

THE TRUSTEES OF THE NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM

THREE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY FIFTH MEETING

15:00 THURSDAY 18 NOVEMBER 2021

HELD IN THE BOARDROOM

MINUTES

Trustees present:

Alastair Marsh Chair for this meeting
Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope (via MS Teams)
Joyce Bridges
Dr Fiona Butcher
Dr Helen Czerski
Eric Reynolds
Jeremy Penn
Professor Julian Dowdeswell

In attendance:

Paddy Rodgers	Director, Royal Museums Greenwich
Kate Seeckts	Director, Development & Communications
Gail Symington	Director, Collections and Public Engagement
Chris Walker	Director, Finance and IT
Lucy Cooke	Head of Development
Charlotte Cowan	Head of Human Resources
Karen Eden-Tuxford	Head of Commerce & Visitor Experience
Jane Costantini	Governance and Museum Records Manager

~Board Matters~

- i. Alastair Marsh informed the Board that as Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope was unable to attend the meeting in person, he had been asked to step in as Chair on this occasion.
- ii. Update on the appointment of Trustees and Chair
Jeremy Penn advised Trustees that the sift had been held early October with interviews scheduled for 22/23 November. There had been c. 30 applicants in total, with 11 shortlisted for interviews. Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope confirmed that we had received formal confirmation from DCMS that the tenures of Joyce Bridges and Eric Reynolds had been extended until 11 March 2022.

~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 374 of 16 September 2021

An amendment to item 8. Development Update was requested to make it clearer that Trustees had asked the Executive to come back to the Board on a funding matter once further information is available. Otherwise, the Board **agreed** the minutes to be a true record of the meeting. The amendment was made following the meeting and Chair of the Board certified the minutes accordingly.

4. Director's Report

The Director's full report had been circulated to the Board prior to the meeting. The Director provided a summary of the key themes and priorities for the coming months. We shall be focusing our energy on the redevelopment of the ROG in the run up to its 350th anniversary in 2025; the ROG should become one of the 'must see' destinations in London. We shall also be picking up on sustainability and environmental issues connected to the Ocean and also stepping up our collection digitisation programmes. We shall ensure that we work hard to meet the needs of our various audiences and we shall be putting the General Managers of each site at the heart of what we do as the representatives of our visitors. We are making changes to our management structures to empower colleagues and enable them to make more timely decisions and to work across departments much more than they have in the past. The financial situation will continue to be challenging for the foreseeable future so we will need to continue to do more with fewer resources.

Trustees were keen to understand how we address the connectivity between the sites. The Director stated that working more closely with the ORNC would be key to this as would improved transportation links with the ROG; there are promising signs that a driverless vehicle will be trialled early next spring which would transport visitors up the hill to the ROG. Trustees also discussed the need to bring in younger more diverse voices and it was suggested that we should pursue the idea of a Board Apprentice which is being trialled in other organisations. **The Board asked the Executive to pursue this suggestion.**

There was a final question from the Board regarding the likelihood of additional costs being incurred should the Museum assist the ORNC with their collection as proposed. The Director clarified that this assistance would be in the form of providing collections management expertise and including their objects (which are relatively few in number) on our collections database and as such should not involve any significant additional costs.

5. Visitor update

The Head of Commerce and Visitor Experience informed Trustees that we welcomed over 194,000 visitors in September and October across the sites with an admissions income of over £560,000. Visitors continue to book online 55% but we are seeing more walk-up 42% and phone bookings 3%. In terms of ticketing the audience split was 72% adult 4% student 24% child. Core visitors represented 89% of visits with Members making up 7% and Travel Trade 4%. The new APY exhibition opened in September and Tudors to Windsors exhibition closed at the end of October.

Overall, visitor numbers in September following the school holidays were encouraging and are gradually increasing. Half term was extremely positive with

63,000 visitors in large part thanks to the Ice Worlds Festival. Year to date we have welcomed 500,000 visitors with admissions income of over £1.5 m. and retail income of over £500K.

Trustees were informed that Flamsteed House closed to the public after half term to enable the Octagon Room works to progress and with works due to commence on the Great Equatorial Telescope in January, we have reviewed the experience and value for money for our visitors and concluded that closure of the North site from 4 January 2022 is the most practical option. It is planned to open again in time for Easter, subject to lead times on critical supplies. The Planetarium and education spaces will remain open throughout.

Trustees were informed that our ice rink had just opened and that we had sold over 10,000 advance tickets which was very promising. The presentation concluded with a selection of visitor comments.

Trustees asked how the retail spend per visitor compared with other museums. The Head of Visitor Experience said that anecdotally the feeling was that everyone had experienced a slight increase but she would gather more information for the next meeting. Our new book range with 23 new titles, many of which support the interest in climate change, was doing well. The Board enquired about plans for the Special Exhibitions Gallery and were told that in 2022 it would host our Canaletto exhibition. The Executive were asked about the income predictions for the ice rink and were informed that we hope to take between £60-80K net in addition to the booking fees. Trustees were reminded that we had ensured that the contract put any risk of closure (due to Covid restrictions) on the supplier, so the terms were slightly less favourable as a result. However, moving forward we will be in a strong negotiating position for more favourable terms as the venue has proved its popularity. There was a final question regarding the potential obsolescence of the Planetarium equipment bearing in mind that we rely on a sole supplier. Whilst there is always a risk of the supplier going out of business, this is not currently foreseen as being a major threat.

There were no further questions and the Chair thanked the Head of Commerce and Visitor Experience for her update.

6. HR update

A paper detailing planned changes to the management structure had been sent to Trustees in advance of the meeting. The Head of Human Resources summarised the proposals, informed Trustees that we were currently in the process of consulting with the senior management team, and invited questions from the Board.

Trustees asked for further clarification on the reporting structure. The Head of HR confirmed that the line management structure remained relatively unchanged, the proposed changes centred around the format and focus of the senior management meetings. Trustees also requested an update on the Sustainability Manager role and were told that we had had difficulties in attracting candidates of the right calibre - good candidates were in high demand. However, we have two promising candidates that we are pursuing currently. If these leads do not come to fruition we shall look at altering the role to a consultancy position.

There were no further questions and Trustees thanked the Head of HR for her update.

7. Finance Director's Report

A detailed report of the 2021-22 financial position had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Director, Finance & IT presented the Trustees with a first look at the 2022-23 picture. We are facing a flat GIA award (with a small inflationary increase) but DCMS has secured a fund of £150m over three years in the Spending Review and some additional funding for capital maintenance for DCMS bodies. We have not yet heard how this will be split. Whilst forecasting visitor numbers is very difficult in the current climate, we think we have a reasonable feel for likely visitor behaviour and we have factored in some growth if the pandemic situation continues to improve gradually over the coming months. This said, we have assumed in this model that there will be very few international visitors in the coming year. There is some concern from ALVA that many British visitors may start to go abroad in 2022 but that visitors from overseas may be slower to return. We should start to get some information from ALVA after Christmas and in the early part of the new year when traditionally holiday bookings are made.

We have also factored in some growth in fundraising for core works into the 2022-23 budget but we know that our operating costs are going to increase due to inflation in utilities with a predicted 20-25% increase in fuel charges. Other elements of Covid support received in 2021-22 such as furlough and rates and VAT relief will not be forthcoming in 2022-23. We are therefore currently looking at a deficit of around £2m without additional government support. We are hoping to hear from DCMS within the next two months what additional support will be available so that we will be in a position to present the Board with a final budget at the February meeting.

Trustees asked if we would consider increasing admission charges and were told there may be some small adjustments such as bringing the Cutty Sark admission price in line with the Royal Observatory, but other than that, not at present. The Executive were asked if there were capital projects planned if money was to be made available for this purpose by government. The Director, Finance and IT confirmed that this was the case. Trustees enquired whether there was any risk to our catering company and were told that there was an ongoing dialogue with Benugo who appeared committed to working with us and had taken steps to reduce costs during the pandemic. One final question related to the start date for the Cutty Sark rig climb which was confirmed as April 2022. There were no further questions and the Board **approved** the Finance Director's Report.

8. Programming Update

The Director, Collections and Public Engagement provided Trustees with a review of the recent Ice Worlds Festival which had been hugely successful with 36,000 visitors over the three days and 4000 pieces of press with all the major broadcasters involved. Feedback from our staff and visitors has been extremely positive. Following this success, we are looking at further opportunities to do more of this type of public programming. Helen Czerski congratulated the staff for their hard work and enthusiasm and the Director thanked Helen for her support and leadership throughout the project. Trustees supported the

Executive's intention to do more of these kinds of events and it was suggested that linking up with universities would be a good way of bringing in additional expertise.

Next, Trustees were given a glimpse of works of Canaletto's Venice to be showcased in an exhibition opening in April 2022. The background to this is that we were offered the opportunity to borrow 24 works by the artist from Woburn Abbey and we decided to widen the scope of the show by thinking about the current issues around the environmental threat to Venice brought about by climate change and the huge burden of mass tourism to the island. Trustees were enthusiastic about the potential of this topic and thanked the Director, Collections and Public Engagement for her informative update.

9. Error on agenda, there was no item 9 for this meeting.

10. National Historic Ships UK Annual Report

The Director, NHS-UK started by reminding Trustees of the remit of NHS-UK. Set up in 2006, they are funded by Government to give independent, objective advice on all matters relating to historic vessels throughout the United Kingdom. A small team of five staff and two volunteers working with a Council of Experts, they deliver UK-wide support. Despite Covid they were able to deliver 95% of their activities online and whilst vessel casework increased during the pandemic, savings in travel costs allowed them to make a £10K grant to struggling vessels. The Shipshape Network celebrated its 10th anniversary with five organisations acting as Shipshape Hubs. The Historic Vessel Conservation Course had 18 students (including one international) and whilst placements could not take place in person, we increased our online resources to boost learning. The 2021 awards event was held online and as a result reached a larger audience than previous events. In summary, whilst it was a challenging year, we have been able to develop our online resources which will be a lasting legacy.

Trustees congratulated the NHS-UK Director and her team for their hard work and achievements over the last year. Trustees were keen to know how the Museum could support their work. The Director stated that we were already starting to look at ways we can work more closely together.

There were no further questions and the meeting Chair thanked Director, NHS-UK for her presentation.

11. Matters arising from the information in Volume B/AOB

The Board offered their congratulations to staff for the considerable amount of work documented in Item 12. the Q2 Cross Museum Activities Report.

There were no further matters raised and the meeting concluded.

Minutes certified by Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope, Chair

24.02.2021