

THE TRUSTEES OF THE NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM

THREE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-THIRD MEETING
THURSDAY 26 OCTOBER 2023
HELD IN THE BOARDROOM

MINUTES

Trustees present:

Lance Batchelor (Chair)
Professor Clare Anderson
Dr Fiona Butcher (Via MS Teams)
Dr Helen Czerski
Sir Stephen Deuchar
Professor Julian Dowdeswell
Murdoch MacLennan
Alastair Marsh
William Nye
Professor Andrew Thompson (Via MS Teams a.m. only)

In attendance:

Paddy Rodgers	CEO, Royal Museums Greenwich
Chris Walker	Executive Business & Operations Director
Lucy Cooke	Head of Development
Jane Costantini	Governance and Museum Records Manager
Karen Eden-Tuxford	Head of Commerce & Visitor Experience
Ann Carter	Director of Major Projects (for item 4)
Ray Flanagan	Senior Capital Projects Manager (for item 11)
Daniel Martin	Head of Collections Services (for items 9 & 10)
Emma Snow	Design Manager First Light (for item 14)
Miles Delap	Gardiner and Theobald
Lizzi Hewitt-Brown	Gardiner and Theobald

~Governance Session~

1. Apologies

Apologies received from Helen Czerski, Trustee and from Gail Symington, Executive Creative Director.

2. Declaration of relevant interests related to this meeting

Several members of the Board and the Museum's management team noted that they were Shipwrights (in relation to a mention of funding from the Worshipful Company of Shipwrights in the Finance Report). It was not felt that this represented any conflict of interests.

3. Draft Minutes of Board meeting 382 of 20 July 2023

The Board **agreed** the minutes to be a true record of the meeting. The minutes were certified by the Chair accordingly.

4. 'First Light' Update

Trustees had received a paper from the Director and from the Chair of the First Light Project Trustee Committee recommending an early decision to pursue the 'do less' option of a new entrance, gallery renewal and improved access provision. The Director informed Trustees that DCMS guidance received in September made it clear that Government grants would no longer be available. Without this grant our middle option ('Do less') is the only feasible way forward.

The Head of Development updated the Board on the current status of our approaches to Trusts and Foundations. If all goes well we hope to have pledges in the region of £24m by summer 2024. We are also talking to a number of High Net Worth individuals. Trustees were asked to consider suggestions for guests to the Newton lecture with Professor Robert Iliffe at No 11 Downing Street in January 2024.

In response to a question on venture philanthropy Trustees were told that this is something we would consider. Trustees asked what private funders might expect in return for pledges and were told that naming rights would certainly be considered, but that the Board would be consulted as appropriate on these. The Head of Development also confirmed that regular fundraising events will be reinstated in the longer term even once we have reached our objectives on First Light.

Trustees asked about the £20m loan from Government and were told that we were not receiving any pushback on this. Trustees with experience in this area advised a structured approach aimed at the right officials in the Treasury would be beneficial. Paul Jardine, who is already advising us, would be able to provide guidance in this area. There was also discussion around a commercial loan if required and this has not been ruled out.

Trustees asked if we would achieve the same 'awe and wonder' without the underground galleries. Dr Czerski in particular had expressed concerns through the First Light Committee, on this and the proposed use of the Special Exhibitions Gallery at the NMM as an alternative in the long term. The Director stated that we were confident that we would achieve 'awe and wonder' through the increased presence of our astronomers and their interaction with the public on site. This would be a key part of the new ROG experience which will mean that it is less dependent on physical spaces. The Head of Development also confirmed that conversations with funders to date had not been based around the underground galleries.

The Director of Major Projects introduced the team from Gardiner and Theobald, appointed in September as our External Project Management team for Basebuild. They then went on to present an overview of the project timelines with the handover of the site planned for September 2027 and completion date in spring 2028.

Trustees remarked that obtaining consent from the Royal Parks was critical. Gardiner and Theobald concurred but stated that the reduced project scope will mean a reduced impact on the Park.

The Director stated that we would share the outline activities plan being developed as part of the lottery application in February. (This activities plan is one part of a wider engagement programme that will be offered at ROG).

The Chair of the First Light Project Trustee Committee stated that we need to scrutinise the costs now for the overground elements to ensure there is no possibility of them creeping up.

Trustees were invited to make any final comments. The consensus was that this will still be an exciting and transformative project, in keeping with the scale and historic appeal of the site. Trustees were keen to drop the 'do less' terminology as it does not befit the scale and scope of what we hope to achieve. They therefore **approved** the proposed change in scope as detailed in the paper from the Director and from the First Light Project Trustees.

5. Update on campaign for new Trustees and Board Apprenticeship scheme

The Chair of the Remuneration and Nominations Committee informed the Board that Ministers had approved the role descriptions for the Astronomy and Finance (Chair of Audit Committee) Trustees. We were now waiting for the Independent Panel Member to be appointed. Trustees again expressed their concern at the length of time taken to progress this and the Chairman stated that he would be raising this at his forthcoming meeting with the Permanent Secretary in November. The Board **agreed** that based on the length of time required to progress these appointments, we should pursue the other two vacancies (for Digital and for Community Engagement) within the next three months.

Next, the Chair of the Remuneration and Nominations Committee updated the Board on the Apprenticeship Scheme where there was some news. The Board will be joined from January by Matthew Hastings. A volunteer is sought from Board members to become Matthew's 'Board Buddy'.

6. Director's Report

The Director started by providing Trustees with an update on the recent changes at DCMS. He went on to say that visitor numbers are holding up well and that the children's playground was proving extremely popular. The playground project had been a remarkable achievement, truly collaborative across RMG teams and with external stakeholder and community groups who spoke movingly of the importance of their involvement at the opening event. Trustees were told that the project cost £500k and was partly funded by the Peter Harrison Foundation. The pay and rewards outcomes had overall been received well by staff, with some inevitable individual issues to work through in the coming months.

This sentence redacted in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 S. 36 prejudicial to the effective conduct of public affairs.

The Cutty Sark Rig Climb was a popular activity and we are keen to retain it in some form but the company who run it are having to work on a more financially viable solution.

The working relationship with the ORNC is going well. There is a meeting of the Quad in November and the Chairman reported that he had a positive meeting with the new ORNC Chairman, Sir Stuart Etherington, the day before. The Director stated that the discussions on the Grand Axis crossing were moving forwards, thanks to the efforts of our former Trustee, Eric Reynolds. *This sentence redacted in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 S. 36 prejudicial to the effective conduct of public affairs.*

The Director informed the Board that we were working with the National Windrush Museum to agree a Memorandum of Understanding which would underpin a collaborative relationship between the organisations. This would be a non-exclusive partnership and we shall not be providing the NWM with any permanent space in the RMG, but we currently do not have anything in the Museum on Windrush so there will be opportunities to collaborate. Trustees were broadly supportive of the initiative but cautioned that the Memorandum of Understanding should not be legally binding. We should make sure our relationship with the NWM is clear in any public announcements. Professor Thompson had been a lead adviser on the Windrush Review and noted that the full report could be found online: [Windrush Review](#). He suggested that there we might consider a display on 'iconic ships' of which the Windrush could be a part.

Trustees were keen to use the opportunity of the forthcoming RNLI display to engage with communities from around the country. There was a question from the Board around the Fellowship programme and the Director confirmed that there had been a pause in the programme over the last year while it was reviewed but that we were now finalising plans to relaunch the programme in 2024.

Finally, Trustees thanked the Director for his informative report which was duly **noted**.

7. Visitor update

The Head of Commerce and Visitor Experience informed the Board that we had welcomed just over 772,000 visitors across our core sites, down 59,000 against Forecast 1 with admissions income just over £2.5 million, down £180k against forecast. Membership income was £160k for the quarter. Retail generated sales of just under £1.1 million, up £45k against forecast. Our commission from our catering partner (Benugo) was £98k. Trustees heard that half term was going well and that 'the Cove' playground was bringing additional visitors to the upper level of the Parkside café. Overall, our visitor numbers are performing very well against last year and we are by and large back on track with pre Covid numbers.

Trustees were provided with an overview of visitor comments, many of which praise the service they receive from our colleagues. There were a few negative

comments around wayfinding, which is currently being addressed by our Marketing team. ALVA research suggests visitors are acutely aware of value for money as the cost of living crisis continues. We continue to aim to provide a value for money experience with free talks and character actors with teams keen to explore these opportunities further.

The Chairman asked if we had returned to normal since Covid and was told that visitor numbers had pretty much recovered although we are still expecting to see some international audiences return. There were no further questions or comments and the Chairman thanked the Head of Commerce and Visitor Experience for her presentation.

8. Finance Update Report

8.1 September Management Accounts and Forecast Update

The Executive Business & Operations Director started his presentation by reflecting on the visitor numbers and visitor profiles. He noted that Travel Trade visitor numbers were very strong and that the comparative increase in domestic visitors from pre Covid days was the result of a deliberate push on our part to attract them, but that does mean there should be more scope for bringing back the contingent from overseas in the future. Whilst the increase in Travel Trade visitors is to be welcomed, the yield from their visits is lower than for an independent traveller, and, with the exception of visitors from China, they also tend to spend less in our shops due to a shorter time spent on site.

On the management accounts, Trustees were reminded that at the last meeting we had been predicting a surplus of £1m, but that due to the money spent on the pay awards, as approved by the Board at the last meeting, we are now predicting to end the year in a break even position.

Trustees noted that further salary increases would depend on increases in income in the coming months. The Executive Business & Operations Director concurred and advised Trustees that our commitment to keep up with the London Living Wage would entail at least a £400- £500k increase in expenditure (based on last year's increases).

In response to a question asked about the GIA for 2024/25, Trustees were told that it was unlikely there would be a spending review before the General Election and so it is probable that our funding allocation will be rolled over into 24/25.

On a positive note, we are cautiously optimistic regarding forthcoming changes and opportunities on Business Rates and DCMS Capital Funding.

The Executive Business & Operations Director finished by providing Trustees with an overview of the Reserves position with £5m of the total £12.7m designated for First Light as at 31 March 2023.

The Audit Committee Chair requested that the Management Accounts slide should be sent to Trustees in the Board papers prior to the meeting in future as it provides a very clear picture. There were no further comments and the Chairman

thanked the Executive Business & Operations Director for his Finance Report which was **noted**.

9. Collections Management Procedures

The Head of Collection Services provided Trustees with an overview of our controls and procedures around collection security in light of the British Museum incident. These centre around the following: having a dedicated Collections Audit team; auditable systems; limited and controlled access to stores, CCTV, staff invigilation.

The Collections Audit, Registration, Disposal, Acquisition and all other Collections Management processes were recently audited by our internal auditors, BDO, and our controls and procedures were found to be 'substantial'.

This section redacted in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 s.31(1)(a) prejudicial to the prevention of crime

The Chairman thanked the Head of Collections Services for his presentation and requested an annual update on progress on the risk areas identified.

10. ACE Museum Accreditation

The Head of Collections Services provided the Board with a brief overview of the work being done to achieve a renewal of our ACE (Arts Council England) Museums Accreditation status. Achieving Accreditation is essential to our funding and in order to receive object loans from our peers. Our application deadline is 12 January and Trustees will be asked to approve certain policies in the coming weeks prior to submission. (These will be circulated via email).

11. Ocean Court update

The Executive Business & Operations Director started by showing Trustees a slide of Ocean Court being used for a performance on World Oceans Day to remind the Board how key this space is for us and the current uncomfortable conditions. The next slide showed the temperatures experienced on that day, peaking at 32 degrees, well above the maximum recommended temperature of 25 degrees. The project has now reached a critical point as the draft RIBA stage 3 report has now been received and substantial progress was being made on technical analysis. Buro Happold had been appointed to provide technical assurance and Gardiner & Theobald to support project management & RMG stakeholder engagement. Trustees were informed that fritted glass was now recommended

over the louvred option which had raised serious concerns with the Planning Authorities. In response to a question from the Board regarding the harvesting of solar energy, the Executive Business & Operations Director said that the most efficient solar panels are opaque and would therefore significantly reduce natural light levels of the space for modest gain in electrical power. We are however investigating the possibility of harvesting rainwater.

The budget for the project is now estimated to be £13.5m including an increase in contingency from £1m to £2m and £1m for additional works such as the replacement of the chillers which are reaching end of life and the underfloor heating/cooling system. In terms of funding, we have been allocated £10.2m by DCMS, we're applying for £400k contingency funding, up to £2m will be drawn from the prioritisation of core Estates capital budget through to 25/26 which leaves a funding gap of £1m. The Chairman asked whether there would be opportunities for private funding perhaps in return for naming rights and was told by the Head of Development that this was a possibility.

Next the Head of Commerce and Visitor Experience, Chair of the Senior Leadership Team meetings, informed Trustees that the various working groups were making progress on the communications plan, the messaging on the hoardings, and on the wayfinding. Discussions regarding the feasibility and timing of the decant of the large objects were reaching their conclusion as the deadline for the tender is imminent. The whole NMM site will be closed for one day on 11th March to facilitate the temporary changes required (such as new visitor routes and wayfinding).

Trustees asked how long the Neptune/Ocean Court area would be closed for and were told that it would be approximately one year for roof works with a further short period to implement creative enhancements to the space.

There were no further questions and the Executive Business & Operations Director and Head of Commerce and Visitor Experience were thanked for their updates.

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

The Director informed Trustees that we had in recent years hosted the visit from a rabbi during Hanika to display a Menorah. Given recent events, he wanted to flag this with the Board in case anyone had any concerns to this going ahead again this year. No objections were raised.