The British Museum Board of Trustees

Minutes of the meeting, 5 July 2012
Held at the British Museum

Present

Mr Niall FitzGerald KBE (Chairman)
Ms Karen Armstrong
Lord Broers
Professor Sir Christopher Bayly
Sir Ronald Cohen
Dame Liz Forgan
Professor Clive Gamble
Mr Antony Gormley
Ms Bonnie Greer
Ms Penny Hughes
Baroness Kennedy
Mr James Lupton
Mr John Micklethwait
Mr Gavin Patterson
Professor Amartya Sen
Ms Ahdaf Soueif
Lord Stern
Lord Turner
Baroness Wheatcroft

In Attendance

Neil MacGregor         Director
Andrew Burnett         Deputy Director
Joanna Mackle          Director of Public Engagement
Justin Morris          Director of Operations and Projects
Jonathan Williams      Director of Collections
Christopher Yates      Director of Administration
Jane Whittaker         Head of Finance (Items 9 & 10)
Mark Bates             Governance and Planning Manager (Secretary)

1. Welcome and apologies

1.1 The Chairman warmly welcomed James Lupton, Gavin Patterson, Ahdaf Soueif and Adair Turner to the Board.

1.2 Apologies had been received from Chief Anyaoku, Mr Francis Finlay, Sir George Iacobescu and Sir Martin Sorrell.

2. Minutes of last meeting

2.1 The minutes of the Board meeting held on 22 March 2012 were approved and the Chairman was authorised to sign them as a true record.
2.2 Matters arising from the minutes:

2.2.1 Item 2, Torres Strait claim: the Trustees’ consideration of a claim for the return of human remains had been rescheduled to the November Board meeting.

2.2.2 Item 3.2.2, Turkey: the Director reported that the Museum’s offer of a long-term loan of the Samsat stele was not acceptable to the Turkish authorities.

2.2.3 Item 5.4, Meetings with Chairman: the Chairman advised that he hoped to complete his annual meetings with each Trustee by the autumn.

2.2.4 Item 5.5, Visitor hosts: a reminder of dates available to act as a visitor host would be sent to Trustees. The Chairman encouraged all Trustees to take part.

Action: Mark Bates

2.2.5 Item 5.7, Digital Advisory Group: the first meeting had been scheduled for September.

2.2.6 Item 5.8, Arm’s Length Bodies Review: the Chairman had not received a response to his letter to Jonathan Stephens.

2.2.7 Item 5.9, DCMS Board Effectiveness Review: it was understood that Ministers had received a draft report from Charles Mackay and that the final report would be published in the autumn.

2.2.8 Item 5.11, Cap on tax relief: the Board welcomed the Government’s decision not to proceed with a proposed cap on tax relief for charitable giving.

2.2.9 Item 7.2, Security: the new Head of Security and Visitor Services would be in post from 10 July.

3. Declaration of Interests

3.1 No interests were declared.

4. Chairman’s report

4.1 The Chairman informed the Board of the following committee appointments:
- Patience Wheatcroft appointed to the Standing Committee from July.
- Adair Turner appointed to the Audit Committee and to take on the chair after the October meeting.
- James Lupton to join the Audit Committee from October and the Major Projects Committee.
- Ahdaf Soueif appointed to the International Strategy Committee from July.
- Gavin Patterson to join the Digital Advisory Group.
- Lady (Tessa) Keswick co-opted as a member of the International Strategy Committee

4.2 The Chairman was pleased to announce that the Secretary of State had approved the reappointment of Chris Bayly for a further term of four years from May.
4.3 The Chairman had strongly recommended the reappointments of Karen Armstrong, Liz Forgan and Nick Stern from October to DCMS and the Prime Minister. A decision was awaited.

4.4 The Chairman advised the Board that a Research Committee (a sub-committee of the Standing Committee) was to be established to be chaired by Nick Stern. Clive Gamble, Chris Bayly, Amartya Sen and the Royal Society Trustee would be members, along with co-opted members – Linda Colley, Richard Brook, Andrew Prescott and Greg Woolf. Terms of reference would be submitted to the Standing Committee for approval.

4.5 The Chairman and Director proposed to host an event for some former Trustees, current Trustees and senior staff after the Board meeting on 22 November.

4.6 The Chairman had asked that Fundraising Strategy be considered by Trustees in the autumn.

5. Committee reports

5.1 The Chairman reported on recent Standing Committee and Nominations and Governance Committee business and Adair Turner reported on the Audit Committee meeting held that morning (see Annex to minutes).

6. Management Report

6.1 The Director gave a presentation on the Museum’s Annual Review 2011/12 which had just been published.

6.2 Jonathan Williams, Joanna Mackle, Justin Morris and Christopher Yates highlighted the key issues arising from the Management Report.

7. Stewardship Report

7.1 Andrew Burnett highlighted the key issues from the annual Stewardship report. It was agreed that new Trustees should have the opportunity to see the collections held at Blythe House or Orsman Road.

Action: Mark Bates

8. World Conservation and Exhibitions Centre

8.1 Liz Forgan reported that the Great Court openings had been completed; the ground floors were being laid; a solution to the truck lift problem had been found; and that 90% of the construction contracts had been let. The contingency budget was also discussed.

9. Towards 2020

9.1 The Trustees discussed the Towards 2020 document that the Director had presented at the previous Board meeting. The Trustees unanimously approved the direction and aspiration of Towards 2020.
10. **Operating Plan and Budget 2012/15**

10.1 Following discussion, the Operating Plan for 2012/13 to 2014/15 was approved by the Board.

10.2 The Budget for 2012/13 to 2014/15 was approved by the Board.

11. **Acquisitions Report**

11.1 The Board noted the Acquisitions Report.

12. **Quarter 4 Operating Plan Report.**

12.1 The Board noted the Quarter 4 Operating Plan report summary for 2011/12

13. **Committee minutes**

13.1 The Board noted the following minutes:
- Standing Committee 1 March and 26 April.
- Nominations and Governance Committee 22 March.
- Audit Committee 26 January.
- WCEC Committee 26 March and 21 May.

14. **Board Performance Review 2011**

14.1 The Chairman reported a positive outcome from the 2011 review of Board performance. He proposed a number of actions for the Board and Executive to help strengthen performance which would be circulated to Trustees. Progress would be reported to the Standing Committee on a quarterly basis.

*Action: Mark Bates*

15. **In Camera session**

15.1 The Executive withdrew from the meeting.

16. **Any other business**

16.1 The Chairman thanked Sir Alec for his rigorous and insightful contribution to Board discussions.

______________________________ Chairman

Date of next meeting: 28-29 September 2012
Item 5: Committee Reports

Standing Committee

The Standing Committee had met twice since the last Board meeting. The key issues considered were:

26 April 2012
- The Director of Development had presented her view of the Museum’s fundraising capability and the scope for development.
- The terms of reference of the Major Projects Committee were approved.

7 June 2012
- Quarter 4, 2011/12 Operating Plan report and Management Accounts were presented.

Nominations and Governance Committee

The committee had not met since the last Board meeting. Appointments activity had been reported under the Chairman’s report (Item 4)

Audit Committee

The Audit Committee had met on 5 July. The key issues considered were:
- Key risks from the risk register.
- Zayed National Museum project relationships.
- Physical security of the Museum’s sites.
- Annual Report and Accounts, which were approved for signing.