

No 257

THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

AT A MEETING ON

TUESDAY 20 NOVEMBER 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
Hilary Newiss
Robert Noel
Simon Patterson
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 Ian Owens (Director of Science)
Frances Allen (Board Secretary)

Preliminary

2015 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Anand Mahindra and Professor Sir Robert Stephen John Sparks (joined part of the meeting by telephone).

2016 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REGISTER OF INTERESTS (TP 18/47)

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

2017 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 3 JULY 2018 AND MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TRUSTEES' STRATEGY DAY HELD ON 18 SEPTEMBER 2018

The Minutes of the meeting of the Trustees held on 3 July 2018 and also the Minutes from the Annual Trustees' Strategy Day held on 18 September 2018 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

2018 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 3 JULY 2018 AND THE ANNUAL TRUSTEES' STRATEGY DAY HELD ON 18 SEPTEMBER 2018 (TP 18/48)

All matters arising were noted.

Corporate items:

2019 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Nothing to report.

2020 DIRECTOR'S REPORT (TP 18/49)

Follow up to water ingress to NHM Archive Store, 9-10 April 2018: The Museum received accreditation by the National Archives after its inspection of the archive store area following the water ingress in April. Work designed to prevent future leaks into the archive store has been planned, which forms part of the collection protection programme established after the flood.

Exhibition Road: The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC) has engaged architects to produce proposals for Exhibition Road incorporating hostile vehicle mitigation into a range of street furniture to safeguard the public using this area. The material will be subject to consultation with local residents, including the NHM, with the intention to start work before the end of the fiscal year. In the meantime, the NHM has introduced measures to expedite entry into the Museum to reduce the number of people queuing in Exhibition Road.

Museum attendance: Attendance remains very strong compared to the prior year and the moving annual total has been on a constant, strong upward trend since the end of January 2018 (new daily attendance records were set twice in August and October).

Dippy on Tour: Dippy on Tour continues to be a great success with the host venues reporting record-breaking visitor numbers. The tour has also had a wider impact – both economic and cultural - on the local areas and the Director was pleased to report that the Dorset County Museum had won both the *Tourism Event of the Year* and the overall *Outstanding Contribution to Dorset Tourism* awards for 2018 for Dippy on Tour.

Review of Ethics Policy: The NHM's current Ethics Policy is being updated (last updated in 2012) to ensure that it can both address contemporary issues and aligns with the Museum's emerging strategy. The renewed Ethics Policy will be underpinned by a clear set of principles and will provide a framework for other key policies and operating procedures. The final policy will be submitted to the Board in May 2019 for final approval. In the meantime, a policy and procedure is in place to address any arising issue.

2021 FINANCIAL REVIEW FOR THE PERIOD APRIL – SEPTEMBER 2018 (TP 18/50)

Neil Greenwood (Director of Finance and Corporate Services) presented the provisional outturn for the financial year 2017/18. The half year position reflected the strong performance associated with visitor attendance and venue hire. The General Fund balance at the FY2018/19 year-end is forecast to exceed the original budget approved by the Board in February 2018.

Items for Approval:

2022 BUDGET FY2019/20 (TP 18/51)

The Board reviewed the Budget for FY2019/20 and projections for the following two years to FY2021/22, which had been prepared against the backdrop of uncertainty over the impact of Brexit and the Spending Review scheduled for mid-2019. Mr Greenwood also warned that a high percentage of unavoidable expenditure, such as utilities, inflationary pay awards and the anticipated increase in superannuation, would impact the budget. The Board noted that the projections for commercial income were significantly more prudent than in previous years to reflect caution over visitor numbers and the impact of Brexit.

In response to the Board's concern over the level of risk associated with Brexit, the Executive had concluded that the risk touched upon a number of areas and was not just constrained to a single risk. One of the imponderable factors is the impact Brexit would have on inbound tourism; 35% of the total audience is European, so losing a proportion of this audience would detrimentally affect visitor numbers and visitor-related income. The potential loss of European research funding is another risk factor.

The Board approved the budget.

2023 LOAN APPROVAL FOR REMAINING OBJECTS FOR ANCIENT OCEANS TOURING EXHIBITION (TP 18/52)

Ancient Oceans is the next exhibition in the series of new specimen-rich international touring exhibitions. The provisional object list for the exhibition, presented to the Board in November 2017, included a number of specimens that required further assessment of their suitability to tour internationally. Dr Sarah Long (Museum Registrar) had now evaluated these specimens (together with some additional objects that were subsequently required for the exhibition) and recommended that these items be included in the *Ancient Oceans* tour.

The Board approved the recommendation provided that the standard conditions listed in this paper are met, as well as any specific conditions (which may include restrictions and limitations on how the items are used), and that the venues provide acceptable facility, security and display reports. The Chair reflected that it would be useful for the Board (via the Chair) to have early knowledge of the proposed tour locations as they are agreed.

Items for noting:

2024 UPDATE ON DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW MUSEUM STRATEGY (TP 18/53)

The Board reviewed the update on the development of the new Museum strategy, which incorporated Trustees' input from the Annual Trustees' Strategy Day in September.

The Board agreed that, although the draft strategy contained good content, there was still a lot of refining and prioritising to be done in order to transform the document into a manifesto for the Museum. The feeling was that the strategy in its current form was not cohesive and did not reflect the *one museum* ethos - essential for communicating the NHM vision. The Board also believed that the narrative lacked inspiration and passion and did not convey the wonder of nature and scientific discovery (although the section on *redefining the science of natural history* captured a lot in conveying a scientific vision for the future).

Inevitably, the uncertainty regarding the future of collections storage and the outcome of related discussions with government will have a fundamental impact on the future of the NHM and, until a solution to collections storage is found, it may be imprudent to make any tacit assumptions in the document. The suggestion was made that perhaps two documents should run in parallel - one that conveys the passionate vision for the NHM over a span of 10-15 years and the other spelling out the practicalities of achieving that vision.

2025 COLLECTION PROGRAMME UPDATE (TP 18/54)

The Board noted progress.

2026 NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM GARDENS PROGRAMME UPDATE (TP 18/55)

The Board received an update on the Gardens Programme and noted that DCMS had given approval for the programme to proceed with the next stage of development. Fiona McWilliams (Director of Development and Communications) provided an update on fundraising activity and that she will be reviewing the overall financial position and potential funding risks with the Programme's SRO (Clare Matterson, Director of Engagement).

2027 EXECUTIVE BOARD LEADERSHIP PROJECT (TP 18/56)

The Board noted the report describing the current project on leadership development, which seeks to pave the way for the Executive to become a more collaborative, high-performing team operating on a higher and more strategic level. The Executive believed that this project was very beneficial in helping the Directors work more effectively together as a cohesive unit.

2028 EMPLOYEE OPINION SURVEY (TP 18/57)

The 2018 Employee Opinion Survey was conducted by external consultants on behalf of the NHM and took place in September/October. Employing external consultants allowed the independent collection and analysis of the responses (providing staff with anonymity) and enabled the NHM data to be compared with a consolidated "norm" data-sets from the consultant's client base.

The Director presented to the Board the consolidated data, together with the consultant's executive summary, which summarised the initial outcomes from the Survey. It was disappointing that the areas highlighted for development were similar to those from previous surveys and these areas were of concern to the Executive. A familiar theme related to internal communication and the Director acknowledged that better engagement with staff is needed. In this context, a series of cross-Museum workshops will be developed by HR to focus on the low scoring areas of (1) Consultation and Collaboration; (2) Leadership and (3) Respect and Safety to look at the factors underpinning these problematic areas and to explore possible solutions (the free-form comments relating to leadership will feed into the workshop agenda). It is hoped that the workshops will provide the Executive with a better insight into the issues that have influenced the negative scoring and the consolidated views will inform a series of recommendations and action plan. In parallel, each directorate is developing more local-level action plans.

2029 HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT: JULY-SEPTEMBER 2018 (TP 18/58)

The board acknowledged and noted the report.

Committee reports:

2030 REPORT ON THE SCIENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 24 SEPTEMBER 2018 (TP 18/59)

The meeting had focussed on the Collections Masterplan and Museum Strategy and Professor Sir Stephen Sparks (Chair of the Science Advisory Committee) recommended that the Board review the addendum to the minutes, which outlined the issues and concerns the Committee had with regard to these two projects.

2031 REPORT ON THE COMMERCIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 29 OCTOBER 2018 (TP 18/60)

Dr Kim Winsor (Chair of the Commercial Advisory Committee) reported that the Committee had discussed key visitor trends in FY2017/18, which indicated that the Waterhouse building plays a key role in attracting visitors to the Museum. The interest in the building is increasing and the potential to introduce building-related tours is being explored. The data also highlighted that over 60% of NHM visitors are international, so there is a need to understand the marketing needs of the international audience more fully.

2032 REPORT ON THE PROPERTY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 29 OCTOBER 2018 (TP 18/61)

Robert Noel (Chair of the Property Committee) reported that the meeting had focussed on the Collection and Gardens Programmes. Following the proposal from the Audit and Risk Committee, it was agreed that the Property Committee should oversee the *Protecting the Collections* project. This project ensures the short-term protection of collections prior to the implementation of the solution developed by the Collections Programme.

Finally, the constitution of the Committee had changed with two external members stepping down. The Chair of Trustees (Lord Stephen Green) agreed to enlist another Trustee onto the Committee.

2033 REPORT AND MINUTES OF THE DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 31 OCTOBER 2018 (TP 18/62)

Dame Frances Cairncross (Chair of the Development Advisory Committee) was pleased to report that the Development and Communications Department now have in place a full Philanthropy team which will play an important role in the Museum's fundraising activities. Membership is also showing good sales and a significant increase in retention rates, with the Anning Rooms appearing to play a major role in contributing to this growth.

Dame Frances reflected that Ms McWilliams (Director of Development and Communications) has been in post for three years and during that time the large investment made in the Development function had shown dividends. To demonstrate this Ms McWilliams circulated to the Board a summary report that outlines a year-on-year track analysis of Development income since 2010.

2034 REPORT FROM THE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 1 NOVEMBER 2018

Hilary Newiss (Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee) provided an update from the November meeting and reaffirmed that the NHM Gardens Project (and the risk of not achieving the funding target) had been added to the Risk Register. The wording will be crafted to reflect that this is a low risk.

2035 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Annual Trustees' Dinner: The Director reconfirmed that the Annual Trustees' Dinner will take place on 4 June 2019. The Museum's Special events team will work with the Board to compile a high-profile guest list.

Director of Science – Prof Ian Owens: The Board offered thanks to Prof Ian Owens, Director of Science, who departs the Museum in January 2019 to take on a new role as Deputy Director of the Smithsonian Institution. The Chair complimented Prof Owens on his enthusiasm and clarity on transforming science in the NHM during his tenure. Prof Owens will be much missed and his influence at the NHM has gone far beyond the realms of science.

Board appointments: The Chair confirmed Prof Sir Stephen Sparks' reappointment to the Board (as Royal Society Trustee) for a further four-year term ending 31 December 2022.

2036 AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE BOARD MEETINGS (TP 18/63)

The rolling agenda for future meetings was noted.

2037 EVENTS DIARY (TP 18/64)

The Board of Trustees noted the contents of the report.

2038 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

2019:

- 19 February
- 23 May (Great North Museum, Newcastle)
- 24 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 tbc Annual Trustees' Dinner
- 7 July 2020 (Annual Staff Summer party in the evening)
- 22 September (Annual Trustees' Strategy Day)
- 17 November

