Minutes

The British Museum Board Meeting 20 March 2014

Held at the British Museum

Present

Mr Niall FitzGerald KBE, Chairman
Ms Karen Armstrong (by phone)
Professor Sir Christopher Bayly
The Hon Nigel Boardman
Ms Cheryl Carolus (by phone)
Ms Patricia Cumer
Dame Liz Forgan
Sir Antony Gormley
Ms Penny Hughes
Sir George Iacobescu
Ms Wasfi Kani
Sir Richard Lambert
Mr James Lupton
Mr John Micklethwait
Sir Paul Nurse
Mr Gavin Patterson
Ms Ahdaf Soueif
Lord Sassoon (by phone)
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
Tony Wilson (Item 7)
WCEC Project Director
1. Welcome and apologies

1.1 The Chairman welcomed Sir Richard Lambert to the Board.

1.2 Apologies had been received from Professor Gamble, Sir Deryck Maughan, Professor Sen, Sir Martin Sorrell and Lord Stern.

2. Minutes

2.1 The minutes of the Board meetings held on 21 November 2013 and 27 February 2014 were approved and the Chairman was authorised to sign them as a true record.

2.2 Matters arising from 21 November meeting:

2.2.1 Item 3.3.1, Regulatory reforms and storage review: Christopher Yates updated the Board on discussions with DCMS about the implementation of regulatory reforms. He also gave an update on the DCMS review of the future use of Blythe House.

3. Declaration of Interests

3.1 No interests were declared.

4. Chairman’s Report

4.1 The Chairman informed the Board that Sir Richard Lambert would become a member of the Standing Committee and Nominations and Governance Committee with immediate effect and that he would remain a member of the International Strategy Committee.

4.2 The Chairman was pleased to confirm Professor Sen’s reappointment by the Board as a Trustee for a further term of four years from 19 July 2014.

4.3 Wasfi Kani had been appointed to the British Museum Friends Advisory Council.

4.4 The Chairman read out fundraising reports from Sir Deryck Maughan and Sir Martin Sorrell.

4.5 The Chairman congratulated Marilyn Standley on her appointment as a Deputy Director.

5. Committee Reports

5.1 The Chairman reported recent business of the Standing Committee and Adair Turner reported business of the Audit Committee (see annex for summary of reports). The Nominations and Governance Committee had not met since the last Board meeting.

6. Management Report

6.1 The Board noted the contents of the Management Report.

6.2 The Director reported on the successful opening of the Sainsbury Exhibitions
Gallery and the **Vikings** exhibition, and the steps being taken to manage the high visitor numbers. The Director was pleased to report that the new Sir Paul and Lady Ruddock Gallery (Sutton Hoo and Europe, AD 300–1100) would be opened by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne, on 26 March. He also reported his attendance at the opening of the third Leadership Training Programme in Delhi earlier in the week.

6.3 **Jonathan Williams** highlighted the acquisition of the Lacock cup, a joint acquisition with the Wiltshire Museum; the award of an €8 million research grant by the European Research Council for a project on the Gupta period to be led by the Museum in partnership with the British Library and SOAS; and an Andrew W. Mellon Foundation grant of $1.5 million for a semantic web project.

6.4 In response to the Audit Committee’s request for a more strategic approach to loans, **Jonathan Williams** reported that work was already in hand to develop a loans strategy which would be presented to the Board later in the financial year.

6.5 **Joanna Mackle** reported: that visits for the financial year 2013/14 were likely to reach 6.8 million; the latest exhibition ticket sales; and the award of funding from the Department for Education to develop history curriculum resources based on the collection.

6.6 **Marilyn Standley** reported that work was in hand to develop: a capital plan for 2014/15; a programme of building work for the next five years; and a 20 year register of works. She also provided an update on the Facilities Management contract.

6.7 **Christopher Yates** reported that although the budget for 2013/14 would be balanced, more work was needed to address further cuts in grant-in-aid announced by the Government. In addition, there was a risk of an unfunded increase in the Museum’s pension contribution.

6.8 The Chairman congratulated the Museum on achieving a 95% return rate for staff appraisals.

7. **WCEC Update**

7.1 **Tony Wilson** provided a progress report on WCEC building works. He informed the Board that the moves programme had been rescheduled to allow time for completion of all outstanding work.

7.2 It was noted that this was Tony Wilson’s last appearance before the Board as WCEC Project Director; the Chairman expressed the Trustees’ deep gratitude to him and his team for the successful delivery of the WCEC.

8. **Reserves Policy, Grants and Designations**

8.1 The Trustees re-confirmed their commitment to the existing reserves policy and agreed the proposed designations and releases of funds. The recommended grants, together with the proposals relating to their terms, were approved.
9. **British Museum Friends Reserves Policy and Grants**

9.1 The Trustees of the British Museum Friends (BMF) approved the retention of the BMF’s existing reserves policy.

9.2 The BMF Trustees approved an unrestricted grant to the British Museum of £2.5 million.

10. **Loans**

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

10.2 The Board approved loans to the National Palace Museum, Taipei, Taiwan for the exhibition, *A History of the World in 100 Objects*.

10.3 The Trustees discussed the criteria that they might wish to apply when considering future loans of the Cyrus Cylinder. It was agreed that this would be given further consideration at a future Board meeting.

11. **Building Development Framework**

11.1 The Board approved the Building Development Framework.

12. **Exhibition Programme to 2020**

12.1 Joanna Mackle gave a presentation on the draft exhibition programme.

13. **Working Conditions in Abu Dhabi**

13.1 Joanna Mackle reported on working conditions in Abu Dhabi.

14. **Quarter 3 Operating Plan Report**

14.1 The Board noted the report.

15. **Committee Minutes**

15.1 The Board noted the minutes of the Standing Committee meetings of 24 October and 6 January, the Audit Committee meeting of 18 October and the WCEC Committee meeting of 25 November.

16. **Any Other Business**

16.1 The Chairman deferred discussion of the Board Performance Review to the next meeting.

**Date of next Board meeting:** 3 July 2014, 15.00-17.30

____________________________________ Chairman
Item 5: Committee reports

Standing Committee (Niall FitzGerald)
The Standing Committee had met twice since the last full Board meeting.

Meeting 16 January 2013
- The Quarter 2 Operating Plan Report, Management Accounts and Investment Report were presented and discussed.
- The Committee approved a revised Loans Policy.
- A paper on the Museum’s new approach to recovering the costs of loans was presented.
- The Committee received a presentation on the performance of the Museum’s onsite retail, e-commerce and hospitality.

Meeting 27 February 2014
- The Quarter 3 Operating Plan Report, Management Accounts and Investment Report were presented and discussed.
- The final draft of the Building Development Framework was discussed before submission to the Board for approval.
- The Committee approved an application to the BM Trust for a grant.

Audit Committee (Adair Turner)
The Audit Committee had met twice since the last full Board meeting.

Meeting 21 January 2014
- The Committee received a presentation on human resources and volunteers.
- The Committee considered an internal audit report on the Museum’s carbon reduction programme.

Meeting 20 March 2014
- The Committee considered an internal audit report on loans management, and recommended that there should be a more strategic approach to loans.
- The Committee reviewed the WCEC risks.