

Minutes

The British Museum Board Meeting 2 July 2020

Held digitally

Present

Sir Richard Lambert
Chairman
Professor Dame Mary Beard
The Hon Nigel Boardman
Ms Cheryl Carolus
Dame Elizabeth Corley
Ms Clarissa Farr
Professor Chris Gosden
Ms Muriel Gray
Mr Philipp Hildebrand
Dame Vivian Hunt
Sir Deryck Maughan
Sir Charlie Mayfield
Sir Paul Nurse
Mr Mark Pears
Mr Grayson Perry
Sir Paul Ruddock
Lord Sassoon
Dame Minouche Shafik
Mr George Weston
Professor Sarah Worthington

In Attendance

Hartwig Fischer (to Item 15)
Director
Jonathan Williams (to Item 14)
Deputy Director
Christopher Yates (to Item 14)
Deputy Director
Mark Bates (to Item 16)
Governance & Planning Manager
Jane Whittaker (Items 3-5)
Director of Resources
Kary Kelly (Item 6)
Director of Development
Radojka Miljevic and James
Campbell (Item 15)
Campbell Tickell

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Apologies has been received from Miss Patricia Cumper.

2. Declaration of Interests

- 2.1 No interests were declared.

For Approval

3. British Museum Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20

- 3.1 Vivian Hunt advised the Board that the Audit Committee Report for 2019/20 had been approved by the Committee earlier that day. The Chairman drew attention to the summary of top risks, and the Board noted the Report.
- 3.2 Vivian Hunt informed the Board that the Auditor's report could not be completed until the auditors were able to gain physical access to the collection and some documentation, and had confirmation about additional financial support from Government to address shortfalls in commercial income caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 3.3 The Board agreed to delegate authority to Vivian Hunt as Chair of the Audit Committee to make a recommendation to the Chairman and Director to sign the accounts when all the outstanding audit issues had been resolved satisfactorily.

4. British Museum Friends Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20

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 2019/20, on the recommendation of the BMF Audit Committee.
- 4.3 The BMF Board approved the letter of representation, on the recommendation of the BMF Audit Committee.

For Discussion

5. COVID-19 update

- 5.1 The Board received a detailed report from the management team on the Museum's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This included the measures being taken to safeguard the collection and buildings during lockdown; the ongoing support for staff who were still working and those on furlough; the resumption of capital works; engagement with the Museum's supporters; and discussions with Government about additional financial support.
- 5.2 Christopher Yates briefed the Board on the issues that needed to be addressed in order to ensure the safe re-opening of the Museum. Jonathan Williams outlined plans for communications and for the public programme at Bloomsbury and nationally. The Director highlighted plans to resume international activity, and new opportunities for the Museum to engage with current debates.

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6. Fundraising

- 6.1 Kary Kelly gave a presentation on trends in fundraising and philanthropy, and the Museum's approach, with a focus on the Rosetta Project and in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Action: Kary Kelly to come back to the Board with further advice on fundraising for the Rosetta Project.

Standing Business

7. Minutes

- 7.1 The minutes of the Board meetings held on 19 March 2020 and 11 May 2020 were approved as true records of the meeting.
- 7.2 There were no matters arising from the minutes.

8. Chairman's Report

- 8.1 The Chairman reported back on his recent meeting with the Secretary of State to discuss Trustee appointments and reappointments.
- 8.2 The Chairman had made the following committee appointments:
- Vivian Hunt appointed as chair of the Audit Committee.
 - Mary Beard and Sarah Worthington appointed to the Research Committee.
 - Professor Rana Mitter and Professor Olivette Otele co-opted to the Research Committee.

9. Management Report

- 9.1 The Board noted the report.
- 9.2 The Director gave a presentation on the narrative of the Rosetta Project which the Board endorsed.

10. Committee reports

- 10.1 Vivian Hunt advised that Audit Committee business had been reported under Items 3 and 5.
- 10.2 Minouche Shafik advised that issues discussed at the Nominations and Remuneration Committee meeting held on 11 June would be covered by Items 15 to 18.
- 10.3 James Sassoon reported that the Rosetta Project Committee meeting held on 24 June had focused on the British Museum Archaeological Research Collection and the energy strategy.

For Information

11. Archaeological material approvals

11.1 The Board noted the paper.

12. Loans Approvals

12.1 The Board noted loans approved by the Standing Committee and the Chairman.

13. Committee minutes

13.1 The Board noted the minutes of the Audit Committee meeting of 27 January 2020; the Nominations and Remuneration Committee meeting of 5 December 2019; and the Standing Committee meetings of 20 February and 7 May 2020.

14. Any Other Business

14.1 No other business was raised before the closed session.

The Deputy Directors left the meeting.

Closed session

15. Board performance review

The Director and Mark Bates were present for this item.

15.1 Campbell Tickell gave a presentation on the findings of the independent board performance review.

15.2 The Chairman thanked Campbell Tickell for their review and said that he would invite Trustees to submit their views on the review's recommendations and proposed actions.

Action: Chairman to write to Trustees to invite views.

The Director left the meeting.

16. Chair selection process

Mark Bates was present for this item.

16.1 The Board approved the proposed process for selecting a new Chair from 2022.

Mark Bates left the meeting.

17. Director's remuneration

17.1 The Board approved the Nominations and Remuneration Committee's recommendations for the Director's remuneration for 2019/20. The Board noted that the Director had requested that the award of a bonus for 2019/20 should not be considered. The Board also noted that the Director's objectives for 2020/21 had been agreed.

The Chairman left the meeting and Minouche Shafik assumed the Chair.

18. Chairman's performance

- 18.1 Minouche Shafik reported back on her review of the Chairman's performance in 2019.

_____Chairman

Date of next meeting: 2 October 2020