

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 26 January 2023.

Present

Michael Salter-Church (Chair)
Roma Dibua
Bunt Ghosh
Simon Hesketh

Nico Iacuzzi (items 7-9)
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

Apologies were received from Caroline Cole and Eva Appelbaum.

No new conflicts of interest were declared.

2. Nature + Love Presentation

The following members of the Project team gave a presentation on the current status of the Project:

Florence Andrews, Focus Consultants, project Manager
Fergus Feilden, Feilden Fowles, Lead Architect
Neil Davidson, J&L Gibbons, Landscape Architect
Mhairi Naismith, Studio MB, Exhibition Designer

The CEO reminded the Board that although there are three elements it is important to remember that it is one integrated project with the overall aims of diversifying audiences and engaging visitors positively with climate change action.

The team presented the three elements:

- **Nature Explorers Adventure Zone**
Trustees raised comments/provided feedback on the position of the toilet block, the number of internal covers (30-40), storage of furniture when not in use, bins. The team/management confirmed that these were all still being discussed.
- **Sustainable Gardening Zone**
It was noted that most of the area would be public facing but that there was a work space/private area and a semi-private area that would be visible and open to the public/groups at certain times. Trustees asked about the type of materials being used and it was noted that these would be recycled where possible.
- **Natural History Gallery**
In relation to the exhibition trustees asked whether the murals and projections were permanent or could easily be changed. If the latter then the costs would need to be built into future budgets. It was noted that the murals are intended to be semi-permanent as they would be costly to replace but the projections could be changed more easily as this would only involve the software, however there would be a cost. There were also concerns about the ongoing cost of the projections. Management

confirmed that we would be using high spec, low energy equipment and that the overall energy costs of the gallery overall should reduce when the roof insulation was taken into account. Trustees questioned the use of AR and VR when technology is changing so rapidly. Management confirmed that there was an overall Digital Strategy for the Gallery.

Budget: The Project Manager reported that the Project is now at the end of RIBA3 with the technical design still to come. There was a meeting with the NLHF last week and they were pleased with progress. Costs estimates are currently £1.4m over budget. This has been reduced to £1.2m after value engineering. The overrun includes £426k of additional inflation, which NLHF have already said they would cover, with the remaining £774k representing additional costs including the projections and a bigger café. This was discussed with the NLHF and their steer was to put the bid in with these costs and ask for the additional amount.

Fundraising: The CEO informed the meeting that we are planning to submit on 23 February 2023 and at this stage are looking for the Board's endorsement of where we are. Fundraising is not as far as we would usually expect with only c£200k of the £1.6m raised to date. The three largest prospects all want planning permission or a Stage 2 pass to be in place before they will commit. However we are seeking letters of support from them and hope to have raised £1.25m by the end of the year but not by June when the decision will be made. The NLHF will want reassurance that the remaining £1.4m can be raised. This may need to be underwritten from reserves. Trustees asked about the running costs post completion of the project. Kirsten reported that a Management and Maintenance Plan is currently being worked on. A business plan is also being prepared for each area.

The Board confirmed that they were happy with the designs and budgets. It was agreed that management would circulate a fundraising plan to trustees including a time line and the amount that needed to be underwritten for approval prior to submission on 23 February.

3. Minutes of the previous Board meeting and matters arising

3.1. The minutes of the Board meeting of 6 December 2022 were agreed as a true record.

3.2. The following updates were given on the action points:

- Evaluation on Fundraising – the Head of Fundraising has been discussing a suitable analysis with Helen Williams. This has still to be finalised but would give a RAG rating for particular bids, capture targets, include lessons learnt, return on investment and risks. Management are looking at producing something that works but isn't cumbersome to produce.
- EA had feedback via email that she had contacted her contact at Lego and they were trying to find someone to help but had heard nothing further. She had also invited her contact to the event in March and sent the sponsorship pack to see if there was any interest.
- EA had also fed back that she had had a meeting with the Head of Fundraising to discuss corporate sponsorship. She has followed up with some action points.
- LPFA – the Secretary reported that DCMS were being helpful in trying to put together the necessary letter for the LPFA. However it was felt unlikely that they would be able to produce something that would amount to a guarantee which is required to enable the Horniman's covenant grading to be increased to A.

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

4. Management report

The CEO presented the Management report for December 2022 to January 2023.

The **Benefactors event 31 March 2023** was highlighted. Trustees were invited to come and bring anyone they considered suitable. It is targeting family audiences with the aim of converting members to Benefactors. The Chair encouraged trustees to attend and considered that they were joint hosts. It was agreed that management would circulate an information pack to trustees when available and that trustees should notify fundraising of anyone they specifically wanted to invite so that they could be sent an invite to pass on. It was also suggested that high net worth individuals could be targeted and with a possible dinner after the event.

Safeguarding: The Board agreed to appoint the Chair as their designated Safeguarding Lead.

Dashboard: The Board reviewed the dashboard and noted that things are going in the right direction. In particular visitor numbers are almost back to their previous levels which indicates that there was still a need for a new Entrance as set out in the Framework Plan and that this would soon need to be revisited.

Management accounts: The Board reviewed the management accounts to 31 December 2022. The results of the January reforecast have not been finalised but an initial review indicates that the position will be similar to the August reforecast. The Secretary reported on the ongoing problems in recruiting suitable staff for the finance team which was causing problems across the organisation.

5. Risk register

The Board reviewed the updated risk register. It was noted that the cyber security risk is still high and would remain so until the recommendations of the cybersecurity audit had been fully implemented. It was agreed that this would need to be kept under review by the Board.

6. Capital Project Board (CPB)

Simon presented a summary of the meeting on 18 January 2023.

The meeting had largely focused on the N+L project and had been satisfied with progress.

The other significant capital projects are reaching a critical stage as they need to be completed by 31 March 2023 in line with DCMS funding. There is quite a bit of risk and the team are quite burdened but currently managing the projects well. The Conservatory in particular is a large project which is weather dependent.

Trustees discussed the Path Project tender report and the additional costs. It was felt that it was likely that these could be met from other underspends in the next three months and the Board agreed to proceed with the appointment of Blakedown Landscapes.

7. Horniman Museum Enterprises

Nico provided a verbal report on the Board meeting which took place on 20 January 2023:

The position overall is healthy and positive. Net profit was c£274k for the nine months to 31 December which is close to the original target of £277k. The last quarter is expected to be good as usual with the launch of a new exhibition at February half term. The Café and Shop have both performed strongly.

Concerns over pricing and customer feedback were raised at a meeting with the Café. Overall their response was largely positive but the Board considers that it is time to look at retendering the contract with a view to identifying if the current providers are still the best option. The level of sophistication in the business is low as illustrated by their response to inflationary pressures which has resulted in increased prices and poor service, both of which jar with the Horniman ethos and are bad for business long term. The plan is to retender in the next twelve months. The current contract doesn't expire until 2029 but our lawyers have confirmed that it can be terminated with six months' notice. Further legal advice needs to be taken in this area as there is a slight risk of the current providers claiming tenancy rights which could make it more complex and confrontational. There could also be a cost in respect of compensation for previous capital investments and also a risk of TUPE. In addition the current providers could make it very difficult for new operators. They haven't yet been informed that we are considering retendering. At present they have only been told about the customer dissatisfaction. They would like to invest in a new counter but have been told that they need to tighten up on services, pricing and financial reporting before the HME Board will consider this further. Meanwhile the management team are taking the opportunity to informally speak to other operators to come and get their opinion on the operation.

The CEO explained that there was a need to act now in order to be ready for the Kinder Café as it was felt unlikely that the current provider would be able to scale up and two operators would be difficult to manage. The option of the Horniman taking the business on had also been dismissed on the grounds that it was not its core business and would involve too much additional work and risk.

Trustees asked where venue hire and plans to offer a mid-range offer fitted in. Management confirmed that it would be included in the tender.

It was agreed that retendering sounded the right approach but that the situation needed careful management and communication.

8. Disposals

The following disposals were approved by the Board:

- DO2022.1 zither and autoharp
- DO2022.2 fireback
- DO2022.3 whistle; ocarina
- DO2022.4 bead
- DO2023.1 communication artefacts, pipe, asbestos sample, pipe lagging

9. Corporate Plan 2023-26 and budget 2023-24

The CEO explained that the aim was for the Board to make comments on the draft and then sign it off. The current plan is largely an update on previous years with the detail from page four.

Trustees made the following comments:

- Goal setting – it was good to see that the Horniman is recovering more rapidly than expected. This brings risks as mentioned in item 4 and so it would be good to revisit the Framework Plan.
- Who is the audience for this? *It used to go to ACE but won't in the future as we're no longer an NPO. DCMS don't require it. It goes on the website and is used as an advocacy document.*

- Why haven't we signposted 125 years of the Horniman in 2026? *This falls in June, outside this Corporate Planning period but we will need to start planning in 2025.*
- How do we manage the intersectionality of targets? *Nick Budden will pick this up during his presentation.* Older age groups aren't specifically referred to e.g. dementia groups. Are we linking work around communities and the environment to local council objectives? *We are working closely with Lewisham Council on this.*
- Can we clarify what the goal of the digital community is? Having targets are helpful, but what are we aiming to achieve? Is this for awareness and brand building - with the goal being to convert to in person visits? Or, do we consider it as an alternate form of reach? For example - digital engagement with young people on TikTok would be recognised as an alternate form of delivering education and engagement, on par with young people visiting the museum? Also, would these vary by social platform? (eg. the goal for TikTok would be education and engagement with young people, whereas for Instagram and Twitter is ultimately to try to increase footfall). (comment via email from EA)
- Are there enough procedures around monitoring targets? *This is done via the new Impact report which is reviewed quarterly by senior management. KPIs could be put at the end of the Corporate Plan as well for clarity.*

The Board signed off the Corporate Plan subject to amendments arising from the comments made.

Budget: The Secretary presented the budget for 2023-24 along with forecasts for 2024-25 and 2025-26. Since preparing the budget there has been a government announcement of an Energy Discount Scheme for various organisations. It is estimated that this should reduce bills and the deficit by around £79k. As the situation around the pension scheme is still unresolved no account has been taken into account of any possible reduction in contributions (c£35k). It was noted that the forecast income from HME might not be achievable given the intentions regarding the café described above. There is still a lot of uncertainty about energy prices and inflation going forward so at this stage no specific action was being proposed to reduce the underlying deficit. Management suggested the use of reserves to cover the deficit in 2023-24 and then review future years later in the year.

The Board approved the budget for 2023-24 with the use of reserves to cover the deficit for that year.

10. Staff presentation

Nick Budden, the Marketing and Communications Manager gave a presentation on Audience segmentation.

11. AOB

The Secretary gave advance warning that the Framework Agreement with DCMS would need approval via email once DCMS had agreed the final draft with Treasury.

There was no other business.

Minutes ref:	Action	Date due	Who by	Progress

2.	Fundraising plan including timeline and proposed use of reserves to be circulated to trustees.	Before Feb 23	NM/VP	
4.	Let Management know of anyone they think should be invited to the Benefactors event	Feb/March	ALL	
	Information pack to be sent to trustees re Benefactors event	Feb/March	VP	
	Post event dinner to be considered for high net worth individuals.	Feb/March	NM/MSC	
6.	Update for Trustees' comments. Include KPIs at end of CP		VP	