

No 210

**THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM**

**AT A MEETING ON**

**TUESDAY 17 JULY 2007**

**AT 9.30 A.M.**

**AT THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM**

**Present**

**TRUSTEES**

Oliver Stocken (in the Chair)  
Sir William Castell LVO  
Professor Dianne Edwards CBE FRS  
Ian Henderson CBE  
Professor Georgina Mace OBE FRS  
Sir David Omand GCB  
Professor Linda Partridge CBE FRS FRSE

**In Attendance**

Dr Michael Dixon	Director
Sharon Ament	Director of Public Engagement
Rachael Casstles	Policy Advisor to the Director
Neil Greenwood	Director of Finance and Administration
Pamela Harling (Minutes)	PA to the Director and Secretary to the Board
Professor Richard Lane	Director of Science
David Sanders	Director of Estates
David Thorpe	Head of Audit and Assurance
Teresa Wild	Director of Policy and Planning and NHM at Tring

  

Paul Bowers ( <i>item 1068 only</i> )	DC2 Public Offer Programme Director
Louise Emerson ( <i>item 1070 only</i> )	Head of Business and Commercial Strategy

**1059 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Daniel Alexander QC, Louise Charlton, Professor Alex Halliday, Professor Michael Hassell, Professor Jacqueline McGlade.

**1060 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 24 MAY 2007**

The minutes of the meeting of the Trustees held on 24 May 2007 were confirmed as a true record.

**1061 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING OF 24 MAY 2007**

Trustees noted the progress which had been made on items raised at the last meeting. All matters arising are covered in the agenda.

## **1062 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

### **1063 DIRECTOR'S REPORT (TP 07/32)**

By way of an update on advocacy, the Director informed Trustees of contacts made with new Ministers whose areas of responsibility cover the work of the Museum, in particular Margaret Hodge (Minister for Culture, DCMS, who is visiting the Museum tomorrow (18 July 2007) and James Purnell, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport) He reported that the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) is now unlikely to be known before the Autumn. There is some optimism however, that the £12 million bid for international work is likely to be forthcoming, and the Museum should benefit from that. Hugo Swire, Shadow Minister for the Arts has been replaced by Ed Vaizey and he will be visiting the Museum on 26 July 2007.

The Director reminded Trustees of new appointments to be made. Previously Trustees with expertise in the Middle East, retail, fundraising and research outside the academic sector have been suggested as useful additions to the Board. In the Science area, expertise with large data handling projects would be welcomed.

The Director reminded Trustees of the Board Assessment to be carried out shortly. This would be carried out internally and will take the form of questionnaires and an interview with the Chairman.

The Director noted from the discussion about human remains at the Strategy Day that a review of remains still held by the Museum is underway, legal advice will be taken on how the process for handling the claim, the independence of the Human Remains Advisory Panel needs strengthening and that it was agreed that the Panel needed further expertise in some areas. The Director of Science noted that an internal meeting will take place in two weeks time to address these issues. Trustees requested an update report of progress in November.

Costs for the legal services for the Tasmanian claim are £280,000, and the DNA samples from the remains in this case are about to leave the Museum for the Tasmanian State Forensic Services facility,

The Museum has achieved accreditation in Occupational Health and Safety Assessment Series 18001. This will require an annual audit to make sure the health and safety management systems at the Museum remains of high quality. There is also the possibility for the Museum to sell its expertise in this area to other organisations.

### **1064 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **1065 VERBAL REPORT FROM THE CHAIR OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE of meeting held on 9 July 2007 (TP 07/33)**

The Chairman of the Audit Committee, Sir William Castell, gave a verbal report to Trustees. He outlined the initial concerns of the Audit Committee, concerning the surplus in hand at year end, which is essential to assist cash flow on the Darwin Centre Two project, and the Restless Planet debt, for which provision has now been made.

The Chairman of the Audit Committee also talked about the more rigorous approach to the audit of the National Audit Office this year and said that he would be asking them in future to highlight potential areas of concern in good time for them to be addressed before year end.

Two items for consideration were highlighted: how the Museum handles its Gift Aid income and resources in the finance department for handling the end of year accounts (but praised staff for producing the accounts in such a timely manner).

The Chairman of the Audit Committee then recommended to Trustees that they approve the accounts as a true record of the state of financial affairs of the Museum.

### **1066 APPROVAL OF ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS**

On the recommendation of the Audit Committee the Annual Report and Accounts were approved.

### **1067 FINANCIAL REVIEW FOR THE PERIOD APRIL 2007-MAY 2007 (TP 07/34)**

The Finance Director introduced paper TP 07/34, which outlined expenditure for the period April 2007 to May 2007. At this stage the predicted outturn at year end is on target. The only area of concern noted was the ambitious target for income from special exhibitions.

## **1068 DARWIN CENTRE PHASE TWO UPDATE**

### **a) Programme Director's Update (TP 07/35a)**

The Programme Director expressed satisfaction with progress and said that it was now hoped that the expected four week delay can be extinguished. Completion is still on target for late summer to early autumn 2009. Ian Henderson told Trustees that he felt more comfortable about progress than he had done, but that constant vigilance was still required. The Estates Director told Trustees that he had recently appointed a project manager to supervise the quality control of the mechanical and electrical installation process.

### **b) Office of Government Commerce review (TP 07/35b)**

The outcome of the review was noted by Trustees.

### **c) Public Offer Presentation by Paul Bowers**

Trustees had the opportunity to question Paul Bowers, the Programme Director for the public offer of Darwin Centre Two about the proposed visitor experience in the new building. Trustees were keen that the new experience should offer visitors a "wow factor" and were concerned about general wear and tear on existing buildings if visitor numbers increase. They also expressed a wish for the space to be used for arts events.

## **1069 FALCON PROJECT (TP 07/36)**

The Director for Public Engagement presented the outline proposal for this project. It is not known how this will be received when it is presented to the client in September, although initial contacts have demonstrated a strong desire to have the Natural History Museum brand. A visit will be made shortly to the proposed location for discussions with a local legal firm and consultations with other potential collaborators. Contact has been made with the local British Embassy and someone recommended by David Omand.

The Museum expects to make money from the project in consultancy fees and with an annual licence fee. Trustees asked what other motives the Museum had for undertaking this project. Particular areas of concern are: receiving payment, understanding local legal and tax liabilities, governance, the science case and the motives for taking on the project including the opportunity costs.

Trustees requested a further report to address concerns about potential liabilities and to state more clearly the science to be carried out. They gave continued qualified support to the further elaboration of the project.

Directors requested a smaller working group of Trustees to assist the Museum in going forward with this project. It was agreed that Trustees would be approached individually.

## **1070 CATERING PROPOSAL (TP 07/37)**

Louise Emerson, Head of Business and Commercial Strategy, gave a presentation to Trustees on possible future plans for visitor catering at the Museum.

Trustees requested time for further examination of the risks attached to the various options. The decision will be revisited at the November meeting.

## **1071 RESEARCH INCOME (TP 07/38)**

The Science Director presented a paper on research income at the Museum. The report highlighted a recent downturn in grant income and the steps taken by the Museum to reverse that trend.

Trustees commended the Museum for its actions. The discussion then moved on to how that Museum could demonstrate world class science as a means of demonstrating public value. Benchmarking the number of recipients of Individual Merit Promotions, might be a good measure for example. A paper on the quality of the Museum's science was requested for the November 2007 meeting.

Trustees recommended further dialogue with the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council about eligibility for funding and making the most of the Museum's unique research strengths, particularly for funding from the European Commission.

## **1072 PERFORMANCE SCORECARD (TP 07/39)**

The Policy Advisor to the Director presented the DCMS performance scorecard figures. These were noted by Trustees.

## **1073 UPDATE 1<sup>ST</sup> QUARTER PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT GROUP (TP 07/40a) SCIENCE GROUP (TP 07/40b)**

Trustees noted these reports.

**1074 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

**1075 AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE BOARD MEETINGS (TP 07/41)**

The rolling agenda for future meetings was noted.

**1076 DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

Tuesday 27 November 2007 at 0930 at The Natural History Museum

It was agreed that the Chairman's office would circulate provisional dates for meetings in 2008 and invite Trustees to reply with their availability by the end of July.