

No 237

THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

AT A MEETING ON

TUESDAY 25 FEBRUARY 2014

AT 9.00 A.M.

AT THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

Present

TRUSTEES

Sir David Omand GCB (in the Chair)
Daniel Alexander QC
Professor Sir John Beddington CMG FRS
Louise Charlton
Professor David Drewry
Professor Christopher Gilligan
Professor Alex Halliday FRS
Professor Sir John Holman
Dr Kim L Winser OBE

In Attendance (alphabetical order)

Frances Allen (Minutes)	Executive Assistant to the Director and Secretary to the Board
Joe Baker	Head of External Affairs
Rachael Casstles	Head of Internal Affairs
Dr Michael Dixon	Museum Director (and Executive Board Chair)
Neil Greenwood	Director of Finance & Corporate Services (Executive Board member)
Dr Richard Herrington	Head of Earth Sciences Department (for item 8)
Dr Tim Littlewood	Head of Life Sciences Department (for item 8)
Dr Sarah Long	Museum Registrar (for item 9)
Dr Justin Morris	Director of Public Engagement (Executive Board member)
Professor Ian Owens	Director of Science (Executive Board member)

As the role of Chair of the Board is currently vacant, Professor Alex Halliday proposed the motion to elect Sir David Omand as chair for the meeting; this was seconded by Professor Christopher Gilligan.

CLOSED DISCUSSION

1567 TRUSTEE/CHAIR OF THE BOARD APPOINTMENT

The Board held a closed session, with only the Director and Ms Allen in attendance to discuss the Chair of the Board appointment. The formal interviews by the Selection Panel will take place on 4 March 2014 and the Chair will be formally elected by the Board at the extraordinary meeting on 1 April 2014.

OPEN DISCUSSION

Preliminary

1568 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Dr Derek Langslow and Prof Sir Roy Anderson.

1569 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REGISTER OF INTERESTS (TP 14/01)

There were no declarations of interest and changes to the Register of Interests were noted by the Secretary to the Board.

1570 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 19 NOVEMBER 2013

The Minutes of the meeting of the Trustees held on 19 November 2013 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

1571 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING OF 19 NOVEMBER 2013 (TP 14/02)

Tring: Director of Public Engagement, Dr Justin Morris will produce a summary note for the May meeting of the Board.

Google Analytics: Dr Winsor and Dr Morris have been working with Blue State Digital to define the long-term digital media strategy for the NHM. Discussions to date have largely focused on public engagement objectives, but the company is now working with the Director of Science to take a broader look at the science audience with a view of creating one holistic digital media strategy for the Museum.

Gallery Plan: The draft Public Space Plan, encompassing the plans for gallery development, will be presented to the Board in July.

Grounds Development Competition: The Jury Panel will meet on 13 March to evaluate the bids submitted by the five design consultants shortlisted for the Competition. A recommendation will be presented to the Board at the extraordinary meeting on 1 April. The focus is very much on identifying the right team to take the development forward rather than the actual design at this stage.

All items of significance were addressed under the current agenda

1572 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Nothing to report.

1573 MUSEUM REPORT (TP 14/03)

Funding issues: In late December the Director alerted Trustees to two issues related to government funding promising to comment further once the possible affects had been evaluated. The first issue was the cuts to grant-in-aid funding (1.17% in FY2014/15 and 1.13% in FY2015/16) announced in the Chancellor's Autumn Statement. The expectation is that reductions to grant-in-aid funding will continue for the foreseeable future and the Executive Board will continue to consider ways to address this.

The second issue, and potentially of more significant importance, is the notification by the Cabinet Office of an actuarial revaluation of the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme rising from 19% of employer's contribution to 26%. This represents a substantial increase in the Museum's superannuation costs and DCMS has asked for details of how this would impact on the Museum. It was noted that the Audit and Risk Committee discussed these issues on 13 February.

The Executive Board Planning Conference will focus on strategies for dealing with a range of funding scenarios and the outcome of this discussion will be presented to Trustees in due course.

Estate Condition Survey: The Executive Board has been working with the Estates Department in identifying how to analyse the data which the Estate Condition Survey has created and will bring this issue to the Board of Trustees once a clearer way to represent the reality of the current situation, and a way to measure change over time, is known. The Estates and Buildings Committee (EBAC) is providing helpful input into tackling specific issues.

Calendar 2013 Attendance Figures: The Museum continues to receive record visitor attendance achieving a new high in annual attendance of 5.35m, which is a 6.5% increase over CY2012. Managing this visitor level and the consequential long queuing times presents a major concern for the Museum in fulfilling its aim to provide an improved visitor experience. Although measures are in place to deal with long queues (e.g. using a pulsed entry system), the Executive Board recognise that a longer-term solution needs to be found and this issue will form part of the grounds development programme.

Organisational Restructuring: Dr Justin Morris expects to finalise the restructure of the Public Engagement Group by the end of the fiscal year. The Director took the opportunity to outline the recent organisational restructures within the Directorate: the Media Relations team will form part of the new External Affairs group under the management of Joe Baker, who assumes an expanded role as Head of External Affairs; Internal Communications will move into the Directorate under the management of Rachael Castles, who assumes an expanded role as Head of Internal Affairs.

Employee Engagement Survey: The response rate to the recent survey was 71%, which is regarded as a good outcome by industry standards. A summary of the results, together with an action plan to address areas which have emerged as points on which to focus, will be presented to the Board at the May meeting.

Specimen Purchase: *[This section to be made available in January 2015]*

Major Corporate Risks: A definitive list of Major Corporate Risks for FY 2014/15 will be presented to the May meeting of the Board.

1574 Communications Update (TP 14/04)

Noted

1575 Development Update (TP 14/05)

Noted

1576 Offer of a Major Gift (TP 14/05a)

[This has been redacted for reasons of commercial interest. This section will be kept confidential indefinitely]

1577 NHM Q3 Activity Report for FY2013-14 (TP 14/06)

Noted

1578 Impact of 7% Increase in Employer contributions to PCSPS 2015-16 (TP 14/07)

Noted

1579 Financial Review for the period April-December 2013 (TP 14/08)

The Board noted the forecast year-end outturn for FY2013/14 for the General Fund. Mr Greenwood confirmed that the Museum had had a successful third quarter and the budget going forward reflects increases in a number of forecasts for business units. Accommodations in the budget have been made to mitigate the impact of 1% reduction in grant-in-aid funding for FY2014/15 and departmental restructuring.

Main Items:

1580 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY (TP 14/09)

Dr Morris presented the final Public Engagement Strategy, which incorporated the suggestions made by the Board at the Annual Trustees' Strategy Day in October 2013. These were primarily focused on the Museum's digital media strategy and the need to clearly articulate the Public Engagement Group's (PEG) capacity to realise the objectives, defined by a clear programme of activities.

Dr Morris outlined the five objectives that will underpin the emerging long-term strategy for the Museum over the next five years – the cornerstone of which is for the Museum to position itself more clearly as an authoritative voice of authority on the natural world and ensure a sustainable financial model for the Museum recognising that an increasing proportion of this will be self-generated income. Over the five-year phase, the Strategy will seek to resolve some fundamental issues that had previously not been addressed whilst at the same time identify opportunities to be more innovative. A component of the web redevelopment programme will be the consideration of how to effectively use social media channels, such as Twitter and balance the need to control some communication whilst at the same time embracing the inherently open nature of social media as this becomes an ever important element of Museum business; it was noted that the Museum currently attracts over half a million tweets annually.

Trustees liked the intellectual tone and content of the Strategy as well as the benchmarking against other institutions, which helped set the context. The Board also recognised that the Strategy proposes a greater use of the collection and enhanced collaboration with Science, which was a welcome approach. However, Trustees felt that there were some instances where the aspirations were more inward-looking, particularly when referring to an "international" centre of excellence for informal learning.

The Board endorsed the Strategy and Dr Morris noted the recommendations.

1581 HEADS OF EARTH SCIENCES AND LIFE SCIENCES DEPARTMENTS – FIRST IMPRESSIONS (Oral)**Tim Littlewood – Head of Life Sciences:**

Dr Littlewood had been a member of the research body (formerly in the Department of Zoology) for 20 years before taking on the role as Head of Life Sciences – a role affording him the opportunity to influence the direction of research in the Department. A motivation for Dr Littlewood is to truly understand the intrinsic value of different elements of his Department (individuals, collections and relationship to the organisation), using the results to identify a future path for the Department and to recognise the challenges along that journey. He fully endorses the ethos of individuals (particularly those who desire autonomy) and teams working closer together to share knowledge and skills and enhanced collaboration between curation and research. In trying to achieve this, Dr Littlewood has tried to reduce bureaucracy enabling individuals and divisions to work more easily, and more cohesively, together.

A key challenge ahead is the need to increase self-generated income and Dr Littlewood believes that the NHM is in a position of strength to exploit emerging opportunities resulting from central funding cuts to government-funded bodies. The NHM could bridge the gap left by these cuts to offer its expertise on identifying pests, bird strikes etc and bring together a number of groups to offer that service.

Richard Herrington – Head of Earth Sciences:

Dr Herrington started his career at the NHM in 1991 as a Research Fellow. Any doubts Dr Herrington had on the rationale of the new “super” department model (merging the Departments of Mineralogy and Palaeontology) disappeared since taking on the role as Head. He felt that the new model presented opportunities for cross-departmental groups to work closer together, as well as research and curation working less in silos and more on a collaborative footing. Establishing the Facilities Unit and Conservation Unit as centralised functions was also a welcome outcome of the restructure.

Dr Herrington felt that the recent hire of four internationally respected research leaders in a number of areas of earth science paved the way for further opportunities to interact more with the Department of Life Sciences (e.g. ancient DNA) as well as aiding the endeavour to spawn more self-generated income. Dr Herrington was already witnessing some very positive links between the two departments. Dr Herrington’s background is in mineral exploration and he felt that engagement with the mineral extraction, water and energy industries (in particular linking the sustainability of our planet to science) and also soil science could be areas to exploit. Dr Herrington invited Trustees to contact him to explore his plans more fully and to provide the opportunity to exploit their expertise.

Both Drs Littlewood and Herrington appreciated that it was early days in the evolution of the two Departments and realised that there were challenges ahead, which they intended to meet head on. They thanked the Board for providing the opportunity to present their first impressions.

Trustees congratulated Drs Littlewood and Herrington on the progress they had made in their respective departments and welcomed this new and exciting approach.

1582 2014 REVISION OF COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT POLICIES (TP 14/10)

It was agreed at the November meeting that Mr Daniel Alexander, on behalf of the Board, would work with the Museum Registrar (Dr Sarah Long) to provide a short report identifying the principal differences so as to provide reassurance to the Board to endorse the modification and variances in readiness for submission for Arts Council Accreditation. The Board was reminded that under the British Museum Act 1963 the Trustees have a statutory responsibility for the NHM collection, which includes policies relating to the management of the collection.

Dr Long explained that the policies, last amended in 2007, were being revised to bring them into line with changes in legal, regulatory and sectoral standards and to ensure compliance with the requirements of the UK Museums’ Accreditation Scheme overseen by Arts Council England (ACE). The Board noted that failure to gain accreditation would have an impact on the Museum’s fundraising ability, as some funding bodies would not consider applications from non-accredited organisations. The major change is that the documentation has been streamlined from 31 key documents on collections policies and governance to only 5. This both responds to the restructure of Science and reflects feedback from staff who found the previous documents unwieldy.

As ACE is very much focussed on museums in general, the ACE Collections Development Policy template was not devised with natural history museums in mind and so the Museum Collections Development policy differs in some aspects. The most notable of these being that the template omits any reference to CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species), Convention on Biological Diversity and the Nagoya Protocol 2010. Whilst there is no wish to commit the NHM to concordats that the UK has not signed up to, there is a need to make reference to accord with what other countries have in place.

Of significant importance was the request to vary from the Arts Council Accreditation Collections Development Policy template, which was to better reflect natural history collections and the use of a separate policy on human remains. The ACE template focusses on DCMS guidance for the care of remains without reference to law and regulation under the Human Tissue Act 2004. Human Remains is an area with significant potential for litigation, of which the Museum has experience. The Museum’s broader experience on human remains and repatriation has informed the detailed development of the 2010

Human Remains Policy. It is, therefore, recommended that the Board retain the 2010 policy with minor modification rather than experiment with the ACE template which is more general.

Mr Alexander stated Trustees have to be assured that the majority of the variations were minor amendments to current policies and had to rely on the work done by Registrar, the Science Policy Coordinator and Heads of Departments who are experts in assessing whether changes are reasonable.

The Board commended Dr Long and Mr Alexander on their careful examination of the policies and that the policies, in particular the request to vary from the Arts Council Accreditation Collections Development Policy template, had undergone a sufficient review (from a collections and legal point of view) to provide reassurance to Trustees. The Board thanked Dr Long for her diligence on compiling the documentation for submission.

SUMMARY

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Board approved the 2014 revisions of the Collections Management policies, which are public documents.• The Board agreed the variation from the Arts Council Collections Development Policy template and retain the 2010 policy with minor medication rather than experiment with the ACE template which is more general. The Board invited Dr Long to come back for advice if any obstacles become evident. |
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1583 DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW MUSEUM STRATEGY 2015-2020 (TP 14/11)

Mrs Rachael Casstles (Head of Internal Affairs) explained that in recent months the Executive Board has been working on the repositioning of the NHM for the next stage of the its development to help inform the next Museum Strategy covering the period FY2015-2020. Brand consultants, Lambie-Nairn, had assisted the Executive Board in achieving this goal as well as helping the NHM develop a more consistent and coherent brand experience for its key audiences defined as Public, Corporate and Science.

Essential to this review was to evaluate the effectiveness of the Museum’s positioning as a “*voice of authority*” on the natural world through the eyes of its key audiences, as well as repurposing the Museum’s current purpose statement to better communicate its mission. Lambie-Nairn worked closely with staff to develop a statement that was emotive and used language appropriate in creating a compelling and causative campaign to describe the effect the NHM has on society rather than the work we do as an institution. The recommended purpose statement for the Museum now reads:

“Changing the way we think about the natural world – its past, present and future”.

The Board conveyed differing views on the strength of the statement with some Trustees voicing opinion that it undermined the intellectual content of what the NHM does whilst others felt it was a more energised and contemporary statement. The context in which the word “changing” was used was challenged, but the Board accepted that this statement had been tested by staff and appreciated the difficulty in capturing objectives in one snappy sentence. Trustees were asked to feedback any further comments to Mrs Casstles.

The Board also considered the revised intellectual proposition document that was first reviewed at the Annual Trustees’ Strategy Day in October 2013. This is very much an internal document for staff and Trustees and seeks to provide a clearer frame of reference and purpose using the three intellectual narratives of Origins & Evolution, Biodiversity and Sustainability to shape the Museum’s scientific and public programmes. In general Trustees like the latest version and felt it was more realistic of what the Museum does, but recommended that numerical data be omitted to keep the document live and sustain it over the five-year lifetime of the document. It would also be advisable to include some key objectives and a way to measure against these. Trustees noted the timetable for the review and production of the new Museum Strategy 2015-2020.

SUMMARY

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trustees noted version 11 of the Intellectual Proposition document• Trustees noted the timetable for review and production of the Museum Strategy 2015-2020 |
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Development Department:

The repositioning of the NHM is the critical piece of work that will form the platform on which a new case for support for the Museum’s fundraising endeavour is built. The Museum is entering a phase where it needs to dramatically increase its fundraising ambitions in order to realise a range of capital project priorities and programmes of ongoing work. As a result, the Development Department as a function within the NHM now needs to take these priorities, enhance the presentation of them and develop an overall campaign to step up our attainment of external support. The Department occupies a pivotal position in this challenging fundraising landscape.

The recent restructures of Science and Public Engagement have enabled the departments to deliver and drive forward strategic ambitions. In the same spirit the Museum embarked on an overarching review of the Development Department in January 2014 to ensure it is in the right place, and has the right structure, to deliver the Museum's ambitious fundraising aspirations. The Board fully acknowledged that any changes were not without consequence, or cost, but nonetheless fully endorsed the review and the Director's recommendations.

NHM Development Trust

Mr Daniel Alexander will retire from the Board of Trustees in May and consequently from the NHM Development Trust Board. However, it was proposed that Mr Alexander continue his membership of the Trust for a transitional period while his successor is being appointed, which would also provide benefit for the Development Trust and its governance. The Board was unanimous in its support of this proposal.

1584 REFURBISHMENT OF QUEEN'S GATE LODGE (TP 14/12)

The Board had previously agreed the importance of carrying out work on Queen's Gate Lodge to halt decay and ensure better use of this asset. The Museum has a legal obligation to maintain the Lodge as part of the estate and a capital resource bid was approved at the Executive Board Planning Conference in October to fund its refurbishment. As the Director uses the southern dwelling as a personal benefit the decision to draw down funds for the refurbishment has to rest with the Board.

The Board noted that the project had been delayed as the Museum had deliberated on the most appropriate use for the northern compartment, which had now been determined, including the use as overnight accommodation for important visitors to the NHM for which a charge would be levied. This would be under strict control and it should be borne in mind that costs would be incurred for servicing the area. It was noted that this area has certain access constraints and, therefore, would be inappropriate for general commercial purposes (e.g. a "virtual shop"). Dr Morris will consider other options for a "virtual shop" (or other commercial venture) in the context of grounds development.

Trustees endorsed the proposals. Trustees will be kept updated and invited to comment further and given approval before any significant investment takes place at the completion of the design in May 2014 and at contractor appointment scheduled for August 2014.

1585 AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE

(i) Report of the meeting held on 13 February 2014:

In the absence of the Chair, Dr Derek Langslow, the Director highlighted two points:

Revaluation of the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS): The Executive Board will conduct a wider review of pension's options and the sustainability of current pension arrangements for new employees looking at models in the university and commercial sectors. A detailed paper analysing the different pension scheme options will be presented to Trustees in November.

The Committee reflected that future funding cuts could impact on the level of service the Museum is able to provide in its public offer and recommended a more considered discussion at the November meeting of the Board.

1586 SCIENCE GROUP

(i) Third Quarter Update FY2013/14: (TP 14/13)

The Trustees noted the report and Prof Ian Owens drew attention to the following areas:

Recent and Ongoing Recruitment: The Board noted the recent recruitment of the five Research Leaders as well as the proposed future hires.

Offsite and National Collections: Discussions continue on the feasibility of a shared offsite collections storage facility close to central London. Creating more floor space and improving circulation in the galleries was an important priority and so offsite storage of collections a desirable option to realise that goal. The Executive Board has set a two year timetable to resolve the immediate needs of the offsite storage of collections.

1587 CORPORATE SERVICES GROUP

- (i) Estates and Buildings Advisory Committee – Minutes form 30 January 2014 Meeting (TP 14/14)

Noted.

- (ii) Health & Safety Report for Third Quarter FY2013/14: (TP 14/15).

The Board reviewed the Health and Safety Report and noted that there had been no RIDDOR reportable incidents in this reporting quarter. The Board also noted staffing changes in the Health and Safety Unit occasioned by the retirement of the Head of Health and Safety, Alan Barlow. Annette Fitzjohn will now take on the role of Health and Safety Manager, supported by a Fire Safety management and a Health and Safety Administrator.

1588 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT GROUP

- (i) Third Quarter Update FY2013/14: (TP 14/16):

Dr Morris was pleased to report that visitor numbers to our new exhibition - *Britain – One Million Years of the Human Story* - had exceeded the target figure of 5k visitors. During the last quarter a bronze statue of Sir Alfred Wallace had been unveiled by Sir David Attenborough.

1589 AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE BOARD MEETINGS (TP 14/17)

The rolling agenda for future meetings was noted.

1590 EVENTS DIARY (TP 14/18)

Noted.

1591 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Freedom of Information Request: The Museum has received a Freedom of Information request from an individual wishing to have information about Trustees and potential conflicts of interest. In particular, whether any Trustee has declared an interest in relation to any matter being discussed at a meeting from 2012 to the present time. In bringing this to the attention of the Board, the Director confirmed that this information is already in the public domain (contained in the Minutes on the NHM internet site), but out of courtesy thought it necessary to inform the two Trustees concerned that their names would be included in the response. The Board acknowledged the request and approved the draft response.

Archive Centre: The Museum's new Archive Centre has been granted a place of deposit status by the National Archive, which enables the Museum to store own its own archive material.

DC2 Heating System: There is a recurring problem in DC2 with the failure of the heating system resulting in restricted heating and hot water. A resolution is being sought and Mr Neil Greenwood will provide an update as appropriate.

1592 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

- 1 April 2014 – Extraordinary Meeting of the Board
- 16 April 2014 – Annual Trustees' Dinner
- 20 May 2014 (PM: Science Session)
- 1 July 2014 (Evening: Annual Staff Summer Party)
- 30 September 2014 (Annual Trustee Strategy Day, Chelsea Physic Garden)
- 18 November 2014 (PM: Science Session)