

THE BRITISH MUSEUM
MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
HELD ON 17TH NOVEMBER 2005
AT
THE BRITISH MUSEUM

PRESENT

Sir John Boyd (Chairman)	Baroness Kennedy QC
Chief Emeka Anyaoku	The Hon Philip Lader
Mr Hasan Askari	Mrs Edmée P Leventis
Lord Broers	Mr David Lindsay
Sir Ronald Cohen	Mr David Norgrove
Professor Barry Cunliffe	Mr Eric Salama
Miss Val Gooding	Sir Keith Thomas
Ms Bonnie Greer	Sir John Tusa

Apologies had been received from, Mr Francis Finlay, Mr Stephen Green, Dr Olga Kennard, Mr Richard Lambert, Mr Tom Phillips, Lord Powell and Mr Vikram Seth.

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr Neil MacGregor	- The Director
Ms Dawn Austwick	- Deputy Director Resources
Dr Andrew Burnett	- Deputy Director Collections
Dr Christopher Herring	- Director of Finance
Mr Tony Doubleday	- Head of Legal Services
Mr Arthur Walford	- Acting Temporary Board Secretary
For Item number 3.1	- Peter Clennell, Trade Union Side Chairman Chris Terrey, Trade Union Side Secretary
For Item number 6.3	- Carolyn Marsden-Smith, Head of Exhibitions Philip Marshall, Head of Commercial Unit
For Item number 6.4	- Simon Neale, Head of Projects Ian Ritchie, Ian Ritchie Architects Ltd
For Item number 7.7	- John Curtis, Keeper: Ancient Near East Department

The reports and minutes referred to below may contain exempt information within the meaning of Part II of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

PRELIMINARY – CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

- 10.1 No conflicts of interest were declared
- 10.2 The Board noted that the British Museum had been requested to loan certain items to an exhibition at The South Bank organised by a company controlled by Professor Martin Kemp, a former trustee. Professor Kemp had declared his interest at the material time and it had been taken into account in approving the loan, which had been for an exhibition the Museum was properly able to support. The Trustees agreed formally to record Professor Kemp's proper and timely declaration.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

- 11.3 *Berlin*. On behalf of the Board, the Chairman thanked the Director for the excellent arrangements made for the Board's previous meeting in Berlin.
- 11.4 *China*. The Chairman was pleased to note the progress, referred to in the Director's management report, on the broad 5-10 year strategy vis-à-vis China.
- 11.5 *The Feldmann Claim*. The Chairman was pleased to note the very substantial progress that had been made towards the resolution of the claim. He thanked those Trustees who had met with the claimants' former representatives to aid in its resolution.
- 11.6 *Museum in Britain Programme*. The Chairman observed that the programme appeared to be developing well.

BRITISH MUSEUM CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

- 12.1 *Pay and Grading*. Mr Clennell said that discussions about pay and grading had progressed well and an understanding had been arrived at with Museum Management, for which the concurrence of HM Treasury would be required. Dr Herring said that subject to Treasury approval the proposed agreement could be accommodated within present budgets.
- 12.2 *Facilities Management*. Consultations on the out-sourcing of Facilities Management had been constructive, although there were concerns arising in connection with the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations that remained to be resolved.
- 12.3 Board Members were pleased to hear that the working relationship between management and the Trades Unions was continuing to develop constructively.

MINUTES

- 13.1 *Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Trustees: 29th September 2005*
The Minutes were approved and the Chairman was authorized to sign them as a true record.

MATTERS ARISING

- 14.1 *The Feldmann Claim.* The Director reported that jointly proposed terms for the settlement of the claim were about to be submitted to the Spoliation Advisory Panel for its independent consideration.
- 14.2 *Inscribed Stele.* The Director referred to the questions raised about an inscribed Stele vested in the collection (minute 6.2.1; 29 September 2005). There being no reason to believe it had been improperly exported from Turkey, and the object having been published on many occasions in the last eighty years with no comment or claim from the Turkish authorities, there could be no legitimate doubt about the Museum's title to it.
- 14.3 *AGM – British Museum Company Ltd.* Mr Norgrove, as Chairman of BMCo Ltd, reported upon the annual general meeting of BMCo Ltd, held immediately preceding the present Board meeting. A deficit within the Company's final salary pension scheme seemed likely; further advice was being taken. Mr Norgrove anticipated that he would have a conflict of interest in the matter and would therefore need to resign as Chairman and as a director of the company.

MATTERS REQUIRING BOARD APPROVAL

- 15.1 *Loan to Tate Britain (Holbein).* The Board approved the loan to Tate Britain of 30 items between the end of September 2006 and January 2007.
- 15.2 *Loan to Nairobi City Museum.* The loan to Nairobi City Museum of 140 items between 30th March 2006 and 30th September 2006 was approved. It was noted that an indemnity was being arranged by the British Council.
- 15.3 *Developing a Special Exhibitions Facility.* The Director introduced a discussion, on an outline feasibility proposal for the creation of a new interim special exhibition gallery, designed for flexibility. The Trustees supported the outline proposals in principle and RESOLVED that as and when the proposals were worked up in greater detail they should be taken to the Standing Committee for approval.
- 15.4 *Space Planning.* The Trustees received a presentation on the existing use of space at the British Museum. In principle, the Trustees approved the concept of developing proposals to improve collection facilities, enhance the visitor experience and improve working conditions. The Trustees supported the recommendation that such proposals be developed through option studies, feasibility studies and business plans for consideration at a future Board Meeting.

MATTERS FOR BOARD DISCUSSION

i) Museum Management Report

- 16.1 *Temporary Exhibitions.* The Director reported that visitors to both *The Forgotten Empire: The World of Ancient Persia* and to the *Samuel Palmer: Vision and*

Landscape exhibitions were exceeding targets.

The *Throne of Weapons* touring exhibition was proving very successful. This was the first time the Museum had so successfully sent an object on tour to so many locations. A film report had been commissioned.

- 16.2 *Qatar*. The Director felt that the British Museum had begun to develop a good working relationship with the Cultural Council in Qatar and he anticipated it would be possible to give support on a long term basis.
- 16.3 *Dubai*. The Director reported that it was hoped a sponsor in Dubai would agree to support the Middle Eastern exhibition scheduled for next summer.
- 16.4 *The Transformation Mask: U'Mista*. A Band Council Resolution had been passed in acknowledgement of the British Museum's title and therefore it would be possible to loan the Mask to the U'Mista Cultural Society in British Columbia.
- 16.5 *Fundraising*. The Director advised that a new Head of Fundraising had been recruited. The post holder's role would begin in early 2006.
- 16.6 *Facilities Management*. The Board heard that the Standing Committee was satisfied with the process and the outcome; the successful tenderer had been selected.
- 16.7 *Catering*. The Board AGREED that subject to continuing consultation with the members of the Standing Committee as appropriate, negotiations with the preferred bidder should commence.

ii) Research: Archeology

The Vision and Purpose. The Trustees had before them a proposed British Museum Archeological Strategy. Following discussion, the Trustees SUPPORTED the proposed strategy and endorsed the intention to start the delivery of the updated strategy beginning in the planning year 2006-07.

MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

- 17.1 Minutes of the Nominations and Governance Committee from the meeting held on 29th September 2005 were noted.

Election of New Chairman. Miss Gooding explained to Trustees that she felt it would not be appropriate to defer a decision until the next full meeting of the Trustees on 23rd March 2006. She anticipated a special meeting would be convened, towards the end of January, of which full notice would of course be given to all Trustees.

- 17.2 The meeting of the Audit Committee held on 19th October 2005 had been inquorate. Therefore the Chairman presented the minutes for the formal adoption of the Board. He drew attention in particular to the improvements which have been made to incident management and business recovery during the preceding 12 months and the excellent progress made by the Keeper of the Learning and

Information Department. The Chairman of the Committee explained that the most significant risk going forward, that had been identified by the Committee, related to the importance of fundraising. Trustees APPROVED AND ADOPTED the Minutes of the Audit Committee.

- 17.3 The Minutes of the Standing Committee meeting held on 27 October 2005 were noted.

Tasmanian Bark Bundles. At the last Standing Committee Meeting it was noted that it had been hoped to bring to this meeting a proposal in connection with the claim for Tasmanian Bark Bundles which had been made against the Museum. Reports were not yet available but it would probably not be appropriate to await the next full meeting of the Board of Trustees at the end of March. It was RESOLVED that the Standing Committee could settle appropriate decisions on behalf of the Trustees.

OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman paid a glowing tribute to Ms Dawn Austwick, who would be leaving the Museum at the end of the month. He said for three years she had played a pivotal role in the affairs of the Museum and had made a key contribution to the giant strides being made in taking the Museum forward.

Ms Austwick thanked the Trustees for their generous remarks and said that she wished the Museum well over the years to come.

Date of next Board Meeting:

Thursday 23rd March 2006, 3pm, Hartwell Room

(As well as any special meeting convened to approve the appointment of the next Chairman)

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Chairman