

Meeting: Board of Trustees Meeting, Horniman Public Museum & Park Trust
Date: Thursday 16 October 2025
Time: 1.40pm
Venue: 100 London Road, Forest Hill, London & MS Teams

PRESENT	
Michael Salter-Church (MSC) - Chair	Mayowa Ochere (MO)
Diana Maine (DM)	Patrick Barker (PB)
Edmund Neuberger (EN)	Rod Taylor (RT)
Naila Yousuf (NY)	Roma Dibua (RD)
Nicholas Wyver (NW)	Simon Hesketh (SH)
Eva Appelbaum (EA)	

IN ATTENDANCE
Gordon Seabright (GS) – Chief Executive
Annie Duffield (AD) – Director of Audiences & Income
Kirsten Walker (KW) – Director of Collections Care and Estates
Peronel Craddock (PC) – Director of Content
Sharon Vickery (NM) – Minute Taker

APOLOGIES
Somi Umolu (SU) - Vice-Chair and Nicola Mclean, Boardroom Apprentice

Agenda #:	GOVERNANCE
1.1	<p>Welcome, Apologies & Declaration of conflicts of interest</p> <p>MSC, as chair, opened the board meeting and welcomed all. The apologies were noted, as was the need for EN, NW and PB to potentially leave early.</p> <p>MSC advised the board that Director of Finance and Corporate Services would not be in attendance and therefore any questions which would normally be answered by the FD would to covered by the CEO where possible or responded to after the meeting.</p> <p>No new conflicts of interest were declared.</p>
1.2	<p>Draft Minutes of the meeting held on 24 April 2025</p> <p>Redacted</p>
1.3	<p>Matters arising from the Minutes</p> <p>Licence valuations for land: GS updated the board that the legal adviser had provided several options for resolution.</p> <p>Redacted</p> <p>GS Updated on the status of each of the residences concerned. EN asked whether the recent letter from residents had been responded to.</p> <p>Fundraising Strategy – to be covered at a future meeting once the new Head of Membership and Fundraising has been in post for longer.</p> <p>Final Credit check – MSC to follow up with ME on the status of this action.</p>

Agenda #:	FOR DISCUSSION
2.1	Management Report – Q2, Jul-Sept 2025
2.1.1	GS presented the management report for July to September, noting that while there were no major issues, there had been several positive developments across the organisation. These included a Museums Association award, increased Gift Aid recovery, and the successful delivery of new exhibitions and events.
2.1.2	He highlighted the professionalism and resilience of the senior team and staff, with strong collaboration across departments.
2.1.3	Areas for improvement were also identified by internal audit, particularly around data protection compliance, and by the senior team, such as financial reporting.
2.1.4	Trustees commended the progress made and discussed the need for clearer context and benchmarking data in future reports, including progress on staff training and diversity in visitor numbers.
2.1.5	There was also recognition of ongoing learning from unsuccessful fundraising bids and the value of feedback from funders.
2.3	Nature + Love Project
2.3.1	KW provided an update on the Nature + Love project, confirming that the gallery refurbishment was progressing well despite a seven-week delay, with the revised opening date now expected to be February 2027.
2.3.2	The glasshouse and café works were advancing, and overall site activity remained strong with good morale among contractors.
2.3.3	Trustees discussed the need to monitor the financial implications of any project delays, including potential prolongation costs and additional staffing requirements, and agreed that a further paper should be produced to set out the possible financial impact.
2.3.4	It was also noted that claims for delays may be contested, and that the Capital Projects Board would review the situation once more detailed information was available.
2.3.5	Action: KW to prepare a short paper for the Capital Projects Committee, within approx. One month, providing an updated financial overview of the prolongation costs, to include any associated project staff implications, the likely budget impact, and a summary of the contractors' delay claims, and then circulate to the Trustees.
2.4	125 Year Project Plan
2.4.1	AD introduced the plans for Horniman's 125th anniversary celebrations, explaining that the programme would align with the completion of the Nature + Love project and seek to build public engagement and fundraising

	momentum. Early budgeting work had begun, with some activities expected to be self-funding through event income and sponsorship, while others would require additional support.
2.4.2	Sponsorship opportunities would be explored locally and nationally, and Trustees were encouraged to identify potential contacts. The programme would include celebratory events such as a gala for the reopening of the Natural History Gallery, supported by new communications and marketing activity.
2.4.3	Trustees welcomed the ambitious but realistic approach, noting that the immediate focus should remain on completing the Nature + Love project before committing to major anniversary expenditure.

Agenda #:	FOR DECISION
3.1	Remuneration Committee - ToR, appointment of Chair, and 2025 pay offer The SMT left the meeting.
3.1.1	In this closed session, the Board received a report from the Chair on the Remuneration Committee's recent discussions.
3.1.2	It was agreed that the Terms of Reference for the Remuneration Committee be approved in principle, subject to circulation to all trustees via Onboard for formal confirmation. The Board further agreed that the Chair of the Remuneration Committee must be a Trustee other than the Board Chair, to be confirmed following the Committee's next meeting.
3.1.3	Following consideration of the Committee's recommendations, the Board approved the following 2025 pay award: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 3.8% uplift for all staff (excluding London Living Wage roles), backdated to 1 July 2025. • A 6.8% uplift for London Living Wage staff, subject to confirmation of the final published rate; and • A 3.8% uplift for members of the SMT, maintaining consistency across senior roles.
3.1.4	Redacted
3.1.5	Action: MSC to circulate the Remuneration Committee ToR to all trustees for formal electronic approval. Action: The Remuneration Committee to confirm the appointment of its Chair at the next meeting. Action: The Remuneration Committee to review the CEO and SMT's remuneration and report back to the Board with recommendations for approval. Action: Redacted
3.1.6	The SMT rejoined the meeting.
3.2	Fundraising and Donations Acceptance Policy with Fundraising code of practice
3.2.1	AD presented the revised Fundraising and Donations Acceptance Policy together with the accompanying Fundraising Code of Practice, which had been reviewed to ensure compliance with the Fundraising Regulator's

	standards and alignment with the Museum’s ethical and reputational framework.
3.2.2	Trustees discussed the principles guiding the acceptance or refusal of donations, the importance of transparency in donor relationships, and the need to maintain consistency with the Museum’s values and safeguarding obligations. The Board was satisfied that the documents provided a clear and appropriate framework for decision-making and oversight.
3.2.3	It was agreed that both the Fundraising and Donations Acceptance Policy and the Fundraising Code of Practice be approved as presented, subject to minor formatting amendments, and that they be implemented with immediate effect.
3.2.4	Action: AD to arrange publication of the approved policies on the Museum’s internal systems and ensure all relevant staff are briefed on their contents. Action: AD and the Fundraising Team to review implementation after six months and report back to the Board on any issues or recommended refinements.

Agenda #:	FOR INFORMATION
4.1	Health and Safety Q2 Report
4.1.1	The Board received the Quarterly Health and Safety Report (Q2). No additional matters were raised beyond clarification that a tree stability and health review had been commissioned in response to recent incidents, with work expected to take place during October. It was agreed that the report be noted, and trustees thanked the team for maintaining ongoing oversight of health and safety matters.
4.2	Forward Plan 2026-2029 – progress update
4.2.1	The Board received a verbal update from GS on progress with the Forward Plan 2026–2029. A first draft of the opening section had been completed and reviewed by the SMT at their recent team day, with a revised version now being prepared to reflect feedback and align with the organisation’s updated values and behaviours.
4.2.2	The redrafted plan will be shared with SMT and then circulated to section leads to inform the development of individual work plans and budgets, ahead of submission of the full Forward Plan to the January Board meeting. GS also noted that recent workshops on organisational values had finalised the revised wording and would inform updates to key governance documents, including the Code of Conduct and Staff Handbook.
4.2.3	The Board noted the update and welcomed the structured approach and engagement across all staff levels.
4.3	HMG Consolidated Financial Results to 30 Sept 25 & 2025/26 Full Year forecast
4.3.1	The Board received and discussed the financial report and annual forecast, which had been circulated to Trustees at the same time as to the SMT. MSC noted that, while this would normally contravene the Board’s expectation that all papers must first be reviewed by the SMT before submission, an exception was agreed in this case, given the significance of the financial information.
4.3.2	Redacted
4.3.3	Redacted
4.3.4	Redacted

4.3.5	The Board also noted that the Audit and Risk Committee meeting on 20 November would provide an opportunity for further scrutiny, and that DCMS should be informed of any material delays or implications.
4.3.6	Action: Redacted
4.4	Staff Satisfaction and Engagement Survey
4.4.1	The Board received a short update on the Staff Satisfaction Survey, which has been postponed to redraft the questions. It is anticipated from conversations that areas for focus will include workload management and internal communication between teams.
4.4.2	The Board noted the findings and thanked SMT for maintaining transparency and for their ongoing commitment to staff wellbeing and organisational culture.
4.5	Update on Board Recommendations paper inc. Internal Comms
4.5.1	The Board considered the Board Recommendations Paper, which outlined proposals to strengthen governance processes, improve the flow of information between the Board, SMT, and staff, and enhance internal communication throughout the organisation. Trustees recognised the importance of ensuring that decision-making structures remain transparent, consistent, and well understood across all levels of the organisation.
4.5.2	Discussion focused on the need for clearer procedures around the submission and circulation of Board papers, ensuring that all documents are reviewed by the SMT before being shared with Trustees, and that deadlines are consistently met.
4.5.3	Trustees also emphasised the importance of maintaining open communication channels following the recent operational challenges, particularly to support staff confidence and alignment with the Museum's values and priorities.
4.5.4	It was agreed that the proposed governance and communication improvements be adopted in principle, subject to minor refinement and subsequent implementation by SMT.
4.5.5	Trustees asked SMT for views on staff morale and satisfaction. Concerns were raised regarding benchmarking and a lack of a 'one-team' approach.
4.5.6	Action: GS to finalise and implement the governance and communication recommendations set out in the paper, ensuring that future Board papers are reviewed by the SMT in advance of circulation to Trustees.
4.6	Capital Projects Board update and Minutes for the meeting held on 10 Sept 25
4.6.1	The Board received an update from the Capital Projects Board, noting that the outstanding matter regarding additional fees from the design team had now been resolved satisfactorily, with no further fee claims anticipated. The division of responsibilities between the lead architect and the conservation architect, particularly in relation to the Natural History Gallery, had also been clarified to ensure appropriate cost allocation and avoid duplication of fees.
4.6.2	It was reported that project documentation had been streamlined to make future reports clearer and more concise, with detailed technical papers retained separately for reference. The Finance Team will confirm the breakdown of the previously noted £212,000 capital spend.
4.6.3	The Board also noted that the issue of prolongation and associated museum on-costs arising from project delays will be reviewed further at the next Capital Projects Board meeting in December.
4.6.4	Action: Finance Team to confirm and report back on the detailed breakdown of the £212,000 capital spend.

	Action: Capital Projects Board to review prolongation costs and associated on-costs at its December meeting and update the main Board accordingly.
4.7	HME Board Meeting Minutes for the meeting held on 21 July 25
4.7.1	The Board received an update on the recent meeting of the HME Board, noting positive progress in retail performance and efficiency. Stock levels had been reduced, improving cash flow and increasing the rate of stock turnover, reflecting a more professional and commercially focused retail approach.
4.7.2	It was noted that DM had formally joined the HME Board. Trustees welcomed her appointment and the continued commercial development under the leadership of the new Head of Commercial, whose impact was already evident.
4.7.3	The Board also looked forward to the forthcoming Christmas retail range and display, which would be launched shortly and promoted to staff and Trustees.
4.7.4	A query was raised regarding Google reviews for the café and whether legacy reviews from the previous operator might be affecting current ratings; this will be checked and clarified.
4.7.5	Action: AD to review how Google reviews are listed for the café and ensure the current operation is correctly represented online.
4.8	Corporate Risk Register Highlights – October 2025
4.8.1	The Board reviewed the Corporate Risk Register, noting that while it had not been considered by SMT before circulation, it was important that the discussion proceed, given the timing. GS responded to a series of detailed questions from PB (submitted in advance of the meeting), including clarification that while recent cybersecurity improvements (Risk I1) have reduced the likelihood of an incident, they do not necessarily reduce the impact, and the register will be amended to reflect this distinction.
4.8.2	GS also confirmed that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The long-term funding risk (F4) remains stable, with positive indications from DCMS regarding future grant-in-aid levels, though funding is likely to continue below inflation. • Budgeting references (F5) will be corrected to reflect that the 2025/26 budget process is underway. • Spelling and factual errors (O5) will be corrected. • The pay-related risk (S3) will remain unchanged for now, as it is too early to assess the impact of the recent pay decision. • Training has been delivered to front-facing staff on managing challenging visitor behaviour and social media auditors, in response to an observed increase in difficult interactions.
4.8.3	RD raised a query regarding Risk O4, noting that mitigation scores appeared unchanged despite actions having been implemented. GS confirmed this was an error and that the likelihood score should be adjusted to reflect the positive impact of ongoing work.
4.8.4	It was agreed that a revised version of the Risk Register would be brought to the Audit and Risk Committee meeting in November for further review.
4.8.5	Action: GS to amend the Corporate Risk Register to reflect corrections to risks I1, F4, F5, O4, O5, and S3 as discussed. Action: Revised Risk Register to be submitted to the Audit and Risk Committee in November for detailed review and confirmation of updates.
4.9	Report on the recent Late

4.9.1	The Board received a report on the most recent Horniman Late event, which had been extremely well attended and positively received by visitors. The event was praised for its strong atmosphere, diverse audience engagement, and effective delivery by the programming and front-of-house teams. Trustees commended staff for the professionalism shown in managing high visitor numbers and maintaining a safe and inclusive environment throughout.
4.9.2	<p>GS noted that the event had performed strongly both operationally and financially, contributing positively to the Museum’s audience development and income generation objectives. Lessons learned regarding capacity, queue management, and crowd flow would inform planning for future Lates to ensure an even smoother visitor experience.</p> <p>It was agreed that the success of the event should be communicated internally to recognise staff contribution and to help embed best practice across future evening events.</p>
4.9.3	Action Point: GS to share a short internal summary celebrating the event’s success and acknowledging staff efforts.

Agenda #:	ANY OTHER BUSINESS
5.1	<p>RT asked if a thank-you gift would be appropriate for outgoing Trustee. MSC confirmed that an ‘au revoir’ dinner had been held and a gift featuring the Horniman’s logo had been given but is open to ideas on something more.</p> <p>RD highlighted that she, EA and SH had now completed four years as Trustees and would need to be formally reappointed. Both RD & EA agreed to continue as Trustees for another term. MSC to review the schedule of Trustee appointments and seek formal approval from the Board for the reappointments digitally.</p> <p>The trustees were reminded of the opening of the Qalqans Crimean Tatar exhibition on November 12th and encouraged to return their RSVP’s.</p> <p>Action Point: MSC to confirm the schedule of Trustee appointments and request online / digital approval for extending terms, this to be done ahead of the January Board meeting</p>

Agenda #:	Date of next meeting
6.1	January 2026

MEETING CLOSED