The British Museum Board of Trustees

Minutes of the meetings held on
Friday 30 September 2011 at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford and
Saturday 1 October 2011 at the Pitt-Rivers Museum, Oxford

Present

Mr Niall FitzGerald KBE (Chairman)
Chief Emeka Anyaoku
Ms Karen Armstrong
Professor Sir Christopher Bayly
Mr Francis Finlay
Dame Liz Forgan
Professor Clive Gamble
Miss Val Gooding
Mr Antony Gormley
Ms Bonnie Greer
Ms Penny Hughes
Dr Olga Kennard
Baroness Kennedy
Mrs Edmée Leventis
Mr John Micklethwait (Saturday meeting)
Mr David Norgrove
Lord Stern
Baroness Wheatcroft

In Attendance

Neil MacGregor Director
Andrew Burnett Deputy Director
Joanna Mackle Director of Public Engagement
Justin Morris Director of Operations and Projects
Brian Oldman Managing Director BMCo (Saturday meeting)
Chris Yates Director of Administration
Andrew Curry The Futures Company (Saturday meeting)
Sarah King The Futures Company (Saturday meeting)
Mark Bates Governance and Planning Manager (Secretary)

Part 1: Friday Meeting

1. Welcome and apologies

1.1 Apologies had been received from Lord Broers, Sir Ronald Cohen, Mr Iacobescu, Mr Micklethwait, Professor Sen and Sir Martin Sorrell.

2. Minutes of Meeting

2.1 The minutes of the Board meeting held on 30 June 2011 were approved and the Chairman was authorised to sign them as a true record.

2.2 Matters arising:

2.2.1 Item 2, Torres Strait human remains claim: the Deputy Director reported that the independent reports were expected shortly.
2.2.2 Item 6.2, Spoliation claim: the Director informed the Trustees that there had been no reply from the Spoliation Advisory Committee to a submission made by the Museum in July.

2.2.3 Item 6.2, Paul Hamlyn Library: the Director reported that the Library had closed and that the Museum was in discussion with the Paul Hamlyn Foundation.

3. Declaration of Interests

3.1 No interests were declared.

4. Chairman’s report

4.1 The Chairman confirmed John Micklethwait’s appointment by the Prime Minister as a Trustee for a term of four years from August 2011.

4.2 The Chairman had appointed Clive Gamble to the Standing Committee and Audit Committee, and advised that he would also be appointed to the British Museum Friends’ Council.

4.3 The Chairman announced that a digital advisory group was being set up which would include some Trustees and outside expertise.

4.4 The Chairman tabled a paper on the consultation by the Treasury and DCMS on proposals to offer a reduction in tax liabilities to donors who make a lifetime gift of pre-eminent objects to the nation.

5. Committee reports

5.1 The Chairman reported on Standing Committee business since the last Board meeting (see Annex).

5.2 Referring to the Audit Committee Annual report, David Norgrove informed the Board that the Museum’s accounts had been commended by the National Audit Office. He also reported on areas of risk management that had been considered by the committee.

5.3 Val Gooding reported that a list of potential Trustees drawn up by the Nominations and Governance Committee had been circulated to the Board and that comments received would be considered for the forthcoming recruitment exercise.

6. Management Report

6.1 The Trustees noted the Management Report.

6.2 The Director reported that Jonathan Tubb had been appointed Keeper of Middle East from October, Neal Spencer had been appointed Keeper of Ancient Egypt and Sudan from January, and a recruitment exercise was underway for a Keeper of Africa, Oceania and the Americas.

6.3 The Director highlighted some key areas in the Management Report and informed the Board of a major donation to the Museum of the complete Vollard Suite by Picasso.

6.4 Chris Yates provided a progress report on the Financial Sustainability Programme.
7. **World Conservation and Exhibitions Centre**

7.1 Liz Forgan provided a progress report on the WCEC.

8. **Reputation**

8.1 Joanna Mackle gave a presentation on the Museum’s public reputation.

9. **Exhibitions**

9.1 Joanna Mackle gave a presentation on the Museum’s exhibition programme.

9.2 A paper showing daily attendance figures compared with other National Museum and Gallery charging exhibitions was tabled.

10. **Security**

10.1 Justin Morris provided an update on Museum security. He informed the Board that a new acting Head of Security had been appointed.

11. **Advocacy report**

11.1 The Board noted the advocacy report.

12. **Quarter 1 Operating Plan summary report**

12.1 The Board noted the Operating Plan report

13. **Committee minutes**

13.1 The Board noted the minutes of the Standing Committee meetings of 19 May and 21 July; the Audit Committee meeting of 24 March; and the WCEC Committee meeting of 25 July.

14. **Exhibitions forward look**

14.1 The Board noted the paper.
Part 2: Saturday Meeting

1. Welcome

1.1 The Chairman welcomed John Micklethwait to the Board of Trustees

1.2 The Chairman welcomed Andrew Curry and Sarah King who would be facilitating the Board’s strategy discussion, and thanked The Futures Company for their generous pro bono support for the Museum’s planning process.

2. British Museum Strategy

2.1 The Board had an extended discussion to consider the question, “How will questions of identity in the UK and globally influence the work of the British Museum in research, public programmes and international engagement?”

Date of next Board meeting: 24 November 2011

_________________________________________ Chairman
Item 5.1: Standing Committee report

The Chairman reported on the key issues discussed at two Standing Committee meetings held since the last Board meeting:

21 July 2011

- The 2010/11 Quarter 4 Operating Plan and Management Accounts reports were presented.

- A spoliation claim relating to clocks and watches in the Museum’s collection was discussed, and the Committee approved a submission to the Spoliation Advisory Panel.

- The Committee considered the potential acquisition of a 7th century bronze from the Swat Valley, and agreed that a decision should be deferred until final advice had been received from the Pakistani authorities.

8 September 2011

- Penny Hughes as Chair of BMCo attended to present proposals for the future hospitality offer at the BM.

- The Committee received a progress report on security plans.

- The 2011/12 Quarter 1 Operating Plan and Management Accounts reports were presented.