

THE TRUSTEES OF THE NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM

THREE HUNDRED AND SIXTY-EIGHTH MEETING

10:00 THURSDAY 9 JULY 2020

HELD REMOTELY BY VIDEO CONFERENCE DUE TO COVID-19 EPIDEMIC

MINUTES

Trustees present:

Sir Charles Dunstone, Chair
Joyce Bridges
Dr Fiona Butcher
Dr Helen Czerski
Professor Julian Dowdeswell
Dr Aminul Hoque
Carol Marlow
Alastair Marsh
Jeremy Penn
Eric Reynolds
Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope

In attendance:

Paddy Rodgers	Director, Royal Museums Greenwich
Andy Bodle	Director, Operations and HR
Kate Seeckts	Director, Development
Gail Symington	Director, Collections and Public Engagement
Chris Walker	Director, Finance and IT
Karen Eden-Tuxford	Head of Commerce & Visitor Experience
Jane Costantini	Governance and Museum Records Manager

~Board Matters~

The Chairman noted that this would be Carol Marlow's final Board meeting as she completes her second term as RMG Trustee on 11 September 2020. Usually Carol's tenure would be celebrated with a lunch in her honour but due to the pandemic this, and the Board's full thanks, will have to be postponed. Nevertheless the Chairman and members of the Board thanked Carol for her enthusiasm and tireless support of the Museum, and particularly the *Cutty Sark*, over the years.

~Governance Session~

1. **Apologies**
None received.
2. **Declaration of relevant interests related to this meeting**
None other than those previously registered.

3. **Draft Minutes of Board meeting 367 of 7 May 2020**

The Board **agreed** the minutes to be a true record of the meeting. The Chair of the Board certified the minutes electronically after the meeting.

4. **Re-opening the Museum**

The Head of Commerce & Visitor Experience provided an update to the Board of our plans to re-open our venues, starting with *Cutty Sark* on 20 July, with a Community Day on 16 July and a Members weekend on 18 and 19 July. The Board were told of the preparations which had been made to ensure the safety of staff and visitors which included reduced capacity, timed ticketing, the implementation of one-way routes and new signage; all measures adhering to Government guidance and Visit England standards. A flexible approach, enabling us to react to visitor behaviour and changing guidance, is key.

Trustees queried the selection of *Cutty Sark* as the first venue to open and the Head of Commerce & Visitor Experience explained that we had selected *Cutty Sark* first as it lends itself to a linear route and its size is manageable so we can take the lessons learned from there to our other larger sites in the coming weeks. Trustees were also keen to hear of our stance regarding the use of face masks and were told that we would adhere to official government advice which is subject to imminent change on this issue. The Board and Executive agreed that we should encourage the use of re-usable face coverings rather than disposable masks due to the adverse environmental consequences of the latter.

5. **Staff Update**

The Director, Operations & Human Resources updated the Board on the staffing situation. Out of 600 staff, none currently had symptoms and none to date have required hospital treatment. The HR team have been promoting online 'keeping in touch' programmes, health and wellbeing initiatives, training, self-support groups and social activities. We have been issuing twice weekly all staff updates, the Director, Development hosted an online Coffee Morning and the Director hosted a virtual meeting for all staff who wished to attend in early July. Feedback from staff about the various methods of communication has been very positive. Some 70% of staff were furloughed at its peak, with £743,000 claimed from HMRC March to May inclusive. A further claim of £400,000 has been submitted for June. Our estimated savings from non-recruitment of summer temporary staff amounted to £264,000 over the year and the reduction of overtime payments to date account for a saving of £87,000. Labour turnover has reduced to practically zero and we are taking steps to manage the potential backlog of annual leave by asking staff who have been furloughed to book leave on a pro rata basis for the time spent on furlough. Trustees were also informed that our Gender Pay Gap had been calculated at minus 12.06% (minus 3.30% 2019).

Trustees were keen to hear how staff had reacted to the steps taken to reduce the annual leave backlog and were informed that there had been no adverse comments. Overall it was felt that staff had appreciated that the Museum had bridged the gap between the 80% received from Government, paying the remaining 20% of salaries.

6. Security and Estates Update

The Director, Operations & Human Resources briefed the Board regarding the security of our sites and collections. Trustees were informed that all sites remain safely secured, contractors and projects were being managed by skeleton staff. As preparations for re-opening mount there has been an increase in site visitation which was all being managed safely in terms of lone-working and social distancing.

We are currently investigating an internal leak in Special Exhibitions Gallery/transit room which has been contained. The very heavy rainfall on night of 17 June caused multiple leaks, which were all dealt with according to emergency procedures; most historic leaks have proven to be repaired effectively but unfortunately some new ones have surfaced.

We have received advice from counter terrorism police on the potential return of terrorism as lockdown eases so this has fed into reopening plans. A review has been undertaken of any collection items at risk as contested history and we have concluded that there should be no immediate issues; the perception is that museums are the most appropriate place for statuary as context can be provided and debate encouraged in our programming. Trustees also heard that the review of security at Ship Model Store, Chatham is now complete.

There were no questions arising and the Chairman thanked the Director, Operations & Human Resources for his presentation.

7. Collections and Public Engagement Update

The Director, Collections and Public Engagement provided an overview of work done in recent weeks. This consisted of:

Regular on-site inspections, including gallery inspections, pest management, storage conditions and conservation assessments of displayed collections.

The Shipkeeping team have worked on the Cutty Sark throughout the lockdown period, and have been able to undertake deck repairs that would have been difficult with a public presence. TS Rigging began work on the ship from late June, undertaking significant inspection and replacement work, taking advantage of the public closure.

The relaxed environmental trial across the five galleries at NMM has continued throughout this period without any damage to collections. Reporting on the conditions twice-weekly we have saved £15,000 as of late April, with the final saving expected to be much higher.

Trustees were reminded that many major projects have had to be halted, postponed or reimagined during this period. Tudors to Windsors, which had been due to open in April 2020, will be relaunched towards in February or March 2021. We are in discussion with the major lenders about an extension into 2021 for Faces of a Queen and Woburn Treasures. We have agreed a twelve month postponement of the Sunken Treasures project with the Chinese partners. It is now due to open in spring 2022.

The final judging of IAPY was successfully managed by video conferencing and the winners have been chosen. We will not be disrupting the annual cycle of the competition and publication. However, it may not be possible to deliver a physical exhibition in the Photography Gallery for September - this might follow later in Q3. An enhanced online version of the exhibition will be developed and we are looking into an online awards ceremony.

Inhospitable Seas (working title), destined for the New Insights gallery, currently occupied by the Battle of Jutland display, is scheduled to open in November 2020. Social distancing is being 'built in' to the layout of the space.

During lockdown much focus has been placed on our online programming with grateful thanks to Trustee Helen Czerski for hosting our Ships, Sea and the Stars series, receiving very favourable feedback from the public. Our various community events - World Oceans Day, Refugee Week, Dementia Action Week, Windrush Day, Pride, Space week - have all moved online.

In May we had a very intensive period of astronomy content being released on Twitter daily and we launched the ROG YouTube Channel with content that will engage adults, families and children with a variety of astronomy topics and activities every week. We have also been working with the Development team to offer exclusives for Members.

Trustees were very impressed with the amount, quality and variety of work achieved in this period and they were keen to find out if there were plans to make the content available in different languages. The Director, Collections and Public Engagement stated that occasionally content is made available with British Sign Language but the feasibility of translating into different languages would need to be looked into.

Trustees were also keen to hear how the staff had coped with the technical challenges during lockdown. The Director, Collections and Public Engagement stated that there had at times been issues with the quality of colleagues' home broadband, but on the whole with the assistance of our IT team we have overcome most difficulties. We are however seeking support for improved Planetarium equipment and we are looking at new spaces and ways of working when we return to the Museum in order to maintain the momentum. The Director added that staff were working more effectively across the Museum than previously and in addition to new content we were looking at repurposing some old online content which had fallen into obsolescence, but with some updating will prove extremely valuable.

There was one further question from the Trustees regarding our Safeguarding Policy for our online workshops and the Director, Collections and Public Engagement confirmed that this was now in place.

There were no further questions arising and the Trustees thanked the Director, Collections and Public Engagement very much for her presentation and for the work done by the staff.

8. Development, Marketing and Events Update

The Director, Development provided the Trustees with an overview of the current fundraising situation. Thankfully Membership has not dropped as much as we had feared but not surprisingly we are currently not recruiting any new Members. At the start of the lockdown we wrote to Members offering to extend their membership by the same duration as closure. We have recently written to ask if Members would like to donate the value of this extension back to the Museum and we are receiving some favourable responses to this. All of our Patrons have remained and we have recently recruited three new Patrons. Recent fundraising research showed that organisations with actively anti-racist and green credentials were likely to fare best in a post-Covid climate.

Our Digital Marketing team are working towards accessibility compliance while the Events team have been dealing with wedding postponements and corporate event cancellations but there are signs that interest in events is building.

The Trustees had no additional questions and thanked the Director, Development for her presentation.

9. Finance Update

The Director started by briefing Trustees on the recent DCMS announcement regarding additional funding. Due to our previous success in income generation, our reliance on commercial income is amongst the greatest of our peers and therefore we have been awarded the top level of compensation at 25% of Grant in Aid. Although good news, this will still not cover our shortfall so we are continuing the dialogue, which we started before Covid-19 in any case, for increased funding.

The Director, Finance & IT then briefed Trustees on the financial position over the first quarter of the financial year. As predicted, with closure our income has collapsed and we are losing c. £1 million per month, partially offset by our furlough claim and some cost savings.

The Trustees were keen to know where we were, compared with our estimates at the start of lockdown. The Director, Finance & IT said that income recovery looked like it might be a bit slower than we thought as consumer confidence may take longer to build than we originally predicted.

There were no further questions and the Trustees thanked the Director, Finance & IT for his presentation.

10. Audit Committee Update to Board

The Chair of the Audit Committee informed the Board, as per his report, that due to lockdown the audit team have not been able to conclude the fieldwork and have not been able to provide an Audit Opinion. The most concerning question is the fact that the Museum is not yet in a position to offer a view on 'Going Concern' in light of the ongoing discussions with DCMS. We will continue discussion with the Auditors and update the Board on the Audit Opinion at the September meeting so that the Audit Committee can review the final Annual Report and Accounts in the early autumn.

11. Director's Report

The Director concluded his earlier summary of the discussions with DCMS stating that we have a good working relationship with the DCMS team. We shall have to see how this translates in terms of funding in the Comprehensive Spending Round this autumn. The Director told Trustees that the Black Lives Matter movement was a clear expression from communities that they feel unrepresented in our large institutions. We must seize this opportunity, be ambitious and scrutinise everything we do so that we promote inclusivity at every opportunity.

The Trustees were also keen to point out the opportunities around the green agenda and that all of these issues are interrelated. Several of the Trustees expressed their willingness to take part in a Diversity Committee which should not be a structural governance committee but more of a 'critical friend', monitoring our progress and challenging us. The Director committed to reporting back to the September Board with an update on this. There were no further questions and the Trustees thanked the Director for his report.

12. **Matters arising from the information in Volume B/AOB**

Trustees commented on 'The Moon' closure report, stating that whilst the exhibition had been extremely successful in terms of visitor numbers, good reviews and press coverage, it had not been profitable. After discussion it was **agreed** that making money should not necessarily be the aim, but we must be very clear about the motivations, and agree what success will look like, at the outset.

There were no further matters raised and the meeting concluded.

Minutes certified by Sir Charles Dunstone, Chair

Date