The British Museum Board of Trustees

Minutes of the meeting, 4 July 2013
Held at the British Museum

Present

Mr Niall FitzGerald KBE (Chairman)
Ms Karen Armstrong
Professor Sir Christopher Bayly
The Hon Nigel Boardman
Dame Liz Forgan
Professor Clive Gamble
Ms Penny Hughes
Mr James Lupton
Mr John Micklethwait
Mr Gavin Patterson
Professor Amartya Sen
Lord Stern
Baroness Wheatcroft

In Attendance

Neil MacGregor Director
Joanna Mackle Deputy Director
Marilyn Standley Director of Operations and Projects
Jonathan Williams Deputy Director
Christopher Yates Deputy Director
Mark Bates Governance and Planning Manager (Secretary)
Tony Wilson WCEC Project Director (Item 8.1)
Jane Whittaker Head of Finance (Items 10 & 11)

1. Apologies

1.1 Apologies had been received from Ms Cheryl Carolus, Mr Antony Gormley, Sir George Iacobescu, Sir Paul Nurse, Ms Ahdaf Soueif, Sir Martin Sorrell and Lord Turner

2. Minutes of last meeting

2.1 The minutes of the Board meetings held on 21 March and 6 June 2013 were approved and the Chairman was authorised to sign them as a true record.

2.2 Matters arising from the minutes of 21 March:

2.2.1 Item 9.1, Grants and Designations: terms were agreed by the Standing Committee and recorded in Annex 2 of the minutes.

2.2.2 Item 12.2, Security Strategy: Christopher Yates reported that the security of customer data would be included in the new Information Strategy.

2.3 There were no matters arising from the minutes of the 6 June meeting.
3. Declaration of Interests

3.1 No interests were declared.

3.2 The Chairman informed the Board that, on the recommendation of the Audit Committee and Nominations and Governance Committee, the guidance for completion of the Register of Interests had been revised to encourage full disclosure of interests. The revised guidance would be circulated to Trustees shortly.

*Action: Mark Bates, Governance and Planning Manager*

4. Chairman’s Report

4.1 The Chairman reported on the successful launch of the Museum’s Annual Review 2012/13 on 25 June which had received positive media coverage.

4.2 The Chairman had reviewed the committee structure and, following consultation with the Standing Committee and Nominations and Governance Committee, had concluded that the committee structure and membership was appropriate. However, he stressed the need to ensure that paperwork for all committees was proportionate and of a high quality.

5. Spending Review 2013

5.1 The Chairman thanked those involved in putting a strong case to the Government which had helped secure a relatively favourable Spending Review settlement for national museums.

5.2 Christopher Yates outlined the settlement for the Museum: a 5% real terms cut in resource and capital grant-in-aid in 2015/16; a package of financial and operational freedoms, the details of which had yet to be confirmed; and a review of shared storage facilities in London.

6. Committee Reports

6.1 The Chairman reported that the focus of the Standing Committee’s meeting on 25 April had been the Spending Review.

6.2 The Chairman reported that the Nominations and Governance Committee which had met that morning had considered Trustee vacancies arising over the next two years; the Board performance action plan report; the committee structure; and the Chair recruitment exercise. The Committee also discussed the Chairman’s review of the Director’s performance in 2012/13.

6.3 Patience Wheatcroft, in Adair Turner’s absence, reported on the main business of the Audit Committee which had met that morning. The Committee had approved the Annual Report and Accounts for recommendation to the Board. The Committee also discussed some of the risks of the ZNM project; the procedures for recording missing objects; and the WCEC finances.
7. **Management Report**

7.1 The Board noted the Management Report and received updates from the Director and the other Directorate Group members. The key issues noted were:

- The significant progress made on fundraising for the acquisition of the Lacock Cup.
- The very positive response of the Patrons to the fundraising campaign for the Picasso linocuts acquisition.
- Confirmation of the loan of the Cyrus Cylinder to CSMVS, Mumbai at the end of the year.
- The measures being taken to manage the significant increase in visitors.
- The possibility that two Martinware ceramic birds on loan to the Cuming Museum may have been lost in a fire.
- The success of *Pompeii and Herculaneum* which had already achieved its budget target for ticket sales.
- The success of the second module of the India Leadership Training Programme held in June at the Museum.

8. **Major Projects**

**World Conservation and Exhibitions Centre**

8.1 Tony Wilson gave a presentation on the progress of the project. He reported that the project was on time and to budget. There was a discussion about the cladding.

**Development Framework**

8.2 Jonathan Williams provided an update on the Development Framework.

9. **Collection Development Policies**

9.1 Jonathan Williams presented revised policies on Acquisitions, De-accession and Human Remains for approval. He explained that the policies were consistent with the Arts Council England’s Museum Accreditation standards and that the Acquisitions Policy would be supported by a strategy which was in development.

9.2 The policies were approved, subject to the incorporation of some amendments suggested by Trustees.

10. **The British Museum Annual Report and Accounts 2012/13**

10.1 The Board noted the Audit Committee Annual Report 2012/13.

10.2 Patience Wheatcroft reported on discussions at the Audit Committee and the Board approved the British Museum Annual Report and Accounts 2012/13 on the recommendation of the Audit Committee.

11. **The British Museum Friends Annual Report and Accounts 2012/13**

11.1 The Trustees, acting in their capacity as trustees of the British Museum Friends, approved the British Museum Friends Annual Report and Accounts 2012/13.
12. **Spoliation Claim**

12.1 The Board approved in principle the recommendation that a claim from the heirs of Dr Arthur Feldman for a German Renaissance drawing attributed to George Pencz should be settled by an ex gratia payment as requested by the claimants. The Board authorised the Chairman to approve on its behalf the payment once a final valuation had been obtained.

*Action: Jonathan Williams*

13. **Loans**

13.1 The Board approved loans to the Brunei Gallery, SOAS, London; Musée du Louvre, Lens; Palazzo delle Espizioni, Rome; and the New Mexico Museum of Art, Santa Fe.

14. **Board Performance Action Plan**

14.1 The Board noted the progress report.

15. **Quarter 4 Operating Plan Report**

15.1 The Board noted the report.

16. **Committee Minutes**

16.1 The Board noted the minutes of the Standing Committee meetings of 28 February and 25 April; the Audit Committee meetings of 25 October and 29 January; and the Nominations and Governance Committee meetings of 7 November and 21 March.

17. **Any Other Business**

17.1 The Chairman congratulated Karen Armstrong on her award of the inaugural British Academy Nayef Al-Rodhan Prize for Transcultural Understanding.

17.2 The Chairman also congratulated Gavin Patterson on his appointment as CEO of BT.

18. **In Camera Session**

18.1 Succession planning for key senior management posts was discussed with the Director.

**Date of next Board meeting:** 27-28 September 2013

_______________________________________ Chairman