

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Minutes of the Meeting on 3 December 2014 at the Science Museum

Present:

Dr Gill Samuels (Chairman)
Lady Chisholm
Mr Howard Covington
Dame Athene Donald
Lord Faulkner of Worcester
Professor Ludmilla Jordanova
Mr Simon Linnett
Professor Averil Macdonald
Sir Howard Newby
Mr James Smith

In Attendance:

Dame Mary Archer	SMG Chairman Designate
Mr Ian Blatchford	Director, Science Museum Group (SMG)
Ms Jane Ellis	Finance Director, SMG
Mrs Susan Fisher	Director of Development
Ms Jean Franczyk	Deputy Director, Science Museum
Dr Roger Highfield	Director of External Affairs, SMG
Mr Paul Kirkman	Director, National Railway Museum
Ms Sally MacDonald	Director, MOSI
Mr Jonathan Newby	Chief Operating Officer, SMG
Ms Jo Quinton-Tulloch	Director of NMeM
Ms E Helen Jones	Head of Strategy & Planning

Apologies: Mr Andreas Goss, Lord Grade of Yarmouth; Mr Chris Swinson

Declaration of Interests: None

ACTION

BT 14/12 1 Draft minutes of previous meetings and matters arising

- 1.1 The minutes of the meeting on 8 October were approved, subject to correction of the attendance list.
- 1.2 Item 2.1 – the Regional Growth Fund (RGF) had been considered as a potential source of funding for MOSI, but the Museum did not fulfil the RGF criteria.

BT 14/12 2 Chairman's business

- 2.1 Dame Mary Archer, SMG Chairman designate, was welcomed as an observer for this meeting. This was the last meeting for Lady Chisholm, Sir Howard Newby and James Smith, whose terms of office would end in January 2015. Trustee membership of Board sub-committees was under consideration. From mid-January until new Trustees were appointed, the Board would have 11 Trustees. This was below the statutory minimum of 12 Trustees, but DCMS advice was that the Museum could continue to operate. A Trustee recruitment exercise was underway.
- 2.2 The recommendations of the Remuneration Committee had been discussed in the Board's closed session immediately before the meeting, and had been **approved**.
- 2.3 The Board Strategy Day on 8 October 2014 was discussed:
 - The informal discussion between the Board and Director had been useful and more such opportunities should be sought;
 - The SM Strategic Ambitions 2012-2022 document was being updated and extended to include the whole Group. The main science themes remained relevant; more would be made of the sector-leading audience research; and there could be opportunities to cover sustainability issues such as food security;
 - It was confirmed that property expertise was a priority in current Trustee recruitment;
 - Although each Museum could demonstrate good local performance on aspects of diversity, diversity overall remained an issue that the Museums continued to address in terms of both personnel (including the Board itself) and gallery content;
 - Suggestions for extending SMG's circle of friends and supporters should be sent to the Chairman, e.g. how to better use the Museum Advisory Boards, or a 'campaign group' in advance of the General Election.
 - The minutes of the strategy discussion were **approved**.
- 2.4 The Chairman had attended a dinner hosted by the 1851 Commission at which a number of issues common to Exhibition Road institutions had been discussed.

BT 14/12 3 SMG Director's Update

ACTION

3.1 *a) Director's Report, November 2014*

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

- The Director had addressed the Prime Minister's Committee on Science & Technology, at the invitation of the Government's Chief Scientific Adviser;
- Negotiations had been re-opened with Versailles about the possibility of showing a version of their exhibition on science in the court of Louis XIV at the Science Museum;
- The Chancellor's Autumn Statement that day had included a commitment by the government to review the storage of museum collections at Blythe House. Providing SMG's contribution to the full business case for quitting Blythe House would be a very big and challenging project, but was very welcome. It needed to be complete in time for the March 2015 Budget. Resolution of some financial issues was outstanding. SMG Executive would consider how the Museum Chairmen and Boards might help.
- SMG, the BBC and the Royal Society had committed to identifying a collaborative project and an initial proposal was under discussion.

JN

3.2 In discussion:

- The complex issues around the *Cosmonauts* exhibition were rehearsed again; there had been no substantive changes to affect SMG's resolve to proceed with it if possible;
- The opening of *Information Age* had been a triumph. It was noted that some complaints about the perceived lack of representation of women had been received by the Museum and by one of the Trustees. The response by lead curator for the gallery would be sent to the Trustee concerned.
- With reference to the report by the Select Committee for Culture, Media & Sport on the national distribution of Arts Council England funding, and the growing political consensus behind a 'Northern Hub', there was discussion of SMG operations and priorities. This included; Board composition; fostering greater/deeper understanding of the local context in which NRM, MOSI and NMeM operate; and balancing integration and consistency with localism and autonomy. **It was agreed** that the Museum Directors and Chairmen of Museum Advisory Board should meet to consider these issues; as preliminary GS and JF would produce a discussion paper.

IB

GS, JF

3.3 *b) SMG Development Report:* The papers that had been circulated previously were noted.

3.4 *c) Management Accounts Summary:* The paper that had been circulated previously was noted. It was agreed that cashflow forecasts would be included in future.

JE

3.5 *d) SMG Health and Safety Report:* The paper that had been circulated previously was noted. A key current concern was the difficulty of recruiting the right personnel to the in-house advisory service.

BT 14/12 4 Reports from Museum Advisory Boards Chairmen and Directors

4.1 *a) National Railway Museum*

The minutes of the meeting of the NRM Advisory Board on 17 September 2014 had been circulated previously and were noted. The NRM Advisory Board had also met on 12 November 2014. The main topics had been the York Central development, which represented a huge opportunity, and concerns about progress on digital initiatives.

4.2 A decision on the re-submitted funding bid (not by NRM) to the Heritage Lottery Fund for the Great Central Railway, Leicester North site was expected in April 2015.

4.3 *b) National Media Museum*

The draft minutes of the meeting of the NMeM Advisory Board on 19 September 2014 had been circulated previously and were noted. The NMeM Advisory Board had also met on 26 November 2014. The overall picture was of huge progress in a short time (e.g. securing the Picturehouse partnership, planning a new interactive gallery, reviewing the film festival offer, securing funding from the local council) that was shifting external perception of the Museum and moving it towards a more sustainable operating model.

4.4 *c) Museum of Science & Industry*

The draft minutes of the meeting of the MOSI Advisory Board on 30 October 2014 had been circulated previously and were noted. The meeting took place during both half-term and the Manchester Science Festival (MSF). Although the formal evaluation was not yet completed, MSF 2015 was thought to be the most successful yet in terms of the number and quality of events, and in visitor numbers. Visitor data and opportunities afforded by Manchester becoming European City of Science in 2016 had also been discussed. It was suggested that other Museums in the Group could learn from the way MOSI was well embedded in the local cultural scene.

4.5 *d) Science Museum Advisory Board*

The draft minutes of the meeting of the SM Advisory Board on 22 October 2014 had been circulated previously and were noted. The main topics had been the major exhibition programme after 2018, the development of the new interactive gallery, and the need to disseminate SMG Learning's academic research more widely.

BT 14/12 5 Digital Update

5.1 The paper that had been circulated previously was noted.

5.2 In discussion:

- There was a strong field for the new post of Director of Digital;
- HM The Queen's first tweet had generated a lot of attention;
- SMG had a strong reputation for educational online games; e.g. the teachers' app associated with Information Age was excellent;
- Board members reiterated that they, and Museum Advisory Boards, expected to be consulted on the development of SMG digital strategy.

BT 14/12 6 Masterplan

6.1 The papers that had been circulated previously were noted. The recommendation in paper 6i regarding funding arrangements for the Medicine Galleries was **approved**.

BT 14/12 7 ScM Foundation Grant Approvals

7.1 The paper that had been circulated previously was noted. HC, as a Trustee of the ScM Foundation, did not participate in this decision. The recommendations regarding grant requests to the ScM Foundation were **approved**.

BT 14/12 8 Science Museum Research Centre

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

8.2 In discussion:

- Opening hours were to be Monday to Friday, but this would be reviewed once the Research Centre was in use;
- Research topics were broadly defined, as represented by the online SMG Journal;
- User targets had not yet been set, but numbers were expected to increase substantially from those using the Science Museum Library at Imperial College. 25 readers could be accommodated at any one time;
- The research facility could be complemented by, for example, events and fellowship programmes;
- The Research Centre would act as a portal to all SMG digital materials and to external library resources.

BT 14/12 9 Collections

9.1 *a) Board of Survey recommendations*

The paper that had been circulated previously was noted. The recommendations were **approved**.

9.2 *b) CoRe meeting 27/10/14*

The draft minutes of the meeting of the Collections & Research Committee on 27 October 2014 had been circulated previously and were noted.

BT 14/12 10 Railway Heritage Designation Advisory Board (RHDAB)

10.1 *a) Recommendations*

The paper that had been circulated previously was noted. The recommendations were **approved**.

10.2 *b) Meeting 10/10/14*

The draft minutes of the meeting of the RHDAB on 10 October 2014 had been circulated previously and were noted. Lady Chisholm was thanked for serving on the RHDAB.

BT 14/12 11 Reports from other Committees

11.1 *a) Finance & Strategy Committee*

The draft minutes of the meeting of the Finance & Strategy Committee (FSC) on 24 September 2014 had been circulated previously and were noted. The FSC had also met on 17 November 2014. The Chairman of FSC was keen to raise the strategic focus of the Committee and give more prominence to Masterplans. The remit of the FSC could be reviewed more generally.

11.2 *b) Audit Committee*

The draft minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee on 5 November 2014 had been circulated previously and were noted.

BT 14/12 12 Any other business

12.1 The three Trustees whose terms would come to an end in January 2015 were thanked very warmly for their contribution to SMG and wished well for the future.

12.2 Dr Gill Samuels was also thanked for acting as Chairman of SMG July – December 2013. She had provided strong support to the Executive and Board in a short but notably busy period. Dame Mary Archer would become SMG Chairman from 1 January 2015.

Next meeting: Wed 4 March 2015, 16.00-19.00, Science Museum

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