

## Minutes

# The British Museum Board Meeting 03 December 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  
Ms Wasfi Kani  
Professor Nicola Lacey  
Lord Lupton  
Sir Deryck Maughan (by phone to  
Item 10)  
Mr Gavin Patterson  
Professor Amartya Sen  
Ms Ahdaf Soueif  
Lord Stern  
Lord Turner (by phone to Item 10)  
Baroness Wheatcroft (from Item 5)

#### 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  
David Bilson  
Head of Security & Visitor Services  
(Item 10.5)

**1. Apologies**

- 1.1 Apologies had been received from Ms Cheryl Carolus, Mr John Micklethwait, Sir Paul Nurse, Mr Grayson Perry and Lord Sassoon.

**2. Declaration of Interests**

- 2.1 No interests were declared.

***For Approval***

**3. Research Strategy**

- 3.1 Jonathan Williams presented a new Research Strategy which was recommended to the Board for approval by the Research Committee and the Standing Committee.
- 3.2 Subject to a few minor amendments which the Board agreed should be approved by Lord Stern, the Trustees approved the strategy.

***Action: Jonathan Williams***

**4. Working and Travelling Overseas**

- 4.1 Marilyn Standley presented a new Working and Travelling Overseas policy and new Fieldwork procedures for approval.
- 4.2 The Board reviewed the policy and procedures, and agreed some changes to be approved by Nigel Boardman and Clive Gamble on behalf of the Trustees.

***Action: Marilyn Standley***

**5. Perimeter Properties**

- 5.1 The Board approved the release of funding from the Museum's reserves to refurbish some of the Perimeter Properties to enable them to be leased.

**6. The British Museum Common Seal**

- 6.1 The Board approved an amendment to the Museum's Governance Policies and Principles to allow Trustees to delegate the sealing of documents to be authorised by members of senior management.

**7. British Museum Friends Governance Policies and Principles**

- 7.1 The British Museum Friends Board approved an amendment to the Governance Policies and Principles to give the Chairman the power to make decisions on behalf of the Board and its committees.

***Standing Business***

**8. Minutes**

- 8.1 The minutes of the Board meetings held on 21 September and 2-3 October were approved as true records of the meetings.

8.2 There were no matters arising from the 21 September Board meeting. One matter arose from the 2-3 October Board meeting:

8.2.1 Item 6.2, Management Accounts: the quarter 1 Management Accounts had been circulated to Trustees on 19 October.

## **9. Chairman's Report**

9.1 The Chairman provided an update on the Trustee recruitment exercise for five appointments to be made by the Prime Minister.

## **10. Management Report**

10.1 The Board noted the Management Report.

10.2 The Director was pleased to the report that the Spending Review had included Government funding of £2.9 million for the Museum's Iraq cultural heritage protection training programme, and £5 million to the Manchester Museum for its New South Asia gallery which would be delivered in partnership with the British Museum. The Director also reported on recent fundraising success.

10.2 Christopher Yates reported on the outcome of the Spending Review, which included additions to and permanency of the museum freedoms, and funding to move from Blythe House.

10.3 Jonathan Williams reported that Professor Carl Heron had been appointed to the new post of Director of Scientific Research, which would be supported by a generous grant from the Wellcome Trust. He was also pleased to report that the AHRC had awarded a substantial grant for a research project on Hokusai to support the forthcoming exhibition.

10.4 Joanna Mackle provided a progress report on the Zayed National Museum project.

10.5 David Bilson provided an update on security.

## **11. Committee Reports**

11.1 Christopher Yates reported on recent Audit Committee business on behalf of Adair Turner: the committee had received a presentation on human resources; the outcome of an internal audit review of firearms was discussed; and changes to the delivery of the technical security project were approved.

11.2 Liz Forgan reported on the Nominations and Governance Committee meeting that had been held earlier in the day: the Chairman would be speaking to those Trustees whose first term ended in 2016 about possible reappointment; the Board performance review questionnaire would be issued to Trustees in December; and Trustees would be invited to contribute to the assessment of the Chairman's performance.

***For Information***

**12. Collections Management Report**

12.1 The Board noted the report

**13. Committee Minutes**

13.1 The Board noted the minutes of the Audit Committee meeting of 2 July and the Standing Committee meeting of 3 September.

**14. Loan Approvals**

14.1 The Board noted loans that had been approved by the Standing Committee and Chairman.

***The Director***

15. To mark the Director's retirement, he gave a presentation on the achievements of the British Museum since 2002 and the challenges that it faces.

16. On behalf of the Board, Karen Armstrong reflected on the Director's achievements and expressed deep gratitude for his service to the Museum.

\_\_\_\_\_Chairman

**Date of next meeting:** 24 March 2016, 15.00-17.30