

No 260

THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

AT A MEETING ON

TUESDAY 2 JULY 2019

AT 09.00 A.M.

THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

Present

TRUSTEES

Lord Green of Hurstpierpoint (in the Chair)
Professor Sir John Beddington CMG FRS
Dame Frances Cairncross DBE FRSE
Professor Sir John Holman
Anand Mahindra (joined by phone for items 9 and 10)
Hilary Newiss
Simon Patterson
Professor Sir Robert Stephen John Sparks CMG CBE FRS
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)
Dr Tim Littlewood (Director of Science)
Fiona McWilliams (Director of Development and Communications)
Clare Matterson CBE (Director of Engagement)

Frances Allen (Board Secretary)
Keith Jennings (Head of Masterplanning and Projects) for items 10 and 11
Kathryn Packer (Senior Programme Manager, Collections Programme) for item 10

Preliminary

2086 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Mr Robert Noel

2087 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REGISTER OF INTERESTS (TP 19/38)

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

2088 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23 MAY 2019

The Minutes of the meeting of the Trustees held on 23 May 2019 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

2089 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 23 MAY 2019 (TP 19/39)

Honorary Research Fellows: The list had been reviewed by the Science Group and the revised nominations will be shared with the Science Advisory Committee.

Trustee appointments: It is anticipated that the role specification for the two Trustee appointments will be approved by Ministers in the very near future. The Director will seek to revise the timetable so that the successful candidates are appointed by the September 2019.

Corporate items:

2090 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Succession Planning: The Director recently announced his retirement to take place in March 2021. Representatives from the Board will be meeting with management consultants to proceed with the search to find Sir Michael's successor. It is anticipated that the search will launch in September 2019 and the Chair will provide a further update at the Annual Trustees' Strategy Day on 24 September.

2091 DIRECTOR'S REPORT AND APPENDICES (TP 19/40)

Flint Global Workshops with the Executive Board: The Director had circulated to the Board the original consultant's proposal, together with the summary reports from the workshops with the Executive Board. The Director confirmed that the 360 degree exercise will be repeated at intervals and regular checks against the outcomes will take place to ensure adherence to certain agreed behaviours and actions.

Board Review process: A triennial external review of the Board will take place in the summer and the procurement process has commenced. The Director believed that the launch of the new Museum strategy and changes pending to the Chair and Chief Executive roles in the next three year cycle provided the opportunity to do a slightly more detailed review and look at the committee structure that reports to the Board.

Annual Trustees' Dinner: The dinner held on 4 June was a great success and had attracted very positive feedback from guests. Fiona McWilliams (Director of Development and Communications) reiterated that the dinner was an advocacy event and as such it acted as an engagement and cultivation vehicle for a wide range of current and potential stakeholders and funders by showcasing the Museum's science and other activities.

Dippy on Tour: Dippy was unveiled at the Great North Museum: Hancock in Newcastle during the week of the NHM's Board meeting at Newcastle University and initial feedback from the venue has been very positive with indications that visitors numbers are strong. It is estimated that Dippy has now reached circa 1 million visitors during the tour.

Organisational changes: Changes to the Museum's communications functions have now begun. A discussion also took place on the recruitment process and possible remuneration for the Museum's Chief Information Officer role.

Major risks: These were noted.

2091 FINANCIAL REVIEW FOR THE PERIOD APRIL 2019 – MAY 2019 (TP 19/41)

Neil Greenwood (Director of Finance and Corporate Services) presented the provisional outturn for the period April 2019 to May 2019, which reflected continuing strong performance for Retail, Venue Hire and visitor-related income, including onsite donations. Trustees noted that the slippage to April 2020 of the major planned exhibition had influenced forecast income. In addition, the increase in employer's contribution (only partially funded by Government) and the capital award from DCMS was reflected in the forecast outturn.

Items for Approval:

2092 ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FY2018/19 (TP 19/42)

Mr Greenwood presented for Trustees' approval the NHM's Annual Report and Accounts FY2018/19 and consolidated accounts for the NHM Trading Company Limited, the NHM Special Funds Trust and the NHM Benevolent Fund. The Board noted that the accounts had been scrutinised by the Audit and Risk Committee and the auditors had issued audit certificates accordingly. Some minor amendments to the narrative had been made, which had received ministerial approval.

The Board reviewed the accounts and was pleased to note that the accounts reflected good financial performance. The Board approved the Annual Report and consolidated accounts for signature by the Chair and Director for formal submission to the Comptroller and Auditor General at the National Audit Office.

2093 VISION AND STRATEGY TO 2031 (TP 19/43)

The Board reviewed the final version of the new Museum strategy document, entitled *Vision and Strategy to 2031*, and gave thanks to Dame Frances Cairncross for using her editorial skills on the last draft. In parallel, a perception audit had taken place to test the public perception of the NHM and to inform content of the strategy.

The intention is to release the finalised strategy (which will include commissioned illustrations) to staff on 18 July, along with a short summary document, in order to inform other related pieces of work (such as operating plans etc). The formal launch to external stakeholders will take place in the Autumn. Work over the summer months will include a 12-year summary of activities which support this strategy, as well as a rolling three-year business plan, the structure of which will be shared with the Board at the Annual Trustees' Strategy Day in September. The financial plan, together with a provisional additional two year financial forecast, will be presented to the Board in November for approval.

The Board agreed that the latest draft was a great improvement and the document is now something that will electrify staff as well as the wider audience when it is launched in the autumn. However, there was general consensus that education (formal and informal learning) should have a higher profile and emphasis should be placed on the Museum's USP that it is the place to learn about natural history and the natural world.

The document will be revised, reflecting on the feedback from the Trustees, and will be approved by the Chair before the internal launch on 18 July.

2094 COLLECTIONS PROGRAMME UPDATE (TP 19/44)

At the meeting in May the Board had supported the concept of a scientific research and collections centre in preference to a collections storage-only option. It was also believed that this approach offered the best opportunity to leverage Government support, as investment in science infrastructure is more persuasive in attracting funding than offsite deep storage of collections.

Dr Tim Littlewood (Director of Science) provided context by explaining that the NHM is faced with the very real challenge to find circa 25,000 square metres of space to relocate the "at risk" collections, which are currently housed in sub-standard storage conditions/buildings, or occupy gallery space. This is equivalent to 18 Hintze Halls, which provides some insight into the gravity of the situation. Many options have been considered including developing the South Kensington site (and the Museum's other sites), but this was discounted due to budgetary constraints and the very tight planning restrictions associated with central London buildings. By moving some of the collections off-site, and consolidating existing off-site storage at Wandsworth through the creation of better, more efficient and accessible spaces for science staff and collections, the Museum can realise longer-term ambitions for the South Kensington site – releasing gallery space back to the public footprint.

Since the meeting in May the Collections Programme Board had actively engaged with three potential sites across the country to further shape the proposition and to inform a decision on a preferred partner. Selection criteria had been used to test suitability of each site and each partner had been invited to complete a questionnaire to facilitate deep interrogation of fundamental issues (such as land lease, access to infrastructure, science capability, synergistic research collaborations, sustainability etc). In addition, in its role as a sustainable organisation and in meeting societally relevant goals in science, the NHM, in reaching its conclusion, also had to recognise the need to deal with the challenges of our century, as captured in the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)^[1]. Aligning with the SDGs helped map NHM ambitions against challenges and opportunities in a meaningful way.

After in-depth analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of each site/partnership, the suite of evidence suggested that the Museum should work with the Harwell Science Campus (on a preferred partner basis) to develop a bid to Government for the funding of a science research centre at Harwell. If there is no Spending Review in the summer with no alternative route to submit a capital bid to Government, then the NHM would keep discussions live, take the opportunity to review the programme and would present a proposal for the next at the Annual Trustees' Strategy Day in September. In addition, should the level of funding mean that only a collections storage facility could be funded, then Wroughton would be a good candidate for Plan B. This is based on the flexibility of the site and its proximity to South Kensington.

[1] **The UN Sustainable Development Goals** are the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. They address the global challenges we face, including those related to poverty, inequality, climate, environmental degradation, prosperity, and peace and justice.

Dr Littlewood presented to the Board a letter from senior research staff expressing their concern that the proposals could fragment science, change the dynamic and had the potential to create a schism in staff interaction. The Board acknowledged the concerns expressed in the letter and urged management to remain transparent in communicating the NHM's plans and to reassure staff that science will still be undertaken at South Kensington. However, it should be recognised that there is no other choice but to move a large part of the collection out of South Kensington to ensure that the collection is housed in suitable storage conditions. It was also reiterated that the Board of Trustees has a statutory obligation to ensure that the collections are protected and, therefore, the integrity of the collections must be at the heart of all decision-making.

SUMMARY:

The Board agreed that the proposal to work with the Harwell Science Campus (on a preferred partner basis) to develop a bid to Government for the funding of a scientific research and collections centre was the right course of action and it was noted that the Science Advisory Committee had also endorsed this decision. However, the NHM should retain flexibility and continue work on the fall-back options. The Executive will work with the Collections Programme team to take this forward and regular updates will be provided to the Trustees.

Updates:

2095 URBAN NATURE PROJECT UPDATE (TP 19/45)

Capital project: Keith Jennings (Head of Masterplanning and Projects and Programme Manager) reported that the architect and landscaper for the project have been appointed and an announcement will be released in mid-July after final due diligence checks have been made. The appointment follows a tender process, which had attracted a number of high-quality submissions.

Business project: Six dedicated roles have been recruited and are now in place taking forward a raft of activity around the business project (including testing the on-site schools workshops for Open Creation Citizen Science), which makes the Urban Nature Project an exciting proposition. Dame Frances Cairncross urged the team not to use terms/phraseology, such as Citizen Science, that is not widely understood by an external audience.

Fundraising: Fiona McWilliams (Director of Development and Communications) provided an update on fundraising activity, which includes fundraising dinners planned for the autumn, and reflected that all such activity builds a strong case for support for fundraising. Ms McWilliams confirmed that the fundraising campaign was progressing well. In addition, a bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund has been made and a decision is anticipated on 4 September 2019.

2096 PUBLIC PROGRAMME UPDATE (TP 19/46)

Clare Matterson (Director of Engagement) presented an update of the public programme. The key activity since the May Board meeting has been the development of a three-year plan for the temporary exhibition programme. A dynamic exhibition programme has a direct influence on all aspects of Museum business (e.g. exhibitions drive up membership, supports fundraising and attracts visitors) and, with this in mind, a new model had been developed to provide a balance of exhibitions taking into account cost, contribution and type of exhibition (eg specimen rich vs use of IP) to attract different audiences with a variety of programming. *Museum of the Moon* – a free exhibition – has been a tremendous success and has been used in a variety of after-hours commercial activities (such as yoga, private hire etc). Over the next three years the exhibitions will focus on different themes: 2019 – Space; 2020 - Biodiversity and 2021 - Dino-takeover (exploiting *Dippy's* return to South Kensington).

In addition, a new national programme strategy will be developed to address the Government's priority to connect with hard-to-reach and diverse audiences. The Museum is already gaining ground in this territory: one recent example is involvement in the FirstLight Festival in Lowestoft (a disadvantaged coastal town), where the Museum worked with Cefas to bring science to this area. This was a great success and Ms Matterson was proud of the impact the NHM had at this Festival.

2097 SCIENCE UPDATE (TP 19/47)

Dr Tim Littlewood shared with Trustees his first impressions of the Museum since taking on the role of Director of Science in May. The Museum has a great scientific talent pool – in both geo and bio disciplines – which has become more collaborative and integrated in recent years. However, Dr Littlewood seeks to improve the demography and recruit more early career researchers as part of the future strategy.

A key task will be the development of a Science Strategy, which has been delayed due to the publication of the new *Vision and Strategy to 2031* document, which is close to completion. This work will allow Dr Littlewood to undertake a gap analysis to determine how current activity maps against the Sustainable Development Goals which, in turn, will help align science activity with government (and other) funding and policy priorities associated with societal big challenges. It is anticipated that the first draft will be ready for internal interrogation by October 2019. Reflecting on the need for the NHM and its staff to be able to speak with one voice that reflects NHM's various roles, activities and partnerships, Dr Littlewood drew upon the theme of NHM revealing nature's diversity, connectedness and change through time.

A weakness that Dr Littlewood would like to redress is that NHM science is misunderstood by external audiences, so science will be working with the departments of Engagement and Development to raise the profile of science and to make it more comprehensible to non-scientific communities. Science will also be working with the Department of Development and Communications and external partners to help shape the terms of reference and strategy for the centres of excellence.

Annual Report for noting:

2098 AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE: ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19 (TP 19/48)

The Board noted the contents of the Annual Report previously submitted and approved by the Audit and Risk Committee at the meeting on 25 June 2019.

Committee reports:

2099 REPORT ON THE COMMERCIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 1 MAY 2019 (TP 19/49)

Dr Kim Winser (Chair of the Commercial Advisory Committee) reported on the meeting held in May, which reviewed retail stockholding and the digital journey on the Museum' for giving donations. The meeting also discussed licencing. It is hoped that with the new appointment, his expertise will tease out further opportunities.

2100 REPORT OF THE DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 11 JUNE 2019 (TP19/50)

Dame Frances Cairncross (Chair of the Development Advisory Committee) reported on the 11 June meeting, which had been Professor Sir John Holman's last meeting before his retirement from the main Board of Trustees. On behalf of the Committee, Dame Frances expressed her thanks to Sir John for his commitment and contribution.

The meeting had focused the fundraising strategy of the Urban Nature Project and on the performance of the Membership scheme which had grown to circa 35,000 members. The change in Gift Aid rules had prompted a review of the scheme's benefits and incentives. A current review of the membership proposition is underway, with the aim of the Museum being able to claim Gift Aid on membership fees again from Q4 this FY.

2101 REPORT FROM THE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 25 JUNE 2019 (TP 19/51)

Hilary Newiss (Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee) informed the Board that the June meeting had primarily focussed on approving the Annual Accounts. In addition, a presentation was made on current HR policies to understand what processes were in place to manage the risks identified in the staff survey. The challenge was made to the Executive to review staff progression

2102 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Professor Sir John Holman: The Chair expressed his thanks to retiring Board member, Professor Sir John Holman, for his valuable commitment and support to the Board during his tenure as Trustee and also a member of the Development Advisory Committee. The Director gave his personal thanks for Sir John's support of him and the Museum.

Board meetings: 2020: The Chair confirmed that the Board will continue to hold its May meeting outside London and in 2020 the intention is to hold the meeting in Rochdale at the venue hosting Dippy. The Board Secretary was asked to scope dates for 2021 meetings.

2103 AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE BOARD MEETINGS (TP 19/51)

The rolling agenda for future meetings was noted.

2104 EVENTS DIARY (TP 19/52)

The Board of Trustees noted the contents of the report.

2105 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

2019:

- 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)
- 15 September (Annual Trustees' Strategy Day)
- 17 November

