

No 239

THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

AT A MEETING ON

TUESDAY 13 MAY 2014

AT 9.00 A.M.

AT THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

Present

TRUSTEES

Lord Green of Hurstpierpoint (in the Chair)

Prof Sir Roy Anderson FRS FMedSci

Professor David Drewry

Professor Sir John Holman

Sir David Omand GCB

Dr Kim L Winser OBE

In Attendance (alphabetical order)

Frances Allen (Minutes)

Rachael Casstles

Dr Michael Dixon

Neil Greenwood

Mr Ian Henderson

Dr Justin Morris

Professor Ian Owens

Executive Assistant to the Director and Secretary to the Board
Head of Internal Affairs

Museum Director (and Executive Board Chair)

Director of Finance & Corporate Services (Executive Board member)

Chair of Estates Advisory Board Committee (for item 8)

Director of Public Engagement (Executive Board member)

Director of Science (Executive Board member)

Preliminary

1600 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Professor Sir John Beddington CMG FRS, Professor Christopher Gilligan and Dr Derek Langslow.

1601 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REGISTER OF INTERESTS (TP 14/22)

Declarations of interest and changes to the Register of Interests were noted by the Secretary to the Board.

1602 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 25 FEBRUARY 2014 AND 1 APRIL 2014

The Minutes of the meeting of the Trustees held on 25 February and 1 April 2014 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

1603 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING OF 25 FEBRUARY AND 1 APRIL 2014 (TP 14/23)

DC2 Heating System: Mr Greenwood confirmed that he hoped a resolution to this on-going problem will be reached by early autumn.

WPY Licencing: Dr Morris updated the Board on recent discussions with the BBC Worldwide (BBCW).

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

All items of significance were addressed under the current agenda.

1604 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Board welcomed the Chair, Lord Green, to his inaugural meeting. The Chair was delighted to be part of the Museum at an exciting time in its history and was enjoying spending time with his fellow Trustees and the Director in familiarising himself with the Museum.

1605 MUSEUM REPORT (TP 14/24)

Funding Issues: The Director highlighted the future funding issues facing the NHM, as outlined in his report, and drew Trustees' attention to the table showing government RDEL (resource department expenditure limit) projections to FY2018/19. Predictions for a plausible funding scenario indicate a possible reduction of 6%-7% per annum to resource grant-in-aid during the period 2016-2018 and the Executive will be taking into consideration this extreme scenario when modelling future financial planning. In addressing this shortfall, the Executive will also look at the challenge to grow self-generated income from a variety of income streams.

The Board believed that it was right to err on the right side of caution in considering the extreme funding scenario in its forward planning. Furthermore, it would now be prudent to start building a case in advance of the next spending review demonstrating how the Museum adds value to economic growth (e.g. tourism and higher education) notwithstanding the Treasury's view that museums and galleries have fared well in comparison to other sectors since the last election.

SUMMARY	ACTION
The Director confirmed that, following a discussion with the Chair, the Executive Board will bring recommendations to the Board in July on the issues to be considered on future superannuation costs and pension scheme arrangements.	MD/NG/IO/JM

1606 NHM Q4 FY2013-14 Data Summary (TP 14/25)

The Board reviewed the Data Summary Q4 13/14 (appendix 1) and commented as follows:

Research Grant Value: *Research Grant Value:* Prof Ian Owens explained that the steep rise over the last year reflected the concerted effort made by Science staff to increase the number and value of grant awards. He explained that the figures represented overall grant money, but did not reflect overhead recovery, which would have a lower trajectory, as some grant sources do not cover full overheads. Overhead recovery is an issue that needs to be addressed by Science, together with winning more large programme and institutional awards.

Publications: The Board noted that this upward trend was in contrast to the downturn in publications, which Prof Owens explained was due to Science adopting a different strategy for recording KPI data - shifting from publishing a high number of papers to focussing efforts on publishing in high impact journals. In future an electronic capture system will help record KPI data and sub-divide more effectively.

Digital: The number of Twitter and Facebook followers over the last few months had grown impressively with March being the best ever month for Twitter attracting over 29k new followers. This was due largely to the Museum's participation in #MuseumWeek and featuring "sensational" stories (e.g. botfly maggot story). The combination of this type of bite-sized content, as well as content more grounded in the collection, attracts more hits and exposure, which equates to an improved brand and commercial opportunities. Dr Winser suggested that other social media platforms, such as Instagram, would present another platform with mass take-up to showcase specimens.

Prof Owens reported that progress is being made with digitising the collections with a number of pilot schemes running to demonstrate that the rate can be increased for some parts of the collection. Only a small number (about 5 million) of the 80 million specimens might need hi-resolution images; the challenge is to have an effective digital database of holdings and associated metadata of the whole collection. Other initiatives (e.g. the fly project) are being set up using crowd sourcing. Prof Owens' plan recognises that external funding will have to be sought to complete large sections of the collections and over the next six months these plans will become more concrete. In this context, Prof Owens will consider Sir Roy Anderson's suggestion about exploiting 3D printing technology and forging partnerships with 3D technology companies.

1607 NHM Q4 FY2013-14 Activity Summary (TP 14/26)

The Board of Trustees noted the contents of the report.

1608 Financial Review for the period April 2013-March 2014 (TP 14/27)

The Board noted the provisional year-end outturn for the General Fund. Mr Greenwood confirmed that the Museum had had a successful year, which has been particularly driven by good performance by the commercial units.

SUMMARY	ACTION
The Chair would like future reports, from July onwards, to include trend data.	NG

Main Items:

1609 EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT SURVEY – RESULTING ACTION PLAN (TP 14/28)

The Executive Board agreed the reintroduction of a staff opinion survey at the end of 2013 after a three year gap. The Executive Board had agreed to delay undertaking a new survey until the reorganisation of Science and restructure of Public Engagement had been given the chance to embed. An external specialist organisation – Survey Initiative – had been engaged to run the survey to assure anonymity and, in consultation with staff, a questionnaire had been developed. The survey was open to all key individuals based at the Museum, including those not on the payroll, such as students, volunteers and contractors.

On-line access to the survey was open for approximately three weeks from late November and the results were collated by Survey Initiative and reported to the Executive board in January 2014. The response rate was 71%, which was regarded as a good outcome by industry standards. As a result of action planning meetings within each directorate, the Executive Board drafted a Museum Action Plan representing the major Museum-wide issues that would be addressed, which was finalised on 14 April by the Senior Management Team. The Director's presentation demonstrated the highlights and lowlights from the results of the survey compared to the Survey Initiative normative data-set. Highlights to note:

- Asking the question: *"I would recommend the Museum as a good place to work"*, the Museum was towards the upper end of Employer Net Promoter score (in the Survey Initiative database) = 15% (the norm is -4%).
- 11 items are 10% or more above norm; 5 items fall 10% points or more below norm.
- 62% of respondents were positive that action will be taken.

The Action Plan focuses on six key areas:

1. Pay and recognition
2. Career development and promotion
3. Restructure
4. Leadership
5. Bullying and harassment
6. Physical working conditions

The Executive was surprised at some of the results, including staff opinion that bullying and harassment was an issue. One of the biggest surprises for Prof Owens was the concern of Science staff over career development and promotion particularly as over the last few years a lot of time has been spent in introducing an improved and more transparent structure for promotion within Science. The survey revealed that a number of people felt left out (or unaware) of this process. After consulting with staff Prof Owens had concluded that the new system had not been adequately communicated and thus had not penetrated daily life and in response Prof Owen has drawn up an action plan to avoid any future issues.

The Board agreed that surveying staff was a healthy process and one that should be conducted on an annual basis. It was crucial for the Executive to regularly monitor progress against the proposed action plan, taking advantage of areas that can be quickly resolved. It was equally important for staff to be reminded of what the Museum has done in response to the last survey, particularly immediately before the launch of a new opinion survey.

1610 AUDIT & ASSURANCE

- (i) Report of the meeting held on 8 May 2014: The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee was unable to give an oral report as he was absent from the meeting.
- (ii) Annual Health and Safety Report FY2013/14 (TP 14/29): The Board noted that there had been no RIDDOR reportable incidents in FY2013-14 and was assured that the Museum is operating a satisfactory health and safety environment.

- (iii) Annual Security Report FY2013/14 (TP 14/30): The Board noted the improvement to security have been made over the last 12 months, particularly the upgrading of the internal CCTV system at South Kensington covering areas of crime or public safety with new HD cameras. Sir David Omand urged the Museum to hold an annual security exercise to flush out any problems and to reinforce individuals' responsibility remit.
- (iv) Head of Risk and Assurance's Annual Assurance to the Accounting Officer and Audit and Risk Committee FY2013/14 (TP 14/31): The Board noted the report.
- (v) Annual Review of Gifts and Hospitality FY2013/14 (TP 14/32): Noted as a nil return for all Trustees.
- (vi) Major Corporate Risks FY2014/15 (TP 14/33): The Board noted the major corporate risks which have been assessed as the most significant ones this year.

1611 LONG-TERM CAPITAL PLANNING (TP 14/34)

The purpose of the discussion was for Trustees to gain an understanding of the Museum's capital masterplan and the five strands of capital planning that underpin it in advance of a tour of the Estate and a broader discussion of the Public Space plans at the July Board meeting.

Mr Greenwood presented an outline of the objectives for each of the five key strands, which are inextricably linked and aligned to the Museum, Science and Public Engagement strategies. These are:

1. Quality and location of collection storage
2. Capacity of public space
3. Public circulation
4. Staff office and laboratory accommodation
5. Estate condition survey

In November 2013 the Board was presented with a paper on capital planning outlining the priority infrastructure projects set over two phases spanning the next decade. In addition, the Board had agreed to proceed with the development of a design for the Museum Grounds at the extraordinary meeting of the Board meeting in April 2014. In the months following the November meeting, the Executive had developed a framework for the advancement of its capital infrastructure that is cohesive across strands and projects and will allow the Museum to plan and prioritise its programmes of capital investment and fundraising. The Board emphasised that it is important to engage with the NHM Development Trust in supporting the Museum's ambitions and helping to fundraise to realise these.

As visitor numbers continue to increase a key and urgent priority for the Museum is to provide a positive visitor experience by improving circulation around the Museum, increasing public space and reducing queuing time. This will be achieved by a number of projects including the Grounds Development competition, the Northern Link Corridor, the Public Space Plan and the more aspirational Earth and Planetary Sciences Centre project.

The Museum's ambition is to strengthen the relationship between the inner and outer space to improve the visitor experience from start to finish and to ensure that this positive journey starts in the Grounds. The underlying principle of the Grounds Development project is to make the grounds part of the Museum experience and not the precursor – thus the grounds will be treated like an external gallery providing interest and engagement. This precept will help satisfy the imperative to make the queuing experience as pleasant as possible recognising that queuing will always occur during our busiest periods.

Mr Henderson welcomed the fact that the Museum is actively engaging with its masterplan and believed that off-site storage is key to advancing the Museum's ambition by freeing up space and *ergo* increasing the public footprint.

1612 REPORTS FOR NOTING

- (i) The Natural History Museum at Tring, Past, Present and Future (TP 14/35):

The Board noted Mr Paul Kitching's (Museum Manager, Tring) paper setting out background information on the Natural History Museum at Tring. The paper is a precursor to further discussion with Trustees in the autumn of 2014 on the future direction of the Museum, following the appointment of the Head of Visitor Experience, Learning & Outreach and the Head of National Public Programmes. The Board is mindful that any future plans may be constrained by the will and codicils of Lionel Walter Rothschild, which are being reviewed to confirm whether any other form of restriction may exist. Legal advice will be sought to obtain a clear interpretation of the contents of the will and to inform any future action. Quite separately to this, Dr Morris has been engaged in discussion with the Rothschild family in connection with gallery refurbishment.

1613 AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE BOARD MEETINGS (TP 14/36)

The rolling agenda for future meetings was noted.

1614 EVENTS DIARY (TP 14/37)

Noted.

1615 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

2014:

- 20 May 2014 – Informal meeting to review long-term capital planning
- 1 July 2014 (Evening: Annual Staff Summer Party)
- 30 September 2014 (Annual Trustee Strategy Day, Chelsea Physic Garden)
- 18 November 2014 (PM: Science Session)

2015:

- 24 February 2015
- Annual Trustees' Dinner – date in April to be arranged
- 19 May 2015 (PM: Science Session)
- 30 June 2015
- 22 September – Annual Trustees' Strategy Day
- 17 November (PM: Science Session)

1616 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Future Board of Trustee Meetings: The Board agreed with the Chair's suggestion of holding some future Board meetings offsite visiting other institutions to gain a broader perspective of how other institutions operate. The first offsite meeting will be held at Tring on 19 May 2015.

September Annual Strategy Day: This will be devoted to looking at the strategic issues that face the Museum over the next five years encompassing: the Museum Strategy (against the backdrop of how to maintain a robust business model); engagement with NHMDT; commercial activities etc.

Trustee Vacancies: The Board briefly discussed the strategy for filling the current Trustee vacancies and agreed that a priority is to improve the gender balance of the Board. The Chair also felt that, as the NHM is an iconic global brand and its mission is very much grounded in the international engagement, thoughts should centre on introducing an international dimension to the Board. This would also be allied to the Chair's other plans for extending the Museum's global reach by establishing an international advisory board.

Sir David Omand: The Board bade farewell to Sir David who retires from the Board on 19 May. The Director reflected that the Museum owes a huge debt to Sir David whose knowledge of Whitehall and Westminster of great value during his tenure. Sir David will be missed.

