

Minutes

The British Museum Board Meeting 1 July 2021

Held digitally

Present

Sir Richard Lambert
Chairman
Professor Dame Mary Beard
Ms Clarissa Farr
Professor Chris Gosden
Ms Muriel Gray
Mr Philipp Hildebrand
Dame Vivian Hunt
Sir Deryck Maughan
Sir Charlie Mayfield
Mr Mark Pears (from Item 4)
Sir Paul Ruddock
Lord Sassoon
Baroness Shafik
Sir Mark Walport
Mr George Weston

In Attendance

Hartwig Fischer (to Item 17)
Director
Jonathan Williams (to Item 17)
Deputy Director
Christopher Yates (to Item 17)
Deputy Director
Mark Bates (to Item 17)
Governance & Planning Manager
George Osborne (Item 3 only)
Guest
Jane Whittaker (Items 1-8)
Director of Resources
Kary Kelly (Item 9)
Director of Development

1. Apologies

- 1.1 Apologies had been received from Elizabeth Corley, Patricia Cumper and Sarah Worthington.

2. Declaration of Interests

- 2.1 No interests were declared.

3. Chair appointment

- 3.1 The Chairman was pleased to welcome George Osborne to the Board following his appointment as a Trustee and the new Chair of the Board.

Approvals

4. BM Annual Report & Accounts 2020/21

- 4.1 Vivian Hunt reported on the business of the Audit Committee meeting held earlier that day. This included receipt of the annual stewardship report on the collection, and a presentation and discussion on risks to the collection; receipt of annual reports on security, health and safety, fire and technical statutory compliance; and a discussion of the internal audit assurance report and the governance statement. No changes had been made to the draft Audit Committee annual report to the Board; the Board noted the report.

- 4.2 The Board noted the Auditor's Report and approved the letter of representation for signature by the Director.

Action: The Director

- 4.3 Vivian Hunt reported that the Audit Committee had made no changes to the Annual Report and Accounts for 2020/21 as submitted to the Board and recommended them for approval. The Board approved the accounts for signature by the Chairman and the Director on receipt of ministerial approval.

Action: The Chairman and the Director

5. British Museum Friends Annual Report and Accounts 2020/21

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

- 5.1 Vivian Hunt noted that the BMF Audit Committee had received the Auditor's Report. The BMF Board noted the report.
- 5.2 The BMF Board approved the Annual Report and Accounts on the recommendation of the BMF Audit Committee.
- 5.3 The BMF Board approved the letter of representation on the recommendation of the BMF Audit Committee.

6. Governance Principles and Procedures

- 6.1 The Board approved a recommendation supported by the Audit Committee that the Governance Principles and Procedures remain unchanged following review, apart from updates to some of the annexes.

Discussion

7. Re-opening

- 7.1 Jane Whittaker gave an update on the re-opening of the Museum since 17 May, including information on visitor numbers and gallery openings.

8. Spending Review

- 8.1 Jane Whittaker provided an update on the current year financial position and planning for the Spending Review.

9. Fundraising

- 9.1 The Board discussed the Annual Donations Report 2020/21.
- 9.2 The Board approved a recommendation that the Acceptance of Donations and Sponsorship Policy remains unchanged following review.

Standing Business

10. Minutes

- 10.1 The minutes of the Board meetings held on 18 March 2021 and 23 June 2021 were approved as true records of the meetings.
- 10.2 Under matters arising from the meeting of 18 March, the Chairman confirmed that the annual away meeting would now take place in Norwich.

11. Chairman's Report

- 11.1 The Chairman informed the Board of a recent security incident.
- 11.2 The Chairman informed the Board that he had appointed Philipp Hildebrand to the Investment Sub-committee, and had appointed Charlie Mayfield as chair of the Rosetta Project Committee to succeed James Sassoon at the end of September.
- 11.3 The Chairman reported that a ministerial decision on three trustee appointments was still awaited.

12. Management Report

- 12.1 The Board noted the report.
- 12.2 The Director gave an update on the policy position on restitution in a number of European countries. The Director also provided a progress report on the recruitment of the Director of Communications.

13. Committee reports

- 13.1 Audit Committee business had been reported under item 4.1.
- 13.2 Minouche Shafik reported that the Nominations and Remuneration Committee meeting of 17 June had included consideration of candidates suggested for The Queen's trustee appointment and discussion of the Board performance review action points.
- 13.3 James Sassoon reported that the Rosetta Project Committee had met informally on 30 June to discuss the BM_ARC project.

For Information

14. Annual Research Report

- 14.1 The Board noted the report and would welcome the opportunity to discuss the Museum's research programme at a future meeting.

Action: Jonathan Williams

15. Committee minutes

- 15.1 The Board noted the minutes of the Standing Committee meetings of 18 February and 6 May 2021; the Audit Committee meeting of 21 January 2021; and the Nominations and Remuneration Committee meetings of 3 December 2020 and 18 March 2021.

16. Archaeology approvals

- 16.1 The Board noted the Standing Committee's approval of the disposal of archaeological material stored at Blythe House.

17. Any other business

- 17.1 The Chairman noted with regret that this was the last Board meeting for Pat Cumper, Deryck Maughan and James Sassoon. He thanked them for their contributions to the Museum over the last eight years.

The management team left the meeting.

Closed session

18. Board Performance Review

- 18.1 The Board agreed the action points recommended by the Nominations and Remuneration Committee,

19. Director's remuneration

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

_____Chairman

Date of next meeting: 2 October 2021, Norwich