

No 265

**THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM**

**AT A MEETING ON**

**TUESDAY 7 JULY 2020**

**AT 09.00 A.M.**

**TEAMS VIRTUAL MEETING**

**Present**

**TRUSTEES**

Lord Green of Hurstpierpoint (Chair)  
Professor Sir John Beddington CMG FRS  
Harris Bokhari OBE  
Dame Frances Cairncross DBE FRSE  
Hilary Newiss  
Professor Yadvinder Malhi FRS  
Robert Noel  
Simon Patterson  
Professor Sir Stephen Sparks CMG CBE FRS  
Professor Dame Janet Thornton DBE FRS  
Dr Kim L Winser OBE

**In Attendance**

Sir Michael Dixon (Director)  
Neil Greenwood (Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services)  
Dr Tim Littlewood (Executive Director of Science)  
Fiona McWilliams (Executive Director of Development and Communications)  
Clare Matterson CBE (Executive Director of Engagement)  
Bethan Parry (Directorate Chief of Staff)  
Frances Allen (Board Secretary)  
  
Kathryn Packer (Collections Programme Director) – for item

**Preliminary**

**2183 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None

**2184 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REGISTER OF INTERESTS (TP 20/34)**

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

**2185 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19 MAY 2020**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Trustees held on 19 May 2020 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

**2186 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 19 MAY 2020 (TP 20/35)**

All matters arising were covered on the agenda.

**Corporate items:**

**2187 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

The Chair was pleased to confirm that the appointment of Dr Douglas Gurr as Director Designate was been announced on Thursday 18 June with a cascade of press releases, emails and letters to key stakeholders. Dr Gurr's start date will be announced in due course.

**2188 DIRECTOR'S REPORT (TP 20/36)**

Management response to the external review of the Board: As part of the follow-up to the external review, an induction programme for new Trustees is being developed by the Directorate, which will also be offered to other Trustees. A number of other actions are underway, including a review of the current committee structure to determine whether this advisory network needs to be modified to better meet the needs of the main Board.

Employee Engagement Survey: The annual survey will be conducted in September and will include additional questions relating to the Museum's handling of its response, and attitudes to permanent change in working arrangements. The Director and Head of Internal Communications will also be reviewing progress against the action plan for last year.

Government relations: The Director was pleased to inform the Board that the Government had announced a £1.57b rescue package for the cultural sector, which is to include DCMS funded museums and galleries. This is welcome news and reflects a great deal of behind the scenes work by Directors, Boards and DCMS officials. The package will be an uplift in resource grant in aid through to March 2021, with ongoing support thereafter being determined in the government spending review this autumn.

Appointments to the Board of Trustees: The Board now has eleven trustees following confirmation from No.10 Downing Street of the appointment of Harris Bokhari and Professor Yadvinder Malhi and the reappointment of Professor Janet Thornton and Robert Noel. In addition, the Board has reappointed Dame Frances Cairncross to her co-opted position. There is one further vacancy for a co-opted trustee.

The Director also informed the Board that the DCMS Appointments unit had indicated that, as the Departmental follow-up to Covid-19 is likely to disrupt its work, it is proposed to defer some Trustee appointments by extending existing terms for a period. Dr Kim Winser is the only current Prime Ministerial appointee as Trustee whose term falls within this period and accordingly her term has been extended to 17 August 2021.

Diversity and inclusion: The Executive Board had approved a Diversity and Inclusion action plan some months ago, but progress has been hampered by the lockdown of the Museum. The Museum is committed to improving the diversity and inclusion of its workforce to better reflect the communities it serves. To aid this goal, a specialist diversity and inclusion adviser will be employed to progress the action plan and ensure that policies and procedures reflect the Museum's commitment that diversity and inclusion should be at the heart of the organisation and integrated into everything it does. The Museum wants to ensure that its workforce feel no stigma in declaring disability, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation etc.

Similarly, the Museum has to do more to attract audiences which are more representative of the UK demographic and the ethnicity of Londoners. The Director reflected that most museums are regarded as enclaves of white privilege and, whilst the NHM audience is probably more diverse than that of its peers, it needs to ensure that all future plans place the intention to rectify this at their heart.

Another intertwined issue is the NHM collection, which has been accumulated over hundreds of years and reflects its colonial past as well as modern collecting according to current legislation and international agreements. Whilst the facts about the history of the NHM collection cannot be rewritten, the Museum can reinterpret them using today's ethics and moral values and ensuring that the knowledge held in our collection is shared appropriately. For example, a new representation of Joseph Banks in the *Images of Nature* Gallery will have new interpretation. In addition, the Executive Board has commissioned an internal review of the public areas of the Museum to record the depictions of historical figures in statuary and artworks and the naming of spaces, collections and artefacts within the Museum. The Museum is very aware of changing attitudes and, in this spirit, will not hesitate to put into storage any statuary and artworks deemed inappropriate for public display. This decision rests with the NHM and will always adopt a robust and sensitive approach to contested heritage issues.

Diversity and inclusion will be discussed in more depth at the Annual Trustees' Strategy Day in September.

**2189 FINANCIAL REVIEW FOR THE PERIOD APRIL – MAY 2020 (TP 20/37)**

Neil Greenwood (Director of Finance and Corporate Services) presented the income and expenditure report for the financial year 2020/21 to 31 May 2020. The Board noted that the forecast had been revised to reflect a significant reduction in self-generated operating income (due to a reduced level of visitation) and the assumption of a reopening date to the public of 5 August 2020. The Executive will continue to look at measures to reduce expenditure and continue to use the Corona Virus Job Retention Scheme.

The Director outlined the latest financial forecast for 2020/21 and explained that, due to savings on expenditure and taking advantage of the furlough scheme, the Museum is predicted to remain solvent until the end of the fiscal year. However, from December 2020 onwards the Museum's General Reserve will be drained to an unacceptable level, so longer-term financial support from government, together with the continued use of the furlough scheme, is essential, particularly in view of uncertain visitor numbers (and income projections) and the uncharted territory of the "new normal". The Director reiterated that the General Reserve is not a surplus but a running buffer and, whilst the minimum level (£4m) is low, it is appropriate for an arm's length body accountable to government.

Neil Greenwood, Chair of the Museum Activation Programme (MAP) group explained that the MAP group has been responsible for planning the reopening of the Museum to the public and staff and had been working with the V&A and the Science Museum to develop a coordinated approach. The NHM is scheduled to reopen to the public on 5 August and will initially operate a restricted schedule opening five days a week (Wednesday to Sunday) from 11.00-18.00. The Museum's opening hours will be staggered with those of its South Kensington neighbours so as to reduce the burden on public transportation system during rush hour. Approximately 70% of spaces will be open to the public (only one café) and entry, via free timed tickets booked in advance, will be limited to circa 2.8k visitors per day. The three directors of the NHM, V&A and Science Museum will hold a joint press conference in mid-July to announce the launch package. This coordinated approach will also benefit South Kensington businesses and the wider community.

MAP had developed a number of workstreams to cover every aspect of operation, but much of the emphasis was on people. In this context, the health and safety of both public and staff was at the heart of planning and MAP had consulted with Tesco's Operational Team (as well as other external sources), to learn from the organisation's approach to staff and customers to inform a reopening/return to work plan. Staff on site and the Unions had also been hugely supportive in sharing intelligence and providing input to shaping these plans.

Going forward there will be a phased staff return with working from home being the default position. The initial focus will be on those who need to be working/on-site for public re-opening and on discrete critical projects (some pockets of work had already restarted during closure). The Museum will adopt a supportive and flexible approach to staff who may be anxious about returning to NHM sites; a process has been developed, which enables line managers to identify any vulnerabilities (such as ethnicity, disability, health issues etc) that may warrant particular attention or support around staff returning to site in this COVID-19 period.

Plans are underway for the opening day and Engagement's Learning and Community teams are working with local community groups to ensure that they feel comfortable and welcome in returning to the Museum. Various ideas are being explored including special sessions and afternoon events to which different community groups (from BAME and lower socio-economic backgrounds) will be invited. The programme for the opening day for the opening day will be shared with the Board to ensure that Trustee presence on the opening day and days thereafter.

**Strategic items:****2190 COLLECTIONS PROGRAMME: A SCIENCE AND DIGITISATION CENTRE AT HARWELL SCIENCE AND INNOVATION (TP 20/38)**

Kathryn Packer (Collections Programme Director) provided the Board with an update on the progress of the Collections Programme since the Chancellor announced funding on 11 March. Kathryn also outlined the major milestones and deliverables for the next phase of the programme – the first of which is to provide an updated version of the bid document in the form of a revised Strategic Outline Case for a science and digitisation centre at Harwell Science Campus in order for DCMS to release the next tranche of funding.

A shortlist of scenarios for what is moved to, created or replicated at Harwell will be developed through evidence development and a series of staff workshops to take place in the summer and autumn. This will culminate in the Collections Programme Board in December selecting 2 or 3 scenarios for more detailed evaluation with a final decision being made in early 2021. This will then pave the way for decisions, for example, on the staff and technology models for the new site. This will enable more detail planning of the move process, which will offer the opportunity to make NHM specimens available digitally. The Museum will continue to explore scope for additional external funding for the wider process of digitisation and to develop the DiSCCo UK partnership with other organisations to work on this collectively.

The Property Committee continues to oversee the land deal and building development part of the programme and will be approving the negotiating brief for the lease in October 2020. Any major decisions and/or contract signature will be submitted to the main Board for approval, on the recommendation of the Property Committee.

#### **2191 TEMPORARY REMOVAL OF LOW-USE LIBRARY COLLECTIONS TO THE BRITISH LIBRARY, BOSTON SPA STORAGE FACILITY**

In July 2017, the Board endorsed the decision to temporarily relocate the low-use Library collection to the British Library facility at Boston Spa on a five-year basis with a review in three years' time. The review has reaffirmed the efficacy of the arrangement as a low-cost immediate storage solution and so the contract will continue until its termination in September 2022. The Board endorsed this decision.

#### **2192 ANNUAL TRUSTEES' STRATEGY DAY – ITEMS FOR THE AGENDA**

It was agreed that the topics to be discussed will include:

- The Collections Programme (to include Harwell move, collections strategy and digitisation)
- COP26
- Diversity and inclusion (and related issues)
- Board committees (structure and how they support the main Board).

#### **Item for approval:**

#### **2193 STATEMENT ON SLAVERY AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING 2019/2020 (TP 20/39)**

The Modern Slavery Act 2015 requires certain organisations to develop a slavery and human trafficking statement each year. The statement, prepared by Andy Davies, Procurement Manager, sets out what steps the NHM has taken in 2019/20 to address the risk of human rights abuse in its supply chains and proposed plans for the forthcoming year. The draft statement has been considered and endorsed by the Head of Risk and Assurance, with the recommendation that it is brought to the Board of Trustees for approval, as required by the legislation.

The Board was happy with the statement but wondered whether the title should be changed to capture the much broader ethical issue of exploitation. The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee, Hilary Newiss, confirmed that the title had to comply with the requirements of the Modern Slavery Act, but agreed that the Audit and Risk Committee would review to ensure that the Museum lives its values.

The Board approved the statement.

#### **Updates:**

#### **2194 ENGAGEMENT UPDATE**

Clare Matterson (Executive Director of Engagement) presented an update of work across Engagement Group. The global reach over the last two years has risen to circa 22 million, largely due to online growth. Since closure Engagement has exploited new areas via digital and media outreach to engage the widest audience, as well as generating income. In this respect, the investment made in digital has paid dividends and the Museum has learned a lot about digital delivery during these challenging times. This journey has led the team to explore innovative ways to reach the NHM audience, including repurposing the homepage to present the *Virtual Museum* – and bringing to the fore the virtual self-guided tour of the galleries, an interactive experience about Hope the blue whale and audio guides narrated by Sir David Attenborough. This has attracted lots of plaudits from the media and the range of new activities will provide the springboard to experiment further with different digital

platforms/ideas. Other new projects include *A Breath of Fresh Air: Nature in Lockdown* – (a NERC-funded project) that will use datasets to look at changes in nature during lockdown and engage in public dialogue with young researchers to inform future research interests. The Museum has also agreed to work with Channel 5 on a series showing the work of the Museum that will be aired towards the end of the year.

Businesses that have survived under lockdown were: Publishing (with nine new books to press); Licensing (where the focus was on larger brands with a strong sustainable message) and the on-line shop, which is part reopened and gradually building up a good range of products. The new platform – Magento 2 – will improve the functionality of shopping online.

The reopening of the Museum is now taking centre stage and this special moment provides a unique time for visitors to enjoy the Museum with fewer people and the opportunity to reconnect with nature and our collection. Diversity is a core value and to progress the D&I agenda, a member of staff has been seconded to work directly to Clare as Culture & Inclusion Lead (Engagement). Some immediate action includes developing special days for local targeted audiences on opening and conducting a 'Review of Names and Representation' of NHM collections on site and on-line with recommendations going to the Executive Board.

As well as a major capital programme, the Urban Nature Project is key in for local and national outreach around UK-wide learning programme for families and schools to connect to urban nature. The current NHM garden will be transformed into an exemplar of urban wildlife research, conservation and awareness. As part of the broader outreach programme, the development phase is well underway. Considerable audience research and consultation has taken place to understand the barriers for families from lower socio-economic backgrounds, local communities, disabled and visually impaired people is the first step toward creating programmes and experiences they want and need. Fiona McWilliams gave an update on the progress regarding fund raising for the project noting that funds for the national programme were well progressed and there was a focus on funding for the capital build. It was noted that the final planning application to be submitted in mid-July.

With regard to the future public programme, key exhibitions include *Wildlife Photographer of the Year* (opening in October) and *Fantastic Beasts* (opening in December). Plans are also in progress for the Anthropocene year, which has been brought forward to 2021 from 2022.

## 2195 SCIENCE UPDATE

Dr Tim Littlewood (Executive Director of Science) provided a summary of Science performance in 2019/20 and future plans. Science income (comprising grants, studentships and consultancy) was a little down on forecast and the forward projection has been adjusted to reflect the effects of Covid-19. Several grants are pending review and interestingly, a number of new grants are associated with the Covid-19 pandemic. In the context of consultancy, building partnerships and proactive marketing to business will ensue to promote the Museum's ability to diagnose and model the natural world. Dr Littlewood will also pursue further discussions with partners to strengthen links with the engineering community as suggested by Professor Sir John Beddington.

In the last six months 270 publications have been achieved covering a diversity of disciplines under which the Museum normally publishes. Dr Littlewood made special mention of individuals who had received awards including:

**Linnean Medal** - Juliet Brodie

**Collins Medal** - Alan Woolley (retired)

In addition, Adrian Lister, Beth Okamura, Richard Herrington, Mark Wilkinson have been successful in their Individual Merit Promotion renewals.

Looking forward, Dr Littlewood outlined the future plans for Science, a major catalyst of which is the Collections Programme. The digital component is a fundamental part of Science and will become increasingly important as the Science and Digital Centre is developed.

## 2196 DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Fiona McWilliams (Executive Director of Development) provided an update on the financial outturn for Development income for the year ending 31 March 2020, an overview of income for the 10 years to that date and activities in Q1 of the current financial year.

Investment was made in the Museum's Development function in 2015/16 and the five years since then to 31 March 2020 show significant increases in income. The high value income streams from Philanthropy and Corporate Partnerships, show New Funds Secured (NFS) up 56% on the previous five years, and Received Income (RI) up 92. For 2019/20 the NFS outturn was up 48% on the previous year, RI was 95% up and 34% above target. 2019/20 was a tough year for Membership in terms of acquisitions as due to changes in the public programme there was only one paid-for exhibition. However, renewals/retention targets had been met despite the changes in membership proposition which saw the withdrawal of free guest passes. The high retention rates show the positive impact of the deliberate move to a cause-based proposition focused on the Museum's vision and mission.

Since lockdown all the Development teams have been focused on both keeping supporter audiences involved and engaged with the Museum and shoring up existing revenue streams and experimenting with reaching new audiences and supporters – all through new digital initiatives. Fiona McWilliams thanked colleagues across the Museum, especially in the Digital teams, for their collaboration in creating and delivering new supporter lectures and 'in conversation with' events and a wide variety of corporate sponsored online activities that were originally planned to take place at the Museum. These events, and the new digital supporters' hub, The Hive, have been very well received and feedback from corporate partner LEGO has been very positive and an online family festival supported by Pukka is planned for August.

The first phase of the digital fundraising strategy has shown promising results. Improvements have been made to the messaging, content and functionality of online donations and different sorts of donation 'asks' have been trialled across the website, on social media, alongside online events and in marketing emails. Q1 results show a significant increase on the previous year and 59% of online donors are new to the Museum. Further improvements are planned in Q2 and the integrated approach represents major progress toward a holistic NHM supporter journey, paving the way for increased income and engagement in the future.

The effect that the Covid-19 pandemic has had on the economy presents challenges for high value fundraising in the near future. Many trusts and HNWIs are diverting funds to front line organisations, pausing or delaying their grant-giving. The lack of onsite engagement and cultivation events over several months is also inevitably having an impact and the RI forecast for this year has been revised down. Fundraising for the Urban Nature Project continues in earnest though and submission of the NLHF stage 2 application has been delayed to March 2021 - also due to delay in being able to progress the development of the activity programme.

Fiona McWilliams also highlighted reasons for optimism, despite ongoing uncertainty in the economy. The Museum's new strategy had resonated strongly with funders and the public when it was launched in January and its key theme of urgently addressing the planetary emergency has only been heightened by people becoming more aware of the negative impacts of humankind on the natural world, such as Covid-19. There is increased interest in the natural world and role of culture in society. The endorsement and investment by UK government in the NHM's new centre at Harwell and the appointment of a new Director gives real momentum. Funders tend to take a long-term view and research shows we should not make assumptions and that the funding market is resilient. Maintaining good relationships with all and building our digital engagement with supporters will pay dividends over the longer term.

## **Annual Reports for noting:**

*These reports have been submitted and reviewed by the Audit and Risk Committee at the meeting on 30 June 2020.*

### **2197 2019/20 ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS (TP 20/40)**

Mr Neil Greenwood presented for Trustees' approval the NHM's Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20, the NHM Special Funds Trust Accounts 2019/20 and the NHM Benevolent Fund Accounts 2019/20, and for noting the NHM Trading Company Limited Accounts 2019/20. All the accounts had been considered and reviewed in detail by the Audit and Risk Committee at the June meeting, and it was reported that discussion had focussed on the issue of material uncertainty over going concern arising from the impact of COVID-19 for the Museum accounts. However, since the Audit and Risk Committee the Government had announced the support package for the culture and heritage sector on 5 July 2020 which had enabled the going concern assessment to be reconsidered and satisfied. This would require some amendments to the disclosures in the Museum accounts and it was hoped that this would enable the accounts to be laid in Parliament before the recess, even though the timing was now extremely tight with Ministerial approval and NAO certification still required.

The Board:

1. Approved the NHM Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20 with the Chair and the Director, with the support of Audit and Risk Committee, authorised to approve final amendments
2. Approved the NHM Special Funds Trust Accounts 2019/20
3. Approved the NHM Benevolent Fund Accounts 2019/20
4. Noted the NHM Trading Company Limited Accounts 2019/20

#### **2198 AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20 (TP 20/41)**

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

#### **Committee reports:**

##### **2199 REPORT FROM THE PROPERTY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 16 JUNE 2020 (TP 20/42)**

Mr Robert Noel (Chair of the Property Committee) informed the Board that the June meeting had considered a number of items and was pleased to report that the Museum had been invited to submit a bid to the DCMS Emergency Infrastructure fund for any projects that can be up and running very quickly. As a result, a bid had been submitted to repair the external structure and replace the curtain walling on the Palaeontology Building.

##### **2200 REPORT FROM THE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 30 JUNE 2020**

Ms Hilary Newiss (Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee) provided an update on the June meeting. The main focus of the discussion was the audit plan for the coming year and the challenge of undertaking the audit in the absence of personnel on site. An internal review of the lessons learned from the closure of the Museum due to Covid-19 and the reopening will be submitted to the ARC in due course.

##### **2201 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

##### **2202 AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE BOARD MEETINGS (TP 20/43)**

The rolling agenda for future meetings was noted.

##### **2203 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS**

###### **2020:**

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

###### **2021:**

- 16 February
- 18 May
- June (date to be determined): Annual Trustees' Dinner
- 6 July (Annual Staff Summer party in the evening)
- 22 September (Annual Trustees' Strategy Day)
- 23 November

