

No 258

THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

AT A MEETING ON

TUESDAY 19 FEBRUARY 2019

AT 09.00 A.M.

THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

Present

TRUSTEES

Lord Green of Hurstpierpoint (in the Chair)
Dame Frances Cairncross DBE FRSE
Professor Christopher Gilligan CBE
Professor Sir John Holman
Hilary Newiss
Anand Mahindra (joined by phone)
Robert Noel
Simon Patterson
Professor Sir Robert Stephen John Sparks CMG FRS CBE
Professor Dame Janet Thornton DBE FMedSci FRS
Dr Kim L Winser OBE

In Attendance

Sir Michael Dixon (Director)
Neil Greenwood (Director of Finance and Corporate Services)
Richard Herrington (Acting Director of Science)
Clare Matterson CBE (Director of Engagement)
Fiona McWilliams (Director of Development and Communications)
Professor Richard Herrington (Acting Director of Science)
Frances Allen (Board Secretary)

Preliminary

2039 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Professor Sir John Beddington CMG FRS

2040 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REGISTER OF INTERESTS (TP 19/01)

Declarations of interest and changes to the Register of Interests were made and recorded by the Secretary to the Board.

2041 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20 NOVEMBER

The Minutes of the meeting of the Trustees held on 20 November 2018 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

2042 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 20 NOVEMBER 2018 (TP 19/02)

All matters arising were noted.

Corporate items:

2043 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Board appointments: The Chair was delighted to confirm that Ms Hilary Newiss and Mr Simon Patterson had been reappointed by the Prime Minister for a second term as Trustee (ending 4 January 2023). In addition, Professor Sir Stephen Sparks had been reappointed as Royal Society Trustee and Mr Anand Mahindra as a co-opted member of the Board for a period of four years (ending on 31 December 2022).

Chair's Dinners: The Chair reported on the two very successful Chair's dinners in support of the Gardens Programme that had taken place in the Anning Rooms. Events of this nature are a core part of outreach and integral to the engagement strategy for existing and new supporters.

2044 DIRECTOR'S REPORT (TP 19/03)

Staff Survey: Following the November meeting of the Board, a number of internal workshops had taken place to explore issues that had attracted low scores in the survey and, as a consequence, a steering group had been established to work with the Executive Board on an action plan. An update on progress will be submitted to the Board in May.

Exhibition Road: The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC) had reported that work is being advanced on installing permanent improvements to Exhibition Road, which includes the replacement of the existing granite blocks with more vehicle resilient street furniture. It is anticipated that the work will commence on 1 April 2019.

Executive Board Leadership Development: The Executive Board has been working with external consultant, Flint Global, on a leadership development project. The project's objective was to build a more collaborative and aligned Executive team equipped to address the leadership challenge inherent in the delivery of the new Museum strategy. The second phase of the review would consider how the Executive interacts with the Board of Trustees, its advisory committees and senior management and staff of the Museum. The brief of this work will be submitted to the Chair by the Director. The Board would like to receive a copy of the consultant's report at the May Board meeting.

The Chair also informed Trustees that the triennial external review of the Board will take place in late June/July

Museum attendance: Attendance continues to be very strong with year-to-date figures close to an all-time record, which is in contrast to the previous year. The critical turning point was perhaps precipitated by the new marketing campaign, which targeted the family audience and promoted the whole Museum rather than focussing on one exhibition, and which was exploiting digital as well as traditional platforms.

Trustees welcomed the refocused marketing to families, which is regarded as the bedrock audience, and *Dippy on Tour* has had a very positive impact on promoting the Museum and engaging with wider audiences.

International engagement: Our work on the international stage is creating a lot of goodwill and contributes to the Government's soft power strategy aimed at maintaining Britain's leadership role in international affairs. Clare Matterson (Director of Engagement) reported on two recent activities: the Museum's participation in the British Council 'Spark Festival of Ideas' in Hong Kong and the World Economic Forum in Davos where the NHM showcased the 54th edition of *Wildlife Photographer of the Year*. Both events were a tremendous success and created a lot of media coverage.

Global natural history museum leaders' meeting, Los Angeles: The Director reported on the recent meeting in Los Angeles, which had focussed on the One World Collection project. The project had enabled a database to be created of over 1 billion objects, accounting for more than an estimated 90% of the world collection. The ultimate aim is to create a digital repository of natural history museum data. The study, however, has revealed that the majority of the world's collection is held in Europe and North America in contrast to the fact that much of the world's biodiversity is in the Global South. The Director reflected that there is a growing awareness of colonial history (particularly in the Global South), the "decolonisation" of collections is predicted to become an important topic on the future agenda of natural history museums. The Board agreed that item should be captured as an emerging risk and considered by the Audit and Risk Committee at its next meeting.

2045 FINANCIAL REVIEW FOR THE PERIOD APRIL 2018 – DECEMBER 2019 (TP 19/04)

Neil Greenwood (Director of Finance and Corporate Services) presented the financial review for the period April to December 2018 and reported that the Operating Surplus is predicted to be higher than forecasted, reflecting strong performance for visitor-related income and Venue Hire. However, Mr Greenwood sounded caution that the increase in pension contributions and uncertainty post-Brexit poses a threat to continued growth.

Items for Approval:

2046 REVISION OF THE MUSEUM'S COLLECTIONS POLICIES (TP 19/05)

The Board welcomed Museum Registrar, Dr Sarah Long, to the meeting. Dr Long explained that the Collections Policies set the overarching principles for how the Museum acquires, uses, cares for and disposes of collections and are the means by which Trustees ensure delivery of their duties with respect to collections under the British Museum Act 1963.

The collections policies are reviewed on a five-year cycle and the last evaluation took place in 2013, which refined the Museum's Collections Policy framework from 31 key documents to 5. The latest review (2018) provided the opportunity to further rationalise the collections policies to create simpler and shorter documents and develop a high-level framework that promotes a role-led rather than process-led governance structure.

Dr Long drew the Board's attention to the revised Museum Accreditation Scheme standard (overseen by Arts Council England - ACE), which has the expectation that museums will use the standard policy template for Collections Development produced by ACE. Unfortunately, this template was not devised with natural history collections in mind and, whilst the Museum's Collections Development policy (crucial for accreditation under the UK Museums Accreditation Scheme) follows the spirit of the ACE template where it can, some deviations have been necessary so as to better reflect natural history collections. The key deviation is that the NHM retains a separate policy on Human Remains, as the ACE template focuses on DCMS guidance for the care of remains without reference to the Human Tissue Act 2004. Dr Long assured the Board that the Human Remains policy has been tested and was found to be fit for purpose.

The Board approved:

- Changes to the Governance Structure;
- Variation from the ACE Collections Development Policy template to better reflect natural history collections
- The use of a separate policy on Human Remains.

2047 BRIEFING ON THE CHRIST CHURCH SPITALFIELDS COLLECTION (TP 19/06)

The Board considered the options for the future of the Christ Church Spitalfields Crypt collection and approved the proposed actions outlined by Dr Sarah Long. The Board will be kept informed of the outcome of the next stage of discussions.

2048 HONORARY RESEARCH FELLOWS (TP 19/07)

Professor Herrington submitted recommendations for the appointment of Honorary Research Fellows to 2022 and explained that the five new proposals are strong current collaborators with the NHM and their appointment is driven by building stronger scientific relationships.

The Board considered the proposals and expressed disappointment that the nominations lacked any representation from either the southern hemisphere or developing countries. Professor Herrington accepted this as a valid point and assured the Board that he will consider how to proactively engage with the *Global South* in the hope of identifying potential HRF nominees. In addition, Professor Herrington will review the overall profile of the HRF scheme, engaging the help of the Science Advisory Committee and will report back to the Board in due course.

2048 STATEMENT ON SLAVERY AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING (TP 19/08)

The Modern Slavery Act 2015 requires certain organisations to develop a slavery and human trafficking statement each year. The statement sets out the steps taken by an organisation to ensure modern slavery is not taking place in their establishment or supply chains. The draft statement, prepared by the Museum's Procurement Manager, outlined measures that the Museum is taking to obviate potential risks as well as future plans. The statement was endorsed by the Audit and Risk Committee on 29 January 2019, which recommended approval by the Board of Trustees. The Board approved the statement.

Items for noting:

2049 NEW MUSEUM STRATEGY UPDATE (TP 19/08)

The Board reviewed the latest draft of the new Museum Strategy, which captured recommendations from Trustees, together with feedback from wide consultation with NHM staff. The final version of the strategy will be presented to the Board in May and, following approval, an external-facing document will be published in June. A more specific operational plan will be an addendum to the internal version for staff. The Director believed that the Museum Strategy will be an important tool to leverage discussion with government for collections storage funding.

Since the last discussion in November the Executive has taken the opportunity to review how activity can be mapped against the outcomes and each member of the Executive Board outlined how this will be achieved in their respective directorate. The next step will be to consider specific deliverables, key objectives, planning costs and resource capacity.

Whilst the Board was very much encouraged by the substance of the presentations and felt that real progress has been made since November, the overall view was that the strategy in its current form lacks cohesion and the *vision* and *mission* are still unsatisfactory. The Board reflected that the new strategy presents the opportunity to express "hope" in an exciting way that will engage with different external audiences. In this context, it was recognised that transforming the document into one that meets this goal may not be achievable in time for Board approval in May. However, the Director believed that it was important to maintain momentum to meet the publication deadline so that the strategy can be used to support a funding bid for the Spending Review.

It was agreed that the final draft will be submitted to the May Board meeting for further consideration and in the interim Trustees were invited to offer their recommendations by email to inform the draft document.

2050 COLLECTIONS PROGRAMME UPDATE (TP 19/09)

The Board welcomed Keith Jennings' (Head of Masterplanning and Projects) to the meeting who explained that DCMS has endorsed the approach outlined in the Collections Programme Strategic Outline Case (SOC) submission and had given approval for the programme to proceed to Outline Business Case (OBC) stage. To bolster our case, engagement with government was being taken forward and number of meetings had been arranged to garner pan-government support for the programme.

The Executive Board had also visited the three potential offsite locations to scope their suitability, each of which had merits and challenges. The major challenge at the Wellcome Sanger Institute at Hinxton was the very strong focus on genomics and the requirement that any organisation on campus would need to be involved in genomics and big data. This, together with the volume of space needed for the collection, represented a big drawback.

Professor Sir Stephen Sparks (Chair of the Science Advisory Committee) informed the Board that the political and business case for co-locating at Hinxton and Harwell had been reviewed at the Science Advisory Committee and the science teams were tasked with evaluating the full impact and scientific opportunities for each option. It should not go unrecognised that both options will have a huge impact on staff and this factor should be borne in mind when considering options.

It was agreed that Professor Herrington will develop a "science case" for both options, which will be reviewed at the Science Advisory Committee on 2 April 2019.

2051 NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM GARDENS PROGRAMME UPDATE (TP 19/11)

The programme had undergone a review to redefine its purpose and to clarify of the vision and mission in order for the programme team to speak with one voice. The programme had also been rephrased resulting in the development phase being extended and the construction phase compressed. This had the advantage of providing the Development team with more time to engage in fundraising activity and reduces the period that the front entrance is closed.

2052 HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT: OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2019 (QUARTER 3) (TP 19/12)

The Board noted the report.

Committee reports:

2053 REPORT ON THE SCIENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 28 JANUARY 2019 (TP 19/13)

Professor Sir Stephen Sparks (Chair of the Science Advisory Committee) believed that all relevant issues had been discussed during the course of the Board meeting.

2054 REPORT ON THE PROPERTY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 28 JANUARY 2019 (TP 19/14)

Robert Noel (Chair of the Property Committee) reported that the Gardens Programme had been discussed, in particular, the impact on pledges if not all elements of the programme are delivered. This risk was added to the risk log and is to be managed by the programme team. In addition, Professor Sir Stephen Sparks had agreed to join the Property Committee as Trustee representative.

2055 REPORT FROM THE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 29 JANUARY 2019 (TP 19/15)

Hilary Newiss (Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee) reported that the rising cost of terracotta maintenance was identified as a new risk.

2056 REPORT OF THE DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 12 FEBRUARY

Dame Frances Cairncross (Chair of the Development Advisory Committee) reported on the February meeting, which had focused on corporate membership and the refreshing of the Patrons Programme.

2057 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Annual Trustees' Dinner, 4 June: The focus for this year's dinner will be *Moon, Mars and Beyond* to mark the 50th anniversary of the moon landings and to coincide with the Museum's *Museums of the Moon* exhibition. Each Trustee will be required to host a table.

Professor Christopher Gilligan: The Chair expressed his thanks to retiring Board member, Professor Christopher Gilligan, for his valuable commitment and support to the Board during his tenure as Trustee. The Director gave his personal thanks for their support of him and the Museum.

2058 AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE BOARD MEETINGS (TP 19/16)

The rolling agenda for future meetings was noted.

2059 EVENTS DIARY (TP 19/17)

The Board of Trustees noted the contents of the report.

2039 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

2019:

- THURSDAY 23 May, Newcastle
- 4 June : Annual Trustees' Dinner
- 2 July (Annual Staff Summer party in the evening)
- 24 September (Annual Trustees' Strategy Day)
- 19 November

2020:

- 18 February 2020
- 19 May 2020
- June (actual date to be confirmed): ANNUAL TRUSTEES' DINNER
- 7 July 2020 (Annual Staff Summer party in the evening)
- 22 September (Annual Trustees' Strategy Day)
- 17 November

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Allen'.