

# Minutes

## The British Museum Board

### Meeting 23 March 2023

**Held at the BM\_ARC, Shinfield, Reading**

#### **Present**

Mr George Osborne  
Chair  
Professor Abhijit Banerjee (Items 1-10)  
Professor Dame Mary Beard  
Dame Elizabeth Corley  
Ms Clarissa Farr  
Professor Chris Gosden  
Ms Muriel Gray  
Mr Grayson Perry  
Mr Philipp Hildebrand  
Dame Vivian Hunt  
Lord Marland  
Sir Charlie Mayfield  
Mr Mark Pears  
Sir Paul Ruddock  
Baroness Shafik (Items 1-13)  
Mr Alejandro Santo Domingo  
Mr Weijian Shan  
Ms Priyanka Wadhawan  
Professor Sir Mark Walport  
Mr George Weston  
Professor Dame Sarah Worthington

#### **In Attendance**

Hartwig Fischer (Items 1-18)  
Director  
Jonathan Williams (Items 1-18)  
Deputy Director  
Christopher Yates (Items 1-18)  
Deputy Director  
Jane Whittaker (Items 1-18)  
Director of Resources  
Elizabeth Knight (Items 1-18)  
Governance Manager  
Kary Kelly (Items 4-6)  
Director of Advancement  
Jill Maggs (Items 4-6)  
Director of Public Engagement  
Russell Torrance (Item 6)  
Director of Estates and Capital Projects  
David Abraham, Rob Jennings and  
Jess Lovell (Item 4)  
Wonderhood Studios

## 1. Apologies

- 1.1 No apologies had been received.

## 2. Declaration of Interests

- 2.1 No interests were declared.

### ***Discussion and Approval***

## 3. Audit Committee update

- 3.1 Vivian Hunt briefed the Board on a session at the Audit Committee relating to the Collection and a discussion followed. It was noted that the Board would be kept updated.

***Action: Hartwig Fischer***

## 4. Vision development project

- 4.1 The Trustees commented on the outcomes of the initial stages of the work carried out by Wonderhood Studios, including the creative routes in development. A full discussion followed.

- 4.2 It was agreed that the outcomes of the vision development project would be presented to the Board for approval at the June Board Meeting.

***Action: Wonderhood Studios, Jill Maggs and Kary Kelly***

## 5. Digital

- 5.1 Jill Maggs outlined the work carried out to date in collaboration with McKinsey & Company and the next steps. Priyanka Wadhawan and Jill Maggs responded to questions from the Trustees.

- 5.2 It was agreed that a paper would be brought to the Board for approval at the June Board meeting.

***Action: Jill Maggs***

## 6. Masterplan

- 6.1 Jane Whittaker provided an update, including the challenges around the release of government funding and the related risk. Charlie Mayfield reported that he was pleased with the progress made and he emphasised the importance of ongoing programme discipline and institutional focus.

- 6.2 Following a discussion, the Board approved the recommendations in the paper.

- 6.3 It was agreed that an early version of the brief for an architectural competition would be discussed at the October Board meeting and the final brief would be approved at the December Board meeting. The Chair requested a discussion at the June Board meeting regarding the process, and an update on the Museum's welcome arrangements.

***Action: Russell Torrance***

## **7. Budget & Operating Plan 2023/24**

- 7.1 Jane Whittaker provided an overview. The Chair praised the Museum team for their hard work and achievements.
- 7.2 Following a discussion, the Board approved:
  - 7.2.1 the proposed Budget for 2023/24; and
  - 7.2.2 the proposed changes to the Operating Plan.

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

- 8.1 Jane Whittaker gave a summary.
- 8.2 The Board approved:
  - 8.2.1 the retention of the reserves policy agreed in March 2022; and
  - 8.2.2 the designations proposed in the paper.
- 8.3 The Board delegated authority to the Chair to agree any changes required before the end of March.

*Item 9 constituted a meeting of the British Museum Friends (BMF) Board*

## **9. British Museum Friends**

- 9.1 The BMF Board approved a budget for 2023/24, and the reserves policy and grant set out in the paper.
- 9.2 The BMF Board delegated authority to the Chair to agree any changes required before the end of March.

## **10. Register of Interests**

- 10.1 Elizabeth Knight summarised the proposal.
- 10.2 It was agreed that the current Register of Interests would be circulated to the Trustees for their review, following which a decision would be taken at the June Board meeting.

**Action: Governance Manager**

## **11. Acquisition**

- 11.1 Jonathan Williams summarised the proposed acquisition of a drawing by Rembrandt as an Acceptance in Lieu of Inheritance. The Board approved the acquisition.

## **Standing Business**

## **12. Minutes**

- 12.1 The minutes of the Board meeting held on 8 December 2022 were approved as a true record of the meeting.

- 12.2 Matters arising:
- 7.2.1 Item 3.3 had been actioned;
  - 7.2.2 Item 3.4: any loans that may be proposed pursuant to the collections proposals would be brought back to the Board for consideration; and
  - 7.2.3 Item 5.2 had been actioned.

### **13. Chair's Report**

- 13.1 The Chair noted recent media stories and discussions regarding the Parthenon Sculptures. He noted that he would keep the Board updated of any developments.
- 13.2 The Chair was sad to report that it was Grayson Perry's last Board meeting. The Chair expressed his gratitude for Grayson's valuable and insightful contribution to the Board. The Chair noted that the Museum is in discussions with the Royal Academy regarding a new Royal Academy nominated Trustee and he would update the Board soon.
- 13.3 The Chair reminded Trustees of upcoming events, including the exhibition openings of *Luxury and Power* and *China's Hidden Century*, and the Director's Dinner.

### **14. Management Report**

- 14.1 The Board noted the report. The management team reported that further strike action is planned over the Easter break. In response to a question regarding salary levels, the Chair requested that the Museum's pay grades be circulated to the Trustees.

**Action: Jane Whittaker**

### **Information**

#### **15. Collections update**

- 15.1 An updated document was circulated in response to an action point.

#### **16. Committee minutes**

- 16.1 The Board noted the minutes of the Nominations and Remuneration Committee meeting on 8 September 2022, the Standing Committee meeting on 8 September 2022, and the Audit Committee meeting on 27 October 2022.

#### **17. Loan approvals**

- 17.1 The Board noted the report of loan approvals by the Standing Committee.

#### **18. Any other business**

- 18.1 There was no other business before the closed session.

*The Director, Deputy Directors, Director of Resources and Governance Manager left the meeting.*

### **19. Closed session**

19.1 The Board held a discussion session without the management team present.

\_\_\_\_\_ Chair

**Date of next meeting:** 29 June 2023