

HORNIMAN PUBLIC MUSEUM AND PUBLIC PARK TRUST

Notes of the Board meeting of the Horniman Public Museum and Public Park Trust held on Thursday 9 April 2020 at the Horniman Museum and Gardens.

This meeting was held virtually via Zoom conferencing.

Present

Eve Salomon	Sarah Kemp
Caroline Cole	Clare Matterson
Geoff Crossick	Mayowa Ochere
Bunt Ghosh	Carole Souter
Simon Hesketh	Helen Williams
Nico Iacuzzi	

Nick Merriman (Chief Executive)

Paula Thomas (Board Secretary, Finance Director)

Victoria Pinnington (Director, Communications and Income Generation)

Tim Corum (Director, Curatorial and Public Engagement)

Kirsten Walker (Director, Collections Care and Estates)

1. Notes of last meeting

The notes of the meeting on 26 March 2020 were agreed. All matters arising are covered elsewhere on the agenda.

2. Furlough report

The CEO reported that the position regarding furloughing is changeable. The latest guidance is that although the public sector is only eligible for the Job Retention Scheme in restricted circumstances, museums are eligible although they must be able to show that there is no double counting of government funding i.e that only staff costs not covered by grant-in-aid can be included. HMT are also insisting that staff who are furloughed can only be paid the 80% of their salary covered by the Job Retention Scheme and that public sector organisations are not allowed to top-up the 20%. This can only be done in exceptional circumstances and where it can be shown that this will be funded from self-generated income. HMT have delegated the decision regarding museums to DCMS who will look at these on a case by case basis.

The process for agreeing furlough is tied up with a Financial return on cash flow that is due for submission by 14 April. DCMS have committed to responding within 5 days.

A list has been compiled of staff who could be furloughed.

In the meantime a letter has been prepared together with suitable communications for staff should we be allowed to furlough them. The GMB union has also been kept informed of our plans, although they have not been provided with a list at this stage.

Trustees noted that it was good that DCMS were making the decision rather than HMRC and agreed that it was important to take a proportionate approach, although it is important to protect reserves as far as possible. The alternative would be to make some staff redundant but given that when the Museum reopens visitor numbers are likely to go back up this is not the preferred option.

3. Financial position

Trustees reviewed the financial forecasts prepared under the following two scenarios:

- a) Museum is closed for 3 months
- b) Museum is closed for 6 months

The Chair expressed her relief that the Horniman had been so good at building up reserves over the years and that these looked like being sufficient to cover losses for at least six months.

Trustees suggested that management consider delaying the start of any new employment contracts if those staff would be unlikely to work productively.

Although the financial position in the two scenarios was reassuring, trustees warned about being lulled into a false sense of security as it was impossible to say when the Museum would be able to reopen and a second spike was also possible. It was agreed that the Horniman might not return to normal operations until sometime in Q3 and it was suggested that figures should be produced for this scenario.

It was noted that the CSR had been deferred until the autumn and the current settlement was likely to be rolled over for one year. Trustees commented that it would be necessary to review the Strategic priorities in the light of the likely effects of this and the pandemic in general. The CEO informed trustees that SMT were having a half-day away day in May to consider this and would bring revised strategic priorities back to trustees.

Trustees warned that we should think cautiously about the future and that we might need to make big changes to our current plans. It was suggested that a contingency budget should be created to try to bring audiences back in Q3/Q4. Trustees asked if there were any other funds we could access e.g. ACE. Management reported that they are looking into all options but that although ACE had some emergency funding for NPOs this is largely to help artists and smaller NPOs who are at risk of going to the wall.

4. Café update

Management reported that a meeting had been held yesterday the Café owner and his accountant. Nico had represented trustees and Victoria, Paula and Brad the Head of Commercial had also been present via a zoom video call.

Trustees commented that it was important to identify lessons learned once the crisis was over. In the meantime it was suggested that management should consider an alternative if the Café can't reopen. The strategic plans should

also consider other models of operation for the various café outlets planned in order to dilute risk.

5. COVID-19 Risk register

Trustees reviewed the risk register and the following comments noted:

- B1 – there would only be a problem with Security if all members of the team were sick at the same time. Some additional staff have been trained as a contingency.
- B3 – there is no major issue with staff wellbeing at the moment but this is being kept high on the agenda. Good feedback has been received from staff that they feel well cared for.
- B5 – 24 hour security of the site is currently being maintained. During the day there is at least one person in the gardens in addition to the one member of the Security team. It was agreed to increase the risk to 9/Amber.

The Chair asked if productivity was an issue. The CEO reported that productivity was variable depending on the roles and staff ability to carry these out remotely, in addition to continuing connectivity issues for some staff. Staff are being told not to worry too much about productivity but to concentrate on keeping well and reopening.

6. SMT updates

Finance (Paula)

All the teams are well, working very hard and it's very much business as usual.

- Finance are adapting to new ways of working remotely and are busier than usual with the year end.
- HR have been working on the legalities around furloughing including keeping GMB informed and preparing a letter and other communications for staff.
- IT are continuing to deal with connectivity issues, particularly for staff who have Macs, but these are slowly being ironed out.

Curatorial and Public Engagement (Tim)

All the teams are communicating well and a lot of activity going on, with variable productivity.

- Programming are revising the commitments over the next few months and so have less work to do.
- Curatorial – a lot of their work continues. They have been rethinking some projects and how they can be delivered. Conversations have begun with funders regarding the effects on some projects.
- The School team have been very busy settling bookings that couldn't be delivered and have been working on some new content which has gone online. There are opportunities for more online content but this needs to fit in with the development of the website.
- The Community Engagement team have stepped up their work online. Safeguarding policies are being reviewed in relation to online work.

- Volunteering have obviously reduced their activity as most of it is onsite. They are struggling to rethink their work but have begun to think about how to reintroduce volunteers when the museum reopens.

Communications and Income Generation (Victoria)

All the teams are well and able to work to varying degrees.

- Digital is the main area of focus at the moment. The Digital Manager is working hard on the website snagging. A Digital Content sheet has been put together to identify future areas of activity. There is quite a lot online at the moment. Quite a few other members of the CIG team have been repurposed and have been given some training to help with digital.
- The Press team have been handling queries both internal and external.
- The Fundraising team are still operating and busy with bid writing to Trusts.
- Communications to staff are being produced at least weekly in the form of Messenger and Nick is also doing a weekly message which has been well received.
- A lot of the team roles relate to Retail and Admissions and Visitor Experience and are likely to be furloughed if permitted.
- In the case of cancelled events, ticket holders are being asked to donate the cost of the ticket and the same line is being taken with Membership, although a refund is being given if requested.
- An appeal was considered at the beginning but discounted. A light touch approach is now being taken in Newsletters and there has been a good response so far. Once there is some idea of when the Museum will reopen there will be a bigger appeal.

Collections Management and Estates (Kirsten)

The teams are generally well and working to varying levels of productivity.

- The Gardens opening hours have been reduced to 8am -4.30pm. They have been quite busy at the weekends but not so busy during the week. The Gardens team is monitoring the Gardens and Nature Trail. So far social distancing is being observed. The team are worried about the Easter weekend and are thinking of asking the police to drop by around closing time. The staff are working two teams, with one day on and one day off.
- There is a high level of anxiety in the Security team with two members of staff off. The Estates Manager and Deputy are going in one day a week each to support them. Work is still progressing on Capital Projects such as the boilers.
- A member of the Collections Management team is also going to SCC one day a week to check that the building and environment is okay. Some staff are working from home on loans etc and are being reasonably productive.
- The Knowledge and Information Management Manager is doing a lot of work on various projects such as file rationalization. The rest of the team, who are mostly part-time, are not so productive.
- The Conservation team is doing a lot of work developing training materials.
- The Exhibitions team is working on planning for the 696, Hair and other future exhibitions.

Trustees asked about SCC security and were informed that as well as a CCTV link to the Museum we have a contract with the Greenwich Peninsular Security.

It was noted that some PPE equipment had been donated to the NHS. Another thing to note is that HR are launched an E-Learning suite this week and so staff will be encouraged to use this and also do other personal development.

7. AOB and next steps

The CEO reported that in his most recent weekly telephone conference with the Minister DCMS had asked museums to look at the question of future models of operation. There had previously been a pre-supposed model of constant growth. It would be an opportunity to reset some expectations of museums in the future e.g. more focus on climate change, becoming more sustainable. DCMS would also need to rethink KPIs.

There was no other business. The Board agreed to meet again in two weeks' time.