeting 03 July 2014

Held at the British Museum

Present

Mr Niall FitzGerald KBE, Chairman
Ms Karen Armstrong
Professor Sir Christopher Bayly
The Hon Nigel Boardman
Ms Cheryl Carolus
Ms Patricia Cumper
Dame Liz Forgan
Professor Clive Gamble
Sir Antony Gormley
Ms Penny Hughes
Sir George Iacobescu
Sir Richard Lambert
Mr James Lupton
Sir Deryck Maughan
Mr John Micklethwait
Sir Paul Nurse
Mr Gavin Patterson
Sir Martin Sorrell
Ms Ahdaf Soueif
Lord Sassoon
Professor Amartya Sen
Lord Stern
Lord Turner
Baroness Wheatcroft

In Attendance

Neil MacGregor
Director
Joanna Mackle
Deputy Director
Marilyn Standley
Deputy Director
Jonathan Williams
Deputy Director
Christopher Yates
Deputy Director
Mark Bates
Head of Governance & Planning
Katherine Moos (Item 1)
Spencer Stuart
Chris Michaels (Item 9)
Head of Digital Media & Publishing
Closed session

1. Board Performance Review

1.1 Katherine Moos presented findings from her review of the Board’s performance in 2013. The Board agreed action points.

2. Director’s Appraisal

2.1 The Chairman presented his appraisal of the Director.

Standing Items

3. Apologies

3.1 Apologies had been received from Ms Wasfi Kani.

4. Minutes

4.1 The minutes of the Board meeting held on 20 March 2014 were approved and the Chairman was authorised to sign them as a true record.

4.2 There were no matter arising from the minutes.

5. Declaration of Interests

5.1 No interests were declared.

6. Chairman’s Report

6.1 The Chairman was pleased to announce that Patience Wheatcroft and Clive Gamble had been reappointed to the Board for four years from 2 August.

6.2 The Chairman reported back on his recent meeting with the DCMS Permanent Secretary, Sue Owen.

6.3 The Chairman had completed his handover to Richard Lambert.

6.4 Deryck Maughan and Martin Sorrell were invited to report back on fundraising.

7. Committee Reports

7.1 The Board received reports from the Chairs of the Standing Committee, Audit Committee and Nominations and Governance Committee (see annex for summary of reports).

8. Management Report

8.1 The Board noted the Management Report.

8.2 The Director was pleased to report that the Korean government had provided funding for a three-year curator post in the Asia Department; that work was continuing on the Basra Museum; and that the A History of the World in 100 Objects touring exhibition had already secured several venues.
8.3 Jonathan Williams provided an update on recent research funding success.

8.4 Joanna Mackle reported the successful launch of the British Museum Annual Review on 2 July; provided an update on the Vikings exhibition and Vikings Live; and announced that the Museum’s collaboration with the Department for Education to provide online resources to support the history curriculum would be launched in the autumn.

8.5 Joanna Mackle provided an update on the Zayed National Museum project.

8.6 Marilyn Standley reported good progress on the WCEC moves programme and provided an update on outstanding building works.

8.7 Marilyn Standley reported that the Building Development Framework would be published on the website the following week, and that meetings had been held with English Heritage and Camden Council prior to wider public consultation.

8.8 Christopher Yates informed the Board that the British Museum’s Management Agreement with DCMS had been signed; provided an update on Blythe House; and reported that the accounts for the British Museum’s subsidiary companies had been signed off.

For Approval


9.1 Chris Michaels presented a draft Digital Strategy Framework. Following discussion, the Board approved the Framework, with a recommendation that the Digital Advisory Group meets to consider the points raised in discussion.

Action: Deputy Director, Joanna Mackle


10.1 The Board noted the Audit Committee Annual Report 2013/14.

10.2 The Board approved the consolidated Annual Report and Accounts 2013/14 on the recommendation of the Audit Committee.


11.1 The British Museum Friends Board approved the British Museum Friends Annual Report and Accounts 2013/14 on the recommendation of the Audit Committee.

12. Spoliation Claim

12.1 Jonathan Williams presented for the Board’s consideration a spoliation claim from the heirs of Dr Michael Berolzheimer in respect of a drawing in the Museum’s collection by Allaert van Everdingen, Coastal scene with an old lighthouse (PD 1997,0712.83).

12.2 In light of the evidence presented, the Trustees accepted the merits of the claim and acknowledged the Berolzheimer provenance. They agreed that the Museum and the claimant should each seek independent valuations of the work as the basis for negotiation of an ex gratia compensatory payment in full.
settlement, and authorised Jonathan Williams to negotiate on their behalf an ex gratia payment.

13. **Loans**

13.1 The Board authorised the opening of negotiations on short-term loans to the Zayed National Museum.

13.2 The Board authorised the following loans:

13.2.1 Seven objects for an exhibition on Hellenistic bronze sculpture at the Palazzo Strozzi, Florence, the J Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, and the National Gallery of Art, Washington DC.

13.2.2 Four objects for an exhibition at the Foundling Museum, London.

13.2.3 11 items for an exhibition at the Palazzo Magnani, Reggio Emilia, Italy.

14. **Working Conditions in Abu Dhabi**

14.1 Ahdaf Soueif gave a report on her recent visit to the construction workers’ village in Abu Dhabi. The Board noted that construction on the Zayed National Museum had not yet commenced.

**For Information**

15. **Quarter 4 Operating Plan Report 2013/14**

15.1 The Board noted the report.

16. **Acquisitions Strategy**

16.1 The Board noted the Acquisitions Strategy, as approved by the Standing Committee on 5 June.

17. **Employee Opinion Survey**

17.1 The Board noted the summary of the Employee Opinion Survey.

18. **Committee Minutes**

18.1 The Board noted the minutes of the Standing Committee meetings of 27 February and 17 April.

19. **Any Other Business**

19.1 Nick Stern concluded the meeting with a tribute to the Chairman to mark his retirement from the Board.

**Date of next Board meeting:** 4 October 2014

__________________________________ Chairman
Item 7: Committee reports

Standing Committee (Niall FitzGerald)

Meeting 17 April 2014

- The Committee received a report on the measures being taken to manage the very high visitor numbers to the Vikings exhibition.

- The key findings and responses to the Museum’s third Employee Opinion Survey were presented.

Meeting 5 June 2014

- The Quarter 4 Operating Plan Report, Management Accounts and Investment Report were presented and discussed.

- The Committee approved an Acquisitions Strategy.

- The Committee received updates on working conditions in Abu Dhabi; the regulatory freedoms agreed with DCMS; and the Collections Management Review.

Nominations & Governance Committee (Liz Forgan)

Meeting 03 July 2014

- The Committee had considered Trustee vacancies arising over the next year.

- The Committee would be reviewing the skills required on the Board at its autumn meeting.

- The Committee would be appointing additional members.

Audit Committee (Adair Turner)

Meeting 03 July 2014

- The Committee received a presentation on the reorganisation of the Finance department.

- The Committee agreed to recommend that the British Museum Annual Report & Accounts 2013/14 be approved by the Board.

- The Committee had agreed to hold a meeting to discuss security issues.

- The content of the Audit Committee Annual Report to the Board was agreed.