

The Minutes of the **Board of Trustees Meeting** of the Horniman Public Museum and Public Park Trust, held in the Pavilion, Horniman Museum and Gardens, 100 London Road, SE23 3PQ, on 24 April 2025.

PRESENT	
Michael Salter-Church (MSC) - Chair	Nicholas Wyver (NW)
Diana Maine (DM)	Patrick Barker (PB)
Edmund Neuberger (EN)	Rod Taylor (RT)
Eva Appelbaum (EA)	Roma Dibua (RD)
Mayowa Ochere (MO)	Simon Hesketh (SH)
Naila Yousuf (NY)	Michelle Edward (MED) – Secretary and Director of Finance & Corporate Services

IN ATTENDANCE	
Gordon Seabright (GS) - Chief Executive	
Annie Duffield (AD) – Director of Audiences & Income	
Kirsten Walker (KW) – Director of Collections Care and Estates	
Nicola Mclean (NM) – Board Apprentice	

APOLOGIES	
Apologies were received from Somi Umolu, Vice-Chair	

Agenda #:	GOVERNANCE
1.1 – 1.2	‘All Eyes on Her’ display (optional extra), followed by Lunch
1.1.1	Around the table introductions Each existing Trustee and Senior Management Team member introduced themselves to the new Trustees.
1.3	Apologies and declaration of conflicts of interest Apologies received from Somi Umolu, Vice-Chair. No new conflicts of interests were declared.
1.4	Draft Minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2025 The minutes of this meeting were circulated, and the contents noted. The minutes were approved as a true record of that meeting.
1.5	Matters arising from the Minutes The Action Planner has been circulated and the contents noted. The following update was given: <ul style="list-style-type: none">In relation to the proposed residents’ Licences – The deadline for the residents to respond to the proposal has been extended. Not all residents have responded (one hasn’t), which is part of the reason for extending the deadline. All other action points have been completed or are due for completion by the next Board meeting.

1.6 – 1.7	Formal welcome and introduction of new Trustees
1.6	The Chair: MSC welcomed the three new Trustees: Naila Yousuf, Edmund Neuberger and Patrick Barker to the Horniman Board.
1.7	Each new Trustee briefly introduced themselves. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Naila is an Architect who specializes in cultural and educational building projects, • Edmund is a Barrister who specializes in construction and infrastructure projects, • Patrick is an Accountant who provides interim leadership support to Charities and organisations.

Agenda #:	FOR DISCUSSION
2.1	Management Report – Q4, Jan to Mar 2025
2.1.1	The CEO: GS presented the Management Report for January to March 2025. The Arts Council Accreditation review was successful thanks to KW's hard work and efforts. Full accreditation has been achieved for another 5 years. The last review was done 10 years ago, so lots of work was required for this application.
2.1.2	A grant of £30k was agreed from the National Environment Research Council (NERC) for the Aquarium's coral project. The Museum hosted the Mantis Muse Exhibition in the Conservatory. There were 5,000 active participations for the sculpture over the two-week period. It was a 3-meter-high Mantis sculpture by David Shrigley.
2.1.3	redacted
2.1.4	GS spoke of his visit to Kyiv; Ukraine. What he learnt from his visit was that organisations in Ukraine within the cultural sector, primarily need the opportunity for their employees to go on study tours to other places, broaden their experience and share more about their country, participate in conferences in the areas of conservation, presentation and education, work on joint exhibitions and contribute to the cultural life of other places.
2.1.5	DCMS officials were debriefed, and GS is now in discussions with the Director General of the Khanenko Museum about a twinning relationship. The Horniman would be able to help them through a twining relationship in the areas described above, and they would be able to help the Horniman with the 51 Ukrainian objects in the Horniman's collection (which are not very well catalogued, so could learn more about them) and the provision of joint exhibitions. GS will be presenting at the next National Museum Directors Council (NMDC) meeting, and meeting with the Deputy Mayor of London for Culture about what London can do to support Kyiv.
2.1.6	With regards to KPIs that are reported to DCMS quarterly, they receive KPIs on visitor numbers and ticket sales. Other information provided to DCMS include the Corporate Risk Register, Nature + Love project updates, and updates on the Public Bodies Infrastructure Fund (PBIF) projects that are being worked on, which are building projects funded by DCMS.
2.1.7	Visitor feedback is reviewed on a regular basis, which includes feedback on schools and communities' work. GS took the action to provide a useful summary for Trustees on the data provided to DCMS.
2.1.8	DM attended a Safeguarding training course, which she found helpful in clarifying duties of care to young people and vulnerable adults. MSC raised awareness of the new statutory duties on employers that came into force in October 2024 to prevent Sexual Harassment in the workspace. This should be rolled out as part of specific risk management.

2.1.9	AD explained that a tender was put out for a brand agency to help with a new brand campaign to launch in 2026. Over 70 applications were received, which has been shortlisted down to 5. The plan is to appoint an agency by mid-June, with the project starting in July for a 12-week development period and the campaign launching in early 2026.
2.1.10	MSC explained the 'Chair's Circle' which will involve hosting dinners and tapping into the local community, will ideally be launched this summer. A separate session for Trustees has been proposed by EA for Trustees to focus on this in more detail.
2.1.11	PB stated as a new Trustee that he would like to know the fundraising strategies across the various income streams of Corporate, Trusts and Foundations, gifts, legacy, etc. MSC therefore proposed that the fundraising strategies be presented to Trustees at the next Board meeting.
2.2	Nature + Love Project Status update
2.2.1	The Director of Collections Care and Estates: KW presented the status report and explained for the new Trustees who the key consultants and contractors were on the project. The Public Bodies Infrastructure Fund (PBIF) funding of £1.4m from DCMS was spent by the end of March 2025, in line with the deadline of the funding requirements.
2.2.2	Blakedown and Rooff contractors were progressing to program. Almost all the scaffolding had been put up. There were a few issues relating to tree protection, which have now been addressed. The oak tree, which was causing a delay in work commencing at the new café, has now been removed. Planning approval was received from the Council earlier than anticipated. A new project architect has been appointed who has so far developed good relationships with the contractors.
2.2.3	Although the report states that the project was £500k over budget, recent reviews now estimate this to be £190k over budget. £600k is in contingency, but no commitment has been made to spend any of this at the moment, until the contractors have opened the roof to see if any other unknowns are discovered.
2.2.4	The stance taken right now is not to make any changes unless absolutely necessary. However, it's important to start talking to the Fundraising Team about increasing the amount of fundraising.
Agenda #:	FOR DECISION
3.1	Updated Health and Safety Policy
3.1.1	KS presented the policy and confirmed that not much had changed since the last time the policy was updated 2 years ago. Volunteers and contractors have been added to the updated policy. KS confirmed that an external Health and Safety profession had also reviewed and signed off the updated policy.
3.1.2	The Board of Trustees confirmed their approval of the updated policy by a show of hands and by clicking the approval button on the online Board meeting platform.
3.2	Updated Human Remains Policy
3.2.1	GS presented the updated policy for approval. This policy is normally updated every 3 years. The next policy update will therefore be in 2028. The coversheet in the document explains the factors that have been considered and how it has been updated and reviewed by the staff.
3.2.2	The Board of Trustees confirmed their approval and clicked the approval button on the online Board meeting platform.

Agenda #:	FOR INFORMATION
4.1	HM&G Group Finance Report to 31 March 2025

4.1.1	The Director of Finance and Corporate Services: MED presented the March 2025 year-end Financial Results. MED explained that it's been a challenging year, but the Museum ended the financial year in a more favorable position against budget. Although the income was below budget, the favorable variance was mainly due to cost savings identified toward the end of the year.
4.1.2	The Exhibitions' Tax Relief receivable was originally estimated to be £50k, but the final amount claimed from HMRC was £93k. Although Board approval was received for a limited amount of overspend to come from reserves, the reduced spending meant that the Museum did not need to call upon the reserves as expected.
4.1.3	As the group-consolidated financial results are presented to the Board, MED made Trustees aware that the financials are reviewed in more detail at the Audit & Risk Committee meetings, which are regularly held between Board meetings and attended by the Museum's internal auditors (BDO) and external auditors (Moore Kingston Smith Accountants - MKS).
4.1.4	GS added that although staff costs only showed a £51k adverse variance to budget, costs included a £146k unexpected pension liability, relating to 2021. £32k of additional legal and professional fees were incurred by the museum having to engage external HR consultants to support the resolution of staff grievances.
4.1.5	MED drew to the Trustees' attention to the small change that was made to the 2025/26 Budget that Trustees had approved in the last meeting. DCMS had agreed to provide £675k for specific Public Bodies Infrastructure Fund (PBIF) projects. This gratefully received funding pledge was the only item added to the 2025/26 budget.
4.2	2024/25 Financial Year-End Planner
4.2.1	The Director of Finance and Corporate Services: MED made the Trustees aware of the financial year-end planner for 2024/25. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The external auditors field work by Moore Kingston Smith (MKS) commences on 12 May 2025 for a few weeks, during which time, data, documents, schedules, etc. will be provided to the auditors, in addition to various audit-testing exercises. The Audit Closing Meeting date with MKS has not yet been confirmed. The draft Report and Financial Statements for both HMG and HME will be presented at the next Audit & Risk Committee meeting on 3 July 25. The final draft of the Report and Financial Statements will be presented to Trustees for approval at the next Board meeting on 24 July 2025.
4.3	Horniman Museum Enterprise (HME) Trading Report and Minutes from the HME Board Meeting held on 16 April 2025
4.3.1	The CEO and chair of HME: GS presented the Horniman Museum Enterprise (HME) Trading report. GS spoke about the café's performance, where improvements have been made. There is now focus on continuous improvements - speed of service, menu management and the opening of a new onsite café down the hill.
4.3.2	Venue hire was performing particularly well, and the team were doing a great job of being able to work around the Nature + Love construction work. They were still able to arrange venue hiring for weddings and funerals around the scaffolding.
4.3.3	To fill the gaps between paid Exhibitions, the Museum will be purchasing play equipment to increase its offer to visitors. With regards to retail, GS explained that the original budget set was more optimistic than what appeared practical in the year. The lower visitor numbers have been directly impacted by the Nature + Love work. There are, however, opportunities to improve the retail and events offering.
4.4	Audit & Risk Committee update and Minutes for meeting held on 19 Mar 2025

4.4.1	The Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee: RD presented the minutes of the last meeting. RD explained that the internal auditors; BDO attended the meeting, but the external auditors MKS did not attend on this occasion.
4.4.2	BDO completed two audit reports, which they presented: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horniman Audience Diversity report • Core Financial Controls report
4.4.3	Both audits were rated as moderate assurance by the internal auditors. There were no significant issues or red risks findings in either report. There were 2 medium-rated findings in both reports. They made several recommendations, which were accepted by management. Overall, the auditors were satisfied that there was nothing to be too concerned about.
4.4.4	The key findings from the audience diversity report were that there was so much work going on that there's a risk of things being missed. This is because there's a lot of working groups, all looking at different elements of diversity.
4.4.5	With regards to the Core Financial Controls report, the auditors noted that MED had already started to work on improvements before and during the audit, by introducing new systems and processes. This gave them a bit of a challenge to audit, as they were working a moving target. Overall positive feedback was given about the changes.
4.4.6	One audit still to be completed is the GDPR audit, which was flipped into the audit plan at short notice, while the audit around the catering contract was moved out into the 2025/26 audit calendar. The results of the GDPR audit are therefore expected by the next Audit & Risk Committee meeting.
4.5.7	The internal auditors presented their progress report, and the audit plan for 2025/26 includes [1] payroll, [2] capital projects and [3] the catering contract review. Three internal audits are normally completed each year. Using a risk-based approach, and the three areas mentioned for 2025/26 have been identified as being the best use of the auditors' time. It should also be noted that there have been recent changes to the audit standards, which include more focus on strategy.
4.5	Capital Projects Board Minutes for the meeting held on 5 Mar 2025
4.5.1	The Chair of the Capital Projects Board: SH presented the Minutes of the last meeting. The key areas discussed were in relation to the Nature + Love project as previously explained by KW.
4.5.2	The key thing to note was that there's a list of other smaller capital projects that were being tracked. There's an awful lot of activity going on in addition to Nature + Love and the team have done a fantastic job to get them all pretty much delivered on time. One or two will drift into next year but are not mission critical and are not dependent on funding deadlines.
4.5.3	The PBIF allocation that was awarded by DCMS soon after the previous Capital Projects Board meeting, has added more to the list of capital projects that need to be completed during the 2025/26 financial year. The other thing to note is that the addition of Beth, as Head of Estates, has made things go much smoother, as she has completely hit the ground running.
4.5.4	MSC noted that it would be useful for an updated organogram to be shared with all Trustees, due to recent staff movements. MED as Director of Corporate Services noted this as an action.
4.6	Corporate Risk Register highlights
4.6.1	The Director of Finance and Corporate Services: MED presented the updated Corporate Risk Register and highlighted the key changes.

4.6.2	Following the introduction of Martyn's Law, a response to it will be brought to the next Board meeting. With regards to the Supreme Court ruling on gender identity, it was noted that the Museum already has universal toilets, so no alterations are required. The signage has also been updated.
4.6.3	redacted

Agenda #:	ANY OTHER BUSINESS
5.	
5.1	<p>Achievement of Cyber Essentials Accreditation EA wanted it minuted on behalf of the Trustees, to pass on congratulations to MED and her IT team for achieving Cyber Essentials accreditation, because of it being such a big deal and very impressive.</p>
5.2	<p>Annual 'Thank you' Event for Volunteers MED made Trustees aware that the Volunteering Team will be arranging a Thank you event for Volunteers during National Volunteering week, on Wednesday 4 June 2025, between 5pm and 9pm at the Pavilion. Heba has kindly agreed to do a presentation on the background and development on the 'All Eyes on Her' display. There will be drinks and nibbles.</p> <p>The volunteers really appreciate meeting the business leaders, and they work really hard, so it would be great if Trustees could attend. MED will send out an invite, so Trustees have this event in their diaries.</p>
5.3	<p>Safeguarding for Trustees MED explained that the new Trustees will need to complete Safeguarding Training. As Trustees should complete a refresher course on an annual basis, MED will send a link to the online course, for all Trustees who have not completed Safeguarding training within the last 12 months. MED also reminded Trustees that the cost of the online training course is reimbursable, so they should contact her for further details about the reimbursement of their expenses.</p>

Agenda #:	CLOSED SESSION
6.	Trustees had a closed session – Content provided by the Chair.

MEETING CLOSED