

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Minutes of the Meeting on Thursday 27 June at the Science Museum

Present:

Dr Douglas Gurr (Chairman)
Lady Chisholm
Mr Howard Covington
Professor Dame Athene Donald
Lord Faulkner of Worcester
Mr Peter Fell (Special Adviser)
Mr Andreas Goss
Professor Ludmilla Jordanova
Mr Simon Linnett
Professor Averil Macdonald
Sir Howard Newby
Dr Gill Samuels
Mr James Smith
Ms Janet Street-Porter
Mr Chris Swinson

In Attendance:

Mr Ian Blatchford	Director, Science Museum Group (SMG)
Ms Jane Ellis	Director of Finance, SMG
Mrs Susan Fisher	Director of Development, SMG
Ms Jean Franczyk	Director, MOSI
Dr Roger Highfield	Director of External Affairs, SMG
Mr Paul Kirkman	Director, National Railway Museum
Ms Heather Mayfield	Deputy Director, Science Museum
Mr Jonathan Newby	Chief Operating Officer, SMG
Ms Jo Quinton-Tulloch	Head of National Media Museum
Ms E Helen Jones	Head of Strategy & Planning, SMG (minutes)
Mr Hadrian Ellory-van Dekker	Head of Collections, Science Museum (Item 8)

Apologies

Received from Lord Grade of Yarmouth

Declaration of Interests

- Howard Covington and Andreas Goss, as Trustees of the Science Museum Foundation, absented themselves from the discussion at item 3.7.
- It was noted that SL worked for Rothschilds, another employee of which was advising on property matters (item 3.12)

ACTION

BT 6/13 1 Draft minutes of the meeting on 4 March 2013 and matters arising

- 1.1 The minutes of the meeting on 4 March 2013 were approved and signed by the Chairman
- 1.2 Matters arising were covered under the agenda.

BT 6/13 2 Chairman's Business

- 2.1 DG reported that he remained in contact with the Royal Institution and would maintain a watching brief on the situation.
- 2.2 DG updated the Board on progress with Spending Review discussions.

BT 6/13 3 Director's Report

3.1 a) *Director's Report June 2013*

The paper that had been circulated previously was noted. IB listed highlights including:

- Negotiations with Russian partners for the *Cosmonauts* exhibition were close to successful resolution;
- Suggestions for a speaker at the 2015 Director's Dinner were invited, with female candidates especially welcomed;
- The Science Museum maths initiative was now referred to as the *Maths Project*. It included a Launchpad-style element and events programme as well as the new gallery;
- The BP-funded Learning project, *Enterprising Science* was significant for the academic research with Kings College, London, that was included;
- Although communication with Brazilian Government was sporadic, the Director has been assured that they remain committed to collaboration and the new museum project;
- Tim Boon, Head of Research & Public History, was commended for building good relationships with the Arts & Humanities Research Council, such that they might commission research from SMG;

Board

- There was to be a major reception at MOSI for the 24th International Conference of the History of Science, technology and Medicine. SMG was well-represented at the conference, hosted by Manchester University;
 - SMG's national reach had been boosted through collaboration with Tyne & Wear Archives and Museums, formalised in May through a Memorandum of Understanding;
 - Heather Mayfield was congratulated on being appointed to the Public Engagement Committee of the Royal Society;
 - SMG would seek to collaborate in future with the Royal Society of Chemistry;
 - Edwina Dunn had agreed to join the Science Museum Foundation;
 - Plans for an important external collection's move were progressing well;
 - Some staffing and organisational changes were underway in Group-wide functions.
- 3.2 In discussion it was confirmed that the Science Museum worked extensively with University College London (UCL) and Imperial College, as well as Kings College, London. It was proposed that IB meet the new Provost of UCL at the earliest opportunity. IB
- 3.3 It was suggested that SMG engage with emerging issues around technical skills at OND and ONC level, where there could be funding available. The planned exhibition on careers in engineering would address this area.
- 3.4 *b) SMG Development Report*
The paper that had been circulated previously was noted. SF listed highlights including:
- Some income strands had been doubled or trebled in 2012/13;
 - Income for Information Age exceeded target;
 - Unrestricted income was up by £756,000 due to Visitor Giving. During four recent days donations at NRM had exceeded £1 per head;
 - The Patrons scheme was growing and a new Media Space offer would be introduced;
 - Future priorities included extending legacies beyond NRM, an international strategy, and promoting SMG's place in the 'STEM ecosystem' via a 'Science Matters' campaign.
- 3.5 In discussion:
- SF and the Development team were congratulated on their success;
 - Upcoming major fundraising projects for the Science Museum included the Maths Project, the Medicine Galleries, a time gallery and other Masterplan projects;
 - **It was agreed** that SMG should be thinking now about longer-term priorities, aligned with the Strategic Ambitions 2012-2022 document. A paper that briefly outlined the key major projects for 2015 and beyond was to be presented at the next Board meeting. IB
- 3.6 *c) Management Information*
The paper that had been circulated previously was noted.
- 3.7 **The Board approved** the making of a grant application of up to £2 million to the Science Museum Foundation to fund *Media Space*.
- 3.8 *d) SMG Health & Safety Report*
The paper that had been circulated previously was noted.
- 3.9 In discussion:
- The number of RIDDOR incidents at MOSI was not a cause for concern, rather it as seen as positive that incidents were being reported properly;
 - **It was agreed** that JS and JN would speak about reporting of near-misses;
 - It was noted that SMG health and safety was routinely reported on via the Audit Committee, and SCMG Enterprises reported via the Finance & Strategy Committee (which incorporated the Board of SCMG Enterprises). JS, JN
- 3.10 *e) Full Year Report against SMG Plan 2012/13*
The paper that had been circulated previously was noted.
- 3.11 In discussion it was noted that performance on a number of visitor satisfaction measures was declining. It was reported that the Museum staff were aware that performance monitoring had become dispersed and data-heavy, such that it was difficult to extract useful management information. It was to be reviewed and pared back to focus on aspects that genuinely added value, possibly with input from a statistician.
- 3.12 *f) Property Development Briefing*
JN reported that:
- Planning permission re the Post Office Block was to be submitted in 6-8 weeks' time. SMG was receiving advice from Rothschilds;
 - An option on a lease had been signed for a large photovoltaic panel array at Wroughton. If successfully realised, there was potential for substantial income to SMG;
 - Other options for the Wroughton site continued to be examined;

- The Culture Minister had, that day, informed senior staff from the three Museums that occupied Blythe House of DCMS's intentions for the buildings. The impact would vary for each Museum and they were to report back on this in the near future.

BT 6/13 4 Strategic Review 2015/16

- 4.1 The paper that had been circulated previously was noted and commended for its clarity. In summary, the Grant-in Aid (GiA) funding situation had worsened and the 5% cuts that had been announced for 2015/16 left SMG facing a structural deficit of £3.7 million, with further cuts anticipated. The Executive had reviewed all SMG activities to identify both cost savings and opportunities for increasing income. The latter were felt to operate over a longer time-scale, though, while certain cost savings could be achieved within the budgeted time-frame. The GiA allocation to SMG for 2015/16 was expected to be confirmed within the week.
- 4.2 In discussion, the following points were made:
- Such a fundamental review could realise some strategic and operational improvements;
 - Creative thinking was urged re income-generation, e.g. increased letting of property;
 - Although general entry charges were precluded, more could be done to increase revenues from special exhibitions. SMG should identify areas of its collections and interests for this purpose and be more ambitious in light of its raised cultural status;
 - It was, nevertheless, important that the cost-base be reduced and reflect realistic expectations of GiA. Budgeting should not be based on future expected income, which might fluctuate (though increased income could be planned-for);
 - It was confirmed that SMG did not intend to charge for *Lates*, though there were no specific prohibitions. *Lates* were sponsored and successful in establishing the Science Museum as an adult venue, building the base for more paid-for, adult-targeted programme such as *Media Space*;
 - The Museums would become increasingly commercial in outlook and content;
 - The Board was in a position to take a strategic overview of programming rather than Museum-by-Museum;
 - Windfall funds could be invested for income rather than used for capital projects;
 - Although the identified savings options equalled the projected deficit, they were deliverable on varying timescales and could be difficult to achieve. Therefore it would be sensible to aim for even more savings;
 - Contingency funds would remain at around the same level as previously. Zero-based budgeting would be applied more systematically in planning rounds.
- 4.3 **The Board gave approval** to proceed to develop the savings plans outlined in section 5 of the paper into detailed proposals to be presented to the next Board meeting in the autumn. **Exec**
- 4.4 The Executive was also exhorted to give serious consideration to income generation through exhibitions and increased commercial offer. There was discussion on revisiting the Board's decision (June 2011) to delay imposition of any charge for entry to non-collections, interactive parts of the Museums. **It was agreed** that this could be part of the financial strategy to be proposed in the autumn, while remaining mindful of SMG's mission. **Exec**
- 4.5 It was noted that an extraordinary Board meeting could be convened if decisions were needed in between scheduled Board meetings.

BT 6/13 5 SMG Audit Committee Annual Report 2012/13

- 5.1 The paper that had been circulated previously was noted. The chairman thanked the Committee for its diligent work over the year.

BT 6/13 6 SMG Annual Report and Accounts 2012/13

- 6.1 The paper and draft SMG Annual Report and Accounts 2012/13 that had been circulated previously were noted. All reviews and approvals had been completed and the Finance & Strategy and Audit Committees recommended approval.
- 6.2 The most significant transaction was payment of a grant to the Science Museum Foundation. Such transactions may be reviewed in light of financial and administrative freedoms announced by the Chancellor in the previous day's Spending Review.

- 6.2.1 SMG had funds accumulated from unspent contingency, from a review of project budgets and an operating surplus in 2012/13. This was potentially deployable on capital projects and investment to realise savings.
- 6.3 **The Board approved** the SMG Annual Report and Accounts 2012/13 and they were signed by the Chairman.

BT 6/13 7 *Flying Scotsman* update

- 7.1 The paper that had been circulated previously was noted. The final figure at the third bullet should be £951K.
- 7.2 Discussion covered the changed financial circumstances since the decision was taken to proceed with the restoration, with certain caveats, in March 2013; the relationship with the sole bidding contractor; the allocation of risk in such a complex and high-profile project; and options for operation of the restored locomotive.
- 7.3 **It was agreed** that the tender process be seen through to completion, with the final decision on proceeding to be put to the Board at the earliest opportunity, convening an extraordinary meeting if necessary.

PK**BT 6/13 8 Board of Survey: NMeM and NRM**

- 8.1 The papers that had been circulated previously were noted. LJ, Chairman of the Collections & Research Committee (CORE), stated that the papers had not been seen in that format at CORE, but that she had reviewed the proposed disposals carefully, was satisfied with the procedure and recommended that the Board endorse the CORE recommendations.
- 8.1.1 The Board approved the disposal and dispersal of candidates from the NMeM Board of Survey held on 20 March 2013 and the NRM Board of Survey held on 10 April 2013 as recommended in the papers.

BT 6/13 9 Railway Heritage Designation Recommendations

- 9.1 The paper that had been circulated previously was noted. This was the first occasion on which the Board was invited to approve recommendations for designation of railway items as national heritage made by its sub-committee, the Railway Heritage Designation Advisory Board (RHDAB). The background and impact of designation were briefly outlined, stressing that designation involved consultation with owners/custodians and that there were no financial implications for SMG.
- 9.2 **The Board approved** the designations as recommended in the paper.
- 9.3 A second paper was tabled at the meeting. This concerned a designated item that could not be located and appeared to have been disposed of inappropriately. **It was agreed** that the RHDAB should pursue the matter with the relevant authorities.

BT 3/13 11 Any Other Business

- 11.1 The Board congratulated the Executive for all the work that had gone into the strategic review, whilst keeping normal operations running well.

BT 3/13 12 Date of Next Meeting: TBC – the Strategy Day on 26 September had been cancelled and instead a business meeting of the Board was to be convened in September/October, to be held at the Science Museum, London. **The Board instructed that the date for this be confirmed as soon as possible.****HJ**

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