

THE TRUSTEES OF THE NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM

THREE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY SEVENTH MEETING

12:00 THURSDAY 28 APRIL 2022

HELD IN THE BOARDROOM

MINUTES

Trustees present:

Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope (Chair)
Dr Fiona Butcher
Dr Helen Czerski
Jeremy Penn
Professor Julian Dowdeswell

In attendance:

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| Paddy Rodgers | CEO, Royal Museums Greenwich |
| Gail Symington | Executive Creative Director |
| Chris Walker | Executive Business & Operations Director |
| Eric Reynolds | Trustee guest |
| Lucy Cooke | Head of Development |
| Charlotte Cowan | Head of People & Culture |
| Karen Eden-Tuxford | Head of Commerce & Visitor Experience |
| Jane Costantini | Governance and Museum Records Manager |

The following members of the Strategy Delivery Group joined the meeting for the Planning Session:

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| Sarah Lockwood | Head of Engagement |
| Daniel Martin | Head of Collection Services |
| Zeena Virani | Head of Marketing |

~Planning Session~

- i. Apologies: Received from Alastair Marsh, Trustee and Joyce Bridges, Trustee Guest
- ii. Primary Aims & RMG Four Year Plan
The Chairman thanked the Strategy Delivery Group for the Plan and invited the CEO to provide a brief overview. The Director reminded Trustees of the various steps and milestones which had led to this point starting with a strategic planning session with Trustees in February 2020, the development and issuing of 'Charting our Course' in September 2020, the presentation to Trustees in February 2021 of the Skeleton Strategic Plan, and our People and Processes paper in November 2021 setting out our new ways of working. Since commencing the process in February 2020, we have seen a great deal of change; the other side of the pandemic and we have a much smaller Executive team now. The Director showed Trustees plans which set out the age of our galleries, with NMM being a mix of old and new spaces, the Queen's House and *Cutty Sark*, in a

reasonable state, but the ROG standing out as desperately in need of development, a victim of its success in that it has always attracted the crowds so we could never consider its closure for refurbishment. Whilst we shall aim to minimise its closure during the planned work as far as possible, a period of closure has been factored into our financial planning.

The Director went on to outline the thinking behind the five primary aims and values and then the Chairman invited comments from the Board. Trustees suggested an expansion of the section on environment so that it acknowledged the aspirational aims of our programming as well as the practical steps we are planning to take on our estate. It was also felt that 'digital' needed to be given more prominence in the Plan, recognising the balance between our digital and in person offer.

The Chairman asked the Director to update the Board on the management structures and processes and how the process of culture change was progressing. The Director stated that the Strategy Delivery Group has been operative since the start of the year and is a collaborative, forward leaning forum. Work on the Activity Trackers continues and the Trackers shall be reviewed at four points by SDG: At idea conception (for approval in principle); at project commencement (for budget allocation); at project delivery; and upon completion (closing report/lessons learned). We have a strong team of General Managers for each site and their status has been elevated as they represent our visitors. The Director concluded by saying that significant steps have been taken over the last two years and we are hoping that the RMG Plan will provide direction and motivation for the staff.

The Chair concluded that the Plan was also in line with the expectations of our sponsoring department and requested that the comments of the Board should be considered by the Directors and the Plan updated accordingly for final issue to the Board by 12 May for final approval by 26 May.

~Board Matters~

- i. Update on the appointment of Trustees and Chair
The Director informed Trustees that we had been advised the previous week that we are in the final stage of the process and that prospective appointments and reappointments are with No 10.
This section redacted in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 S. 36 prejudicial to the effective conduct of public affairs.

The Chair drew the Board's attention to a recent communication from Cabinet Office to ALBs regarding the revised timetable for future appointments and reappointments and also regarding changes to the self-assessment of effectiveness and Trustee and Chair appraisal processes. This will be shared with the Board at the July meeting.

~Governance Session~

1. Apologies

Apologies received from Alastair Marsh, Trustee and Joyce Bridges, Trustee guest.

2. Declaration of relevant interests related to this meeting

None were raised at the start of the meeting other than those previously registered.

3. Draft Minutes of Board meeting 376 of 24 February 2022

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

4. Director's Report

The Director's full report had been circulated to the Board prior to the meeting. Since issuing his report we had been advised by DCMS that our Covid support for income loss in 2022-23 was confirmed as £1.18m, and that there may be a further allocation later in the year. For Capital expenditure we had been notified that we shall receive £15.9m over three years, of which c. £10m would be used to future proof the Neptune Court roof. Initial feasibility work has been done already for this project which went from a modest replacement of glass to wholesale roof replacement. The budget of £10m will allow us to do something between these two extremes. Trustees were keen that opportunities for considering the environmental/energy saving aspects of this project are not overlooked.

In terms of visitor numbers, the outlook appears to be more positive than we originally feared with overseas visitors beginning to return in increasing numbers. If this trend were to continue this should have a positive impact on our admissions income. The Director briefed the Board on the success of the recent Caribbean Takeover event which attracted around 7000 visitors. The day was organised by the Caribbean Social Forum and the events were based around music, games and performances from actors portraying characters from black history. The Cutty Sark Rig Climb opened at the beginning of April, running three days a week currently which will increase during the school holidays. Early indications are that this will prove a popular addition to our offer and it will be interesting to see what impact it has on our visitor numbers.

Trustees thanked the Director for his report which was **noted**.

5. Finance Report

The Executive Business & Operations Director commenced his update by stating that there is a high degree of uncertainty around the Revenue budget, but greater certainty regarding the Capital budget. In the last pre-Covid year, 2019-20, admissions income was £8m, in 2021-22 it was £2.69m. Income from Fundraising has been much more stable, exceeding target. The final total outturn for income for 2021-22 was £4.71m. We estimate that by 2024-25 admissions income will be £4.1m, so approximately half of pre Covid-levels.

In terms of budget levers, DCMS have recently confirmed additional Covid support for the coming year of £1.18m, so we are now anticipating a £2m deficit as a result. We are also continuing with our agile approach and as a result of improved reporting we will be able to activate or stall projects accordingly.

The Executive Business & Operations Director finished his report with an illustration of the impact that relatively modest increases in visitor numbers would have on our income. In terms of performance to date, the NMM, Queen's House and Cutty Sark have been fairly consistent against forecast and the ROG is ahead of target.

The Board were asked to support the approach and the set of assumptions as presented.

The Chairman informed the Board that he had received a written note from Alastair Marsh, Chair of Audit Committee in advance of the meeting, expressing some concern about the extent to which we are planning to use our reserves. The Directors responded by saying that we had been relatively cautious regarding visitor numbers and the early signs were more favourable than predicted and, although far from ideal, there would also be a fallback option of stalling certain projects if necessary.

Trustees concluded that they would **approve** the approach but would like an update at the next Board meeting.

6. People and Culture update

The Head of People and Culture informed the Board that implementing London Living Wage and nothing else would mean a 3.56% increase in the paybill against the pay remit of between 2 and 3%. We also aim to retain a 10% differential between staff on LLW and their managers. A slide was presented showing the impact that illustrative percentage pay increases would have on the overall paybill. The conclusion is that we shall have to present a Pay Flexibility Case. We are currently awaiting further information from the Department regarding this process. Once this is known we shall present our application and recommendation to the Remuneration Committee.

The Chairman thanked the Head of People and Culture for her update and expressed thanks on behalf of the Board for her hard work and valued contribution to the Museum and wished her well in her new role.

7. **Visitor update**

The Head of Commerce and Visitor Experience informed Trustees that the total visitor figures for 2021-22 were 920,000 of which 97% were domestic visitors. The admissions income was 37% of that achieved in 2019 and was slightly behind target. The retail and online shops performed better than target however, generating £890,000 and £189,000 respectively. It was another challenging year, especially at the start with the continuing Covid related protocols, but the staff rose to the challenge, often going above and beyond. The visitor comments received are overwhelmingly positive. The Cutty Sark Rig Climb opened at the start of April and we were already receiving some good reviews on Trip Advisor and some excellent press coverage.

Trustees were keen to know how our performance compared with other museums and were told that our sites were receiving between 30-50% of 2019 figures, whilst the Kensington museums were around 50% of pre-Covid levels. Museums in the north of England had in some cases actually exceeded 2019 figures, particularly those with outside spaces.

There were no further questions and the Chairman thanked the Head of Commerce and Visitor Experience for her update.

8. **ROG 'First Light'**

The Executive Creative Director reminded the Board of the two aims of the project:

- *To deliver an inspiring visitor experience at ROG with new and refurbished gallery spaces and outdoor experiences – a place of 'awe and wonder' which combines the concepts of 'Time and Space'*
- *To transform physical and intellectual access by integrating the historic buildings and collections with the modern astronomy offer and excellent visitor facilities, in a single unified site*

We have appointed Jamie Fobert Architects and we have a temporary project manager on board whilst we seek a permanent one. Trustees were taken through the various expected stages of the project until completion in 2026. We shall aim to present concept plans in October.

Trustees were keen to understand the impact the building work would have on our ability to remain open to the public and were told that we are aiming to maximise work during the quieter periods of the year. If appropriate we may be able to offer a reduced price ticket. It was suggested that in terms of the proposed narratives we should also consider the topic of Earth observation; whereas historically we have looked out to space, now increasingly we are going to space to observe the Earth. The Chairman was keen to know how we will generate the 'wow' factor and who will judge it. The Directors stated that engagement with our various stakeholder groups will be key to this. We are also building a group of critical friends and project ambassadors who will help in the development of ideas.

There was some discussion regarding the rigidity of the RIBA process and it was noted that you could apply for planning permission earlier than Stage 4. The Directors agreed and stated that we are already engaging with all the relevant stakeholders, including the planning authorities as well as Historic England and the Royal Parks. Trustees requested that the Audit Committee should be kept informed of the main stages of the procurement process.

There were no further questions and the Board thanked the Directors for their update.

9. Development Update

The Head of Development informed the Board that we had established a group of critical friends, including Trustee Helen Czerski, Jim Al Khalili, Sanjeev Gupta, Professor Chris Lintott (former Trustee), Brian May, Major Tim Peake, Nick Rhodes and Dava Sobel. Plans were being made for the fundraising launch at No. 11 Downing St. in May.

Trustees were keen to know how the fundraising climate felt and were told that while the response from traditional funders seems a little disappointing, the initial conversations with the ambassadors has been very positive.

There were no further questions and the Chairman thanked the Head of Development for her update.

10. Matters arising from the information in Volume B/AOB

There were no matters arising from the Volume B papers and the meeting concluded.