

THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

AT A MEETING ON

TUESDAY 24 FEBRUARY 2009

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
Ian Henderson CBE
Dr Derek Langslow CBE
Sir David Omand GCB

In Attendance

Dr Michael Dixon	Director
Sharon Ament	Director of Public Engagement
Joe Baker	Special Advisor
Paul Brereton	Director of Human Resources
Rachael Casstles	Special Advisor
Anna Cuss (Minutes)	Executive Assistant to the Director and Secretary to the Board
Neil Greenwood	Director of Finance and Administration
	Programme Director, Darwin Centre Phase Two
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 Tring
Ailsa Barry	Head of Interactive Media (<i>minute 1193 only</i>)
Paul Bowers	DC2 Public Offer Project Director (<i>minute 1193 only</i>)
Martin Lawrence	Deputy Head of Learning (<i>minute 1193 only</i>)
Mike Sarna	Head of Interpretation (<i>minute 1193 only</i>)

1173 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Professor Alex Halliday, Professor Georgina Mace and Professor Jacqueline McGlade.

1174 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 25 NOVEMBER 2008

The minutes of the meeting of the Trustees held on 25 November 2008 were confirmed as a true record.

1175 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING OF 25 NOVEMBER 2008 (TP 09/01)

Individual Merit Promotion Scheme – Professor Lane reported that following negotiations, the scheme would henceforth be administered by the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC).

Honorary Research Fellows – Professor Lane outlined the mutual benefits of the relationship which would be confirmed to Fellows, including the opportunity to work collaboratively, involvement with the peer review process and access to the collections.

Postgraduate Studies at the Natural History Museum – Professor Lane had discussed the decline in uptake of the Masters of Science (MSc) with Professor Ian Owens of Imperial College. The matter would be pursued as part of the 10 year review of science later in the year.

Project Falcon – Ms Ament provided an update on existing and prospective projects for the Museum in the Middle East.

All other items of significance were addressed under the current agenda.

1176 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

(i) Treasures of the Natural History Museum

The Chairman thanked the Director on behalf of the Board for the recent gift of a copy of *Treasures of the Natural History Museum*. The publication provided an excellent summary for Trustees of the iconic collections held by the Museum and he commended all those who had contributed to the book's production.

(ii) Annual Trustees' Dinner

The Chairman reminded Trustees that the annual dinner would be taking place on 17 March in the Earth Galleries. Trustees would be joined by Professor Linda Partridge who had retired from the Board in 2008, but been unable to attend last year's dinner, and by the co-opted members of the Trustees' Darwin Centre Phase Two Sub Committee. The occasion would provide the opportunity to thank attendees for their invaluable contribution to the work of the Museum.

1177 DIRECTOR'S REPORT (TP 09/02)

The Director highlighted three items from his report:

Impact of the economic climate – performance would continue to be monitored to assess the impact of the current economic climate on the Museum, although outturns for December and January were largely positive with on site income generation delivering excellent results in January. However, deficits were likely in other business areas and the expected year-end outturn would be reported on more fully as part of the finance papers.

Fundraising events – the Museum had launched its new fundraising campaign for capital projects beyond the completion of Darwin Centre Phase Two in October and a number of events had been held in recent months. In the current climate, such events were small and targeted with a view to maintaining networks for the future. Trustees were welcome to attend two forthcoming events themed around the current Darwin exhibition. Details would be forwarded in due course.

National Museum Directors' Conference (NMDC) – the Director had recently been elected to the position of Chair, to succeed Mark Jones of the Victoria and Albert Museum, from 1 April 2009. A staff of three would be transferring to the Museum to support the role and office. The work of the Chair of the NMDC was highly complementary to the advocacy work which formed part of the Director's role. Trustees congratulated the Director on this appointment.

1178 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REGISTER OF INTERESTS (TP 09/03)

The Board reviewed the most up to date version of the register of interests. There were no declarations in relation to the business of the meeting. It was agreed that, for the sake of completeness, it would be helpful to include the register of interests for members of the Museum's Directors' Group as well in future.

1179 FINANCE

(i) Budget scenarios 2009/10 (TP 09/04)

At the Board meeting on 25 November 2008, Trustees had asked Directors to look at alternative budget assumptions based on the worsening economic climate and the anticipation that DCMS grant-in-aid funding within the period covered by the current Funding Agreement could be compromised. The Director gave a presentation setting out the basic principles which might be applied to the process of seeking expenditure reductions on a strategic basis, as well as work already underway to achieve cost savings. Those principles were;

- Implementation of a transparent, robust and fair process to identify expenditure savings
- Capital expenditure at the present time to put the Museum in a better position to exploit a more fluid market in the longer term should not be sacrificed for short term savings
- The Museum's vision and corporate plan should dictate the areas for expenditure reduction
- All functions needed to be fit for purpose and benchmarked against relevant comparators
- 'Front line' services should be protected as a priority, including areas across Public Engagement and Science which were core to our mission
- Ceasing some activities might be preferable to reducing all

Following discussion, Trustees agreed that the proposed principles and existing work to reduce costs were rational and proportionate. They concurred that it was important to keep staff informed of the requirements of the process and to seek their assistance in realising efficiencies for the benefit of the organisation as a whole. The Board emphasised the principle that, in undertaking this process to address the immediate economic situation, the long-term aspirations for the Museum must not be compromised.

(ii) **Financial Review for the period April 2008 –January 2009 (TP 09/05)**

Trustees noted the report, in particular that the Museum's cash balance included the increased provision for Darwin Centre Phase Two. The late notification and higher than anticipated level of capital allocation, had meant that feasibility work had taken precedence. In order to optimise the robustness of the financial position and General Fund at the year end, there would be limited approval for carry forwards other than for significant value critical projects which had already been committed. Many significant projects were now on the verge of commencement.

1180 DARWIN CENTRE PHASE TWO MANAGEMENT REPORT (TP 09/06)

Mr Greenwood presented an update on all elements of the Darwin Centre Phase Two programme. The key points to note on progress were that the;

- final account for the construction project had now been concluded to the satisfaction of both parties
- first staff moves (to the 6th floor laboratories) had taken place in mid-January, with further moves scheduled in early March
- collections cabinets installation, despite previous significant slippage, was almost back on schedule
- public offer fit out was underway and budget challenges were being addressed
- public launch proposal would be presented to the next meeting of the Sub Committee and thereafter to the Board in May

The report was noted and the Chairman, on behalf of the Board, thanked Mr Greenwood for his excellent management of the project thus far.

1181 EMPLOYEE OPINION SURVEY (TP 09/07)

The Director presented the results of the most recent survey, undertaken in October 2008. In order to track change over a 12 month period, the questions had largely repeated those of 2007 and the responses received analysed by pay band, length of service and work area. The questions invited further comment on some of the central themes identified in 2007 (decision-making, bureaucracy, Directors' visibility, importance of science to the Museum, corporate planning and communication), including suggested solutions and on longer-term challenges. Many of the latter reflected the aspirations of the brand development group. An action plan would be formulated after closer scrutiny of the data, with the intention to survey again in autumn 2009 following the opening of Darwin Centre Phase Two.

Trustees confirmed that this was a useful consultation exercise and were pleased to note that the comparison with other similar organisations was positive. They agreed that the central themes and actions to address them were important, particularly in times of economic difficulty.

1182 DCMS PEER REVIEW PILOT AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE (TP 09/08)

The Director presented the report of the pilot exercise of self-assessment and peer review carried out by DCMS in December 2008 as well as the Museum's management response. Both documents were due to be published on the DCMS website on 26 February. Overall, the report was positive and provided confirmation that the Museum exercised good governance, balanced with an appetite for creativity and measured risk-taking. The review did not cover science as it was understood that this was a specialised activity for which the Museum already had a rigorous model of peer review. DCMS proposed to use this form of assessment to replace quantitative targets as a means of demonstrating performance and public value and therefore the next Funding Agreement, for April 2011 to March 2014 would be informed by this exercise. The Museum would continue to report quantitative data on a regular basis to DCMS, but a qualitative report such as this was a useful tool for advocacy and for highlighting areas in need of funding.

Trustees supported the principle of such reviews, but agreed that they might, in future, be enhanced by greater involvement of members of the Board in the process, perhaps by the inclusion of a small number of Trustees on the reviewing panel, to utilise both their independent view and their close knowledge of the Museum's work. It might also be helpful to recommend peer comparison with other natural history museums outside the UK.

The Director would contact DCMS on behalf of the Board to communicate their comments on the process and its value.

1183 BRAND SHIFT (TP 09/09)

The Director introduced an update on the work of the Brand Development Group, which was established in 2007. Brand development had been identified as a corporate priority in 07/08 and 09/10 and current work formed part of the ongoing process to inform the next iteration of the Corporate Plan. Most recently the Museum had commissioned Opinion Leader to provide a measurement of its brand shift and public value as a part of delivering a key benefit of Darwin Centre Phase Two. In addition, the Brand Development Group had been working with small staff focus groups to identify how the Museum would want to be perceived by its major stakeholders in the future, with a view to producing measurable actions for delivering each of the identified brand shifts.

Trustees considered that it was important to give greater visibility to the Museum's science achievements, though there were opportunities to realise this through Darwin Centre Phase Two and the forthcoming BBC documentary. The Board agreed that

the subject should be given further consideration at the Strategy Day in June, to include information on the Museum's recent work on topicality.

1184 PROPOSAL FOR A TSUNAMI MEMORIAL (TP 09/10)

Trustees received a summary paper from the Director of discussions to date with the DCMS Humanitarian Assistance Unit (HAU) and the charity, Tsunami Support – UK (TS-UK), with respect to the potential siting in the grounds of the Museum of a memorial to those UK citizens who lost their lives in the Boxing Day 2004 tsunami.

Trustees recognised that this was a complex and emotive issue and expressed, together with the senior management of the Museum, their deep sympathy for the victims' families.

It was agreed that the Museum was an appropriate venue for a memorial, given that tsunamis are natural world disasters, however, a suitable external site could not be offered to meet the necessary criteria required by TS-UK, HAU and the Museum. The initial suggestion of a site outside Darwin Centre Phase Two was no longer viable, since the need to use this space for multiple purposes was incompatible with the dignified, reflective environment appropriate for a memorial. In addition, the limitations on access imposed by the relevant planning consent for the landscaping of this area would result in even greater difficulties for access than previously envisaged. Another significant impediment to the proposed project was the issue of access on the anniversary of the tsunami, since the Museum was closed on Boxing Day. There was no practical, cost effective way to allow the Museum buildings or grounds to be opened on this day and the Museum was unlikely to change its policy unless supported by its counterpart museums in South Kensington.

On the basis of the options put forward in the paper, Trustees therefore agreed that the possibility of an internal site be offered, subject to discussion between the parties of compromises acceptable to each. This was not unprecedented at the Museum, and a tsunami exhibit would be highly complementary to other existing exhibition content on natural world disasters. However, given the Museum's current funding and the forward commitment of capital expenditure, it would need to recover the entire cost of the memorial and exhibition and reach agreement on how the ongoing costs of its maintenance would be borne. The issue relating to access to this memorial on Boxing Day still remained.

Trustees agreed that their views be communicated to DCMS to inform ongoing discussions between the parties involved.

1185 AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE REPORT

(i) Report of the meeting held on 13 November 2008

Sir David Omand, as Chairman of the Committee, gave an oral report on the main items covered by the meeting:

Internal Audit – it had been agreed that the unit should comprise two permanent members of staff for the foreseeable future, with the option to buy in additional assistance when necessary.

Risk Management – the newly revised Guide to Effective Risk Management and the standard risk register had been issued to staff and discussed with departmental heads. The adoption of this guidance should improve the consistency of assessing and recording risks as well as the quality of information being provided.

Accounting Timetable – the timetable was tight again in 2009, with very little time between the Board meeting on 14 July and the Parliamentary Recess on 21 July, but every effort would be made to submit the Museum Accounts to deadline.

Investment Policy and Performance – a review of the investment policy and performance of investments held by the three funds of the NHM Group, ie Special Funds Trust, Cockayne Fund and Benevolent Fund had confirmed that the investment strategies of the funds continued to be appropriate for the aims of the funds. In addition, a review of the performance of the most significant Investment Manager suggested that there was no reason to change them. The Committee confirmed that although the value of the investments was fairly low, it had been a valuable exercise to review their management.

Economic climate – the Committee were monitoring the current climate and potential impacts of the downturn should it continue in the longer term.

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

1186 PERFORMANCE SCORECARD – OUTTURN 2008/09 AGAINST DCMS INDICATORS AND CORPORATE KPIs TO END OF THIRD QUARTER 2008/09 (TP 09/11)

It was reported that visitor numbers were up by 1.4% year to date and that unique users of the website were up by 12% to date. Repeat usage to the site was generally high at 26%. The number of children aged 15 and under in both on and off site organised educational sessions was up by 16.8% year to date and learning contacts for the under 16s had risen by 14.7% compared to the same period last year. Overall, visitor related commercial income was performing well driven by the success of the special exhibitions *Darwin* and *Wildlife Photographer of the Year*.

Trustees noted the report.

1187 HUMAN RESOURCES

- (i) Health and Safety Report for the period April-October 2008 (TP 09/12)
Trustees noted that accidents and incidents for this period were at an acceptable level in relation to target and that there were no other issues of concern.

1188 SCIENCE GROUP

- (i) **Third Quarter 2008/09 (TP 09/13)**
Professor Lane focussed on a number of points from the report:

Performance – performance levels were broadly on track. A full review of Science Group performance, including trends over the past few years, would be presented at the May meeting of Trustees as part of the year end analysis.

Grant successes – Dr Ken Johnson (Palaeontology) had been appointed team leader for an EU Initial Training Network totalling £2.8m for a project to map the animal and plant response to environmental change through a detailed study of fossil marine communities from the Caenozoic period. In addition, the Museum was successful in winning five Marie Curie awards to support post-doctoral fellowships for European scientists. Trustees congratulated all those involved in these successes.

The Science of Nature – the Museum would be producing a science report in 2009. The report was aimed at non-scientists and would include an overview of what science at the Museum was seeking to achieve, the collections, research, sharing our science and details of how science at the Museum worked. It was anticipated that the report would be biennial.

Revenue sharing with inventors – the Museum was in the process of developing a policy on revenue sharing with inventors where the Museum sought to patent or otherwise develop an invention. It was proposed that the Museum would claim the intellectual property rights on work carried out by employees in the course of their work, but in line with universities and other research organisations, the Museum also needed to recognise the contribution made by the inventor and to act as an incentive to develop patentable ideas.

Trustees agreed that a policy was required and, during discussion, recommended a number of elements which could require further exploration, namely incorporation of a dispute resolution mechanism, due diligence testing at the outset to establish the extent of and number of contributors and the sharing of risk with partners where appropriate. Mr Alexander agreed to provide further assistance on these issues if required. Trustees therefore endorsed the principle that investors receive a financial share in the benefits of their invention and requested that they have the opportunity to approve the final detailed policy.

- (ii) **Human Remains update (TP 09/14)**
Trustees were briefed on current progress with human remains activities, following repatriation of the Museum's Tasmanian human remains collections. Given the justification outlined in the paper, Trustees agreed to the initiation of a systematic data collection project using non-invasive techniques (e.g. CT scans).

Following comprehensive discussion on the principles and procedures for access to human remains by researchers, it was agreed that revised access and policy would be drawn up as a result of the discussion. It was noted that when considering claims for repatriation, it might, in exceptional circumstances, be necessary to undertake DNA analysis to confirm provenance of the remains where other means of establishing their origin was not possible. In these circumstances, the Museum would consult with the claimant community through the national representative. The Museum must state its commitment to mediation in cases where agreement could not be reached.

Trustees endorsed this more pro-active approach to the Museum's human remains collections and asked that they have sight of the final Data Collection Policy for approval.

- (iii) **Visiting Groups**

- i) Botany – report on progress with recommendations (TP 09/15)
Professor Lane presented a report on progress made over the past year against the recommendations made by the Visiting Group to Botany in September 2007. Trustees were pleased to note that the department had produced a strategic plan in line with the Museum's corporate plan and welcomed the development of a work plan to achieve the department's aspirations.

Trustees were keen to ensure that the recommended steps to strengthen links with RBG Kew and Edinburgh on a number of issues of joint interest were taken forward as a matter of priority. Engagement on issues such as collection development, staff training, use of resources and collaborative projects was vital, and made more so by the current

economic climate. Professor Lane gave assurance that every effort was being made to maintain momentum on this initiative. It was agreed that Board level contact between the three institutions could be helpful.

Trustees requested a further report on progress in a year's time.

ii) Mineralogy – report and management response (TP 09/16)

Trustees received the report of the Visiting Group to Mineralogy in December 2008, which had been chaired by Professor Halliday, together with a management response on behalf of the Museum. In general, the Visiting Group had been impressed by the work of the department, which was good to excellent in all areas and commended the leadership of the Keeper. Aside from the more specific recommendations relating to the department there were a number of wider-ranging suggestions relating to the strategy for Museum science as a whole, which required further consideration. The key questions for science, how Museum research could respond to them, and the relative merits of discipline-based over thematic-based departments would be central to this discussion. Professor Lane therefore proposed that he and the Science Policy Coordinator explore the issues raised in the report with Trustees individually to assist in the development of a discussion paper for the May meeting, with a view to making a firmer proposal at the Trustees' Strategy Day in June.

Trustees gave their approval to the proposal for addressing these strategic issues and requested a further update on progress with the full set of recommendations in a year's time.

iii) Proposal for 2009 (TP 09/17)

Professor Lane informed Trustees that the next discipline-based department to be the subject of a visiting group in the current sequence was the Department of Entomology. Given that Entomology was wholly occupied with the process of moving into and establishing itself within Darwin Centre Two, it was agreed that it was not feasible to have a visiting group to this department in 2009. The visit would be postponed to 2010.

However, in place of a formal visiting group, Trustees agreed that a review of the Library Strategic Plan take place instead. The Library had reached an important juncture in its history with new technology providing the opportunity to achieve its mission more quickly, potentially with fewer resources. However, demands were also changing at a similar rate, often outstripping even existing resources. The Library's 5-10 year Strategic Plan was due to be completed in April 2009 and a review would assist in defining the resourcing and physical requirements going forward.

With his prior consent, it was agreed that Professor David Drewry would chair the 2009 review of the Library Strategic Plan.

1189 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT GROUP

(i) Third Quarter 2008/09 (TP 09/18)

Ms Ament highlighted a number of items from her report:

Gallery 6, Tring – the refurbishment of Gallery 6 at Tring, funded by the DCMS/Wolfson Gallery Improvement Fund, was now complete. The gallery was vastly improved and Trustees recorded their thanks to the collaborative teams involved in bringing this project to a conclusion.

Science of Nature – as part of the work to complete a suite of much-needed corporate communications tools, the Museum was producing a review of Science entitled *Science of Nature*. The review would help to confirm the Museum's role as a 'voice of authority on the natural world' and would provide corporate positioning on issues such as climate change and loss of biodiversity, identifying where science was part of the debate and providing sound information in response.

Visitor Services – Trustees commended those front of house staff who had made it possible for the Museum to open to the public on time on 2 February, despite heavy snowfall.

Trustees noted the report.

(ii) Darwin Year Interim Report (TP 09/19)

Trustees were aware that the theme for 2009 for the Museum's whole Public Engagement programme was based on Darwin, his work, his theories, their relevance and their impact on society. This Darwin 'campaign' had brought together the whole public programme which was then further united in a national network, Darwin200. The celebrations were due to continue into 2009.

From the Interim Report which was provided, Trustees received a summary of the activities which had taken place in the Museum thus far and the impact of those activities. They congratulated all those involved in bringing the Museum to the heart of the Darwin celebration and in successfully raising the profile of science as a part of culture.

The Museum's ambition to use this model in its approach to 2010 and the International Year of Biodiversity was noted and endorsed as an excellent way forward.

(iii) **Secondary Science Learning Programme (TP 09/20)**

Trustees received a report on a recent major activity within the action plan for improving the Museum's learning offer, initially begun in 2004. The Real World Science programme, which aimed to deliver real experiences based on the real scientific issues, using a museum environment, was supported by many Science Group colleagues and partner organisations. Its specific aims were to support the secondary science curricula, to inspire GCSE and A level students to continue their scientific study into careers in science and to build scientific literacy and enable students to understand the impact that science had on their lives. The programme had attracted funding from the Department for Culture Media and Sport until 2011 and the aim was to develop it further to span all aspects of Museum science as well as to reach more schools and young people.

Trustees noted the programme and the role that the Museum was playing in the field of secondary science and commended the work that had been carried out to develop the programme to this latest stage. They agreed that it was desirable to pursue the programme as far as funding allowed.

1190 AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE BOARD MEETINGS (TP 09/21)

The rolling agenda for future meetings was noted.

1191 EVENTS DIARY (TP 09/22)

The events diary was noted.

1192 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no items.

1193 DARWIN CENTRE PHASE TWO: PUBLIC OFFER (TP 09/23)

Trustees received an update on recent activities by the internal and external teams on detailed production work within Darwin Centre Phase Two to deliver the public offer elements. Presentations were given on progress with the Explore tours and atrium, the David Attenborough Studio and the Museum's website, particularly the 'Nature Plus' concept for personalising visitor journeys on site and online, as well as Darwin Centre Two content for the existing website.

Trustees noted the progress made to date.

1194 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 21 May 2009 at 0930 at The Natural History Museum.