

Minutes

The British Museum Board Meeting 02 July 2015

Held at the British Museum

Present

Sir Richard Lambert Chairman
Ms Karen Armstrong
The Hon Nigel Boardman
Ms Patricia Cumper
Dame Liz Forgan
Professor Clive Gamble
Mr James Lupton
Sir Deryck Maughan (by phone to
Item 5)
Sir Paul Nurse
Mr Gavin Patterson
Mr Grayson Perry
Lord Sassoon
Ms Ahdaf Soueif
Lord Stern
Lord Turner

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

1. Welcome and apologies

- 1.1 The Chairman welcomed Mr Grayson Perry to the Board.
- 1.2 Apologies had been received from Ms Cheryl Carolus, Ms Wasfi Kani, Mr John Micklethwait, Professor Amartya Sen and Baroness Wheatcroft.

2. Minutes

- 2.1 The minutes of the Board meeting held on 19 March 2015 were approved and the Chairman was authorised to sign them as a true record.
- 2.2 The Chairman noted that this meeting had been the last that Sir Christopher Bayly had attended before his sudden death in April. His contribution to the Board had been great, and his presence would be much missed.
- 2.3 Matter arising:
 - 2.3.1 Item 7.1, Loans Strategy: the strategy, which had been revised in consultation with those Trustees who commented at the last meeting, had been approved by the Chairman and had been included in the Board papers for information.

3. Declaration of Interests

- 3.1 No interests were declared.

4. Chairman's report

- 4.1 The Chairman reported that he had attended a British Museum Consultative Committee meeting where he had held useful discussions with the trades unions.
- 4.2 Sir Deryck Maughan would be standing down as Chairman of the American Friends of the British Museum (AFBM) in September and Mr John Micklethwait would be taking his place. The Chairman reported on a recent meeting of the AFBM that he had attended.
- 4.3 The Chairman reported on a recent meeting he had had with Mr John Kingman, Second Permanent Secretary at the Her Majesty's Treasury.

5. Management Update

- 5.1 The Trustees noted the Management Report.
- 5.2 The Director gave an update on the Government's proposals, as set out in its election manifesto, to fund a South Asia gallery at Manchester Museum in partnership with the British Museum.
- 5.3 The Director reported that the Government was considering funding a cultural heritage protection training programme in Iraq which would be led by the Museum.
- 5.4 The Director was pleased to announce that the Marie-Louise von Motesiczky Charitable Trust had provided challenge funding of up to £500,000 for the International Training Programme.

- 5.5 Jonathan Williams reported that UNESCO had formally acknowledged the DCMS and British Museum letters sent in response to UNESCO's offer of mediation in respect of the Museum's Parthenon sculptures.
- 5.6 Jonathan Williams was pleased to announce the creation of a new post of Director of Scientific Research, generously supported by the Wellcome Trust. He also provided an update on the development of a collection display strategy.
- 5.7 Joanna Mackle highlighted key issues arising from the advocacy update report, including the successful launch of the Annual Review 2014/15. She also provided an update on the Zayed National Museum project.
- 5.8 Marilyn Standley provided an update on security.
- 5.9 Christopher Yates informed the Board that DCMS has imposed a further cut in grant-in-aid of 0.5%, pro-rated to 0.375% for 2015/16. He also provided an update on the Government's review of the future of Blythe House.

For Approval

6. British Museum Annual Report and Accounts 2014/15

- 6.1 Adair Turner presented the Audit Committee's Annual Report, which was duly noted by the Board.
- 6.2 The Board approved the consolidated Annual Report and Accounts 2014/15 and the letter of representation, on the recommendation of the Audit Committee.

7. British Museum Friends Annual Report and Accounts 2014/15

- 7.1 The British Museum Friends Board approved the British Museum Friends Annual Report and Accounts 2014/15 and the letter of representation, on the recommendation of the Audit Committee.

8. British Museum Investments

- 8.1 The Board approved a resolution to adopt a total return approach to the investment of the Museum's endowment funds; approved a resolution to spend the capital in the Birch Fund and subsequently wind it up, subject to Charity Commission approval; and approved a policy to determine an appropriate rate of expenditure from the endowment funds as recommended in the investment paper.

9. Exhibition Proposal

- 9.1 The Board approved a proposal to enter a contract to provide a programme of international exhibitions.

For Discussion

10. Board Business Review

- 10.1 The Trustees agreed to restructure future Board business to create more time for discussion of important issues and strategic matters. The Board agreed that more routine business would be delegated to the Standing Committee and the Chairman

on the understanding that any decisions taken would be reported to the Board, in line with the Museum's Governance Policies and Principles.

11. Nominations & Governance Committee

- 11.1 Liz Forgan reported on recent committee business. The Board agreed with the committee's proposals for a Trustee recruitment exercise which would be submitted to DCMS for approval shortly.

For Information

12. Loans Strategy

- 12.1 The new Loans Strategy was noted.

13. Quarter 4 Operating Plan Report 2014/15

- 13.1 The Board noted the report that had been discussed by the Standing Committee on 4 June.

14. Committee Minutes

- 14.1 The Board noted the minutes of the Nominations and Governance Committee meeting of 20 November and 19 March; the Audit Committee meeting of 5 February; and the Standing Committee meetings of 19 February and 7 May.

15. Closed Session

The Management withdrew from the meeting, apart from Joanna Mackle who remained for part of the closed session and Mark Bates.

- 15.1 The Board discussed the outcome of the Board Performance review 2014 and agreed an action plan.
- 15.2 The Board discussed the Director's performance in 2014/15.
- 15.3 The Chairman provided a progress report on the search for the new Director.

_____Chairman