

**Minutes of SMG Board of Trustees Meeting**  
**Held in the Sunday School, Locomotion on**  
**Tuesday 10 October 2023**

<p><b><u>Present:</u></b></p> <p><b>SMG Trustees</b> Dame Mary Archer (Chair) James Bilefield Professor Stephen Belcher Professor Brian Cantor Tim Dugher Judith Donovan Professor Anya Hurlbert Iain McIntosh Lopa Patel Professor Greg Radick Sarah Staniforth Lord Hendy Professor Washington Ochieng Steven Underwood</p>	<p><b><u>In attendance:</u></b></p> <p><b>SMG Executive</b> Sir Ian Blatchford, Director &amp; Chief Executive Shri Mukundagiri, Chief Operating Officer Nicolas Raynaud, Director of Finance and Corporate Services Peter Dickinson, Director of Communications Deborah Myers, Director of Development (items 1 – 8) Anna Dejean, Masterplan Director Dr Roger Highfield, Science Director Dr Julia Knights, Deputy Director, Science Museum (ScM) Sally MacDonald, Director, Science &amp; Industry Museum (SIM) Judith McNicol, Director, National Railway Museum (NRM) Jo Quinton-Tulloch, Director of National Science and Media Museum (NSMM) - <i>audio only</i> Susan Raikes, Director of Learning Sarita Godber, Director of People and Culture Craig Bentley, Director of Estate John Stack, Digital Director Helen Jones, Director of Global Engagement Sian Williams, Programme Director: One Collection</p> <p>Jade Kirton-Vaughan, Head of Directorate (<i>Minutes</i>)</p> <p>David Jacob, Trustee, Science Museum Foundation (<i>Observer</i>)</p>
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**1. Apologies for absence**

Apologies had been received from Professor Ajit Lalvani, Baroness Nicky Morgan and Sarah Sands.

**2. Declarations of interest**

None.

**3. Draft Minutes of SMG Board Meeting on 28 June 2023**

The minutes of the meeting were approved and would be signed by the Chair. **(Action: MA / JKV)**

**4. SMG Chair's Report**

The paper circulated previously was noted.

**4.1 Partnership Panel**

The papers circulated previously were noted. **The Board approved** the recommendations outlined in the paper to proceed with the partnerships, and **The Board approved** the partnership with the Saudi Ministry of Culture which had come for approval out of committee due to tight timescales.

**4.2 SMG Remuneration Committee Terms of Reference**

The paper circulated previously was noted. **The Board approved** the Terms of Reference for the Remuneration Committee.

**4.3 SMG Annual Board Effectiveness Survey**

The paper circulated previously was noted. In addition:

- It was remarked that the results were positive with only three of the questions receiving a score lower than an average of 4 out of 5. This included a question around whether Trustees' skills / experience were called upon outside of meetings and it was suggested that a skills audit of the current Board would be helpful for the new chair.
- A question around Board commitment to fundraising scored below average and it was suggested it would be helpful if trustees could meet at regular intervals with IB/DM/SMu to discuss networks.

## 5. Director's Report

The paper circulated previously was noted. In addition:

- SIM had begun thinking about a Wonderlab but with the idea of having a younger audience than other Wonderlabs at SMG. The team were also considering the feasibility of expanding Wonderlab in London.
- The Horizons Gallery at ScM was providing the opportunity to have conversations with UKRI around unlocking funding. It was suggested that it would be important to engage with the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council.
- IB and HJ would be visiting India at the end of October to meet with the Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation, among other meetings in the country.
- It was expected that the Collections team would be able to remove the remaining SMG objects from the Type Archive by 13 October.
- A discussion on the STEM Ambassador Hub took place following the decision not to continue with the programme after only being awarded one of the two regions tendered for, which came with a 60% reduction in funding. It was noted that although it was a disappointment, the contract was no longer viable.

### 5.1 Collection Security at SMG

The paper circulated previously was noted. In addition:

- The importance of documentation was noted and this was a high priority for SMG.
- Following an external audit of collections management the previous year, it was suggested a further audit in 2024 with a location check would be beneficial.
- The importance of Whistleblowing was noted and staff should feel able to approach any trustee with concerns.
- Collections Management was under resourced across all national museums and a boost in funding was required for digitisation and documentation projects across the sector.
- A paper would be brought to a future Board meeting with detail on what SMG's priorities were. A paper detailing the stores would be made more comprehensive with detail on risks to buildings from fire / flood and risk from pests. **(Action: SMa)**

## 6. SMG Performance and Data Report

The paper circulated previously was noted. In addition:

- The data in these papers was now available to all colleagues via the Management Hub on the intranet and there had been a good uptake of colleagues accessing it.
- New metrics were being designed to be introduced in the coming months, on workforce, collections, and sustainability.

## 7. SMG People and Culture Annual Report

The paper circulated previously was noted. In addition:

- The data was often evaluated against other large national museums and SMG was shown to have comparable statistics on metrics such as turnover and absence rates. The issue with turnover was sector wide.
- Work on socio-economic reporting was noted with a focus on talking to colleagues around the importance of capturing such data.
- A discussion was had around targets and these would be reviewed at the end of March 2024, following the release of the latest Census data.
- It was noted that the majority of the data in the report did not include volunteers and it was suggested this may be something to look at in the future.

## 8. SMG Finance Committee Report

The papers circulated previously were noted. In addition:

- A discussion took place around the process and timeline of approvals for exhibitions and projects and how there was sometimes limited opportunity for trustees to consider a project before it became unfeasible to withdraw. It was suggested that the Public Programme, which currently ran to 2030, should be shared with Finance Committee with a consideration of the finances for those projects. An update would come to a future Board meeting. **(ACTION: NR)**
- **The Board approved** the full project budget for the Zaha Hadid Exhibition.
- **The Board approved** the recommendations for the Power Hall and Decarbonisation project budget increase and underwrite for project contingency.
- **The Board approved** the recommendation of a budget increase for Energy Revolution.
- The Board noted the Finance Committee's approval of the project budget for the Versailles exhibition.
- The Board received an update on SMG's medium term financial plans with forecast deficits into future years.

Various strands of work were underway to help to reduce the predicated deficit for 2024/25. This included increasing income, both commercial as well as grant-in-aid with discussions underway with DCMS on revenue support, and on reducing cost, such as by reducing the public programme and associated costs.

- In addition, the Board noted the significant work underway to review every area of spend and cost categories with a view to identifying savings to manage long-term finances and to live within our means.

#### 9. SMG Audit and Risk Committee Report (ARC)

The papers circulated previously were noted. In addition:

- RAAC had been discovered in one flat-roofed building at NSMM (not the main building). A Structural Engineer would survey the building to advise on the level of intervention required.

An issue with the correct application of procurement process had been discovered and an investigation was underway.

#### 10. SMG Masterplan and Estate Committee Report

The papers circulated previously were noted. In addition:

- **The Board approved** the granting of a new lease of land to National Power Grid for a new substation at NRM.
- **The Board approved** the granting of a new lease to Whitelight Ltd. to activate some unused space at ScM.
- **The Board approved** the programme extension and budget uplift for ScM Energy Revolution.
- **The Board approved** the Basebuild Gateway 4, programme extension and budget uplift for SIM Power Hall.
- **The Board approved** Gateway 2 for the S&IP Capital Programme 23-25.
- Works on Central Hall at NRM could not begin until the revised timeline for the Stopping Up of Leeman Road was known. The working assumption to commence the work was April 2024, which would still keep the project in budget range.

#### 11. SMG Collections and Research Committee Report

The paper circulated previously was noted. In addition:

- **The Board approved** the revised Conservation and Collections Care Policy which now had a greater focus on sustainability.
- **The Board approved** the disposal of two hazardous mercury samples from the Collection and agreed that they should be disposed of rather than advertising for transfer.

#### 12. AOB

None.

**Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 6 December 2023, Science Museum**

Signed:  (SMG Chair)

**Date: 6 December 2023**