

Minutes

The British Museum Board Meeting 4 July 2019

Held at the British Museum

Present

Sir Richard Lambert
Chairman
The Hon Nigel Boardman
Dame Elizabeth Corley
Ms Clarissa Farr
Professor Chris Gosden
Ms Muriel Gray (by phone)
Dame Vivian Hunt
Professor Nicola Lacey
Sir Deryck Maughan (by phone)
Sir Charlie Mayfield
Mr John Micklethwait
Sir Paul Nurse
Mr Gavin Patterson
Mr Grayson Perry
Sir Paul Ruddock
Lord Sassoon
Dame Minouche Shafik
Ms Ahdaf Soueif (for Item 1.1)
Lord Turner

In Attendance

Hartwig Fischer
Director
Joanna Mackle
Deputy Director
Jonathan Williams
Deputy Director
Christopher Yates
Deputy Director
Mark Bates
Governance & Planning Manager
Jane Whittaker (Items 3-4)
Director of Resources
Jane Portal (Item 5)
Keeper of Asia

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Ms Ahdaf Soueif informed the Trustees of her decision to resign from the Board with immediate effect. The Chairman expressed regret at Ms Soueif's decision and thanked her for the support she had given the Museum over the last seven years. Ms Soueif left the meeting.
- 1.2 The Chairman welcomed Dame Vivian Hunt to the Board.
- 1.3 Apologies has been received from Ms Cheryl Carolus, Miss Patricia Cumper, Mr Mark Pears and Mr George Weston.

2. Declaration of Interests

- 2.1 No interests were declared.

For Approval

3. British Museum Annual Report and Accounts 2018/19

- 3.1 The Board noted the Audit Committee report.
- 3.2 The Board noted the Auditor's report and approved the letter of representation on the recommendation of the Audit Committee.
- 3.3 The Board approved the Annual Report and Accounts for 2018/19 on the recommendation of the Audit Committee.

4. British Museum Friends Annual Report and Accounts 2018/19

Note: this item constituted a meeting of the British Museum Friends (BMF) Board

- 4.1 The BMF Board noted the Auditor's report.
- 4.2 The BMF Board approved the Annual Report and Accounts for 2018/19, on the recommendation of the Audit Committee.
- 4.3 The BMF Board approved the letter of representation, on the recommendation of the Audit Committee.

5. Acquisitions

- 5.1 The Board approved in principle the future acquisition by bequest of a collection of Chinese objects.
- 5.2 The Board approved the acquisition by donation of four Chinese jades by Mr and Mrs Selwyn Alleyne.

For Discussion

6. Cultural Property

- 6.1 The Director provided an update on the steps the Museum had been taking to strengthen and develop global relationships.
- 6.2 The Board noted the position of other countries in Europe in relation to the current debate about the restitution of cultural objects. This was followed by a discussion.

Standing Business

7. Minutes

- 7.1 The minutes of the Board meeting held on 21 March 2019 were approved as a true record of the meeting¹.
- 7.2 There were no matters arising from the minutes.

8. Chairman's Report

- 8.1 The Chairman's recommendation to rename the Major Projects Delivery Committee the Rosetta Project Committee was approved.
- 8.2 The Chairman informed the Board of the following committee appointments:
- James Sassoon to be Chair of the Rosetta Project Committee and to join the Standing Committee.
 - Mark Pears to join the Rosetta Project Committee.
 - Clarissa Farr to join the Nominations & Remuneration Committee.
 - George Iacobescu to be co-opted to the Rosetta Project Committee.
 - Stephen Fitzgerald to be reappointed as a co-opted member of the Investment Subcommittee.
 - Valerie Johnson to be co-opted to the Research Committee from January 2020.
 - Andrew Thompson to be co-opted to the Research Committee from January 2020.
- 8.3 The Chairman led a discussion about sponsorship and the Board confirmed its position in relation to the acceptance of donations.

9. Management Report

- 9.1 The Director reported on the recent award from the DCMS-sponsored Museums Infrastructure Fund.
- 9.2 Christopher Yates provided a progress report on the Rosetta Project, including the British Museum Archaeological Research Collection project.

¹ A minor amendment to the minutes was agreed by the Board subsequent to the meeting.

10. Committee reports

- 10.1 Adair Turner reported that the Audit Committee meeting held earlier in the day had discussed risks relating to fire and had reviewed the operational risk management and stewardship reports.
- 10.2 Minouche Shafik reported that the Nominations and Remuneration Committee meeting of 13 June had agreed actions arising from the Board Performance Review for recommendation to the Board, and had considered upcoming Trustee vacancies.

For Information

11. Management of archaeological material

- 11.1 The Board noted the procedural changes approved by the Standing Committee.

12. Annual Research report

- 12.1 The Board noted the report.

13. Committee minutes

- 13.1 The Board noted the minutes of the Standing Committee meetings of 21 February and 2 May; the Audit Committee meeting of 29 January; and the Nominations & Remuneration Committee meetings of 6 December and 21 March.

14. Advocacy Update

- 14.1 The Board noted the update.

15. Loans Approvals

- 15.1 The Board noted the loans approved by the Standing Committee.

16. Any Other Business

- 16.1 The Chairman noted with regret that this was the last meeting for Nicola Lacey and John Micklethwait and thanked them for their contribution to the Board.
- 16.2 The Chairman also noted that this was Joanna Mackle's last meeting before she stood down from her role as Deputy Director, and thanked her for all that she had done for the Museum over the last 16 years.

The management team withdrew from the meeting.

17. Closed session

- 17.1 The Board discussed the outcome of the Board Performance Review and approved the actions recommended by the Nominations and Remuneration Committee.

_____Chairman

Date of next meeting: 4 October 2019, Rome