

HORNIMAN PUBLIC MUSEUM AND PUBLIC PARK TRUST

The Minutes of the Board meeting of the Horniman Public Museum and Public Park Trust held at the Horniman Museum Tuesday 6 December 2022

Present

Michael Salter-Church (Chair)
Eva Appelbaum
Caroline Cole
Roma Dibua
Bunt Ghosh

Simon Hesketh
Nico Iacuzzi
Carole Souter
Helen Williams
Mayowa Ochere

Nick Merriman (Chief Executive)
Paula Thomas (Board Secretary, Director, Finance and Corporate Services)
Victoria Pinnington (Director, Communications and Income Generation)
Kirsten Walker (Director, Collections Care and Estates)

1. Apologies for absence and conflicts of interest

All trustees were present.

No new conflicts of interest were declared.

2. Minutes of the previous Board meeting and matters arising

2.1. The minutes of the AGM, Board meeting and Away day of 13 October 2022 were agreed as a true record, subject to recording apologies of Nico Iacuzzi and Eva Appelbaum for the Away day.

2.2. All action points had been completed, are covered by this agenda or due for completion by the next meeting.

3. Management report

The CEO presented the Management report for October to December 2022:

Trustees raised the following comments/queries:

- *Schools only gave out 84 out of 1000 free tickets over the summer. Was this considered satisfactory?* We are currently reviewing how these are distributed. There are plans to change it to a general admission ticket to enable access to any exhibition. It will also be expanded to 2,500 going forward.
- *Was Halloween as wonderful as it sounded?* It was sold out weeks in advance due to a restricted capacity. Overall it was a good day with only a few grumbles from people who didn't get tickets. There was a slight issue as children were free and so adults were bringing more. These will be bookable in future. We are also looking at how to make the event more sustainable in the future. It was profitable but we are looking at how we can increase it further by expanding food and beverage.
- *Fundraising looks positive but it was difficult to see if anything is coming through.* There will be more information and metrics in the next management report.
- *The legacy from should be recognised e.g. a bench in the gardens with a plaque or a celebration event.* It was agreed to wait until the rest of the legacy came through and meanwhile management and trustees would consider the most appropriate way to do this. **It was agreed that the legacy should be designated to Nature + Love.**

- *Have we managed to get a trade account with Lego?* No, but an arrangement has been made to buy Lego from a local supplier, although this would give a lower margin. Eva informed the Board that she had a contact in Lego and would ask if a trade account could be arranged. It might also be an opportunity to get someone from Lego to the exhibition.
- *Why didn't Cats and Dogs perform so well?* The theme isn't as popular with our audience.
- *Events on the back of the Benin success should be considered.* Our current focus/priority for fundraising has to be Nature + Love. However consideration of how to take advantage of the current success in some other way will be given.
- *Ethnicity doesn't seem to be converting from special events to general visitors.* Quarterly figures can be misleading but need to be monitored.
- *Is the move towards more online sales putting some people off who aren't so technologically minded?* More tickets are being made available via Community Engagement groups.
- *Visitor research contract retendering – what does it cover?* It is a consortium which includes other museums and is good for benchmarking as well as value for money.
- *Thanks were expressed to Claire Robinson, the Volunteering Manager, who is retiring shortly.*

Management accounts for the seven months to 31 October 2022 were reviewed by the Board and the position noted. Comments were raised that the café had become expensive and unaffordable for some of our audiences. Management have brought this to their attention and recently turned down requests to agree a new menu with higher prices.

4. Risk register

The Board reviewed the updated risk register. It was noted that four risks had reduced rather than three noted in the summary. The Secretary reported that although the risk of a data breach was red this was largely due to the cybersecurity risk and there had been no reportable incidents. Once the recommendations from the cybersecurity report had been carried out both these risks would reduce.

5. Audit Committee

Roma presented the minutes of the meeting on 22 November 2022.

The internal audit programme is progressing to plan. Two reviews were carried out during the period: Staff Wellbeing and Development which obtained a Green/Amber rating and Collections Management which obtained an Amber rating. The latter is lower than usual largely due to policies and procedures being out of date. However internal audit confirmed that best practice was being followed. The weaknesses highlight an underlying resourcing issue. The cybersecurity audit had a lot of recommendations but was reassuring overall. Many of the recommendations rely on a lot of time to implement and the underlying resourcing issue was again highlighted. The Committee recommended that the IT team concentrate on priority 1 issues and consider the use of volunteers where appropriate. It was noted that the pension fund valuation had resulted in increased contributions but that the cash lump sum was no longer required as the fund is now in surplus. The result is approximately neutral but could be improved if the Covenant grading can be improved by DCMS giving us a guarantee. This will be followed up by management.

A near-miss Health and Safety had been brought to the Committee. This has been investigated and will be followed up by the H&S Committee.

6. Capital Project Board (CPB)

Caroline presented the minutes of the meeting on 10 October 2022.

Nature + Love was the major topic of the meeting. It is progressing to programme. Consultations have been held with neighbours and no major issues have emerged. Costs are currently over budget but the NLHF have confirmed that they will cover the inflation element. The rest is largely due to the desirable AV elements which we are reluctant to cut. NLHF have also said they don't want us to compromise on quality.

DCMS have confirmed just over £500k in additional funding to cover various projects including £350k for works on paths around the site.

The report on the SCC was reassuring, so there is less pressure in finding an immediate solution and we can take our time in considering future options. Simon felt the site might be attractive to Last Mile distribution businesses and will explore further possibilities once the Horniman storage specification is confirmed.

It was noted that some tenders are going out this week which will need trustees' approval via email.

7. Financial deficit reduction

Nick Merriman summarised the forecast deficit position for 2023/24 and the following two years. These are based on various assumptions around inflation and wage increases. The current reserves position was noted.

Points to note are:

- New income e.g. soft play and Kinder café has been included, but a new Commercial Coordinator is due to start in the new year so other income generating activities will continue to be sought.
- Sectional budgets for 2023/24 will shortly be reviewed by management and this will give a better position of any other measure that are necessary to reduce the deficit for this year to an acceptable level.

The Chair and Chief Executive recently met with DCMS to discuss the financial position.

Points to note:

- The Museums Exhibition Tax relief – the sunset clause was due to end in March 2024 but is now likely to be extended. The amounts for the next three years have been forecast and now included to reduce the deficits.
- In relation to reserves they usually recommend at least three months expenditure cover and therefore consider the Horniman's a bit low. This is a possible area they can look to help with.
- The NPO replacement funding will be confirmed in January. It needs to be found from DCMS' own allocation.
- We need a strong business case to demonstrate ongoing additional support.

Trustees raised the following queries/comments:

- *Have we considered increasing pricing in certain areas i.e. a nuanced approach?* A pricing review has recently been carried out and prices increased where considered appropriate. Other museums haven't increased their prices much as they are still in recovery mode from covid and not getting the same footfall.
- *Have we considered getting sponsorship for the Butterfly House, Animal Walk, Aquarium?* Fundraising is lacking sufficient resources to do this kind of thing. It was

suggested that trustees approach their networks to ask for sponsors. Eva agreed to speak to her contacts and introduce them to Nick.

- *Do we need a Fundraising Committee?* It was agreed that this would be left to management to decide if this would be helpful.
- *What about increasing the volunteer base?* We are doing this where we can and over a period of time as care needs to be taken not to replace paid roles.
- *Is the Butterfly House sustainable? If we had a lot of money would we want to keep it?* Yes if we invested in a heat pump to make it environmentally sustainable.

The Chief Executive concluded the discussions by recommending that no drastic measures should be taken at this stage until there was more certainty around some assumptions and more was known about any help that DCMS could provide. A draft budget will be presented at the January meeting with options to fund any deficit for 2023/24. The position will then be monitored in 2023/24 and any underlying deficit identified for which more severe measures are required.

8. Staff presentation

Cookie Rameder, the Visitor Experience Manager gave a presentation on the work of the Front of House team.

9. AOB

There was no other business.

Minutes ref:	Action	Date due	Who by	Progress
b/f	Marketing Manager to attend meeting Comments on dashboard to be considered and dashboard updated as appropriate. Provide an update on how we evaluation fundraising.	Jan 23	VP	Done -Item 10
		Jan 23	PT	Done -Item 4
		Jan 23	VP	Verbal update on proposal at meeting
3	Enquire about Lego trade contract. HME to review and report back on catering options.	Jan 23	EA	EA to feedback
		Jan 23	NI	Item 7
4.	Follow up pension fund guarantee with DCMS	Jan 23	PT/NM	Verbal update at meeting
6.	Confirm storage requirements.	Jan 23	KW	Done and given to SH
7.	Approach contacts re possible sponsorship Draft budget to be brought to next meeting.	Jan 23	EA	EA to feedback
		Jan 23	NM/PT	Done – item 9