

THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

AT A MEETING ON

TUESDAY 25 NOVEMBER 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
Mr Ian Henderson
Dr Derek Langslow CBE
Professor Georgina Mace
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)	PA to the Director and Secretary to the Board
Neil Greenwood	Director of Finance and Administration
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
Dr Eileen Cox	Head of Postgraduate Studies (<i>minute 1166 (iv) only</i>)
Dr Gordon Paterson	Chair, Curator Competencies Group (<i>minute 1166 (ii) only</i>)

1155 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Professor Jacqueline McGlade.

1156 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 15 JULY 2008

The minutes of the meeting of the Trustees held 15 July 2008 were confirmed as a true record.

1157 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING OF 15 JULY 2008 (TP 08/57)

Trustees noted that the start of the SYNTHESYS 2 project had been postponed until September 2009 in order to utilise the under-spend it had achieved. All other items of significance were addressed under the current agenda.

1158 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

- (i) **Re-appointment of a Trustee**
Noting that Mr Henderson's first term of office as a co-opted member of the Board was due to come to a close on 2 February 2009, Trustees approved the re-appointment of Mr Henderson for a second four-year term to 2 February 2013. Trustees thanked Mr Henderson for his contribution to the development of Darwin Centre Phase Two during his first term of office, notably by chairing the Trustees' sub committee during the construction phase of the project which was now complete.

- (ii) Naming of seminar room in Darwin Centre Phase Two
Trustees gave their unanimous support to a proposal from Museum staff that the seminar room in Darwin Centre Phase Two be named after the former Director of the Museum, Sir Neil Chalmers. Sir Neil would be invited to give the inaugural lecture in the seminar room later in 2009.

1159 DIRECTOR'S REPORT (TP 08/58)

The Director highlighted five items from his report:

Completion of construction of the second phase of the Darwin Centre (DC2) – the construction phase for DC2 had been completed at the end of August and the building formally handed over to the Museum. Extremely positive feedback on the building had been received from both the media launch and from an event for donors, sponsors and other key stakeholders, early in September.

DCMS Peer Review for Museums and Galleries – the review had been established as a two-day process spread over three days and would take place from 8-10 December. The conduct of the review would coincide with the Visiting Group to Mineralogy to allow the two groups to meet since it was helpful to demonstrate the rigour with which the Museum undertook peer review of its scientific activities. The full report and management response would be provided to Trustees in February 2009.

Hosting of (International Association of Museum Facilities Administrators (IAMFA) event – during September, the Museum had taken part in the IAMFA conference. Attendees at the conference looked at benchmarking of facilities management costs – information which the Museum would use to review its own expenditure in this area. The conference dinner was hosted by the Museum.

The Evolution fundraising campaign – work was continuing to develop fundraising beyond the completion of the Darwin Centre. The Museum was continuing to cultivate relationships with possible funders, whilst recognising the uncertainty in the current economic climate. The potential for donations in the form of pro bono work was also being explored.

1160 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REGISTER OF INTERESTS (TP 08/59)

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.

1161 FINANCE

- (i) Draft budget for 2009/10 to 2012/13 (TP 08/60)
Trustees considered a draft operating budget for 2009-10. Following discussion, it was agreed that it would be helpful to complement the draft budget with an alternative budget presenting worst case scenario and mitigating actions, where possible, based on anticipated continuation in the immediate future of the economic downturn. This should include options for future contract arrangements for utility costs (given the substantial increases in energy prices which were forecast), taking into account future consumption and benchmarking against other organisations. Mr Stocken agreed to assist at Chairman-level in exploring further facility sharing/efficiency measures with other South Kensington organisations.

The Director reported, in addition, that, as a direct response to the current volatility in financial markets and the economic slow-down, and in anticipation of risk to extant levels of government funding, the Museum had undertaken a process to review the distribution of current expenditure plans against anticipated outputs to inform future spending decisions. Outcomes from this work would be incorporated into the revised budget presentation for February 2009.

For operational purposes, Trustees approved the draft budget and level of General Reserve for 2009-10 in principle, pending further presentations requested for February 2009.

The provisional allocations for 2010-13 were noted.

- (ii) Financial Review for the period April-September 2008 (TP08/61)
The review was noted.

1162 DARWIN CENTRE PHASE TWO (TP 08/62)

- (i) Management Report (TP 08/62)
Trustees approved the proposal to raise the project budget by a specified amount, including an increase in the Museum's own contribution (excluding proceeds from the sale of Wandsworth) on the basis that further external funding had become available for the main contract and public offer component.

In discussion, Trustees requested an update on the plans for the official and public openings of the building at their February meeting.

Trustees recorded their congratulations to Mr Greenwood and Mr Sanders for the excellent and professional manner in which the contracts for the building had been negotiated.

1163 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:

NAO Report – the management responses added to the NAO list of recommendations had been accepted.

Corporate Risk – the Committee had asked for a more detailed presentation on responses to the threat of terrorism, specifically staff training and vigilance, visitor queuing and master plans and security at evening events. In relation to delivery of capital projects, the Committee had commended the decision to establish a Museum Programme Office which would play a coordinating role in providing strategic oversight of the Museum's portfolio of projects as well as introduce improvements to increase the Museum's capability in project delivery.

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

(ii) Managing Information Risk (TP 08/63)

Following several recent incidents where sensitive personal data held by Government departments, agencies and contractors had been lost, the Cabinet Office had conducted a review led by Robert Hannigan, which had resulted in a number of recommendations for improvements in this area. At the request of DCMS, the Museum had set in place a programme to achieve compliance with the recommendations. The HR Director had been appointed the Museum's Senior Responsible Officer for Information Risk issues and a project team had been established to take matters forward. The scale of work required and tight deadline, meant that the Museum had not achieved the Cabinet Office deadline, but assurance would be given that appropriate and effective controls were in place to manage information risks in the 2008/09 Statement of Internal Control.

Trustees were satisfied that adequate progress was being made and that staff were being kept informed of the key issues.

1164 PERFORMANCE SCORECARD – CORPORATE KPIs TO END OF SECOND QUARTER 2008/09 (TP 08/64)

Trustees noted the increase in overall visitor numbers for the second quarter and the greater numbers of visitors to the website. For their next meeting, Trustees asked to receive further information on the virtual elements of Darwin Centre Phase Two to illustrate how the Museum planned to use the web more effectively in the future.

1165 HUMAN RESOURCES

(i) Health and Safety Report for the period April-October 2008 (TP 08/65)

Trustees noted the report, in particular that the Museum continued to show improvement in the reduction of accidents.

1166 SCIENCE GROUP

(i) Second Quarter 2008/09 (TP 08/66)

Professor Lane focussed on a number of points from the report:

Individual Merit Promotion Scheme – Trustees noted that BBSRC had announced its withdrawal from managing this external assessment scheme for promotion. Discussions were underway to secure a future for this important peer review process. Trustees did not feel that the scheme could be managed by the Museum, but asked Professor Halliday to explore further with NERC what their institutional approach to the scheme might be.

OECD Global Science Forum project on Scientific Collections – Professor Lane reported that he would, on behalf of the UK, be leading the next stage of this project to explore the value of scientific collections as well as chairing the international steering committee. A workshop bringing the major UK scientific collections together would be held in January 2009 to develop a national view. This was an excellent opportunity for the Museum to network with other organisations around the world.

Prizes for Science – Entomologist Dr Vince Smith had been awarded the prestigious Ebbe Nielsen Prize by the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) for combining taxonomic and biodiversity informatics research. In addition, Professor Chris Stringer had won Best Archaeological Book for *Homo Britannicus* at the esteemed British Archaeological Awards. Trustees recorded their congratulations to Dr Smith and Professor Stringer for their achievements.

Cadiou Collection – the collection of hawkmoths, comprising 230,000 specimens had now arrived at the Museum and had completed quarantine. The collection was highly complementary to existing holdings and would be relevant to current research in the Entomology Department. Funds raised for the purchase of the collection had exceeded target, demonstrating the public interest in this type of collection.

- (ii) **Collection Management Competency Framework (TP 08/67)**
Dr Gordon Paterson, Chair of the Curator Competencies Group, presented the progress which had been made on professionalising the curator role through the development of a career structure based on a collections management competency framework. Trustees noted the important and innovative work that had been carried out in this area. Its value, in terms of developing curator skills and the collection and in providing opportunities for further collaboration between research and curation, was clearly demonstrated.
- (iii) **Honorary Research Fellows (TP 08/68)**
Trustees approved the appointment of seven new Honorary Research Fellows and the renewal of twelve of the existing Honorary Research Fellow, all for a period of three years. In discussion, Trustees agreed that it would be helpful, in future, to set out the expectations for both Museum and Fellow to render the relationship more valuable.
- (iv) **Postgraduate Studies at the Natural History Museum (TP 08/69)**
Dr Eileen Cox, Head of Postgraduate Studies, presented a review of the scope of postgraduate training in the Museum and recent developments taking place to improve management of this training. Dr Cox outlined the importance of training in providing the next generation of scientists able to undertake research in studies on the diversity of the natural world, including systematics and taxonomy.

Trustees noted the report and approved the overall approach to higher education training in the Museum. They welcomed the intention to encourage further numbers of students from developing countries, but expressed slight concern about the falling numbers of students taking up the Masters of Science (MSc) course. Although the decline was consistent with that seen in other Masters courses generally, it was not consistent with related courses at Imperial College. Professor Lane was encouraged to approach Professor Ian Owens at Imperial College to explore why this was so.

1167 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT GROUP

- (i) **Second Quarter 2008/09 (TP 08/70)**
Ms Ament highlighted a number of items from her report:

Special exhibitions – the Museum had recently launched both *Wildlife Photographer of the Year* and *Darwin*. Tickets sales and income for the former were exceeding target. Following the success of *Amazing Butterflies* earlier in the year, a similar exhibition *Butterfly Jungle*, to include a vivarium, was planned for 2009. On the basis of this exhibition, a decision would be taken on whether to operate this as a regular feature during the summer months.

Income generating activities – the Events business was starting to feel the impact of the economic downturn, with expenditure scaled back on many bookings. However, this was being mitigated as far as possible by implementing a strategy to increase marketing efforts in a more focussed way and to reduce advertising budgets to contribute to this. The impact upon retail and catering activities was less evident at present with both performing well over target for the year to date. During October, the Museum had published a Kids' Guide, which was providing extremely popular, with 3,600 copies sold in the first three weeks. Whilst this might have an impact on the Souvenir Guide, the cumulative effect was an increase in overall income.

Project Falcon – the Museum was awaiting a formal position from the client to confirm its future involvement in the project. Elsewhere, other opportunities were arising in the Middle East, which would be followed up and reported back to Trustees in due course.

Staff Survey – the 2008 survey had now been completed and results were expected by the end of December. The survey was part of the Museum's ongoing communications activities linking into both corporate planning and the Investors in People initiative. Trustees asked for a presentation on the outcomes for their February meeting.

Portrait of Sir Hans Sloane – Trustees approved a proposal to relocate the portrait of Sir Hans Sloane, currently hanging in the Board Room, to Darwin Centre Phase Two.

Trustees noted the report.

1168 AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE BOARD MEETINGS (TP 08/71)

The rolling agenda for future meetings was noted.

1169 EVENTS DIARY (TP 08/72)

The events diary was noted.

1170 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no items.

1171 SCIENCE DISCUSSION (TP 08/73)

Trustees received a discussion paper from Ailsa Barry, Head of Interactive Media and Dr Johannes Vogel, Keeper of Botany on progress with developing a Citizen Science strategy together with implementation and investment plans required to deliver it. Following a previous discussion on the EDIT strategic document *Taxonomy in Europe in the 21st Century*, Trustees were aware of the Museum's unique position in being able to engage people's participation in science activity. The Board were invited to give their views on the Museum's plans to establish a UK lead in this area and to provide inputs to assist in the development of the strategy and plan.

1172 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 24 February 2009 at 0930 at The Natural History Museum.