Minutes

The British Museum Board Meeting 20 November 2014

Held at the British Museum

Present

Sir Richard Lambert Chairman
Professor Sir Christopher Bayly
The Hon Nigel Boardman
Ms Patricia Cumper
Dame Liz Forgan
Professor Clive Gamble
Sir Antony Gormley
Ms Penny Hughes
Mr James Lupton
Sir Deryck Maughan
Mr John Micklethwait
Sir Paul Nurse
Mr Gavin Patterson
Ms Ahdaf Soueif
Lord Sassoon
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
Governance & Planning Manager
Caroline Usher (Item 7)
Director of Development
Standing Items

1. Apologies

1.1 Apologies had been received from Ms Karen Armstrong, Ms Cheryl Carolus, Sir George Iacobescu, Professor Amartya Sen and Sir Martin Sorrell.

2. Minutes

2.1 The minutes of the Board meeting held on 4 October 2014 were approved and the Chairman was authorised to sign them as a true record.

2.2 Matter arising:

2.2.1 Item 5, Loan to the State Hermitage Museum: the Standing Committee had confirmed approval of the loan at a meeting held on 30 October.

3. Declaration of Interests

3.1 No interests were declared.

4. Chairman’s Report

4.1 The Chairman thanked Antony Gormley for his speech at the Trustees’ Dinner on 5 November.

4.2 The Chairman reported back on his recent visit to Abu Dhabi, which included a visit to the workers’ village and meetings with senior stakeholders.

4.3 The Chairman had visited a number of departments recently and encouraged Trustees to do likewise.

4.4 The Chairman was pleased to report that Patricia Cumper had joined the Nominations and Governance Committee from 20 November.

5. Committee Reports

5.1 The Chairman had nothing further to add to his report back on Standing Committee business sent to Trustees earlier that month.

5.2 Adair Turner reported on an Audit Committee meeting held on 14 November which was devoted to a discussion on security, including measures being taken to address the recent increase in the national security threat level. The Board requested an update on security at its next meeting.

Action: Marilyn Standley, Deputy Director

5.3 Liz Forgan reported that at a meeting of the Nominations and Governance Committee held that morning, it had been agreed that Trustees should be asked to suggest names of potential Trustees in advance of a recruitment exercise in 2015.
6. **Management Report**

6.1 The Board noted the Management Report.

6.2 Jonathan Williams reported that implementation of the Collections Management Review had begun with the appointment of a Registrar and a Collections Programme Manager. He also reported that the *Museum of the Future* debates had been very well attended by a broad and engaged audience.

6.3 Joanna Mackle reported that the *Germany: memories of a nation* Radio 4 series had been well received and that the book was selling very well. She also provided an update on visitor numbers to the three special exhibitions, and preparations for the release of *Night at the Museum 3* in December.

6.4 Marilyn Standley provided an update on outstanding WCEC works and informed the Board that work on the Round Reading Room to restore it to its original condition was commencing.

6.5 Christopher Yates informed the Board that the new Digital Assets Management system had been launched. He also provided an update on Blythe House.

**For Discussion**

7. **Fundraising**

7.1 The Chairman led a wide-ranging discussion on fundraising.

**For Approval**

8. **Collection Display Action Plan**

8.1 The Trustees discussed proposed actions arising for the Board’s discussions in Berlin. They agreed that further consideration was needed and requested that this be brought back to the Board.

*Action: The Director*

9. **Collection Care Strategy**

9.1 The Board approved the strategy on the recommendation of the Standing Committee.

10. **Loan**

10.1 The Board approved a loan to the Swiss National Museum in Zurich.

11. **Disposal of object**

11.1 The Board approved the disposal of a degraded wood sample (BEP 1990.1009,750) under Section 5(2) of the British Museum Act 1963.
For Information

12.1 The Board noted the report.

13. Committee Minutes
13.1 The Board noted the minutes of the Standing Committee meeting of 4 September.

14. Any Other Business
14.1 There being no other business, the executive, except for the Director, withdrew from the meeting.

15. Closed Session
15.1 The Board held a closed session with the Director, which included a discussion on the senior management succession plan.

Date of next Board meeting: 19 March 2015

____________________________________________________Chairman