

Board of Trustees

Minutes

Date: 23 January 2017 (233 meeting)

Time: 14.00-16.30

Venue: The Boardroom, V&A Museum South Kensington

Present: Nicholas Coleridge (Chair) Professor Lynda Nead
Elaine Bedell Steven Murphy
Mark Damazer Mark Sebba
Ben Elliot Caroline Silver
Professor Margot Finn Dr Paul Thompson
Robert Glick Nigel Webb
Andrew Hochhauser QC Anthony Misquitta (*Secretary to the Board*)
Nick Hoffman

In attendance: Emmajane Avery, Director of Learning and Visitor Experience, V&A
David Bickle, Director of Design, Exhibitions & FuturePlan, V&A
Sophie Brendel, Director of Marketing & Communications, V&A
Heather Francis, Director of Finance & Resources, V&A
Jane Lawson, Director of Development, V&A
Tim Reeve, Acting Director, V&A
Bill Sherman, Director of Research & Collections, V&A
Alex Stitt, Director of Commercial & Digital Development, V&A
Julia Downer, Directorate Office Manager & Governance Officer, V&A, (minutes)
Kate Bailey, Senior Curator, Design and Scenography, for item 8
Geoff Marsh, Director, Theatre Collections, for item 8

Dr Tristram Hunt, incoming V&A Director (observing)

Apologies: Steve McGuckin, Dame Theresa Sackler, Sir John Sorrell, Edmund de Waal, Anna Jackson

1. Welcome and Declarations of Interests

1.1 There were no declarations of interests.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

2.1 The minutes of the previous meeting were approved by the Board.

3. Matters arising

3.1 The Chair welcomed Dr Tristram Hunt (TH), who has been appointed as Director of the V&A. TH attended this meeting as an observer and will join the V&A on 20 February 2017.

3.2 The Chair welcomed the new Trustees to the Board: Ben Elliott, Steven Murphy, Professor Lynda Nead and Nigel Webb, with their appointments effective from 1 January 2017.

4. Acting Director's Report

- 4.1 Tim Reeve (TR) presented an overview of the key V&A activities since the previous meeting. In addition to the introduction to the Director's Report, TR reported on visitor numbers for South Kensington and the Museum of Childhood, and gave an overview of current exhibitions: *Lockwood Kipling*, *Opus Anglicanum*, *You Say You Want a Revolution?* and *Undressed*. The V&A is not alone in experiencing a more challenging year than 2015/16 in terms of visitor numbers, but the V&A feels optimistic for 2017/18 with the opening of Exhibition Road and a strong overall programme.
- 4.2 Trustees commended the work of the curators and commercial staff involved in *You Say You Want a Revolution* and *Lockwood Kipling*.
- 4.3 TR shared recent photographs from the Exhibition Road project, which is progressing with renewed momentum. The focus is on the commencement of tiling on the lower courtyard and completion of the reinstatement of the Aston Webb screen.
- 4.4 TR reminded Trustees that the refurbishment of the Museum's main shop will begin on 26 February, and will be completed towards the end of April.
- 4.5 Finally, TR highlighted two recent acquisitions - a Tudor Jack and Sleeves and the 17th century Michael Mazarind Tapestry – and reminded Trustees that the Collecting Europe collaboration with the Goethe-Institut will formally launch on 31 January.

5. V&A East update

- 5.1 TR and the Chairman provided a verbal update to the Board on progress regarding V&A East since the November meeting.

6. Smithsonian partnership update

- 6.1 TR and Bill Sherman (BS) gave a presentation on the proposed collaboration between the V&A and the Smithsonian Institution (SI) for V&A East. The presentation had been prepared jointly with SI, and will be shared with the SI's Board of Regents on 30 January.
- 6.2 The partnership aims to bring together two of the world's leading museums to tackle the defining issues of our time through pioneering exhibitions and research. .
- 6.3 The Trustees endorsed the V&A's approach to the partnership, and the content themes being prioritised for further development, and gave permission for TR and AM to progress negotiations on a formal agreement with the advice of Andrew Hochhauser.
- 6.4 **Action Point:** Trustees' Finance Committee to revisit the business planning assumptions.

7. Exhibition Road opening programme and 2017 overview

- 7.1 Sophie Brendel (SB) gave an overview of the 2017 programme.
- 7.2 The opening of Exhibition Road building will be a highly significant moment in the history of the V&A, and a holistic and ambitious communications plan is being developed to ensure maximum publicity, not just for the new extension but for the broader mission of the V&A. Trustees endorsed the key elements of the emerging plan for the June opening, and noted that *Opera: Passion, Politics and Power* will be the main focus in the Autumn, as the first exhibition in the new Sainsbury Gallery.

8. Opera: Passion, Politics and Power

- 8.1 Kate Bailey, Senior Curator, Design and Scenography (KB) and Geoff Marsh, Keeper of Theatre and Performance (GM) joined the meeting, with KB presenting an overview of the exhibition, which has been devised to introduce new audiences to Opera and the V&A.

- 8.2 The exhibition will cover 400 years of opera, focussing on seven premieres in different European cities, ranging from Venice and Monteverdi to St Petersburg and Shostakovich. The exhibition will reveal the political and social context behind the individual operas, with headsets providing an immersive experience for visitors of all backgrounds.
- 8.3 The exhibition is in partnership with the Royal Opera House, as well as the BBC which will be running a two part series. The season will include performances at the V&A, and touring venues are being finalised.
- 8.4 The Trustees expressed strong enthusiasm and support for the exhibition.

9. V&A Due Diligence and Gift Acceptance Policy

- 9.1 The V&A's Due Diligence and Gift Acceptance Policy was discussed, and the guidelines welcomed by Trustees. The policy was approved, save for any revisions needed to ensure alignment with the Ethical Investment policy.
Action Point: Jane Lawson to update the Gift Acceptance Policy accordingly.

10. Chairman's Report

- 10.1 The Chairman updated the Board on the structure of the Development Advisory Board, which is to be reorganised into two entities, covering corporate sponsorship and individual giving.
- 10.2 The Board recorded its thanks to Tim Reeve, who has been Acting Director since November 2016.

11. Development Report

- 11.1 Robert Glick presented the Development Report, and highlighted the significant support received since the last meeting.

12. Reports from Committees

12.1 Trustees' Collections Committee

The minutes of the meeting held on 05 December 2016 had been circulated previously.

12.2 Trustees' Visitor Experience Committee

The minutes of the meeting held on 05 December 2016 had been circulated previously. Mark Damazer reported on progress to date with this relatively new Committee. It has reviewed the relaunched website, the Visitor Experience strategy and KPI reporting, and progress on a project to improve wayfinding through the South Kensington site.

12.3 Trustees' Audit Committee

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2016 had been circulated previously. An action was agreed to ensure that the Ethical Investment policy is aligned with that for Due Diligence and Gift Acceptance discussed at item 9.1.

12.4 Trustees' Finance Committee

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2016 had been circulated previously. Caroline Silver drew Trustees' attention to item 4 regarding the Blythe House decant, and asked the Board to approve the Blythe House financial protocol. The Board confirmed that the Loans and Reserves levels were appropriate, as detailed in item 6.

12.5 Trustees' Building Strategy Committee

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2016 had been circulated previously. The minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2017 were circulated at the meeting.

12.6 **Trustees' V&A East Committee**

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2016 had been circulated previously.

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2017 were circulated at the meeting.

12.7 **Trustees' Commercial Strategy Committee**

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2017 were circulated at the meeting.

Mark Sebba reported that retail had performed well. The Committee is looking forward to the refurbishment of the main museum shop beginning in February, and to an improvement in on-line trading in the months ahead.

12.8 **Trustees' Investment Committee**

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2017 were circulated at the meeting

13. **Any Other Business**

13.1 None.

14. **Date of the Next Meeting**

14.1 The next meeting will be held on 29 March 2017 at South Kensington.

Julia Downer 23 January 2017

Signed _____
(Nicholas Coleridge, Chairman)