

No 271

**THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM**

**AT A MEETING ON**

**TUESDAY 17 MAY 2022**

**AT 10.00 A.M.**

**Present**

**TRUSTEES**

Lord Green of Hurstpierpoint (Chair)

Harris Bokhari OBE

Dame Frances Cairncross DBE FRSE

Hilary Newiss

Robert Noel

Dr Sarah E Thomas

Professor Dame Janet Thornton DBE FRS FMedSci FRSC

Professor Sir Stephen Sparks CMG CBE FRS

Simon Patterson

**In Attendance**

Dr Douglas Gurr (Director)

Neil Greenwood (Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services)

Dr Tim Littlewood (Executive Director of Science)

Fiona McWilliams (Executive Director of Development)

Dan Phelan (Director of Communications, Digital and Marketing)

Bethan Parry (Chief of Staff)

Jenna Birley (EO Governance and Government Relations) (Board Secretary)

Richard Orr (Head of Marketing) for item 8

Keith Jennings (Director of Estates, Master-planning and Projects) for items 10 and 11

Kathryn Packer (Programme Director, NHM@Harwell) for item 10

Adam Farrar (Director of Commercial and Visitor Experience) for item 11 (remotely)

**CLOSED SESSION**

The meeting began with a closed session of the Board which was not minuted.

**Preliminary items:**

**2337 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Professor Yadvinder Malhi.

**2338 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REGISTER OF INTERESTS (TP 22/13)**

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

**2339 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23 FEBRUARY 2022 (TP 22/14)**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Trustees held on 23 February 2022 were confirmed as a true record and signed off by the Chair.

**2340 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 23 FEBRUARY 2022**

All matters arising were noted as completed or to be addressed later on the agenda.

The Chair requested that a letter of thanks be drafted to the Museum of Science and Industry for hosting the Board of Trustees. **(BP)**

**Corporate items:**

**2341 CHAIR'S REPORT**

The Chair's report was covered for the Board in the closed session.

**2342 DIRECTOR'S REPORT (TP 22/15)**

The Director provided an update on the activities of the Museum since the last meeting, including the operating plan quarterly review.

The Board were pleased to note the increasing number of visitors to the museum in recent weeks.

**2343 FINANCIAL REVIEW FOR THE PERIOD APRIL – DECEMBER 2021 (TP 22/16)**

Mr Neil Greenwood provided an update on the Museum's financial position as well as the projections for 2022-23. It was noted that the Grant in Aid and Covid support funding had now been confirmed by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).

The Board noted the report, with the caveat that the year end figures are subject to review, finalisation and audit.

**Items for discussion:**

**2344 BRAND AND IDENTITY UPDATE**

Mr Richard Orr and Ms Lucy Clark delivered a presentation to the Board, updating them on the progress of the Brand and Identity Project.

The Board commended the progress of the project and expressed positivity about the brand design choices and approach.

The Board asked Ms Clark and Mr Orr to consider the implications of choosing a non-uniform font as part of the branding update and how this may affect documentation circulated outside of the Museum. They responded that this issue had been brought to their attention and they were considering options to mitigate any potential issues.

The Board noted the update and the proposed launch date of the new branding in spring 2023.

**2345 DIGITAL MUSEUM (TP 22/17)**

Mr Dan Phelan delivered a presentation to the Board providing an overview of the Museum's digital plan for collections, content and customers. The presentation focussed on NHM's digital content, channels and products – and the performance of these via a range of metrics.

Mr Phelan explained the challenges and opportunities associated with continuing to grow audiences and having a deeper relationship with individuals. Discover content drives growth but not necessarily

engagement; digital products like the Biodiversity Trends Explorer and Discover Biodiversity drive engagement but not volume at present.

He also talked about the need to invest in social media as younger audiences were more likely to engage with NHM on those platforms. The Board asked Mr Phelan to consider whether members of the science teams could be used further to add to the digital content output. Mr Phelan and Doctor Tim Littlewood confirmed that this idea was being explored with science and communication colleagues.

Mr Phelan finished his presentation by describing the key areas of focus for a more strategic digital offer, which included looking at what site and social media users value and why. This would also include alignment to the Museum's strategic ambitions to engage and involve the widest possible audience, creating advocates for the planet and inspiring future scientists.

The Board thanked Mr Phelan for the presentation and noted the update.

**Regular updates:**

**2346 NHM@HARWELL**

Mr Keith Jennings presented an update on the NHM@Harwell programme. This included a change of location to the Thames Valley Science Park which had been approved by the Board at an extraordinary meeting on 3 May and agreed by DCMS and was shortly to be announced publicly.

The Board noted that the name of the project would be changing, though it had not yet been decided, and that the change of location had no bearing on the overall programme scope, timeline or the collections that will be moving.

Board members noted good working relationships with colleagues from the British Museum who had recently undertaken a similar project and were able to provide valuable 'lessons learned' information.

**2347 URBAN NATURE PROJECT (UNP) UPDATE (TP 22/18)**

Mr Adam Farrar, Mr Jennings and Ms Fiona McWilliams provided an update on the UNP which was noted by the Board.

**2348 QUARTERLY COLLECTIONS UPDATE (TP 22/19)**

Dr Tim Littlewood gave an update on collections which noted by the Board.

**Annual Reports for Noting:**

**2349 ANNUAL SECURITY REPORT 2021/22**

The Board noted the Annual Security Report for 2021-22.

**2350 ANNUAL HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT 2021/22**

The Board noted the Annual Health and Safety for 2021-22.

**2351 ANNUAL COLLECTIONS ASSURANCE 2021/22**

The Board noted the Annual Collections Assurance for 2021-22.

**Committee Reports:**

**2352 REPORT ON THE NEW NHM FOUNDATION**

Dame Frances Cairncross provided an update on the NHM Foundation which was to be established as an independent charity established to support the Museum with its fundraising activities. The Board noted the update.

**2353 REPORT FROM THE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 28 APRIL 2022**

The Board noted the verbal report provided by Ms Hilary Newiss and that the minutes of the April meeting would come to the next Board of Trustees meeting in July 2022.

**2354 REPORT FROM THE INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 3 MAY 2022**

The Board noted the verbal report by Mr Robert Noel and that the minutes of the May meeting would come to the next Board of Trustees meeting in July 2022.

**2355 REPORT FROM THE SCIENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 15 FEBRUARY 2022 (TP 22/24)**

The Board noted the verbal report from Professor Sir Stephen Sparks and the minutes of the meeting provided.

**Other reports:**

**2356 EVENT DATES FOR THE DIARY**

Event dates for the diary had been noted.

**2357 AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE BOARD MEETINGS**

The rolling agenda for future meetings was noted.

**2358 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI): the Chair requested that EDI be a topic for the Board awayday in October. Trustees were asked to inform the Director of any specific points they wished to raise for discussion.

Thanks: The Board thanked Mr Harris Bokhari for his generosity in providing gifts to members as part of 2022's Eid celebrations.

**2359 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS**

**2022**

- 5 July (Annual staff summer party in the evening)
- 6 October (09.00-17.00 – Annual Trustees' Strategy Day)
- 15 November

**2023**

- 21 February
- 16 May

