

**THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM**

**AT A MEETING ON**

**TUESDAY 20 MAY 2008**

**AT 9.30 A.M.**

**AT THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM**

**Present**

**TRUSTEES**

Oliver Stocken (in the Chair)  
Daniel Alexander QC  
Professor Sir Roy Anderson FRS FMedSci  
Louise Charlton  
Professor David Drewry  
Professor Dianne Edwards CBE FRS  
Professor Alex Halliday FRS  
Dr Derek Langslow CBE  
Professor Jacqueline McGlade  
Professor Georgina Mace OBE FRS  
Sir David Omand GCB

**In Attendance**

Dr Michael Dixon  
Sharon Ament  
Joe Baker  
Neil Greenwood  
Anna Cuss (Minutes)  
Professor Richard Lane  
David Sanders  
David Thorpe  
Teresa Wild

Director  
Director of Public Engagement  
External Relations Manager  
Director of Finance and Administration  
PA to the Director and Secretary to the Board  
Director of Science  
Director of Estates  
Head of Audit and Assurance  
Director of Policy and Planning and NHM at Tring

Simon Dickson  
Elizabeth Knock  
Alison Purvis  
Mike Sarna

Head of Development (*minute 1130 (i) only*)  
Head of Corporate Development (*minute 1130 (i) only*)  
Head of Charitable Giving (*minute 1130 (i) only*)  
Head of Interpretation (*minute 1130 (iv) only*)

**1118 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Ian Henderson.

**1119 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 4 MARCH 2008**

The minutes of the meeting of the Trustees held on 4 March 2008 were confirmed as a true record.

**1120 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING OF 4 MARCH 2008 (TP 08/23)**

Mr Sanders confirmed that the Museum had begun a new contract with Sherwood on 1 May for the provision of housekeeping, mailroom, goods-in and portering services. Around 80 staff had moved across to Sherwood for this purpose and the service was progressing well.

All other items were covered by the agenda.

**1121 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT (TP 08/24)**

The Chairman reported on two items:

(i) **Appointments to the Board**

Trustees had been informed earlier in the month of the announcement by No 10 of the remaining two appointments to the Board. Professor David Drewry, currently Vice-Chancellor of the University of Hull, and Dr Derek Langslow, former Chief Executive of English Nature and a recent Trustee of the Heritage Lottery Fund had both been appointed to serve initial four-year terms from 6 May 2008 until 5 May 2012. The Chairman welcomed Professor Drewry, Dr Langslow and Professor Sir Roy Anderson (whose co-option to the Board had been confirmed at the March meeting) to their first meeting. Trustees noted the current composition of the Board and the timetable for future appointments, the next of which was due at the end of 2009.

All three new Trustees would participate in a formal induction and be offered the opportunity to visit key areas of the Museum over the coming months in order to familiarise themselves with the Museum's operation.

(ii) **Trustees' Strategy Day draft agenda**

Trustees noted the draft agenda for their Strategy Day on 26 June, to be held at the Institute of Directors, which incorporated previous discussions and comments from individual Trustees. A decision had been made to consider engagement with citizen scientists at the November meeting science discussion. It was agreed that the session on increasing the impact of the Museum's virtual environment should include an overview of the IT underpinning the virtual visit, since this could require significant investment in the future.

**1122 DIRECTOR'S REPORT (TP 08/25)**

The Director highlighted three items from his report:

Funding Agreement for 2008/09 – 2010/11 - Trustees noted that, following a Capability Review of DCMS by the Cabinet Office, the Museum was to be managed at greater arm's length by DCMS. The new Funding Agreement consequently represented a reduced format compared to previous years. The number of performance indicators to be reported against was very similar, but allowed the Museum to include measures that reflected its scientific work more accurately. A draft had been produced and the Museum was awaiting a formal response from DCMS before the final document was confirmed. Sign off was expected to take place before the July Board meeting.

Brand Development – the Director updated Trustees on ongoing work to reposition the Museum and bring about a change in public perception of the Museum. In this context, two significant opportunities to raise awareness of the Museum were approaching, firstly the launch of Darwin Centre Phase Two and secondly a soon to be concluded agreement with the BBC to produce a documentary series about the Museum, focusing on scientific work as well as more familiar public programmes and exhibitions. Ms Ament confirmed that the programmes were to be pitched as educational entertainment and were aimed at an audience in their early 20s to early 30s.

OGC Gateway Review for Darwin Centre Phase 2 – Trustees noted that the project was currently subject to a strategic review (Gateway 0) and Gateway 4 review (readiness for service) by the Office of Government Commerce (OGC), prior to the Museum accepting responsibility for the completed building in July. The recommendations from the review would be used to assist in providing a higher level of assurance for Trustees and in focusing resources on the successful conclusion of the DC2 programme. The Director would report back to the Board on the outcomes of the review in July.

**1123 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REGISTER OF INTERESTS**

It was noted that the annual update of the register of interests by the Directorate would be concluded before the next meeting. Sir David Omand, as Chair of the Audit Committee confirmed the requirement that any interests related to the business of the meeting should be declared at this point. There were no declarations.

**1124 PROVISIONAL YEAR END OUTTURN FOR 2007/08 (TP 08/26)**

Trustees noted that the level of the General Fund was above both the original budget and previous forecast, as well as the figure used for preparing the balanced budget for 2008/09 approved by Trustees on 4 March 2008. The majority of this was necessarily held for Darwin Centre Phase Two as it neared completion. There was much work still to be done to finalise the year end position which would result in some movement in the figures. In addition, certainty increased in some areas of business as the year end approached, accounting for the strong variance to budget in certain areas. The Chairman confirmed that Trustees should all receive copies of the full accounts once they were finalised.

**1125 DARWIN CENTRE PHASE TWO MANAGEMENT REPORT (TP 08/27)**

Mr Greenwood, as Darwin Centre Phase Two Programme Director, outlined the latest position, concluding that the project was effectively on budget, though there were a number of issues to be resolved with the main construction contractor regarding compensation events. A higher degree of certainty would be reached on these by mid-June. Construction was due for completion by mid to end July at which point the Museum would take possession of the building and move towards the public offer fit out and re-cant of collections and staff. A press event was planned for 2 September, which would launch all of the external communications activities through to public opening in September 2009. Trustees were assured that time-critical

elements relating to post-completion activities such as the public offer fit out, public programme, re-cant, training of staff, running costs and physical management of visitors were receiving appropriate attention to ensure their delivery.

Trustees referred to a suggestion from the last Visiting Group that some elements of the Botany collection might be more usefully deposited at Kew for purposes of research than within the Darwin Centre. Progress on this had been limited and Kew's input into this consideration slow, but it was noted that the Museum's storage cabinets were compatible with those at Kew, which would allow transfer to their collection at a later date if necessary.

It was noted that Trustees would receive a further update on the Public Programmes as part of an overall update on the Public Offer at their July meeting.

## **1126 AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT**

### **(i) Report of the meeting held on 8 May 2008**

Sir David Omand, as Chairman of the Committee, confirmed that as of 8 May, it would be known as the Audit and Risk Committee and revised terms of reference had been established in line with best practice. Sir David then reported on the meeting held on 8 May and highlighted the key areas of business:

Fraud – in response to Audit & Assurance report recommendations, the Director had incorporated messages about the Museum's fraud policy, fraud awareness and the availability of a whistle blowing service into his regular presentations to staff.

Risk - in relation to the annual report on corporate risk, it was noted that consistency was being improved in the processes for risk assessment and management used across the Museum and that staff would seek opportunities to benchmark against processes used in other institutions. The Committee had emphasised that key risks for the future should include non-financial elements relating to DC2.

The Committee also discussed the continuing risk of terrorism and related issues of security and visitor management which would be addressed via the masterplan.

Audit Report follow up – steps were being taken to improve the speed of staff response to audit reports. The Committee would, at each meeting, receive a brief summary of outstanding issues from the previous quarter.

Minutes of the meeting would be circulated separately to Trustees at the earliest opportunity.

### **(ii) Head of Audit's Annual Report and Assurance 2007/08 (TP 08/28)**

Mr Thorpe presented his annual report for 2007/08 and plan of work for 2008/09, which had been approved by the Audit and Risk Committee on 8 May. The report provided an assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Museum's risk management and internal control system and would henceforth also be provided to DCMS. The Statement of Internal Control and a further paper on risk management were to be considered by the Audit and Risk Committee in July. It had also been agreed that a review of DC2 operations, based upon the results of the OGC review, would be considered in July.

Trustees discussed issues of business continuity, in particular the need for an offsite facility for IT operation in the event of a disaster. In the course of the current business continuity planning process Trustees recommended seeking advice from other institutions on this particular aspect, including from Imperial College and the City, where much planning of this nature was underway.

The Director confirmed that, although the resourcing of the audit and assurance unit was high for the sector, the Committee was satisfied that, given the unit's added responsibility for risk management, it was at an appropriate level to provide the assurance the Museum required.

## **1127 HUMAN RESOURCES**

### **(i) Investors in People Award (TP 08/29)**

Mr Brereton informed Trustees that, following a full Investors in People (IIP) assessment during April, the Museum had been recommended to receive the IIP award. Final confirmation was expected in late May.

Trustees, and in particular Sir David Omand who had provided guidance to the People Group which managed the approach, congratulated all those involved in achievement of the award as it represented a significant degree of improvement in standards since the initial decision to seek accreditation.

The areas for development identified by the assessor were noted and Trustees agreed to receive annual updates on progress in addressing these as the Museum was required to re-apply for accreditation in three years' time.

### **(ii) Annual Health and Safety Report for 2007/08 (TP 08/30)**

Trustees received a summary of progress within the Health and Safety Unit during 2007/08 and in particular noted the annual accident figures during that period. Mr Brereton stressed that the introduction of electronic recording during 2006/07 had resulted in a dramatic increase in reported accidents, to what were likely to be more realistic levels.

Comparisons with other organisations were difficult as very few had introduced the same system, but accidents were at a tolerable level for an organisation of the Museum's size and analysis of reporting would assist in the identification of areas requiring attention to reduce the likelihood and incidence of such accidents.

Given this reporting structure and the supporting internal and external audit regimes delivered by the British Standards Institute in connection with the OHSAS 18001 standard, Trustees confirmed that they had sufficient assurance from the Health and Safety Unit that adequate health and safety controls were in place across the Museum.

### 1128 SUSTAINABILITY AT THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM (TP 08/31)

Trustees reviewed the paper, which proposed a set of guiding principles to inform an approach to sustainability across the Museum. This was timely given that the Museum's work was directly relevant to the sustainable future of the planet and would not only assist in achieving the Museum's vision and brand aspirations, but also demonstrate public value.

Trustees agreed that it was important for the Museum to develop a policy framework. They recognised that certain initiatives were already in place and added the following comment:

- That sustainability and its meaning could be clearly demonstrated by linking it more closely to the Museum's science research aims. This should focus on the issues of environmental change and sustainability of the planet rather than the current concentration purely on climate change
- The Museum could play a key role individually in raising awareness in both public and Government of the scientific evidence underpinning issues of sustainability and climate change, but also through collaborative ventures with other relevant institutions such as Imperial College for example
- That to have real impact, the principles should be translated into measurable actions for the Museum, its partners and suppliers, and mitigating actions demonstrated for areas where sustainable principles might appear to be compromised

Trustees commended the work that had been done thus far and agreed that the framework and overarching principles be developed further to provide an embedded approach to sustainability across the Museum. They recommended that progress reports be provided to the Board on a six monthly basis henceforth.

### 1129 SCIENCE GROUP

(i) **Final Quarter 2007/08 (TP 08/32)**

Professor Lane highlighted three points from the report:

Scientific publications – major research outputs had included the publication of two significant papers in *Science* and one in *Nature*, by members of the Museum's research departments. Trustees commended the work of the staff involved in these important publications which brought deserved credibility to the Museum's research outputs.

Major partnerships – Professor Lane updated Trustees on developments within three large scale projects where the Museum was a key partner for the organisation and distribution of biodiversity information; Encyclopaedia of Life (EoL), Biodiversity Heritage Library (BHL) and Biodiversity Collections Index (BCI). The Museum was actively involved in the development of education and outreach components of EoL and was currently reviewing how the website would be sustained in the future following its launch in February 2008.

Grant performance – detailed analysis was provided on success rates for external grant applications showing year on year increases for the past three years. Trustees agreed that overall success rates were excellent, but that further steps could still be taken to increase the number of applications made and to improve rates of success, perhaps with the assistance of facilitators with proven knowledge of available grants and methods of application. This could be of particular help to the Botany Department where Trustees expressed concern over success rates in comparison with other Departments. Professor Lane reminded Trustees that the Museum's work was mission led and that consequently some aspects of curation, though essential, would not easily attract outside funding.

(ii) **Review of Individual Researcher's Programmes (TP 08/33)**

Professor Lane informed Trustees of an evaluation currently taking place of 5-year programmes of individual researchers as part of an overall programme to maintain and develop the quality and relevance of research at the Museum. Trustees agreed that the evaluation was an excellent method for establishing and maintaining standards of work with clear benefits for both researchers the Museum and nominated Professor Drewry to be involved in the final evaluation of the initiative in 2009. Linked to this, Professor Lane would provide an update on curator competencies to the November meeting of the Board.

### 1130 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT GROUP

(i) **Fundraising plan for 2008/09 – 2013/14 (TP 08/34)**

Mr Dickson, Head of Development at the Museum, presented a new approach to fundraising which would, on the completion of Darwin Centre Phase Two in 2009, provide the Museum with the opportunity to re-develop other parts of the estate essential for the long-term delivery of its science and other public programmes. Trustees endorsed the

approach and noted that further work was in progress to refine projects within the campaign in time for a launch in July. The requirement to secure funds to match that provided by DCMS for capital re-development over the next three years was noted and Trustees confirmed their support for the process as well as their willingness to act as advisors and advocates as appropriate to ensure the success of the campaign.

(ii) Final Quarter update (TP 08/35)

Ms Ament highlighted a number of items from her report:

Amazing Butterflies – the exhibition was substantially over target on income and visitors and media coverage had been excellent.

Darwin200 – Trustees noted continuing plans to commemorate Darwin's achievements during 2008/09, in particular the relocation of the statue of Darwin to the Central Hall and the art competition being held to choose designs for a new ceiling canopy in the Plant Power Gallery. It was also noted that, following an expression of interest from the Minister for Culture, the Museum was now working with various Government Departments to determine the potential for their closer engagement with Darwin200 projects.

Wildlife Photographer of the Year – Ms Ament reported that it had not been possible to identify a sponsor for the exhibition in 2008. Trustees discussed the avenues for funding which had been explored, but recognised the difficulties in securing an appropriate funder at the level required during the current economic climate. Ms Ament agreed to present details of the full income and costs associated with the 2007 exhibition to a future meeting.

The Board commended the department's achievements over the past year, including the continuing success of its commercial ventures.

(iii) Engaging with new audiences (TP 08/36)

As previously requested, Trustees received a paper on the programme of work to connect with under-represented groups which, together with other projects, supported the identification of diversity, in its widest sense, as one of the Museum's five core values. Trustees were interested to see the range of projects being undertaken and recognised the need within the museum sector to encourage wider participation, particularly in a city as diverse as London. The use of volunteers and encouragement of school visits to engender self-directed visits in adulthood were confirmed as key approaches and the benefits of improving outreach, though resource heavy, were acknowledged.

Specifically, Trustees noted that the Museum's programme around the 2007 bicentenary of the abolition of slavery had shifted towards a New Perspectives project based on viewing the collections with different eyes. The extent to which this might link to commemorations in the US during 2009 would be explored further.

Trustees noted that there were plans to develop a more strategic approach to audience development work across the Museum, including Darwin Centre Phase Two, to raise awareness of the principles of diversity and social inclusion.

(iv) Humans in the Natural World Gallery proposal (TP 08/37)

Mike Sarna, Head of Interpretation, joined the meeting and gave a presentation on the concept for the Humans and the Natural World exhibition which had been approved by the Gallery Plan Steering Committee and Directorate for delivery after the decant of Entomology in 2012. Trustees noted the key elements of the exhibition, which covered a vast subject, including the inter-relationship of humans and the natural world, past, present and future, as well as an indication of how these themes would be addressed in a somewhat challenging exhibition space.

### **1131 PERFORMANCE SCORECARD – OUTTURN FOR 2007/08 AGAINST DCMS INDICATORS (TP 08/38)**

Trustees noted the report, in particular that total visitor numbers for 2007/08 were above target, but slightly down on 2006/07. In addition, admissions at Tring were 10% up on previous year.

### **1132 AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE BOARD MEETINGS (TP 08/39)**

The rolling agenda for future meetings was noted.

### **1133 EVENTS DIARY (TP 08/40)**

The events diary was noted.

### **1134 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Two items were raised:

- Professor Lane informed Trustees of two significant acquisitions for the collections, which should remain confidential until negotiations were complete;

- The Chairman reminded Trustees of the staff summer party to be held on the lawns on 15 July, and asked them, as on previous occasions, to serve drinks to staff at the start in order to circulate as widely as possible.

**1135 SCIENCE DISCUSSION - THE FUTURE OF TAXONOMY – THE NHM RESPONSE (TP 08/41)**

Trustees received a brief presentation on the context and main conclusions of the recent report *Taxonomy in Europe in the 21<sup>st</sup> century*, which proposed far-reaching changes that would need to take place to ensure taxonomy's continued contribution to science and society over the coming decade and beyond. Since the document was likely to be adopted widely by constituent institutions to guide their development in this area, Trustees discussed the Museum's position with regard to the UK and European science base and what action it would need to take to move forward.

A detailed note of the discussion would be provided to the next meeting.

**1136 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 15 July 2008 at 0930 at The Natural History Museum.