

Minutes

The British Museum Board Meeting 24 March 2016

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 Muriel Gray
Ms Wasfi Kani
Professor Nicola Lacey
Lord Lupton
Sir Deryck Maughan
Mr John Micklethwait (by phone)
Sir Paul Nurse
Mr Gavin Patterson
Mr Grayson Perry
Lord Sassoon
Dame Nemat Shafik
Ms Ahdaf Soueif
Lord Stern
Lord Turner
Baroness Wheatcroft

In Attendance

Christopher Yates
Acting Director
Joanna Mackle
Deputy Director
Marilyn Standley
Deputy Director
Jonathan Williams
Deputy Director
Mark Bates
Governance & Planning Manager
Jane Whittaker (Item 4)
Head of Finance & HR
Hartwig Fischer
Observer

1. Welcome and Apologies

- 1.1 The Chairman welcomed Ms Muriel Gray and Dame Nemat (Minouche) Shafik to the Board, and also welcomed Dr Hartwig Fischer as an observer.
- 1.2 Apologies had been received from Ms Cheryl Carolus and Professor Amartya Sen.

2. Declaration of Interests

- 2.1 Clive Gamble declared an interest in paragraphs 3.3, 3.4, 5.2, 5.5, and Appendices 2 and 4 of the paper submitted for item 3. It was agreed that he would not take part in any discussion relating to these interests.

For Approval

3. Blythe House

- 3.1 The Chairman introduced a discussion about the Blythe House project. Christopher Yates presented a paper on a recommended approach for the project.
- 3.2 The Board discussed and agreed a number of points of principle which would enable the project to proceed to the next stage of detailed development.

4. Operating Plan and Budget 2016/17

- 4.1 Christopher Yates presented the Operating Plan 2016/17, which was approved by the Board.
- 4.2 Jane Whittaker presented the Budget 2016/17, which was approved by the Board.

5. British Museum Reserves Policy and Grants

- 5.1 The recommendations as set out in the paper were approved.

6. British Museum Friends

- 6.1 The British Museum Friends (BMF) Board approved a budget for 2016/17.
- 6.2 The recommendations as set out in the paper were approved.

7. Acquisition

- 7.1 The Board approved a potential acquisition via the Acceptance In-Lieu scheme.

Standing Business

8. Minutes

- 8.1 The minutes of the Board meeting held on 3 December were approved as a true record of the meeting.

8.2 Matters arising from the minutes:

- 8.2.1 Item 3, Research Strategy: the strategy had been amended and approved by Nick Stern on behalf of the Board in January.
- 8.2.2 Item 4, Working and Travelling Overseas Policy: Marilyn Standley informed the Board that a final version of the policy would be ready for approval shortly.
- 8.2.3 Item 10.2, Spending Review: Christopher Yates provided an update on the Museum's Spending Review settlement.

9. Chairman's Report

- 9.1 The Chairman informed the Board of his intention to establish an informal group of Trustees to help with fundraising. The Board was strongly in favour of this.
- 9.2 The Chairman informed the Board of his decision to close the International Strategy Committee. A more informal international advisory group chaired by Joanna Mackle would be set up in its place.
- 9.3 The Chairman informed the Board that he was reviewing committee membership.
- 9.4 The Chairman provided an update on a number of Trustee reappointment decisions that were pending.

10. Management Report

- 10.1 The Board noted the Management Report.
- 10.2 Jonathan Williams informed the Board of repairable damage to an object.

11. Committee Reports

- 11.1 Adair Turner reported on the main business of the Audit Committee meeting held earlier in the day, which included a review of the controls and risks to the collection on display and in storage; assurances on the Zayed National Museum project; and a report on security measures.
- 11.2 Liz Forgan reported on the Nominations and Governance Committee meeting that had been held earlier in the day, including the key findings of the annual Board Performance Review.

For Information

12. Committee Minutes

- 12.1 The Board noted the minutes of the Standing Committee meetings of 5 November and 14 January.

13. Advocacy Update

- 13.1 The Board noted the update.

14. Loan Approvals

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

15. Any Other Business

15.1 The Chairman thanked the Deputy Directors for the way that they had managed the transition period between Directors.

The management team withdrew from the meeting.

16. Closed Session

16.1 Adair Turner left the meeting whilst his reappointment as a Trustee was considered. The Board unanimously approved Adair Turner's reappointment as a Trustee from 12 June for a second term of four years.

16.2 The Chairman left the meeting whilst Liz Forgan reported on the outcome of her annual review of his performance. She informed Trustees that she had met the Chairman to give him feedback.

Chairman

Date of next meeting: 7 July 2016, 15.00-17.30