

No 246

**THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM**

**AT A MEETING ON**

**TUESDAY 23 FEBRUARY 2016**

**AT 09.00 A.M.**

**AT THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM**

**Present**

**TRUSTEES**

Lord Green of Hurstpierpoint (in the Chair)  
Professor Sir Roy Anderson FRS FMedSci  
Professor Sir John Beddington CMG FRS  
Professor David Drewry  
Professor Christopher Gilligan CBE  
Professor Sir John Holman  
Dr Derek Langslow CBE  
Hilary Newiss  
Simon Patterson  
Professor Robert Stephen John Sparks FRS CBE  
Dr Kim L Winser OBE

**In Attendance (alphabetical order)**

Frances Allen (Minutes)	Executive Assistant to the Director and Secretary to the Board
Rachael Casstles	Head of Internal Affairs
Rob Colley	Rob Colley Associates (for item 7)
Lorraine Cornish	Interim Head of Conservation (for item 8)
Sir Michael Dixon	Museum Director (and Executive Board Chair)
Jan English	Head of Touring Exhibitions (for item 8)
Neil Greenwood	Director of Finance and Corporate Services (Executive Board member)
Dr Sarah Long	Museum Registrar (for item 9)
Fiona McWilliams	Director of Development Group (Executive Board member)
Dr Justin Morris	Director of Public Engagement (Executive Board member)
Professor Ian Owens	Director of Science (Executive Board member)

**CLOSED DISCUSSION**

**1757 BOARD RECRUITMENTS UPDATE**

Prime Ministerial Appointments: The Board held a closed session, with the Director in attendance, to receive an update from the Chair on the current recruitment campaign for the two Trustee vacancies. The interviews will be held on 2 March 2016.

Co-opted Trustee Appointment: Dame Frances Cairncross DBE was appointed to the Board to succeed Professor Sir Roy Anderson as Co-opted Trustee from 1 April 2016.

**Preliminary**

**1758 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Mr Anand Mahindra.

**1759 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REGISTER OF INTERESTS (TP 16/01)**

Declarations of interest and changes to the Register of Interests were made by Lord Stephen Green and Mr Simon Patterson and were recorded by the Secretary to the Board.

**1760 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 17 NOVEMBER 2015**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Trustees held on 17 November 2015 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

**1761 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING OF 17 NOVEMBER 2015 (TP 16/02)**

Noted.

**1762 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

The report was given during the closed session.

**1763 DIRECTOR'S REPORT (TP 16/03)**

International: The Director provided an update on the Museum's international initiatives and forthcoming visits abroad.

**1764 Q3 2015/16 Performance and Finance report (TP 16/04)**

The third quarter was largely predominated by speculation on the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review 2015 (CSR15). In the event, the pronouncement made by the Chancellor in late November delivered a more favourable outcome for the Museum than was anticipated.

The report indicated that the downward trend in visitor attendance since the terrorist attacks in Paris has continued and intelligence suggests that peer institutions are facing the same issue. The Executive will continue to monitor the situation. The Board noted, however, that this decline in attendance has had a negative impact on commercial activities during the quarter and this issue was the subject of debate at the February meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee. Whilst it was acknowledged that reduced visitor numbers had played a part in driving down commercial income, the Committee also suggested that another major factor at play was that income targets were perhaps too challenging. Dr Justin Morris (Director of Public Engagement) reassured the Board that, going forward, targets will be continually monitored and adjusted accordingly. On a more optimistic note, the Board was pleased to note the increase in onsite donations.

**1765 Update on Budget for FY 2016/17 (TP 16/04)**

Mr Neil Greenwood (Director of Finance and Corporate Services) presented an update on the indicative balanced budget for 2016/17 following the outcome of the CSR15 announced in late November. In addition to the favourable settlement made to the Museum, the award included a one-off uplift in the capital baseline to support investment in backlog maintenance, which had formed part of the Museum's case to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). This additional budget will allow a review of the capital and strategic priority allocations, which were significantly reduced and compromised under the previous planning scenario.

The Board expressed concern that the Operating Surplus for 2016/17 was lower than desirable. Mr Greenwood explained that 2016/17 represented a year of transition and compromise and, therefore, the projection for the Operating Surplus was set lower that year than in subsequent years. Mr Greenwood assured the Board that, in addressing the inherent risks, expenditure will be constantly under review by both the Executive and the Commercial Advisory Committee and any necessary reforecasting will be undertaken accordingly. It was emphasised that 2016/17 is an atypical year and well-developed plans were in place to grow the minimum level of Operating Surplus in years thereafter.

**SUMMARY:**

Given these assurances, the Board of Trustee approved the balanced budget for 2016/17.

### 1766 Grounds Transformation Programme – Progress Report (TP 16/06)

Historic England had completed its appraisal of the historic value of buildings on the site and Dr Justin Morris (Director of Public Engagement) was pleased to report that the review supported the proposal to demolish the Palaeontology Building's tower to accommodate the new civic square. Historic England will confirm its support of the scheme at the fourth pre-planning meeting the officials from the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

It was reported at the November meeting that the proposals for the Wildlife Garden had attracted some negativity. In this context, the Chair and Dr Morris had met with two local residents who had expressed their concerns about the scheme and hence had presented a counter proposal for the western grounds for consideration by the Museum.

The Board considered the proposals, taking into account the proposed modifications. The Board accepted that, whilst an alternative scheme could be developed that would cause less disruption to the existing area of wildlife garden, the Board felt that such a scheme would not achieve a number of other benefits - in particular: the desire to increase the number of visitors engaging with this area of the grounds; the improving the visitor experience of arriving and circulating through the grounds; and, for the first time in 135 years, a coherent holistic scheme for all of the grounds that fully enhances the setting of the Waterhouse Building.

SUMMARY:	ACTION
The Board concluded that the Museum should continue to work with the RIBA Stage 3 design that has been developed by the design team and a formal response expressing this decision will be sent by the Chair.	SG

### 1767 Hintze Hall Redevelopment Programme (TP 16/07)

Dr Morris reported that good progress is being made on the Hintze Hall Redevelopment Programme with delivery of the project currently on schedule and on budget.

### 1768 Development Group Update (TP 16/08)

Fiona McWilliams (Director of Development) provided an update and advised the Board that focus of effort in recent months has been committed into building capacity and capability in the Development Group to realise identified goals.

### 1769 BMGF Update (TP 16/09)

Professor Ian Owens (Director of Science) was pleased to report that the main contract had been signed with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for a five-year partnership to administer a major research programme on soil transmitted helminths (parasitic worms) entitled the DeWorm3 project. The main task of the initial work will involve computer modelling and this is expected to be led by Professor Sir Roy Anderson and his group at Imperial College. The formal launch of DeWorm3 is expected to take place in May/June 2016.

### Main Items:

#### 1770 OFFSITE COLLECTIONS STORAGE UPDATE (TP 16/10)

It was agreed by the Board in November that Prof Ian Owens should explore further the options he outlined as potential facilities for the offsite storage of the Museum's Life Sciences collections. The Board welcomed Rob Colley (external consultant from Rob Colley Associates) to the meeting who, together with Prof Owens, presented an update on developments since the last meeting.

*(This minute has been redacted from the published minutes under Section 43: Commercial Interests of the Freedom of Information Act).*

**SUMMARY:**

The Board of Trustees supported the recommendations presented by Prof Ian Owens and approved the proposed actions for taking forward the favoured options.

**1771 TREASURES TOUR – ARCHAEOPTERYX (LOAN APPROVAL) (TP 16/11)**

The Board welcomed Dr Sarah Long (Museum Registrar), Lorraine Cornish (Earth Sciences Curator) and Jan English (Touring Exhibitions) to the meeting. In November the Board had approved a list of potential objects for the Museum's new touring show "*Treasures of The Natural History Museum*" and agreed the recommendation that the Archaeopteryx should not form part of the standard *Treasures* tour because of its importance as a research specimen and the need for particularly stringent loan conditions. However, the "in principle" approval to tour the Archaeopteryx specimen was given by the Board pending further assurances that the necessary conditions would be met by the host venues and that the Board consider each request on a case-by-case basis for each venue. The review had confirmed that the venues were able to meet the stringent conditions required to host Archaeopteryx and the *Treasures* exhibition with respect to legal status, logistical planning, environmental conditions, security and experience.

The Board was given the opportunity to inspect the *Archaeopteryx* specimen. Ms Cornish explained how it had been conserved and what measures had been taken to protect this delicate specimen whilst it had been on display and how it would be protected should it go on tour.

**SUMMARY:**

The Board approved the loan of the *Archaeopteryx* to the Japanese venues with the stipulation that reassurance must be provided regarding the potential risk of damage through earthquake activity. In this context, the Chair requested Dr Long to assess the risk and provide a short note, which should include reference to written assurances that has been received by the Museum.

**ACTION**

**Dr Sarah Long**

**1772 DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY: IMPROVING PROSPECT AND DONOR ENGAGEMENT AND STEWARDSHIP TO INCREASE DEVELOPMENT INCOME (TP 16/12)**

The fundraising challenge necessary to support the delivery of the Museum's *Strategy to 2020* has demanded a paradigm shift in the traditional approach to seeking Development-related income. In realising this step change the Development Group's senior leadership team had focussed on developing a Museum-wide approach to engage potential supporters and improve stewardship to meet the challenge. Ms McWilliams' paper outlined the proposed methodology to improve prospect/donor engagement and stewardship.

A fundamental element in advancing towards this goal was the need to revamp the NHM Development Trust. It was felt that the Museum no longer needed a separate and independent NHM Development Trust in its current form, but instead a number of groups (each with a specific function) would be established to offer a high level of engagement fulfilment and excellent stewardship to donors and "senior volunteers". Ms McWilliams outlined how each group would be supported by Development and how they would be managed.

**SUMMARY:**

The Board congratulated Ms McWilliams on progress and wholly supported the proposals outlined in her paper.

**1773 HONORARY RESEARCH FELLOWS (TP 16/13)**

The Museum's scheme for Honorary Research Fellows (HRFs) aims to encourage scientific high quality collaboration with scientists of high repute in their field and the Fellowship award is considered to be an honour to the recipient. Over the last few years the role has expanded with HRFs becoming more active in Museum's scientific endeavours, such as delivering in-house lectures, serving on scientific advisory committees and promotion/review panels. It is anticipated that the breadth of the role will expand even further in the future.

The HRF list was substantially revised in 2013 with several new appointments being made on the basis of a three-year term. Prof Owens sought the Board's approval for the continuance of twelve of the existing HRFs and the appointment of eight new HRFs to strengthen collaboration in key areas. In response to Ms Newiss' questions regarding future fellowships in the realms of citizen science, Prof Owens reassured the Board that the Science Group is not resistant to widening the pool to a broader group of collaborative members.

**SUMMARY:**

Trustees approved all appointments for a period of three years with the next review taking place in 2019.

**AUDIT & ASSURANCE**

**1774 Report of the Meeting held on 11 February 2016**

The Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee, Dr Derek Langslow, provided an update on the discussions held at the meeting on 11 February 2016.

**1775 HEALTH & SAFETY REPORT FOR THIRD QUARTER FY 2015/16 (TP 16/14)**

The report was noted.

**1776 AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE BOARD MEETINGS (TP 16/15)**

The rolling agenda for future meetings was noted.

**1777 EVENTS DIARY (TP 16/16)**

The Board of Trustees noted the contents of the report.

**1778 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS**

**2016:**

- 17 May 2016 (PM: Science Session)
- 26 May- Annual Trustees' Dinner
- 4 July 2016 (Evening: Annual Staff Summer Party)
- 5 July 2016
- 20 September 2016 – Annual Trustees' Strategy Day
- 22 November 2016 (PM: Science Session)

The Board confirmed the meeting dates for 2017, as follows:

**2017:**

- 21 February
- 16 May (PM: Science Session)
- 27 June or 4 July (depending on "laying before Parliament" deadline) (Evening: Annual Staff Summer Party)
- 19 September – Annual Trustees' Strategy Day
- 21 November (PM: Science Session)

**1779 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Retiring Trustees: The Chair expressed his thanks to the retiring Board members - Prof Sir Roy Anderson, Dr Derek Langslow and Prof David Drewry - for their valuable commitment and support to the Board during their tenure. Their continuing connection with the Museum will be assured by becoming members of the external group of Trustee Emeritus. The Director gave his personal thanks for their support of him and the Museum.

