

THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

AT A MEETING ON

THURSDAY 24 MAY 2007

AT 9.30 A.M.

AT THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

Present

TRUSTEES

Oliver Stocken (in the Chair)
Sir William Castell LVO
Louise Charlton
Professor Dianne Edwards CBE FRS
Professor Alex Halliday FRS
Professor Georgina Mace OBE FRS
Sir David Omand GCB

In Attendance

Dr Michael Dixon	Director
Sharon Ament	Director of Public Engagement
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	Associate Director of Public Engagement and Director, NHM at Tring
Frances Windsor	Policy Advisor to the Director
Michael Harvey (<i>item 1057 only</i>)	Interpretation Manager Life Galleries
Graham Higley (<i>item 1046 only</i>)	Biodiversity Heritage Library
John Jackson (<i>item 1044 only</i>)	Science Policy Coordinator
Professor Sara Russell (<i>item 1056 only</i>)	Head of Meteoritics and Cosmic Mineralogy

1037 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Daniel Alexander QC, Professor Michael Hassell, Ian Henderson, Professor Jacquie McGlade, Professor Linda Partridge.

1038 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 27 FEBRUARY 2007

The minutes of the meeting of the Trustees held on 27 February 2007 were amended to show Louise Charlton as present and then confirmed as a true record.

1039 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING OF 27 FEBRUARY 2007 (TP 07/18)

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

1040 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

(i) **Report from the DCMS**

The Chairman reported on a meeting held by DCMS on 23 May 2007. He noted that the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review is not likely to be known before October. The DCMS is satisfied with the governance of the Museum. The Chairman has received a letter from DCMS concerning Boardroom Diversity and a reply has been drafted (this was circulated to Trustees). The DCMS Prospectus on the value that the department adds will be published in July.

1041 DIRECTOR'S REPORT (TP 07/19)

The Director highlighted three items from the report.

- (i) **The Museum's Advocacy Strategy.** The Director explained that the Museum's advocacy is focussed on demonstrating public value in education and science. He invited Trustees to assist the strategy where possible.
- (ii) **The Corporate Plan 2007/8 – 2011/12.** The Director introduced this publication and said that it enabled staff to see more clearly their role in the organisation. Trustees were complimentary about the Plan and thanked Frances Windsor for her hard work on it. It was explained that Directors would be holding Departmental question and answer sessions to bring the Plan to all Museum staff. It was suggested that a video presentation could be produced to promote the NHM to external interested parties.
- (iii) **Internal Audit Report 'Review of Corporate Governance'.** The Report reflects well on the Museum and Trustees suggested that the Chairman should send a copy of it to Nicholas Holgate at DCMS.

1042 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

1043 FINANCIAL REVIEW FOR THE PERIOD APRIL 2006-MARCH 2007 (provisional outturn) (TP 07/20) and (TP 07/21)

Mr Greenwood introduced paper TP 07/20, which outlined provisional expenditure for the period April 2006 to March 2007. The key points noted were the monies in the general fund (unallocated reserve position) and the strong position at the year end.

Trustees noted the financial report, but expressed concern that the level of reserve might be lower than prudent. The necessity for provision of redundancy payments within the general reserve was discussed.

1044 DARWIN CENTRE PHASE TWO UPDATE

As requested at the Trustee's Board meeting of 27 February 2007, Mr Greenwood presented a separate paper (TP 07/21) on the current position of the Darwin Centre Phase Two project. Mr Greenwood outlined how the Museum was making the best use of funds to maximise the success of the project and to mitigate cash flow risks. The management of a potential 7 week delay in the programme was presented, with improved responsibility from the new contractor. The Office of Government Commerce (OGC) will be reviewing the project in mid June. Trustees urged the Museum to get maximum benefit from this review.

1045 UPDATE ON HUMAN REMAINS (TP 07/22)

The Director reported on the resolution of the legal challenge by mediation. He raised some issues for consideration: how future claims should be dealt with and the need for peer review of the scientific case. The exact costs of the case are not finalised at this stage.

The Director of Science reported on the importance of involving the indigenous groups themselves in looking at the scientific case and the benefits of sharing knowledge. The overall process worked well, but in future a broader based advisory panel would be beneficial and a reassessment was required of the rapid period of data collection. It was explained that work is in hand to assess remaining collections for priority work. Even sampling material will be very costly.

Trustees noted that collaboration with other institutions with similar collections could develop a best practice protocol. Trustees requested a report on the lessons learned from this case and an assessment of potential future claims for repatriation. This was agreed as a topic for the Strategy Day on 26 June.

1046 BIODIVERSITY HERITAGE LIBRARY (TP 07/23)

Mr Graham Higley, Head of Library and Information Services, updated the Board about this project. In particular, the participation of the BHL in the new Encyclopaedia of Life project was highlighted.

The Trustees noted the report and expressed continued support for the project.

1047 REPORT ON NEW INTERNATIONAL PROJECT (TP 07/24)

Ms Sharon Ament, Director of Public Engagement, presented a paper on a major new international opportunity for the Museum. A feasibility study is currently underway for a fuller report to Trustees at the July meeting. A confidentiality agreement is in place for this project designated Project Falcon.

Trustees requested further discussion of the implications of this proposed project at the Strategy Day on 26 June.

1048 RISK AND ASSURANCE – AUDIT COMMITTEE (TP 07/25 and TP07/26)

As Chairman of the Audit Committee, Sir William Castell gave an oral report on items from the meeting held on 14 May 2007.

- The year end position was reviewed
- The risks associated with the Restless Planet project had been reduced
- The internal audit report was reviewed and its thoroughness noted
- The restructuring of science funding and the risk for the Museum are to be discussed at a future meeting of the Board.

Trustees were urged to comment on the paper on the management of major corporate risks. The Director outlined current work that the Museum had undertaken to prepare business continuity and crisis management plans and agreed to circulate these to Trustees.

1049 RISK AND ASSURANCE – HEALTH AND SAFETY (TP 07/27)

The Director, on behalf of Mr Paul Brereton, Director of Human Resources reported that the Museum hopes to receive OHSAS 180001 accreditation shortly.

Online reporting of accidents has resulted in an increase in the number of reported incidents but the figures are still low in incidence for the sort of organisation the Museum is.

Trustees noted the report.

1050 NEW APPOINTMENTS (TP 07/28)

The Director reported that two Trustees will be standing down next year and that the process to replace them needs to be put in hand. A job description to be drawn up by the Nominations Committee (but Michael Hassell will stand down in order not to be involved in appointing his successor). The Board needs to consider what skills are needed to complement its current expertise. Possible areas for consideration are experience in: retail, technical IT, international projects, the environment, large scale databases. The Board might also consider a new member from outside the UK and a younger scientist.

Alex Halliday, Dianne Edwards and Georgina Mace all noted that they will be heavily occupied with the Research Assessment Exercise during 2008 and may not therefore be able to commit time to Nominations Committee work.

1051 PERFORMANCE INFORMATION ANNUAL OUTTURN TO MARCH 2007 (TP 07/29)

The Trustees noted that performance against DCMS Funding Agreement targets in 2006/7 was excellent.

1052 CORPORATE PLAN 2007/8 – 2011/12

Already discussed under Item 1041.

1053 ACTIVITIES REPORT 4TH QUARTER (TP 07/30)

The opening of the new exhibition Ice Station Antarctica was highlighted. Trustees welcomed the changes to the Science Report.

1054 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Dianne Edwards reported on her participation in a mentoring scheme established by the UK Resource Centre for Women in Science, Engineering and Technology.

1055 AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE BOARD MEETINGS (TP 07/31)

The rolling agenda for future meetings was noted.

1056 METEORITES: SPACE PROBES AND TIME MACHINES

Professor Sara Russell gave a presentation on her work on meteorites and their importance for what they can tell us about the formation of the universe.

1057 PROPOSALS FOR A NEW METEORITES GALLERY

Mr Michael Harvey joined the meeting to present the design concept for a new meteorites gallery. He explained how the designers had worked closely with researchers to incorporate their ideas and inspiration into the new gallery.

Summary of the Gallery Plan:

The permanent galleries are fundamental to the Museum's role in promoting the discovery, understanding, responsible use and enjoyment of the natural world. They are the physical manifestation of the Museum's visitor offer and, in their content, they must deliver the basic science communication agenda for the Museum. The Museum's key themes for science communication are Natural Diversity, Change and Interdependence. We also have a clear aspiration to communicate, not only what we know, but also how we know it. We wish to share with visitors the processes by which natural science is pursued, the role and relevance of the Museum's science and the sense that there is still much to be discovered. In doing so, we will allow recent scientific developments to be represented and contemporary/topical issues to be addressed.

The Museum layout in the new Gallery Plan is based around the same five zones that are currently in place in the new Wayfinding Strategy. From East to West, the site includes the following zones:

- Red Zone: Earth Galleries - *The planet* on which we live and the processes that created our environments.
- Green Zone: Waterhouse East - *Environments* that are diverse and inter-related. Connections between organisms & environments.
- Central Zone: Welcome and Orientation - *Information* on what the Museum is, and what visitors can see and do here.
- Blue Zone: Waterhouse West - *Organisms* that are diverse and inter-related. How diversity has changed over time.
- Orange Zone: Darwin Centre - *How* we study diversity, change and inter-dependence.

Summary of the Meteorites Exhibition:

The current Meteorite Pavilion is closing down in November – it was only ever a small introduction to meteorites and never displayed the extent of our collection to best effect. The new space, replacing the old Earth Today and Tomorrow exhibition, is substantially larger and enables us to broaden the focus beyond simply the meteorite specimens to encompass the broader field of planetary science. A redevelopment of the Bronze Globe Atrium is incorporated in this project, to fix circulation problems between the Waterhouse Building and the Earth Galleries - so this gallery serves as both exhibition and circulation route.

The content of the new gallery encompasses meteorite impacts - past, present and future, the Solar System and what we can learn about it from our study of meteorites and how planetary science shows us how rare the life-sustaining conditions here and orienting the visitor to the rest of the Earth Galleries. The design aims to both make the most of the specimens, and to create a beautiful and visually stunning space to draw the link between the 'ordinary' looking meteorites in the collection and power and beauty of the Solar System. The gallery will enable visitors to engage through a range of senses – as well as specimens, the cases will incorporate video, audio and tactile elements that will cater to a range of senses and learning styles. This design is costed to £3.3M, and will serve as a start point for fundraising. Feedback from our fundraisers indicates that they have never had this level of information at this stage of a project, and that this will increase the prospects of success for them.

1058 DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

Tuesday 26 June 2007 Strategy Day at 1000 at the Royal Institute of British Architects, 66 Portland Place, London W1B 1AD
 Tuesday 17 July 2007 at 0930 at The Natural History Museum