

No 256

THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

AT A MEETING ON

TUESDAY 3 JULY 2018

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 Christopher Gilligan CBE
Professor Sir John Holman
Anand Mahindra (joined the meeting by phone)
Hilary Newiss
Robert Noel
Simon Patterson
Professor Sir Robert Stephen John Sparks CMG FRS CBE
Professor Dame Janet Thornton DBE FRS
Dr Kim L Winser OBE

In Attendance

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

Preliminary

1994 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None

1995 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REGISTER OF INTERESTS (TP 18/34)

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

1996 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 24 MAY 2018

The Minutes of the meeting of the Trustees held on 24 May 2018 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

1997 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING OF 24 MAY 2018 (TP 18/35)

All matters arising were noted.

Corporate items:**1998 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

Outreach beyond South Kensington: The meeting held at the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, to coincide with the launch of Dippy on tour, was a tremendous success. The Chair reflected that this meeting established the trend of holding an annual Board meeting outside London, which validated the Museum's support of the regions. The intention of holding a meeting in Newcastle in May 2019 was agreed in principle.

Science award: A major project that Science had been pursuing in Europe, DiSSCo¹, has been selected to join the EU roadmap for research infrastructures². The Chair congratulated Professor Ian Owens (Director of Science) and his team on this achievement and reflected that this prestigious project represents the beginning of a new era for the application of cutting-edge digital technologies to natural history collections. The challenge now is to retain a leadership role through the BREXIT negotiations and to stress to government the great importance of the UK maintaining a strong relationship with Horizon Europe into the future.

1999 DIRECTOR'S REPORT (TP 18/36)

Executive Board effectiveness: The Director outlined his plans to commission a project to examine the way the Executive Board operates with the objective to strengthen its collective leadership capability.

Upcoming priorities: The Executive Board will be developing a case to government for additional funding ahead of the autumn Spending Review with the main priority being collections storage, collections digitisation and capital investment in core infrastructure.

New financial report: The report is intended to provide a snapshot of the Museum's financial performance outside of the routine schedule of Board meetings. The Board welcomed the draft report and asked that the next iteration include comparative (seasonal) data against previous years and illustrative graphics. The Board cautioned that this supplementary report should not duplicate the effort committed to the quarterly main Board papers and should be developed as a tool that can be used by the Executive and Board alike.

Museum attendance: The Board was pleased to learn that attendance remains strong compared to the prior year, but noted that the temporary closure of the front entrance (due to the remedial work to the terracotta) may have a negative impact on attendance.

NHM Global Leaders' meeting, USA, 16-18 June 2018: The Director reported on the recent meeting of the 12 leaders of European and North American natural history museums where the main focus was to reference the One World Collection project. It was agreed that a short presentation on the One World Collection project would be given at the Annual Trustees' Strategy Day.

Major corporate risks: The Board Assurance Framework of key strategic risks had been previously reviewed by the Audit and Risk Committee on 26 June. The Board noted that visitor attendance and visitor-related income remains a high priority corporate risk and as such future strategic planning will focus on how to lessen the Museum's reliance on visitor-related income. Digital activity – a major growth area – should be added as a risk in the context of the Museum's technology infrastructure not being able to underpin front-end ambitions.

2000 FINANCIAL REVIEW FOR THE PERIOD APRIL – MAY 2018 (TP 18/37)

Neil Greenwood (Director of Finance and Corporate Services) presented the financial review for the first two months of FY2018/19, which reflected a positive start to the year for visitor-related income and venue hire. The Board noted the report and acknowledged the early warning of budget pressures on future expenditure.

¹ Distributed System of Scientific Collections

² ESFRI: European Strategy Forum for Research Infrastructures

Items for Approval:**2001 ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FY2017/18 (TP 18/38)**

Mr Neil Greenwood (Director of Finance and Corporate Services) presented for Trustees' approval the NHM's Annual Report and Accounts FY2017/18 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 some amendments to the narrative and layout had been made to reflect the Committee's recommendations.

The Board reviewed the accounts and, with the caveat that the narrative be slightly amended to reflect recent and future financial challenges, 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.

2002 NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM GARDENS PROGRAMME (TP 18/39)

The Board welcomed Keith Jennings (Head of Masterplanning and Projects) to the meeting who presented a project update and the proposed next steps following the May meeting of the Board and subsequent discussions with members of the Property Committee. The Board was reminded that the new concept design upholds the Museum's brand and values by delivering an affordable and environmentally sustainable scheme with reduced disruption to environmental habitats. To ensure that this commitment is maintained, the design team is planning to appoint an independent environmental specialist.

Mr Jennings outlined the main features of the design and explained that, as the most popular access point into the Museum is via the Eastern Grounds (used by 80% of visitors), this entrance will be improved to provide a bigger welcome and to offer more intuitive access into the Museum. Navigation into this space will be aided by universal access from Exhibition Road and the TfL pedestrian tunnel. The Eastern Grounds will introduce visitors to the main intellectual concepts of the Museum using the evolution wall as the motif to illustrate the story of deep-time.

The Western Grounds will explore the importance of nature and biodiversity in life today and in the future. The wildlife garden connects the public audience to nature in an urban environment and the new design works hard to retain as much of the garden as possible to create more of an environmental and educational experience and less of an architectural journey. The Board cautioned against making the garden too structured or sculptured, but ensure that it is wild enough to allow the public to experience different eco systems in an urban landscape.

A paragraph has been withheld under section 36 of the Freedom of Information Act.

Although there will be an increase in the running costs of the scheme, particularly in the management the estate, Science and Public Engagement will mitigate the operating costs by using existing resources. Mr Jennings agreed to circulate to Trustees a detailed budget and information on how the project will be phased.

Fiona McWilliams (Director of Development and Communications) outlined the status of the fundraising campaign and solicited Trustees' support in introducing potential supporters to the scheme. Ms McWilliams also provided an update on the forthcoming funding application and, although confident of the fundraising capability, Ms McWilliams advised of the potential need for the Museum to underwrite the costs of the development phase, possibly diverting funds from other capital projects to support the Grounds project.

The Board endorsed the project and gave authority to the Executive to continue with the project as outlined.

Annual reports for noting:**2003 PUBLIC PROGRAMMES UPDATE (TP 18/40)**

Clare Matterson (Director of Engagement) presented a visual and descriptive snapshot of the current and future public programme. Trustees welcomed the report and made some recommendations, which Ms Matterson will incorporate into future reports.

The report prompted the Board to ask whether the future programme could have the flexibility to hold *ad hoc* exhibitions that react to contemporary issues as they arose. In response Ms Matterson felt that the current gallery spaces did not easily lend themselves to host exhibitions that tackled anthropocentric issues of the day.

2004 MEMBERSHIP ROOM UPDATE: THE ANNING ROOMS

The Anning Rooms are a suite of six rooms located on the second and third floors of the Museum's Waterhouse Building, which will become available for use by Members and Patrons from 3 September. A series of launch activities will take place to promote the Anning Rooms as a high quality, tangible new benefit for Members and Patrons. It was agreed that if different access rights are to apply to some of the spaces (eg adults only in the Study), this must be made clear in communications and on site.

The facility is named after Mary Anning to celebrate her pioneering work, highlight her contribution to palaeontology and the Museum's collection and to continue the Museum's championing of women in science.

2005 KPI REPORT: FIRST DRAFT (TP 18/41)

The Board of Trustees noted the report and will provide feedback on improvement to the Director.

2006 AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18 (TP 18/42)

The Board noted the contents of the Annual Report previously assessed by the Audit and Risk Committee.

Committee reports:

2007 REPORT AND MINUTES OF THE DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 12 JUNE 2018 (TP 18/43)

Dame Frances Cairncross (Chair of the Development Advisory Committee) reported that the June meeting had focused on a number of issues, including the Membership Scheme and the fundraising campaign for the Grounds Transformation Programme. The Committee had agreed that the Due Diligence policy paper will be submitted to the November meeting of the Board.

2008 REPORT FROM THE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 26 JUNE 2018

Hilary Newiss (Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee) reported that one of the items discussed was the staff survey and to what extent recent cuts and restructures have affected staff. The Board expressed an interest in the upcoming staff opinion survey and the Director agreed to circulate a copy of the draft survey for comment.

2009 REPORT ON THE PROPERTY COMMITTEE)

Robert Noel (Chair of the Property Committee) reported that a meeting was held to review the Grounds Transformation Programme. The next meeting will focus on collections storage.

2010 REPORT ON THE SCIENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Professor Stephen Sparks (Chair of the Science Advisory Committee) reported that selected Trustees will be meeting with the Heads of Life and Earth Sciences to interrogate their future plans for the Departments.

2010 TECHNOLOGY REPORT

Simon Patterson reported on his recent meeting with the Technology team. It was agreed that a short presentation by the Technology team will be given at the Annual Trustees' Strategy Day in order for the Trustees to become familiar with the work of the department.

2011 AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE BOARD MEETINGS (TP 18/45)

The rolling agenda for future meetings was noted.

2012 EVENTS DIARY (TP 18/46)

The Board of Trustees noted the contents of the report.

2013 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

May 2019: The Chair confirmed that the meeting in May 2019 will be held at the Great North Newcastle Hancock Museum and moved to another date to coincide with the hosting of *Dippy on Tour* at the Museum.

Strategy Day: Items for the agenda include:

- Museum Strategy
- One World Collections programme
- Short presentation by Technology staff

2014 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

2018:

- 18 September (Annual Trustees' Strategy Day – all day)
- 20 November

2019:

- 19 February
- 23 May - Newcastle (Note new date)
- 2 July (Annual Staff Summer party in the evening)
- 24 September (Annual Trustees' Strategy Day)
- 19 November

