

HORNIMAN PUBLIC MUSEUM AND PUBLIC PARK TRUST

The Minutes of the Board meeting of the Horniman Public Museum and Public Park Trust held on Tuesday 15 December 2020.

This meeting was held virtually via Zoom conferencing.

Present

Eve Salomon

Caroline Cole

Geoff Crossick

Simon Hesketh

Nico Iacuzzi

Sarah Kemp

Clare Matterson

Mayowa Ochere

Carole Souter

Helen Williams

Nick Merriman (Chief Executive)

Paula Thomas (Board Secretary, Finance Director)

Victoria Pinnington (Director, Communications and Income Generation)

Kirsten Walker (Director, Collections Care and Estates)

1. Closed session

2. Apologies for absence and conflicts of interest

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Bunt Ghosh sent his apologies. No conflicts of interest were declared.

3. Minutes of the previous Board meeting and matters arising

3.1. The minutes of the Board meeting of 14 October 2020 were agreed as a true record.

3.2. Matters arising and action points

There were no matters arising or action points not covered by the agenda.

It was noted that the updated DCMS Code of conduct had been sent out to all trustees.

4. Management Report

The CEO reported that as London was moving into Tier 3 from midnight arrangements were being made to close the Museum from Wednesday, 16 December. The Gardens and Café will remain open (takeaways only). Staff are being put on furlough as previously. The next review of the tiers is scheduled for 30 December but as it seems unlikely that London will move out of Tier 3 so quickly the earliest we are planning to open is 4 January.

The Chair asked the Finance Director about the effect on budgets. Although it is too early to say the effect is not expected to be significant as December/January are traditionally quiet months and the CJRS grant should cover lost income.

A couple of matters were considered in further detail before reviewing the report in general.

IT Review

An update was provided by the Finance Director on the IT review:

De-carbonisation scheme

The Director, Collections Care and Estates introduced the paper which had been circulated regarding a bid to the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme.

Trustees were asked to consider the use of £200k of Reserves to make the bid compliant and enable resubmission before the deadline on 11 January 2021.

The bid was put together with our advisors Harley Haddow and advice was also taken from Salix, the company administering the scheme. It will help the Horniman move forward with its aim of being carbon neutral by 2040.

Trustees noted that the air source heat pumps provided a very different type of heat, which required good building insulation to be effective. They were concerned that without the secondary double glazing and amendments to radiators the heating wouldn't be sufficient. They agreed that the additional spend of c£50k would also be essential if this was progressed.

There was also a question as to whether air source heat pumps were the best way forward. Management explained that although advice had been taken from Harley Haddow, it would be useful to have a peer review before going ahead with the proposals. It was agreed that it would also be beneficial to find out if there were any other buildings similar to ours which had done something similar and find out how it had worked for them. It would also be good to revisit the advice in relation to the Energy Centre.

Trustees asked for information on how much carbon would be saved in relation to our overall current amount generated and how the planned reduction fitted into the overall scheme to reach zero-carbon by 2040 e.g. what is the planned reduction per annum. Once this information has been emailed to them they will decide whether the bid can be resubmitted.

They agreed to consider the use of reserves as part of the overall use of reserves under agenda item 7.

Other comments on Management Report

- How did the schools pilot virtual session go?
The session was a good opportunity to sort out some technical issues for both the Horniman and the school. Otherwise it went well and several more have been done since with more planned. A teachers panel is planned for the new year to consider topics for further sessions for offsite, onsite and virtual. The pandemic has caused the rethinking of the schools programme. Some digital literacy training has also been rolled out.
- What particular area were causing challenges in relation to visitor behaviour?

Reports from other visitor attractions suggest it isn't as bad at the Horniman. The behaviour is generally around mask wearing and having to book tickets, which comes mostly from members. There have been some Covid deniers and some leafleting. On the whole it hasn't been a major issue but front of house staff are tired and have become very anxious with less resilience to deal with any problems.

Trustees noted that the management report reads like there is so much going on despite the pandemic and praised staff for their innovation in adapting to the challenges.

Annex 1 Management accounts

Trustees reviewed these documents and agreed that they were clear and required no further comment.

Annex 2 Key decision points for trustees in 2021

Trustees asked about the ACE business plan and whether 18 March was too late for trustees to see it for the first time. The CEO responded that the deadline for submission was the end of March and that ACE were only expecting a light touch plan. The discussion at the February board meeting (an additional meeting agreed by the Chair and CEO – see agenda item 7) will shape the business plan and outline the main changes. In terms of the next NPO bid ACE aren't looking for us to deviate too much.

Trustees also asked about the CSR timetable for next year. January to March is the only information currently available.

The CEO commented that it would be good to populate the timetable with other topics that the trustees would like to include. The Chair and other trustees indicated that it would be good to have a broader discussion on what the role of a museum is going forward, particularly for a museum like the Horniman with living collections. It was agreed that the Chair and CEO would have a conversation about the best time to have this discussion.

It was noted that it would be good to see the roadmap for decarbonisation earlier in the year.

5. Risk Register

The risk register was reviewed by the Board who made the following comments:

- B8 – why has this risk, relating to reputation due to claims for restitution, increased? The CEO explained that this was due to the strong public reaction to such issues this year. Raising our head above the parapet will further increase the risk. The Chair commented that the risk could be mitigated by getting advice from our lawyers and that she would get involved in this.
- B12 – it was noted that this risk in relation to the slow running of the web shop had also increased. The Secretary updated the Board on the current position: the webshop is running but still appears to be very slow at some times of the day which appears to be due to demand. This issue is not quite so urgent now

that the Museum is closed again but in the meantime IT are looking into whether the issues lies with the server and if a new one needs to be set up.

6. Lewisham Town Centre

The CEO provided a verbal update on the possible opportunity of the Horniman being offered a space to relocate its stored collections and have an exhibition space in a development which is being considered for Lewisham Town Centre.

The trustees viewed this as a potentially exciting opportunity for the Horniman to part of a model which might be an example for other town centres. There is currently a lot of interest in town centres and the introduction of any cultural activity on the High Street could lead to high Government interest. It has some resemblance to the V&A at the Olympic Park and it was suggested that it would be worth talking to them.

7. Update on future planning scenarios

The CEO presented the paper which had been circulated to trustees. As explained in the paper our financial position next year depends very much on how much, if any, COVID relief we receive. DCMS are in the process of trying to secure funding from Treasury at a similar level to the current year and are committed to letting us know a decision by mid-January. This will have a clear bearing on plans for next year and it's difficult to make any decisions until the outcome is known.

The Chair commented that we were fortunate to have a good level of Reserves which have been built up for a 'rainy day'. This is the 'rainy day' and time to use them. However trustees need to agree a minimum level of reserves that they think appropriate to maintain. The Reserves paper submitted to the July meeting included £400k to be set aside for the pandemic. Using this would leave £700k which she suggest is held as the minimum level of free reserves. This was supported by other trustees.

The comments and suggestions proposed by management in relation to the level of redundancy offered were accepted by trustees.

It was agreed that both the decarbonisation spend and restructuring costs should be considered as 'spend to save' initiatives and communicated as such to relevant bodies.

Trustees asked if revenue budgets had been looked at as well as salary costs as part of the deficit reduction plans. Management confirmed that all revenue budgets had been carefully looked at but that most were very small and there was little room cuts following previous years of austerity and the need to make efficiency savings. It was agreed to hold a special meeting of trustees in February to review and agree deficit reduction plans in the light of the announcement of

next year's COVID support plans. The Chair suggested that there should also be a discussion on what the future role of the museum should be.

8. Audit Committee

8.1 Minutes of the meeting on 17 November 2020

The Audit Committee Chair, presented the minutes of the last meeting:

It was noted that the Audit Committee will have a discussion on 'risk appetite' at the next meeting, led by the internal auditors and will bring this back to March Board meeting.

There had been a good discussion on training and inductions and both external and internal audit had offered their support on this. It was noted that this would be useful as two new committee members will be required in October.

8.2 Appointment of auditors

The Board accepted the Audit Committee's recommendation of the reappointment of Moore Kingston Smith as the external auditors following a retendering exercise.

9. Capital Projects Board

9.1 Minutes of the meeting on 11 November 2020

The Chair of the Capital Projects Board, presented the minutes of the last meeting:

The larger issues have already been covered. Other smaller issues are moving ahead on time and within budget.

The Chair of trustees asked about the future of the Nature in Love project and whether there were any options for scaling it down. The CEO reported that the NHMF have clarified their larger grants scheme and a bid will be submitted after looking to reduce some costs. This will be brought back to March meeting.

10. Strategies and Policies

10.1 Repatriation policy

The CEO presented the policy paper:

In the light of the Benin claim and a growing awareness of other possible claims it was felt important to have such a policy in place. Our partners have similar policies in place on their website. The paper is couched in plain language for this purpose.

It was agreed that the CEO would redraft the policy in conjunction with the Chair. In relation to the Benin Bronzes claim it was agreed that this should not be rushed and that all the necessary evidence should be obtained before going public. It should be brought back to the trustees in March. Community expectations would be managed by keeping them informed of the process. The CEO confirmed that they weren't expecting any immediate action.

11. Digital

This agenda item was deferred until the next meeting.

12. AOB

The Audit Committee Chair reported back from a DCMS Audit Chairs meeting which she had recently attended:

DCMS are issuing a new Framework document to all ALBs before Christmas.

These will give greater strategic oversight to DCMS. DCMS are also planning to have greater involvement in Chair's appraisals.

Some concern was expressed about the potential reduction of some Museum freedoms.

There was no other business.

13. Dates of future meetings

February 2021 (tba)

1pm 18 March 2021

10am 9 July 2021

10am-4pm Away day 14 October 2021

1pm 9 December 2021

Minutes ref:	Action	Date due	Who by	Progress
4	Hold conversation on timing of best time for discussion on 'future role of the museum'	Feb 21	ES/NM	
4	Send figures on carbon savings and fit in overall reduction plan to trustees	Jan 21	KW	
7	Arrange additional Board Meeting for Feb 21	Jan 21	PT	
9	Bring NiL bid to Board.	March 21	NM	
10	Repatriation policy to be redrafted and sent to lawyers	Feb 21	NM/ES	