

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Minutes of the Meeting on 6 July 2016 at the Science Museum**

Present:

Dame Mary Archer (Chairman)
Professor Brian Cantor
Mr Matthew d'Ancona
Dr Sarah Dry
Lord Faulkner of Worcester
Ms Sharon Flood
Mr Andreas Goss
Lord Grade of Yarmouth
Professor Ludmilla Jordanova (to item 7)
Mr Simon Linnett
Ms Lopa Patel
Professor David Phoenix
Mr Anton Valk
Lord Willetts of Havant
Dame Fiona Woolf (to item 8)

In Attendance:

Mr Ian Blatchford	Director, Science Museum Group
Ms Jane Ellis	Director of Corporate Services
Dr Roger Highfield	Director of External Affairs, SMG
Mr Paul Kirkman	Director, NRM
Ms Lydia Lee	Director of Development
Ms Karen Livingstone	Director of Masterplan and Estate
Ms Sally MacDonald	Director, MSI
Mr Jonathan Newby	Deputy Director & Chief Operating Officer, SMG
Ms Helen Jones	Head of Strategy & Planning (Secretary)
Ms Alison Boyle	Keeper of Science Collection (item 8)
Ms Alexandra Johnson	Curator of Earth Science (item 8)
Mr John Stack	Digital Director (item 8)

BT 16/07 1 Apologies for absence: received from: Dame Athene Donald; Professor Russell Foster, Jo Quinton-Tulloch

ACTION

BT 16/07 2 Declarations of interests

2.1 Standing declarations: RdF was Trade Envoy for Taiwan. ShF was a Director of Network Rail.

BT 16/07 3 Draft minutes of previous meetings and matters arising

3.1 The minutes of the meetings on 2 March 2016 were approved.

3.2 Matters arising:

- Item 6.2 – Benchmarking exercise on reserves and selected areas of activity was underway and would be reported via Finance Comm.
- Item 16.1 - Pricing for the new interactive gallery had been consulted on with Trustees and agreed unanimously by email

3.3 Other actions had been completed, were on the present agenda, or were due to be addressed at a future Board meeting.

BT 16/07 4 Chairman's business

4.1 The paper that had been circulated previously was noted. In addition:

- New Trustees Professor Brian Cantor, Dr Sarah Dry and Ms Lopa Patel were welcomed.
- The chief impact of the Brexit referendum result was likely to be from a possible economic slowdown, and general uncertainty about the future. SMG had previously received EU funding and current agreements were not under threat, and cooperation with European organisations would continue.
- The Chairmen of the Museum Advisory Boards (ABs) had met with the Chairman prior to the Board meeting and had discussed engagement with non-Trustee members, and arrangements for launching changes at the NMeM; **it was agreed** that the timetable for this would be reviewed. The number of Museum AB meetings had been confirmed as two meetings per year plus an optional awayday (or similar); the number of Railway Heritage Designation AB meetings was to be reduced from four per year to three.

IB/JN

BT 16/07 5 Director's update

ACTION

5.1 *a) Director's Report*

The paper that had been circulated previously was noted. In addition:

- LL had been confirmed as SMG Director of Development
- DCMS had published a White Paper on Culture. One key action was a major review of Museums to be led by Neil Mendoza.
- International connections and UK local community connections were more important than ever in the current climate. A potentially positive side of the Brexit result was that the weak pound could encourage increased overseas tourism.
- STEMNET had been merged with STEM Learning and a revised STEM Ambassador programme had been launched. MSI was preparing a regional bid.
- The governance review of the National Coal Mining Museum for England had been received and an interim Board was in place.
- The Cumming Barograph Clock had been secured for the collection; some funding towards this purchase had been received from the Art Fund.
- SMG was in talks with the BBC and the Royal Society about the BBC's new open digital platform, New Age of Wonder. This remained unformed at this stage but was potentially a very valuable vehicle for contemporary science.

5.2 *b) NRM Land value update*

The paper that had been circulated previously was noted. During discussion it was noted that land values may have changed since the Brexit result, and that it would be useful to engage with the Homes and Communities Agency.

PK/JN

5.3 *c) HLF application schedule*

The paper that had been circulated previously was noted.

BT 16/07 6 Financial Business

6.1 *a) SMG Management Accounts*

The papers that had been circulated previously were noted. There was discussion about the impact of visit numbers, financial forecasting and cashflow, and key performance indicators. Historic underspending in some areas was being addressed, but availability of the right people was as much of an issue as funds.

6.3 *b) Audit & Risk Committee*

The Annual Report of the Audit and Risk Committee was noted. It was felt that compliance with statutory responsibilities had been robustly challenged, and the committee Chairman thanked the committee members and Executive for the degree of cooperation and engagement. Collections management issues were being addressed, as were the Estates team structure and management.

6.4 *c) Finance Committee*

A Strategic Income Plan report had been received. There was strong emphasis on visitor experience.

BT 16/07 7 Masterplan and Estate Committee (MEC)

7.1 *a) Blythe House project*

The paper that had been circulated previously was noted. It primarily concerned the quitting of Blythe House, transferring collections to a new-build facility at Wroughton; there was a masterplan for the whole Wroughton site. Since the MEC meeting, Treasury had approved allocation of £1.4 million to the current phase. It was stressed that there would be other decision points throughout the project and MEC were monitoring closely. **The Board approved** the plan for exiting Blythe House and that the project should proceed to the next stage of feasibility work, as per the MEC recommendations in the paper.

7.2 **It was agreed** that a paper be brought to the next Board meeting on the extent and timing of SMG underwriting of capital projects.

JE

[L Jordanova left the meeting during the above item]

BT 16/07 8 London: Science City

8.1 The paper that had been circulated previously was noted and a presentation was given.

[F Woolf left the meeting]

- 8.2 The project team noted comments on collaboration, London as a global science city and the legacy for today. Consideration was already being given to the Museum's representation of science in the 19th Century and later.
- 8.3 **The Board approved** the approach to the development of this gallery and commencement of fundraising.

BT 16/07 9 SMG Strategy Group update

- 9.1 The paper that had been circulated previously was noted. Three issues were highlighted: acting – and presenting ourselves – more as a Group without negating the individual characteristics of SMG's constituent museums; income-generation as a discrete and explicit strategic objective; and manifesting a serious approach to curatorship and presentation of our subjects ("not just for kids"). There was also support for retaining focus on how science has changed people's lives as an over-arching theme for SMG Museums, and for agreeing a set of organisational values in consultation with SMG personnel.
- 9.2 The Board endorsed the adoption of a strategic objective on income-generation. It was agreed that a new body or forum would be helpful to support and monitor progress; this would be different to the existing, largely operational, Enterprises Management Board, although it may subsume it.

JE

BT 16/07 10 SMG Annual Report & Accounts 2015/16

- 10.1 The paper that had been circulated previously was noted. The SMG Annual Report & Accounts 2015/16 were **approved**.

BT 16/07 11 SMG Research Policy

- 11.1 The paper that had been circulated previously was noted. The SMG Research Policy was **approved**. T Boon and colleagues were congratulated on the progress that had been made.

BT 16/07 12 Disposal of collections (Board of Survey Recommendations)

- 12.1 The paper that had been circulated previously was noted and the recommendations were **approved**.

BT 16/07 13 Railway Heritage Designation Advisory Board Recommendations

- 13.1 The paper that had been circulated previously was noted. The recommendations were **approved**. The new NRM exhibition on Ambulance Trains featured an important Designated item, and was highly commended.

BT 16/07 14 SMG Health and Safety Report

- 14.1 The paper that had been circulated previously was noted.

BT 16/07 15 Minutes of sub-committee meetings

- 5.1 The papers that had been circulated previously were noted.

BT 16/07 16 Any other business - none

Date of Next Meeting: Awayday in County Durham, 4-6 October 2017
(itinerary circulated with Chairman's Report)

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