

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 19 October 2023.

Present

Michael Salter-Church (Chair)
Eva Appelbaum
Caroline Cole

Nico Iacuzzi
Mayowa Ochere
Carole Souter (via video)

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. Closed session

Content to be provided by Chair

2. Apologies for absence and conflicts of interest

Apologies were received from Roma Dibua, Bunt Ghosh and Simon Hesketh

No new conflicts of interest were declared.

3. Report on board skills audit and future trustee recruitment

As only one complete skills audit questionnaire and Board appraisal had been submitted to date it was agreed that it was difficult to discuss at this meeting. The Chair noted that the skills audit is important to feed into the recruitment for the DCMS trustees which will begin in November. **It was agreed that the Secretary would re-circulate the questionnaire and give a two week deadline for completion.**

The Chair reported that he had spoken to the new person responsible for public appointments at DCMS and they were intending to shorten the process, aiming to complete in 3-6 months. The plan is for the advert to go out mid to late November for an initial four weeks with a two week extension if few responses. Sifting would be done by the interview panel members: the Chair, DCMS Deputy Director and an independent member, with interviews in January. DCMS hope to complete the process before a potential General Election date in May 2024. If the process was either unsuccessful or interrupted then extension of terms would need to be considered.

The outcome of the recent Board Apprentice recruitment is still awaited.

Suggestions for skills required for DCMS board members were: experience in capital projects; fundraising – a high net worth individual who would donate and encourage others or someone with connections; local engagement e.g. local authority experience; commercial – someone who understands the need to balance service to visitors with income generation; music – someone who can link to young people and performance. It was also emphasized that diversity was a key issue, particularly disability.

4. Minutes of the previous Board meeting and matters arising

4.1. The minutes of the Board meeting of 13 July 2023 were agreed as a true record.

4.2. One DBS check and two Safeguarding training certificates are outstanding. The Chair reminded the Board of the importance of these.

All other action points had been completed or are not yet due.

4.3. Following the tour of the Gardens after the last meeting it was suggested that some form of thanks/recognition should be made by the Chair.

There were no other matters arising.

5. Management report

The CEO presented the Management report for July to September 2023 and provided feedback from the staff sessions on values and behaviours held in September. SMT had reviewed the responses from the sessions and got a sense of the most common words. They will now all be put into a word cloud but it is likely that the results will be rather generic so the next challenge will be to develop appropriate words which differentiate the Horniman from other institutions.

The Board further discussed a way of recognising/thanking individual members of staff or teams for particularly good contributions during the year. After some discussion including the importance of not forgetting those who worked hard in the background on a regular basis, it was agreed that the Chair would send a message to all staff to thank them for all their excellent work over the recent period, and a special thanks for the team involved with the Tea exhibition. Paula will supply contact details.

There was a lengthy discussion on visitor diversity targets and performance against these. It was agreed that there should be a deep dive on these at the February meeting.

The Board asked about the magnitude of losses referred to re some Events and it was agreed that in future any such losses should be quantified along with recommendations.

The Board reviewed the management accounts for the quarter and noted that the budget is on target overall with no current concerns. The budget reforecast is in line with expectations with an increase in deficit due to the pay offer which the Board had previously agreed to cover from reserves. Commercial areas are currently performing above budget thanks to Soft Play and other income is holding up despite the economic situation. Costs are being closely monitored.

Trustees also reviewed the Dashboard for the year.

The Performance Indicator results for 2022-23 were also reviewed. Trustees asked for an update on the high level of staff turnover at the next meeting.

6. Risk register

The Board reviewed the risk register and agreed the three new risks. It was also agreed to include a risk on the possible impact of the Israel-Hamas conflict.

7. Horniman Museum Enterprises

Feedback was provided from the meeting on 13 October. Commercially the team is doing well and the results are above expectations.

In relation to the café contract and the position regarding the current operator, a detailed opinion is awaited from our lawyers but they have confirmed that the retender can go ahead, which means that it still fits within the planned timeframe. The café is still operating well but remains a financial and reputational risk.

8. Capital Project Board (CPB)

Trustees noted the minutes of the meeting on 21 September 2023.

The renewal of the CUE Roof is now in progress. As previously reported this contract is over the amount funded by DCMS with the additional amount approved by trustees to be funded from reserves.

Four tenders have just been received for the lift contract. These will be evaluated next week but two are within budget. It could be an issue completing this project by 31 March 2024 but more will be known next week.

The contract for repair of the Sunken Gardens was appointed and is now underway. The outcome of the bid to the DCMS Infrastructure fund is still awaited.

The Chair reported that planning permission has now been received for Nature + Love and the Stage 4 designs are going ahead.

9. Waramungu repatriation

The Board approved the draft S106 application to the Charity Commission and the draft Board minute.

10. Options for CUE and Entrance

The CEO presented base and enhanced options for both CUE and the Main Entrance. The Board were basically happy with the enhanced option for CUE but agreed that further work was needed on the Main Entrance to decide what were the priorities that would help future proof the Museum.

In terms of timing it was likely that this would be a two phase project with plans to approach the Clore Foundation for funds for the former and the latter to be part of a submission for the next CSR.

Trustees approved the use of up to £100k from the Development Fund to develop these plans further to RIBA Stage 2.

11. Horniman 125 anniversary in 2026

It was suggested that this be an interview question for the new CEO.

The Board agreed that any events should be forward looking as well as looking back. Opportunities around fundraising were suggested.

It was noted that the Nature+Love project would culminate in 2026 and so would be part of the celebrations. A 'Creative Brief' is currently being put together to send out to agencies for ideas.

It was agreed that trustees would let management know of any ideas of ways of marking this anniversary.

12. AOB

There was no other business.

Minutes ref:	Action	Date due	Who by	Progress
b/f	Add local population data to visitor reports for comparison	July 24	VP	
3	Re-circulate skills audit and board appraisal Complete skills audit and board appraisal	asap 3 Nov	PT ALL	
4.1	Chase outstanding safeguarding training and DBS checks	Nov 23	MSC	
5	SMT to highlight staff to be thanked each quarter Visitor diversity targets to be added to agenda for next meeting Update of level of staff t/o	Quarterly Feb Feb	SMT PT PT	
6	Include Israel-Hamas conflict risk in risk register	Oct	PT	
11	Notify management of any ideas re 125 anniversary events		ALL	