

The Minutes of the **Board of Trustees Meeting** of the Horniman Public Museum and Public Park Trust, held at the Natural History Museum, Cromwell Rd, London SW7 5BD, on 17th October 2024.

PRESENT	
Diana Maine (DM)	Rod Taylor (RT)
Eva Appelbaum (EA)	Roma Dibua (RD)
Mayowa Ochere (MO)	Simon Hesketh (SH)
Michael Salter-Church (MSC) - Chair	Somi Umolu (SU) – Vice-Chair
Michelle Edward (MED) - Secretary	Nicholas Wyver (NW)
Nico Iacuzzi (NI)	

IN ATTENDANCE
Gordon Seabright (GS) - Chief Executive Officer
Annie Duffield (AD) - Director, Audiences & Income
Kirsten Walker (KW) – Director, Collections Care and Estates
Peronel Craddock (PC) – Director, Content
Brian O’Sullivan (BOS) – Board Apprentice

Agenda #:	GOVERNANCE
3.1.1	Apologies for absence There were no absences and apologies to report.
3.1.2	Declaration of Conflicts of Interest No new conflicts of interest were declared
3.2	<p>Welcome and Congratulations - Vice-Chair; SU led the meeting until the Chair; MSC joined later that morning</p> <p>SU first wanted to thank the Team for organizing the event as well as MED and GS for the new user-friendly online Board meeting platform that the board papers are now being shared on.</p> <p>The Board welcomed AD into her new role as Director, Audiences & Income. Congratulations to KW for putting together the proposal with the team for additional funding for N&L project.</p> <p>Update on recruitment of new Trustees – The recruitment process is starting to move forwards, now that a new Government has moved into office and adopted its policy on appointments. Candidates for the 3 new Trustee roles have been shortlisted, and the interview process will soon commence. NI has kindly agreed to continue in post until the new Trustees are appointed.</p>
3.3	<p>Minutes of the previous meeting held on 11 July 2024</p> <p>The minutes of this meeting were circulated, and the contents noted.</p> <p>The minutes were approved as a true record of that meeting.</p>

3.4	<p>Matters arising from the Minutes</p> <p>The Action Planner has been circulated and the contents noted.</p> <p>GS provided an update on the nature trail licences. Letters have not yet been sent out, as further investigations are being carried out into one property to determine whether this property is on the museum's land.</p> <p>MED stated that the update on reserves will form part of her Finance presentation, and the dates of future Board meetings have already been confirmed and in everyone's diaries.</p>
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Agenda #:	FOR DISCUSSION
3.5	Management Report
3.5.1	GS stated that he recently joined a call with other museums. One of the key topics of interest was on security in relation to protests. The creative sector is one of the 8 priority areas listed by the Government. There was also reference to soft power in the industrial strategy, and there is now a soft power working group that has been formed. Discussions were also raised around the budgets, and museum needs were acknowledged. There is no expectation of additional funding in this year's budget and the next budget in the spring is likely to be multi-year settlements.
3.5.2	GS presented his report for July to September 2024 and spoke of MED sorting out the support functions to improve the efficiency of services, including improvements to financial reporting. Other key priorities include KW's work on getting additional funding for N+L, PC has her team looking at ambitious plans for future exhibitions, and AD brings energy, pace and professionalism to the commercial areas.
3.5.3	Items being looked at in the next year of leadership include the large number of items that are being brought to SMT, and building relationships with funders, and other stakeholders like DCMS, Bloomberg Philanthropies and Lewisham council.
3.5.4	DM stated that she wanted to say well done to MED and everyone involved in the restructuring of the HR department, as this long-standing issue was a concern which has now been addressed and should help things going forwards.
3.5.5	RT stated that he noted the comments about the visitor footfall and retail spend, not being where the organisation wants them to be. He wanted to share from conversations in his organisation and others that the pressure on spend seems to be hitting retail more than anywhere else in museums and attractions.
3.5.6	AD added that the museum has a compounding issue with the natural history gallery being closed. Due to the planned closure, it was predicted that there would be a drop in visitor numbers this year. One of the key strategies to address this would be to invest in marketing to attract people to the museum. The museum does not currently spend as much on marketing compared to other organisations in the same sector. The limitation this year is due to the low budget on marketing spend.
3.5.7	With regards to the Climate and Ecology Coordinator vacancy, KW explained that the role is currently on hold, as there are a lot of other staffing issues in the Estates team that need to be addressed first.
3.5.8	RD asked if we are now comfortable that the HR restructuring addresses the staffing issues faced, including grievances. GS explained that we have no new grievances, and that MED has done a great job at managing a HR restructure with limited scope, which addresses the key problems within that department. The new structure enables MED to better performance manage the team.

3.5.9	MED explained that the new HR structure enables better focus on individual responsibilities. The flatter more dynamic structure is better suited for the museum. Further discussions continued on this topic, as the Board agreed that this was a long-running issue that has finally been addressed.
3.5.10	The Chair asked about plans to maximize Christmas trading. AD explained that Christmas has been considered as a downtime at the Horniman museum, so not many activities are normally planned during this time period. However, Christmas products went out a little earlier this year, as they normally go out after the October half term. Going forwards, AD would like to focus on brand partnerships, so that the museum does more to link the temporary exhibitions with known brand partners.
3.5.11	With regards to safeguarding, PC stated that more safeguarding training has been rolled out to staff. The number of concerns raised were discussed further as the number appeared to be high. PC explained that all concerns were being logged, but the number of incidents resulting from these concerns were much lower. DM suggested that a log of the number of referrals from the concerns raised would be useful. RT suggested that incidents logged, which bring risk to the Horniman, should be brought to the Trustees' attention and displayed separately to general concerns raised.

Agenda #:	FOR DECISION
3.6	Policy approvals
3.6.1	KW explained that Arts Council England has requested the accreditation return to be submitted by 1 st February 2025, and several policies that require Board approval need to form part of the return, which is why there are a number of policies that require approval.
3.6.2	The Board discussed the accreditation cycle of the Access policy, and it was agreed that KW should reduce the cycle from 5 to 4 years.
3.6.3	Within the Safeguarding policy PC will amend all mentions of Designated Safeguarding Manager to Designated Safeguarding Lead. MSC was noted to be both the Safeguarding Trustee and Chair of the Board – it was felt that another Trustee should take on the Safeguarding Trustee role, to allow escalation to the Chair of Trustees if necessary. DM agreed to take on the responsibility as Safeguarding Trustee.
3.6.4	MCS questioned whether there should be a note in the Collections Care and Conservation policy about cyber threats. PC explained that the Collections Care and Conservation policy would apply to the accredited collections and care of objects, whilst digital and cyber security would be covered by the IT department.
3.6.5	MED explained that the IT department are working towards achieving Cyber Essentials accreditation and upgrading systems like Mimsy; the digital collections platform, forms part of that process. The aim is to complete the systems upgrades and enhance the IT security infrastructure, to achieve Cyber Essentials accreditation within the next few months.
3.6.6	The following policies were reviewed and discussed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access policy • Collections Development Policy • Horniman Documentation Policy • Collections Care and Conservation Policy

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding Policy and procedures <p>Discussions continued on AI and how it is also being used in other organisations. The above policies were approved, with the recommended changes mentioned.</p>
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Agenda #:	FOR INFORMATION
3.7	Horniman Museum Enterprises Trading Report and Minutes
3.7.1	AD presented the Horniman Museum Enterprises Trading Report and spoke in more detail about the results. She explained that HME is below target, and that this is contributed by the lower than anticipated visitor numbers and possibly due to the target being slightly too high in light of the closure of the gallery and temporary closure of the café for refurbishment. There have been improvements to the takings from the café, but it is down on last year. Some of the customer services issues have now been addressed, and staff are also being trained.
3.7.2	AD made the Board aware that recruitment is now underway for the Head of Commercial. Initially, fewer venue hires were expected, due to the Nature + Love project, but this is an area that has shown great potential with recent bookings for weddings and funerals. An increase in the rates of hiring the venues will be applied early next year to match the market prices. Retail has been impacted by the lower visitor numbers. When the new Head of Commercial joins, they will set the targets and manage performance for the retail and audiences team.
3.8	Capital Projects Board meeting Minutes for 19 Sep 24
3.8.1	SH presented the minutes of the Capital Board meeting that was held on 19 th September 2024. He made the Board aware that they were at the final stages of agreeing contracts for the fit-out. KW added that they cannot enter into any contractor agreements until the full business case has been approved by DCMS. She received a letter from DCMS stating that some conditions first need to be met before the business case can be approved. KW is therefore now working on the responses to their queries.
3.8.2	The planning application also has not yet been signed off by Lewisham Council, so agreements with contractors cannot be confirmed until the planning application has been approved.
3.9	Finance Presentation – Financial Results & Forecast
3.9.1	MED presented the September 2024 financial results and forecast. MED explained that she asked Budget Holders for an updated forecast for their departments' income and expenditure, which is reflected in the updated group forecast.
3.9.2	The overall deficit for the group is expected to increase against budget, due to lower than anticipated revenue and higher unbudgeted costs. The income forecast is lower than budget due to the reduced number of fund applications submitted, and HME trading income being lower than budget.
3.9.3	The adverse expenditure forecast against the budget is mainly due to the higher percentage pay increases that were accepted by the Union. The pay increases will be processed through the November payroll and backdated to 1 st July 2024.
3.9.4	MED presented a high-level summary of the Restricted and Unrestricted reserve accounts and explained what types of projects sat within each reserve account.

	MED agreed to bring a more detailed breakdown of what projects sat within each reserve account to the next Board meeting. The Board requested that reserves formally allocated to cover the costs of future restitutions be highlighted.
3.10	NHM's Transformation Project - by the CEO and COO of the Natural History Museum
3.10.1	CEO; Doug Gurr and COO; Helen Whitehouse from the Natural History Museum (NHM) joined the meeting to speak about the large transformation project that they are currently working on
3.10.2	Helen spoke of how NHM secured Government funding in 2020 for a new science and collections research centre in Reading. They are doing large collection movements of over 36million objects and reviewing their strategy as a 3-site model: Hertfordshire, South Kensington and Reading, which is quite a complicated jigsaw puzzle.
3.10.3	Doug stated that one of their biggest challenges is that their collections outgrow their space. NHM have large spaces, but not all are open to the public. Further discussion between the NHM CEO, COO and HMG Board continued, which included general questions and answers.
3.11	External environment - Insights from each Trustee on what is going on in their sectors/worlds that may impact on the Horniman in the short and long term
3.11.1	Each Trustee spoke in turn of what was going on in their sector and how it may impact the Horniman. Sector and topics of interest included culture, health, Education, AI, the job market, opportunities, sustainability, clean energy, buildings, and investments.

4. ~~~~~ **LUNCH** ~~~~~

Agenda #:	CORPORATE PLAN
5.	Corporate Plan 2025-28 - Discussion on the SMT's draft corporate plan
5.1	GS explained that the corporate plan presentation is a working draft. There has been no change to the mission, values and behaviours, but one priority has been added for the Board's consideration.
5.2	The Board reviewed the corporate plan and further discussions continued about the theme, contents of the corporate plan, how it is communicated, and what type of message the museum wants to communicate. The feedback taken away from the discussion was to think about what really matters, possibly group it according to top-line agendas rather than departmental plans and note what the organisation needs in terms of skills, resources, brand, and so on. Some Trustees stated that the department level information was very interesting, so perhaps separate versions could be considered. GS stated that he will be aiming to finalize the corporate plan for Board approval at the next Board meeting.

6. ~~~~~ **BREAK** ~~~~~

Agenda #:	125th ANNIVERSARY IDEAS
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7.	125th ANNIVERSARY IDEAS - How might we celebrate in 2026, and how might we pay for it
7.1	<p>GS explained that the whiteboard notes contain the Executives ideas that the Trustees could add to. MSC suggested that today's session would be more about growing ideas that could be explored further, including ideas around community engagement and staff engagement.</p> <p>The Board agreed that there should be a party celebration of some sort, maybe like a summer fair. The question is whether the 125th anniversary should be marking the completion of Nature + Love or marking the start of something new. Further discussions on what celebratory ideas and fundraising campaigns could be considered for the 125th anniversary continued.</p>

Agenda #:	CLOSED SESSION
8.	Trustees had a closed session Content provided by Chair.

MEETING CLOSED