

**THE TRUSTEES OF THE NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM**  
**THREE HUNDRED AND SIXTY-FIFTH MEETING**  
**09:30 THURSDAY 21 NOVEMBER 2019**  
**IN THE BOARDROOM OF THE NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM**

**MINUTES**

**Trustees present:**

Sir Charles Dunstone, Chair  
Joyce Bridges  
Carol Marlow  
Professor Julian Dowdeswell  
Alastair Marsh  
Dr Helen Czerski  
Jeremy Penn  
Eric Reynolds

**In attendance:**

Paddy Rodgers	Director, Royal Museums Greenwich
Andy Bodle	Director, Operations and HR
Eleanor Harris	Director, Visitor Experience and Enterprises
Gail Symington	Director, Collections and Public Engagement
Chris Walker	Director, Finance and IT
Jane Costantini	Governance and Museum Records Manager

The meeting started with an 'in camera' session for the Director and the Trustees.

**~Governance Session~**

**1. Apologies**

Dr Fiona Butcher	Trustee
Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope	Trustee
Dr Aminul Hoque	Trustee
Kate Seeckts	Director, Development

**2. Declaration of relevant interests related to this meeting**

None other than those previously registered.

**3. Draft Minutes of Board meeting 364 of 19 September 2019**

The Board **agreed** the minutes to be a true record of the meeting and the Chair of the Board certified the minutes accordingly.

**4. Director's Report for Autumn 2019**

The Director reiterated the three pillars which enable us to deliver our Social Purpose: Grants, Sales and Giving. There are uncertainties with all of these; Sales are vulnerable to the weather and changes in the travel industry beyond our control, while growth in visitor numbers will be ultimately limited by our

site capacity. We are experimenting with lower admissions prices during the week against higher ones at peak periods, but we need to be mindful that our offer should continue to be value for money. It is an uncertain period for Giving as some traditional givers are facing a challenging climate with increased scrutiny in this area from the media and the general public, and our Grant in Aid is, as ever, politically dependent. There are, however, some exciting possibilities for funding around our educational offer particularly in STEM programmes at the Royal Observatory.

Against this background we are focusing our attention on the cost of delivery across the organisation but with particular emphasis on how much we spend on utilities. The Director was pleased to confirm that the recent water leak has been fixed.

The Trustees supported the Director's synopsis of the challenges facing the Museum and thanked him for his presentation. There were no points arising from the Director's Report which was duly **noted**.

## **5. Finance Director's Report:**

### **5.1 Finance Report at 30 September**

The Director, Finance and IT reported that overall the Museum's finances are in a better position than that budgeted. The net operating outturn is £1.2m up against budget for the six months to 30 September and Admissions income is over £1m more than for the same period last year. Visitor numbers have held up well and other income generating areas, such as retail and catering are performing well. There has been some underspend partly due to the change in leadership which meant that some decisions on spending for large projects have been delayed until such time as they have been thoroughly reviewed. Revenue spend by the Estates team is down against budget as they have been focusing on undertaking urgent capital works afforded by the additional DCMS funding.

At this stage, the Executive believe that spending plans will catch up during the second half of the year, when visitor numbers are also traditionally lower. A more cautious view has also been taken of Fundraising income for general expenditure, and overall the surplus at 30 September is forecast to reverse by year end resulting in a modest full year surplus.

The Trustees asked for clarification about a statement in the report regarding sales in the Meridian shop and the Director, Finance and IT explained that sales had reached the £1m mark earlier this year than in the two previous years and indeed prior to 2017 sales had never reached this figure. There were no further questions and with that the Trustees **noted** and **approved** the Finance Director's Report at 30 September 2019.

### **5.2 Projected Cashflow and Director's Expenses**

Trustees were pleased to **note** that we have a balanced cashflow and that we continue to monitor this closely. They then **approved** the Directors' expenses for the period 1 June to 30 September 2019.

### **5.3 Strategic Risk Register at October 2019**

The Director, Finance & IT stated that the risks around staffing continue to be significant as we struggle to attract suitably qualified people particularly in non-Museum specific roles where we are in competition with the wider labour market but unable to keep pace with salaries offered elsewhere. The Chair of the Audit Committee confirmed that the Risk Register had been reviewed in detail at the Audit Committee meeting on 7 November.

The Board reviewed and **approved** the October Risk Register.

### **5.4 Brexit briefing note**

The Chair of the Audit Committee stated that the Committee had spent some time reviewing this report at its recent meeting and had concluded that the paper prepared by the Executive team addressed the main issues, and was consistent with the areas flagged at the recent DCMS Audit Chair Forum – in particular, relating to risks around income and data flows.

The Board thanked the Executive for the paper and **noted** its contents.

## **6. Final Endeavour Project Report**

Sue Kennedy, Head of Special Projects, presented the Endeavour Galleries Project Closure report, confirming that the final HLF grant claim of 30 September has been used to deliver an expanded Activity Programme and to carry out works to back of house areas damaged during the base-build renovations to the East Wing. Overall the project was delivered under budget.

The Board **noted** the report and congratulated Sue Kennedy for her superb project management throughout. Sue Kennedy emphasised the considerable cross-museum collaborative effort involved and added that particular thanks should be given to the RMG Learning Team for their hard work in delivering The Activity Plan, offering a huge number of programmes to a wide audience.

## **7. Annual Report from National Historic Ships-UK with Hannah Cunliffe, Director, NHSC-UK**

The Director, NHS-UK, reminded the Board that NHS-UK is a government funded body, independent from the Museum but that the Trustees have duty of overview hence the Annual Report Board delivered at the November meeting.

The Board heard that the Historic Ships Register, for vessels over fifty years old, now numbers 2,130 with 200 vessels on the National Historic Fleet. Vessel casework is a very important part of NHS-UK's remit, involving regular visits to vessels across the UK, assisting with conservation planning and implementation, funding for project work, or helping with at risk situations. The Director, NHS-UK sits on the HMS Victory Project Board as well as the Cutty Sark Advisory Committee.

The Shipshape network is approaching its tenth anniversary, connecting projects and promoting skilled practitioners and maritime facilities. The Shipshape Heritage Training Partnership, funded by HLF under its Skills for the Future programme, recruited eight trainees for the 12-month placement. Six of the trainees are female meeting the project's diversity targets. The Historic Vessel Conservation Course now has eleven students signed up.

The Ship-Keeping Skills weekend at *Cutty Sark* in May was not as well attended as hoped but some useful lessons were learned.

The NHS-UK Council of Experts, drawn from across the historic vessel and heritage conservation sectors has continued to provide support, at times representing NHS-UK at events.

Social media proves to be extremely useful for sharing news and activities and this year an Instagram account was launched.

The Director, NHS-UK concluded her presentation by stating that the next major challenge is to review the National Registers, requiring an additional staff post for which a bid for funding from DCMS has been submitted.

The Trustees congratulated the Director, NHS-UK for the tremendous work of the team and the Board discussed the desirability of creating a safe haven for these historic ships. Concern was expressed also about the loss of traditional ship-keeping skills; strong success models for schemes aimed at preserving traditional skills were cited in the steam engine sector. It was suggested that consideration should be given to setting up a working group to take this forward.

The Board thanked the Director, NHS-UK, for her presentation and report.

## **8. Public Programme Review, Gail Symington, Director, Collections and Public Engagement**

Trustees received a presentation from Gail Symington, Director, Collections and Public Engagement reflecting on the achievements of the past year and looking forward to the year ahead.

The arrival of our new Director has prompted an opportunity to take stock and consider what our values are and should be and the direction of travel in coming years.

Highlights of the last year include:

- The completion of the *Death in the Ice* North American tour, reaching almost 210,000 visitors;
- *The Moon* exhibition has received excellent reviews and we have already exceeded our projected number of visitors;
- IIAPY, now in its tenth year, continues to be very successful in terms of numbers of entries and press coverage;
- *Astronomy & Islam*, our flagship strand of the community engagement programme, with monthly public offers linked to sightings of the new crescent moon;

- Livestreaming of images produced using the new Annie Maunder Astrographic Telescope (AMAT);
- Bringing the *Polly Higgins* to our site, demonstrating our relevance in contemporary issues and our ability to react quickly to opportunities;
- The *You are here: the world in your neighbourhood van* toured for 25 days with two artist-facilitators, engaging with 2,533 people on themes of Migration, Heritage and Belonging;
- Health and Well-being pilot sessions – *Tea and the Sea*, a partnership with Age UK combatting social isolation for older people and *Grubs Up Family Festival*, a partnership with RBG to address the borough priority of combating obesity in children;
- Our annual events for Chinese New Year and Diwali continue to prove extremely popular;
- Celebrations and events around the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Cutty Sark*;
- Public programming events at PPMCC including the Heritage Open Day and the schools programme has brought in 110 children per week since its launch.

Trustees heard that in the next year our plans include:

- *Tudors to Windsors: British Royal Portraits* from 3 April – 31 August 2020 - we shall be collaborating with National Portrait Gallery (NPG) to tailor the exhibition for RMG;
- *Woburn Treasures*, February 2020 – January 2021, a co-curation partnership with Woburn Abbey;
- *Faces Of A Queen: The Armada Portraits Of Queen Elizabeth I*, from February to September 2020, bringing together three Armada Portraits from RMG, Woburn Abbey and NPG;
- National Schools outreach programme: working with school children to be inspired by the Armada Portrait to develop transferable soft skills in communication and presentation;
- Mars Season: building on the success of 'The Moon Season';
- Continue in our aim to engage with contemporary and future issues affecting people's lives;
- Continue our Artist in Residence programme with Katie Patterson and look into the possibility of working with Ghanaian artist Serge Attukwei Clottey whose work tackles issues of migration, water, climate change and gender identity;
- Working closely with communities to explore improved ways to interpret the Transatlantic Slave Trade and its contemporary legacies;
- *Sunken Treasures from Song China* (working title): collaboration with National Conservation Centre for Underwater Cultural Heritage and Guangdong Museum for loan of c. 300 objects excavated from wreck of 800-year-old Song Dynasty merchant ship;
- Continuing work on *Cutty Sark* enrichment plan;
- Developing our thinking for ROG350 with the aim of reporting back to Trustees early in 2020.

Trustees enquired whether there had been any discussions with Greenwich Park regarding the future use of the old Astronomer's Garden. The Director agreed that there is scope for discussion on this in the long terms plans for the Royal Observatory but no dialogue has yet taken place with the Park on this matter.

The Trustees were impressed by the work done by the team and thanked Gail for her very informative presentation.

## **9. Overview of research funding landscape**

Quintin Colville, Senior Curator Research, explained to the Board that a range of funding opportunities had emerged over the last year involving three bodies: UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and the Independent Research Organization Consortium (IROC). Underpinning this is the Government's desire to increase funding for research. The UKRI distributes government funds to the nation's research councils and, whilst previously funding has been focused on high-budget scientific research, the UKRI is looking towards our sector with new interest. Currently there are two central strands: the UKRI Research Infrastructure Roadmap and the UKRI/AHRC Strategic Priority Fund bids.

For the first, RMG submitted six templates to UKRI in May 2019: Digitizing and Cataloguing; Collections Management and Born Digital; Heritage and Science Laboratory, Participatory Search Architecture; Research Hub; Families and Legacies of Empire. These are not funding bids but scoping exercises that will be evaluated over next six months.

For the second strand RMG is attached to two proposals: - Engaging crowds: Citizen research and heritage data at scale, led by The National Archives; and the challenges of cataloguing in a diverse and changing society led by Tate. We will learn early in 2020 whether either/both proposals will be selected for funding.

Stuart Bligh, Head of Research and Information, concluded the presentation by reminding Trustees of the excellent research work already done at RMG. In addition to the work carried out by the Research and Information team, many other teams undertake research including Learning and Interpretation, Conservation and Collections Management and Marketing. Our Caird and Sackler Fellowships are now more in keeping with the core UKRI thematic priorities such as decolonisation, diversity, climate science and citizen heritage. We have a number of paid internships and we are part of the REACH collaborative Doctoral Partnership Consortium with seven students. Since 2013 we have worked with 35 higher education establishments.

Trustee and Chair of the Collections Research Committee, Professor Dowdeswell, commented that we must ensure that fellowships and internships feed directly back into our work and our collections.

Trustees were pleased to note the proposed collaborative approach with other organisations which is already practised in academia. They also commented that as well as universities and museums our excellent work in collaborating with community groups should continue. Trustees then thanked the presenters for their work.

## **10. Matters arising from information in Volume B**

Trustees noted that we are still having problems with our lifts. The Director, Operations & Human Resources confirmed that the three worst performing lifts are being looked at by our new lift contractors. Trustees also queried progress on the energy audit and it was confirmed that we should be able to report findings early in the new year.

There were no further matters arising.

**11. Next Board Meeting**

Thursday 27 February 2020 at 09:30 in the Boardroom.

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Minutes certified by Sir Charles Dunstone, Chair

Date

*Trustees then welcomed Michael Edwards, OBE who received an Honorary Commodore award in recognition of his outstanding commitment and contribution to the Museum over the past 12 years, in particular towards the Cutty Sark.*