

# Minutes

## The British Museum Board Meeting 24 March 2022

### Held at the British Museum

#### Present

Mr George Osborne  
Chair  
Professor Abhijit Banerjee (online)  
Professor Dame Mary Beard  
Dame Elizabeth Corley (by phone  
Items 1-4)  
Ms Clarissa Farr  
Professor Chris Gosden  
Ms Muriel Gray (Items 1-3)  
Mr Philipp Hildebrand  
Dame Vivian Hunt  
Lord Marland (by phone)  
Sir Charlie Mayfield  
Mr Mark Pears (online)  
Sir Paul Ruddock  
Baroness Shafik (Items 1-3)  
Ms Priyanka Wadhawan (Items 1-9)  
Professor Sir Mark Walport (online)  
Mr George Weston (Items 1-9)  
Professor Dame Sarah Worthington  
(Items 1-9)

#### In Attendance

Hartwig Fischer  
Director  
Jonathan Williams  
Deputy Director  
Christopher Yates  
Deputy Director  
Mark Bates  
Governance & Planning Manager  
Jane Whittaker (Items 3-7)  
Director of Resources  
Jill Maggs (Item 3)  
Director of Engagement  
Russell Torrance (Item 3)  
Director Estates & Capital Projects  
Kary Kelly (Item 9.1)  
Head of Advancement  
Elizabeth Knight  
Observer

## **1. Welcome and apologies**

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed Elizabeth Knight who would be taking on the role of Board secretary from April.
- 1.2 Apologies had been received from Grayson Perry.

## **2. Declaration of Interests**

- 2.1 No interests were declared.

### ***Approval***

## **3. Rosetta Project**

- 3.1 Jane Whittaker provided an update on the progress of the Rosetta Project since the last Board meeting. Following a full discussion, the Board approved the scope of the Rosetta Project; the contents of the masterplan; and the alternative energy technology options to be pursued.
- 3.2 Christopher Yates gave a presentation on energy transition and work under way to accelerate the programme of the Rosetta Project.
- 3.3 Jill Maggs gave a presentation showing how the Stonehenge exhibition exemplified some of the Rosetta Project's public engagement objectives, and setting out initial plans.
- 3.4 The Director presented for discussion a draft of the British Museum's purpose and principles, which would be submitted for approval at the July Board meeting.

***Action: The Director***

- 3.5 The Director gave a presentation on the curatorial principles underpinning the display strategy, and provided an update on the *Reimagining the British Museum* project. It was agreed that a paper would be presented to the July Board meeting.

***Action: The Director***

## **4. Loan approval**

- 4.1 The Director summarised the process for considering loan applications, and the number of loans made each year.
- 4.2 The Board approved the loan of the Cyrus Cylinder to the National Library of Israel, Jerusalem and to the Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History, New Haven, USA.

## **5. Budget and Operating Plan 2022/23**

- 5.1 The Board approved an interim Budget and Operating Plan for 2022/23, pending confirmation of the Museum's three-year Spending Review settlement. Jane Whittaker informed the Board that a new three-year Budget and Operating Plan would be submitted later in the year.

***Action: The Directorate Group***

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## **6. British Museum reserves policy and designations**

- 6.1 The Board approved a return to the pre-pandemic reserves policy, and approved designations as proposed in the paper.

*Item 7 constituted a meeting of the British Museum Friends Board*

## **7. British Museum Friends**

- 7.1 The BMF Board approved a budget for 2022/23, and the reserves policy, grant and designation.

## ***Standing Business***

### **8. Minutes**

- 8.1 The minutes of the Board meetings held on 2 December 2021 were approved as a true record of the meeting. There were no matters arising.

### **9. Chair's Report**

- 9.1 The Board agreed that the galleries, rooms, and endowments supported by the Raymond and Beverly Sackler Foundation would no longer feature the Sackler name.
- 9.2 The Chair informed the Board that there would be a display of objects from Ukraine in Gallery 2.
- 9.3 The Chair informed the Trustees that the Board away meeting would be held in Paris.
- 9.4 The Chair congratulated Charlie Mayfield on his reappointment by the Prime Minister to the Board for a second term from June.

### **10. Management Report**

- 10.1 The Board noted the report.
- 10.2 The Director provided updates on the Museum's work in Girsu, Iraq and in Benin City, Nigeria.

### **11. Committee reports**

- 11.1 Vivian Hunt reported that the Audit Committee had met in February and earlier that day. The committee had discussed financial sustainability and agreed that management would identify high priority initiatives where Trustees could lend support and expertise; had approved the internal audit plan for the year ahead; and had discussed the skillsets for new co-opted members.
- 11.2 In Minouche Shafik's absence, Mark Bates reported that the Nominations and Remuneration Committee had met in January and earlier that day. The committee had discussed the outcome of the Board skills audit and the Board performance review, and had considered a list of potential trustees.

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**Information**

**12. Committee minutes**

- 12.1 The Board noted the minutes of the Nominations and Remuneration Committee meeting of 2 September 2021; the Audit Committee meeting of 21 October 2021; and the Standing Committee meetings of 4 November 2021 and 20 January 2022.

**13. Archaeology approvals**

- 13.1 The Board noted the report of Standing Committee approvals.

**14. Loan approvals**

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

**15. Any other business**

- 15.1 The Chair noted that this was Mark Bates' last meeting and thanked him for his support for the Board.

\_\_\_\_\_Chair

**Date of next meeting:** 7 July 2022, the British Museum