

Minutes

The British Museum Board Meeting 21 March 2019

Held at the British Museum

Present

Sir Richard Lambert
Chairman
The Hon Nigel Boardman
Ms Elizabeth Corley
Ms Clarissa Farr
Professor Chris Gosden
Ms Muriel Gray
Professor Nicola Lacey
Sir Deryck Maughan (Items 1-3)
Sir Charlie Mayfield
Mr John Micklethwait
Sir Paul Nurse
Mr Gavin Patterson
Mr Grayson Perry
Sir Paul Ruddock
Lord Sassoon
Ms Ahdaf Soueif

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 3-6)
Director of Resources
Jonathan Tubb (Item 7)
Keeper of Middle East

1. Apologies

- 1.1 Apologies had been received from Ms Cheryl Carolus, Miss Pat Cumper, Mr Mark Pears, Dame Minouche Shafik and Lord Turner.

2. Declaration of Interests

- 2.1 No interests were declared.

For Discussion

3. Rosetta Project

- 3.1 Christopher Yates briefed the Board on the Rosetta Project.

For Approval

4. Budget and Operating Plan 2019/20

- 4.1 The Board approved the Budget and Operating Plan for 2019/20.

5. BM Reserves Policy, Grants and Designations

- 5.1 The Board approved the recommendations of the paper about British Museum reserves policy, grants and designations.

6. British Museum Friends

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

- 6.1 The BMF Board approved the budget for 2019/20.
- 6.2 The BMF Board approved the recommendations of the paper about reserves policy, grants and designations.

7. Loans

- 7.1 The Board approved a loan to the State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg for an exhibition on Assyria.
- 7.2 The Director sought the Board's view on a request to borrow an object for an exhibition. After a full discussion, the Board gave in principle agreement to consider the loan, subject to the provision of further information when the loan is resubmitted for final approval.

Action: The Director

Standing Business

8. Minutes

- 8.1 The minutes of the Board meeting held on 6 December 2018 were approved as a true record of the meeting.

8.2 Matters arising:

8.2.1 Item 3, Human Remains Policy: the Chairman had approved the policy, and this had been published on the website in January.

8.2.2 Item 7, Visitor numbers: adjustments made to the onsite visit numbers to correct a fault with the counting system showed an increase compared with the same period in the previous financial year.

9. Chairman's Report

9.1 The Chairman updated the Board on the Prime Minister's decision to appoint three Trustees due to be announced shortly.

10. Management Report

10.1 The Board noted the Management Report.

10.2 The Director provided an update on international cultural property matters.

10.3 The Director sought the Board's view on a potential bequest. The Board approved acceptance of the bequest in principle.

Action: The Director

10.4 The Director informed the Board that the development of the Public Engagement Strategy was taking longer than planned and that it would not be completed by the end of the financial year.

11. Committee Reports

11.1 James Sassoon reported that the January meeting of the Audit Committee had considered increases in employer pension contributions; the approach to risks relating to Brexit; and the management of risk in the BM_ARC project. At the Audit Committee meeting held earlier in the day, human resources and security risks, and the Internal Audit plan had been considered, and it had been agreed that cybersecurity should be included in the plan.

11.2 The Chairman reported that the Nominations and Remuneration Committee meeting held earlier in the day had discussed the outcome of the annual Board performance review and upcoming vacancies.

For Information

12. Committee Minutes

12.1 The Board noted the minutes of the Standing Committee meetings of 1 November 2018 and 24 January 2019; the Audit Committee meeting of 25 October 2018; and the Nominations and Remuneration Committee meeting of 6 September 2018.

13. Advocacy Update

13.1 The Board noted the update.

14. Loans Approvals

14.1 The Board noted the loans approved by the Standing Committee.

15. Any Other Business

15.1 Muriel Gray highlighted the potential impact of loans from national museums and galleries to small, non-museum venues and strongly advocated this approach.

The management team withdrew from the meeting before a closed session of the Board was held.

16. Closed session

16.1 The Board held a closed discussion.

_____Chairman

Date of next meeting: 4 July 2019, the British Museum