

No 245

**THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM**

**AT A MEETING ON**

**TUESDAY 17 NOVEMBER 2015**

**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 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
Alex Burch	Head of Visitor Experience, Learning and Outreach (for item 10)
Rachael Castles	Head of Internal Affairs
Sir Michael Dixon	Museum Director (and Executive Board Chair)
Neil Greenwood	Director of Finance and Corporate Services (Executive Board member)
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)
Fiona McWilliams	Director of Development Group (Executive Board member)

**Preliminary**

**1732 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Professor Sir John Beddington CMG FRS and Mr Anand Mahindra.

**1733 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REGISTER OF INTERESTS (TP 15/67)**

Declarations of interest and changes to the Register of Interests were made by Dr Kim Winser, Ms Hilary Newiss and Prof Sir John Holman and were recorded by the Secretary to the Board.

**1734 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 30 JUNE AND 22 SEPTEMBER 2015**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Trustees held 30 June and 22 September 2015 were confirmed as true records and signed by the Chair.

**1735 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING OF 30 JUNE AND 22 SEPTEMBER 2015 (TP 15/68)**

Noted.

**1736 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

The Chair congratulated the Museum in securing the grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) to administer a research programme focussing on the elimination of soil transmitted helminth (parasitic worms) infections. The Chair reflected that the Foundation's commitment to the NHM not only underscores the Museum's pre-eminence in this field of research, but also validates its global stature.

**1737 DIRECTOR'S REPORT (TP 15/69)**

Following the terrorist attacks in Paris the previous weekend the Museum had sought advice from official security bodies in London to ensure that it is doing everything possible to safeguard the security of its staff and visitors. The Museum had responded accordingly to the advice and security measures will be continually reviewed. The Executive assured the Board that the Museum regularly undertakes a number of security exercises to test its ability to respond to any crises and to ensure that processes are in place to maintain general safety.

**1738 Q2 2015/16 Performance and Finance report (TP 15/70)**

The new format of the report was intended to be succinct but impactful - equipping the Board with essential information to enable them to track progress and provide feedback. The Board welcomed the new format and unanimously agreed that the data was well laid out and easy to read. Dr Justin Morris (Director of Public Engagement) responded to Trustees' comments on aspects of commercial performance.

It was generally agreed that onsite marketing needs to become more visible, but the approach should be subtle and sympathetic to our other activities such as learning, education and exhibitions.

**1739 Grounds Transformation Programme – Progress Report (TP 15/71)**

The Grounds Transformation Programme is a component of the long-term Museum Masterplan and proposes for the first time to deliver a holistic and coherent scheme for the Museum grounds. The interim Stage 3 design had undergone a consultation process with the public and other bodies including a range of natural history societies, the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea and local residents. The project is now nearing the end of Stage 3 design and, following approval, an application for planning permission and listed building consent will be submitted in early 2016.

Historic England has encouraged the Museum to apply for Enhanced Listing in order for them to respond to the Stage 3 design; their written opinion is needed before an application for planning permission is submitted. In taking this forward Historic England has agreed to undertake a review of the heritage value of all buildings on the South Kensington site in order to determine the status of the Palaeontology Building (and hence any possible constraints relating to the proposed removal of the tower).

Feedback to the proposals has been generally supportive with the view that the scheme will be an asset to Museum visitors and the wider urban realm. However, the proposal for the Wildlife Garden has attracted some negativity and the Chair circulated to the Board two letters from UK MAB Urban Forum and Prospect Union opposing the scheme. A response will be formulated and circulated in due course.

**1740 Hintze Hall Redevelopment Programme (TP 15/72)**

The Hintze Hall Programme includes the redevelopment of three key spaces at the centre of the Museum: (1) The Treasures Gallery; (2) the second and first floor balconies; (3) the ground floor. Good progress is being made: the main contractor was appointed in June 2016 and work is due to commence on the second balcony. Evaluation is taking place to ensure that impact to visitors and staff as a result of the works is minimised wherever possible.

#### **1741 International Business Strategy – Progress Report (TP 15/73)**

The Board noted progress and was pleased to learn more about the new portfolio of exhibitions presented to them.

#### **1742 Development Group Update (TP 15/74)**

Fiona McWilliams (Director of Development) provided an update on progress towards building capacity and capability in the Development Group to realise identified goals. Since the Annual Trustees' Strategy Day a significant amount of work has been undertaken in honing the large number of fundraising projects to a fundraising portfolio of six priority projects that best represent the Museum's work and ambition. This prioritisation has provided the opportunity to identify a broad range of potential donors, together with the approach that should be adopted, as well as ensuring that the right systems and processes are in place to advance fundraising endeavours. In addition, Ms McWilliams is in discussion with the Development Trust to determine the best future mechanism for senior volunteer fundraising for the Museum.

In looking at potential revenue streams the Development Group will also focus on the existing Patrons and Corporate Memberships programmes and the newly established Annual Fund, which is designed to attract regular giving to support activities such as acquisitions (for the collections, the library, science equipment), field trips and travel grants etc.

The Board felt very encouraged by the progress achieved since the Annual Trustees' Strategy Day and looked forward to further updates.

#### **1743 Update on the Employment Offer and Pay Award Negotiations 2015-16 (TP 15/75)**

Neil Greenwood (Director of Finance and Corporate Services) provided an update on recent negotiations with the Trade Union Side. Mr Greenwood reported that the TUS had rejected the first offer and as a consequence management had submitted a revised offer to the TUS at a meeting on 13 November. Negotiations are on-going and the Board will be updated accordingly.

#### **1744 BMGF Update**

Prof Ian Owens (Director of Science) provided an overview of the agreement with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to administer a major research programme on soil transmitted helminths (parasitic worms) entitled "*Field studies on the feasibility of elimination of soil transmitted helminths*". The objective of this programme is to identify effective drug-delivery strategies to interrupt the life cycle of soil transmitted helminths with a view to their elimination.

Prof Sir Roy Anderson felt that the NHM's renowned historic expertise in biomedical research was a deciding factor in being chosen as the recipient of the award, together with London as a location more related to the physical intellectual strength in this area of disease research. The programme will also draw on the NHM's taxonomic and genome sequencing expertise. Prof Owens hoped that the award would provide the catalyst for realising the Museum's long-held ambition to establish an institution for tropical disease research.

The Board acknowledged this significant achievement, led by Tim Littlewood (Head of Life Sciences) and David Rollinson (Merit Researcher) and others, who supported the application process and undertook the very substantial amount of work that went into its successful conclusion. The Board also thanked Prof Sir Roy Anderson whose input was vital in promoting the Museum as an organisation capable of leading such an initiative. This award will hopefully demonstrate to the public and government that the Museum is more than just a museum, but a world-class research institution that is important to the UK's science base.

The Board also agreed that it would be important to digitally record/photograph this programme for posterity.

**1745 Digital Update**

Mr Simon Patterson circulated a table the purpose of which was to highlight and track a few aspects of the Museum's digital strategy. The selection reflected some of the more important cross-Museum activities that are taking place to provide the Board with a sense of progress. The list will be amended and expanded over time and will feature as a regular report at future Board meetings.

The Chair thanked Mr Patterson for his input and commitment to the Museum's digital endeavours and recognised that the "tracker" table will be shaped by progress.

**Main Items:**

**1746 INDICATIVE BUDGET FOR FY 2016/17 (TP 15/76)**

Mr Greenwood's paper presented an indicative balanced budget for FY2016-17 and a financial plan and projections through to FY2020-21. The plan had been based on the assumption of a 15% real cut in baseline resource grant-in-aid over the three year period 2016-17 to 2018-19 pending the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR15), which was unknown. The indicative budget was based on a set of assumptions that will need to be tested further upon knowing the outcome of the CSR15.

Following the Annual Trustees' Strategy Day some detailed modelling had taken place to arrive at a prudent budget. The paper outlines the level of investment that underpins future growth in income generating areas, but this will be reviewed after the first quarter. In developing the budget the key message is that in order to maintain a level of general reserve and capital investment the Museum will have to make some savings in its operating costs and in addition, for the next two years, refocus priorities, cancel certain investment areas and repurpose some underspends etc. The Director stressed that the Executive had taken a prudent view in forecasting income so the budget presents a cautious scenario. Kim Winser raised a concern that the Income Risk Factor in the proposed budget was low compared to previous and future years and Dr Morris confirmed that the commercial targets were as challenging as previously.

**SUMMARY:**

Recognising that the budget presented a conservative position, the Chair approved the working budget subject to there being no adverse material change as a result of the outcome of the CSR15. If the outcome of the CSR15 impacted negatively on the budget then an extraordinary meeting of the Board will be called in January or February.

**1747 LIFE SCIENCES OFFSITE COLLECTION STORAGE – STATUS UPDATE (TP 15/77)**

The establishment of a robust, long-term plan for collection storage remains a key strategic priority for the Museum. Following recommendations from the Annual Trustees' Strategy Day, a number of options had been explored more fully. This had resulted in identifying four options for an offsite storage facility for the life science collections and the Board considered the advantages and disadvantages of each option.

The Board congratulated Prof Owens on the progress that has been made since the last meeting and, although some of the models presented take the Museum outside the bounds of the original remit, it was accepted that the proposals offered exciting propositions. Notwithstanding, the Board felt that the last two options, which included public engagement elements, offered the most interesting propositions and thus agreed to extend the decision-making process by 12 months to further progress exploratory discussions with external partners. It was recognised that the deterioration rate of the collection plays an important factor in determining the final choice.

**SUMMARY:**

The Board felt that the last two options presented interesting possibilities, including a public engagement element, and thus agreed to extend the decision-making process by 12 months to further progress exploratory discussions with external partners.

## 1748 TREASURES TOUR – IN PRINCIPLE OBJECT LIST (TP 15/68)

The NHM is developing three new touring exhibitions, the first of which is *Treasures of the Natural History Museum*, which will be collections-rich showcasing many of the Museum’s most significant specimens. The new touring exhibitions represent a shift in our business model, moving away from turnkey exhibitions (not based on collections) towards a model that is more common in the cultural and arts sector. The Board was reminded that the overall objective of touring exhibitions is to generate commercial income as well as taking ownership of its cultural role and building new international partnerships.

The Board welcomed Dr Sarah Long (Museum Registrar) to the meeting who explained that in developing the *Treasures* exhibition the interpretation team, working alongside curators and researchers, had selected 240 items, or groups of items, for possible inclusion. After further analysis, the list had been reduced to 223 specimens, which were deemed suitable to tour pending a conservation assessment and other requirements being satisfied. Trustees noted that special consideration should be given to the loan of the *Archaeopteryx* specimen due to its fragility and its scientific and financial importance in the collection.

In principle, the Board was in favour of touring specimens from the NHM collection as long as certain criteria were met, such as the safety of the collection, security arrangements, ability to meet export and import permit requirements and the correct environmental conditions at the host venues etc. Touring authentic specimens also plays to the Museum’s strategic goals and further satisfies its moral obligation to tour specimens back to the place of origin.

SUMMARY:	ACTION
<p>The Board approved that the 223 objects (or groups of objects) listed in Appendix 1 could be included in the tour pending the outlined requirements. Dr Long was asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Order the specimens contained in the appendix according to reputational and financial risk (attributing scientific importance and estimated value).</li> </ul> <p><u>Archaeopteryx</u></p> <p>The Board expressed some concern about touring the <i>Archaeopteryx</i>, but agreed “in principle” to the loan if the other conditions of the loan (outlined in the paper) are met by the venues wishing to borrow the specimen. In terms of high-profile objects such as this, a higher level of risk assessment needs to be undertaken and brought back to Trustees for final approval.</p>	<p><b>SL</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dr Long will undertake further investigation and bring back to the February Board of Trustees meeting.</li> </ul>	<p><b>SL</b></p>

## 1749 LEARNING STRATEGY (TP 15/79)

The Learning Strategy, born out of the Public Engagement Strategy as one of its five objectives, is a fundamental element underpinning the delivery of the Museum’s public offer. Ms Alex Burch (Head of Visitor Experience, Learning and Outreach) explained that Learning is integral to the success of the Museum and as such the development of the Learning Strategy had commanded wide consultation both inside and outside the Museum in the bid to create a centre of excellence for informal science learning. There are a number of challenges facing humanity and learning about the natural world has never been more important and, in this context, the role that the Museum plays in connecting people to nature, building science literacy, inspiring the next generation of scientists and building capacity is thus brought into sharp relief.

The Strategy describes the direction and activities that will provide a world-class learning programme for the NHM onsite, nationally, internationally and digitally. Ms Burch outlined the objectives to 2020, which provide the cornerstones for the following vision:

*“To be a world class centre of excellence for science learning, delivering a high quality and sustainable programme to large and diverse audiences nationally and building a reputation internationally”*

Ms Burch described how the Museum will work with new partners to engage young people with science and the NHM and the ways in which this will be achieved. Two key activities would be the development of a learning programme around the Museum’s Citizen Science activity and continuation of a national schools and museums programme through Real World Science. Ms Burch also outlined the potential for generating income.

The Board welcomed the Strategy's ambition and breadth of engagement with potential partners. The approach also included some strong elements that chime with national policies that could lead to potential government funding. In this respect, a number of funding avenues were suggested, which Ms Burch will consider pursuing.

However, the Board felt that the Strategy was weak on its digital aspirations and reflected that opportunities for digital engagement need to be exploited to their fullest potential, particularly in terms of outreach and classroom engagement. "Smart" partnerships with technology companies need to be engineered so as to provide and develop tools to take forward the digital component of our ambitions. Mr Simon Patterson offered to help in this respect.

The Board thanked Ms Burch for her update and looked forward to hearing of progress in 2016.

## **AUDIT & ASSURANCE**

### **1750 Report of the Meeting held on 12 November 2015**

The Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee, Dr Derek Langslow, provided an update on the discussions held at the meeting on 12 November and highlighted the following:

Crisis Management Capability and Facility: A presentation was provided on the recent Crisis Management project, which had culminated in the release of a new Crisis Management plan and had put in place the actions for activating the onsite crisis management suite. In addition, printed materials had been circulated to staff outlining crisis management and emergency procedures.

### **1751 Report from the Estates and Buildings Advisory Committee held on 11 November**

Dr Derek Langslow provided an update from the meeting.

### **1752 HEALTH & SAFETY REPORT FOR SECOND QUARTER FY 2015/16 (TP 15/80)**

The report was noted.

### **1753 AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE BOARD MEETINGS (TP 15/81)**

The rolling agenda for future meetings was noted.

### **1754 EVENTS DIARY (TP 15/82)**

The Board of Trustees noted the contents of the report.

### **1755 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS**

#### **2016:**

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

### **1756 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

