

Minutes

The British Museum Board Meeting 7 September 2023

Held at the British Museum and via MS Teams

Present

Mr George Osborne Chair
 Professor Abhijit Banerjee (online)
 Professor Dame Mary Beard
 (online)
 Dame Elizabeth Corley
 Professor Chris Gosden (online)
 Ms Muriel Gray
 Mr Philipp Hildebrand
 Dame Vivian Hunt
 Sir Charlie Mayfield
 Mr Mark Pears (online)
 Sir Paul Ruddock (online)
 Mr Alejandro Santo Domingo
 (online)
 Mr Weijian Shan (online)
 Ms Priyanka Wadhawan (online)
 Professor Sir Mark Walport
 Mr George Weston
 Professor Dame Sarah Worthington
 (online)

In Attendance

Hartwig Fischer (Items 1-3)
 Director
 Sir Mark Jones (Items 1-3)
 Director Designate
 Christopher Yates (Items 1-3)
 Deputy Director
 Carl Heron (Items 1-3)
 Acting Deputy Director
 Kary Kelly (Items 1-3)
 Director of Advancement
 Jill Maggs (Items 1-3)
 Director of Public Engagement
 Russell Torrance (Items 1-3)
 Director of Estates and Capital
 Projects
 Head of Internal Audit (Items 3, 5)
 Lizzie Loudon (Items 1-3)
 Head of Communications
 Eoin Martin
 Governance Manager

 The Hon. Nigel Boardman (Items
 3) Lucy D'Orsi CVO QPM (Items 3,
 5)

1. Apologies

- 1.1 Apologies had been received from Baroness Shafik, Clarissa Farr and Lord Marland.

2. Declaration of Interests

- 2.1 No interests were declared.

Discussion and Approval

3. Collection update

- 3.1 Hartwig Fischer provided an update on the announcement that items from the collection had been found to be lost, missing or stolen, and the impact of the announcement on the Museum. The Trustees thanked Hartwig for his handling of the matter and for all he had done for the Museum since 2016.

- 3.2 Nigel Boardman and Lucy D'Orsi provided an update on the progress of the Independent Collection, Security, and Governance Review and its areas of focus, and on efforts to recover items that had been found to be lost, missing or stolen. This was followed by an update from Lizzie Loudon on media coverage of the announcement.

- 3.3 It was agreed that the security of the collection would be Sir Mark Jones' priority as Director and that redoubling efforts to complete the documentation of the collection would be an important part of this. It was agreed that Sir Mark would provide an update on security measures when the Board next met.

Action: Sir Mark Jones

- 3.4 The Chair thanked the Museum staff for their handling of the breach of trust perpetrated when items were stolen, and reinforced to the management team present the importance of the Trustees being alerted as soon any suspicion of theft from the collection was raised.

4. Closed session

- 4.1 The Board held a discussion without the management team or guests present.

5. AOB

- 5.1 Lucy D'Orsi and the Head of Internal Audit re-joined the meeting and Lucy D'Orsi advised the Board, on the basis of legal advice, which she summarised verbally, to pursue a civil claim as part of efforts to recover items from the collection that had been found to be lost, missing or stolen.

- 5.2 There was a discussion of the benefits and risks of pursuing this course of action before the Trustees authorised Lucy D'Orsi and Nigel Boardman, as Co-Chairs of the Independent Review, to proceed as recommended.

_____ Chair

Date of next meeting: 7 October 2023