THE BRITISH MUSEUM BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Minutes of Meeting
24 & 25 September 2010, Copenhagen

Present

Mr Niall FitzGerald KBE (Chairman)
Ms Karen Armstrong (from Item 9)
Professor Sir Christopher Bayly
Lord Broers
Mr Francis Finlay
Dame Liz Forgan
Professor Clive Gamble
Miss Val Gooding
Ms Bonnie Greer
Dr Olga Kennard
Mr Richard Lambert
Lord Powell (from Item 10)
Lord Stern
Ms Patience Wheatcroft

In Attendance

Neil MacGregor Director
Andrew Burnett Deputy Director
Chris Yates Director of Administration
Mark Bates Governance and Planning Manager (Secretary)
Joanna Mackle Director of Public Engagement (from Item 10)
Jeremy Hill Research Manager (Item 9)

Part One: Friday 24 September

1. Welcome

1.1 The Chairman warmly welcomed Clive Gamble and Patience Wheatcroft to the Board of Trustees.

2. Apologies

2.1 Apologies had been received from Chief Emeka Anyaoku, Sir Ronald Cohen, Mr Antony Gormley, Mr Stephen Green, Mrs Penny Hughes, Mr George Iacobescu, Baroness Kennedy, Mrs Edmée Leventis, Mr David Norgrove and Professor Amartya Sen. Lord Powell would be joining the Board for the second part of the meeting on 25 September.

3. Minutes of Meeting 1 July 2010

3.1 The minutes of the Board meeting held on 1 July 2010 were approved and the Chairman was authorised to sign them as a true record.

3.2 Matters arising:

3.2.1 Item 6, Cyrus Cylinder: the Director reported on the opening of the Cyrus Cylinder exhibition at the National Museum of Iran, Tehran, by President Ahmadinejad on 12 September which he had attended along with other Museum staff.
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3.2.2 Item 19, Investments: Francis Finlay gave an update on the appointment of the Museum’s fund adviser and the performance of investments.

4. **Declaration of Interests**

4.1 No interests were declared.

5. **Chairman’s Report**

5.1 The Chairman advised that Stephen Green would be standing down as a Trustee at the end of December because of his appointment as a Government minister from January 2011.

5.2 Ian Johnston, London 2012 Organising Committee’s Director of Security and Resilience, had been co-opted to sit on the Audit Committee to provide advice on security matters.

5.3 Patience Wheatcroft had accepted the Chairman’s invitation to sit on the Audit Committee and Invest Sub-committee

5.4 The Museum’s Strategy to 2012 would be reviewed in light of the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review.

6. **Committee Reports**

6.1 The Chairman reported the main business of the Standing Committee held on 9 September (see annex to minutes).

6.2 Richard Lambert presented the Audit Committee Annual Report.

6.3 The Nominations and Governance Committee had not met since the last Board meeting. Val Gooding invited Trustees to suggest names of potential Trustees for vacancies arising from 2011.

7. **Management Report**

7.1 The Board noted the Management Report. The Director highlighted the award of a grant of $100,000 from the Mellon Foundation to the Information Services department for a semantic web project, and the improvement in the Museum’s DEC rating. He also drew attention to strict visa controls by the UK Border Agency which made it difficult for curators from Iran and Ethiopia to visit the UK.

7.2 The Deputy Director reported on the protest against BP in July which had resulted in molasses being poured around the Easter Island statue – no damage was caused. He also reported on an incident on 29 August which led to the evacuation and closure of the Museum by the emergency services for several hours.

7.3 The Director reported progress on the Zayed National Museum project.

8. **Loans**

8.1 The Board approved a loan to TDIC, Abu Dhabi for the *Splendours of Mesopotamia* exhibition.
9. Research Strategy

9.1 Lord Stern explained the rationale for the Museum’s new research strategy; the key aim was to broaden the range of funders by developing research programmes based on key themes which were important to the Museum and likely to generate significant financial support. Trustees were invited to offer their support for fundraising for a particular research theme.

9.2 The Trustees welcomed and endorsed the strategy. The research themes would be developed further and presented to the Board at a future meeting. **Action: JD Hill**

**Part Two: Saturday 25 September, Copenhagen**

10. Government Engagement

10.1 Liz Forgan declared a potential conflict of interest in any discussion about the Comprehensive Spending Review because of her role as Chair of Arts Council England. In the event, no conflicts arose.

10.2 The Director provided an update on the Comprehensive Spending Review and the Board discussed its strategy for engaging with Government in the lead up to the Chancellor’s announcement on 20 October.

10.3 Joanna Mackle presented the Museum’s media strategy.

10.4 Chris Yates provided an update on the DCMS review of administration status of the national museums and galleries.

11. Stakeholder Engagement

11.1 Joanna Mackle presented a paper on how the Museum engaged with its stakeholders and how it took account of the external environment. The Board was satisfied that the Museum was effective in this area.

12. Fundraising

12.1 Trustees reported progress on revenue generating areas. Fuller reports would be discussed at the next Board meeting.

13. World Conservation & Exhibitions Centre

13.1 The Deputy Director advised the Board that a recent OGC gateway review report (investment decision) had been very positive - a copy of the report would be sent to Trustees. He also reported progress on the detailed design phase and the archaeological survey of the site which had been completed. **Action: Mark Bates**


14.1 The Board noted the report.
15. Committee Minutes

15.1 The minutes of the Standing Committee held on 10 June were noted. The Chairman advised the Trustees that since the meeting he had approved on their behalf a slightly revised loan list for the Treasures of Heaven exhibition at Cleveland Museum of Art and the Walters Art Museum.

16. Events Schedule

16.1 The Board noted the schedule and asked for a more comprehensive schedule of events on a rolling 12 month basis to be sent to Trustees monthly.

Action: Joanna Mackle

17. Any Other Business

17.1 The Chairman reported that the “Meet the Trustees” staff breakfast sessions continued to be very well received and he encouraged Trustees who had not already done so to sign up for one of the available sessions.

17.2 The Chairman reminded Trustees to note the dates of meetings to 2013 which had recently been circulated.

17.3 The Director thanked Karen Armstrong for representing the Board at the opening of the Cyrus Cylinder exhibition in Iran, and Bonnie Greer for representing the Board at the opening of the Yorkshire Museum.

18. Succession Planning

18.1 The Board held a closed session with the Director to discuss succession planning for the Directorate Group.

18.2 This was followed by a closed session for Trustees only.

Date of next Board meeting: Thursday 18 November 2010, 3.00 pm

______________________________ Chairman
Item 6.1

Standing Committee Report for Board meeting 24 September 2010

There had been one meeting of the Standing Committee since the last Board meeting on 1 July.

Meeting held on 9 September 2010

The Committee considered a report on the future use of some of the Museum’s estate.

There was a discussion of the Museum’s engagement with Government in relation to the Comprehensive Spending Review.

The Operating Plan report for the period April to June was presented.

The Management Accounts for the period April to June were presented.

The Committee approved the acquisition of a 13th century Chinese painting of a horse and falconer.

The Committee approved loans to the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna; the National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo and the Nagoya City Art Museum, Japan; and the Holbourne Museum of Art, Bath.

Draft policies on whistle blowing, anti money laundering and fraud were discussed and will be presented to the Committee for approval in October.