



Board of Trustees

Minutes
VABT(20)12

Date: 29 January 2020

Time: 14.00-16.30

Venue: V&A Boardroom, South Kensington

Present: Nicholas Coleridge CBE (Chairman) Kavita Puri
Jonathan Anderson Caroline Silver
Dr David Bomford Marc St John
Dr Genevieve Davies Nigel Webb
Ben Elliot Anthony Misquitta (*Secretary to the
Board & General Counsel*)
Nick Hoffman
Steven Murphy
Professor Lynda Nead

In attendance Dr Tristram Hunt, Director
Dr Antonia Boström, Director of Collections
Sophie Brendel, Director of Audiences
Dr Helen Charman, Director of Learning & National Programmes
Jane Ellis, Director of Finance & Resources
Jane Lawson, Director of Development
Tim Reeve, Deputy Director & Chief Operating Officer
Judy Roberts, Head of HR
Dr Pip Simpson, Director of Design, Estate & Future Plan
Alex Stitt, Director of Commercial, Digital & Exhibitions
Claire McKeown, V&A East Project Director, for item 6.
Nick Marchand, Head of International Programmes, for item 8.

Apologies: Dr Paul Thompson

Minute taker: Julia Downer, Directorate Office Manager & Governance Officer

1. Welcome and Declarations of Interests

- 1.1 Nicholas Coleridge (NC) welcomed the Trustees to the meeting.
- 1.2 Apologies had been received from Dr Paul Thompson.
- 1.3 There were no new declarations of interest.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

- 2.1 The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 28 November 2019, were approved by the Board.

3. Matters Arising

- 3.1 The Board was advised that the first episode of the BBC Two documentary about the V&A, *Secrets of the Museum*, will air on 6 February 2020.
- 3.2 The appointment of four new Trustees is expected to be announced shortly.

4. The Director's Report

- 4.1 Tristram Hunt (TH) presented an overview of key activities since the previous meeting.
- 4.2 The Trustees were briefed on the current public programme which includes the strongly performing exhibitions: *Mary Quant*, *Tim Walker: Wonderful Things* and *Cars: Accelerating the Modern World*. The display, *Concealed Histories*, has opened, examining the background to a selection of objects in the Gilbert Collection.
- 4.3 The Trustees were briefed on the audience segmentation visiting the museum in Quarter 2, July to September 2019, which showed that 21% of visitors were from a BAME group. This is ahead of other London museums and galleries.
- 4.4 The Trustees were briefed on the appointment of Duncan Forbes to the new role of Director of the Photography Centre, and the appointment of Catrin Jones as Chief Curator of the V&A Collection at World of Wedgwood.
- 4.5 TEFAF has awarded a £25,000 grant to the V&A to conserve Frank Lloyd Wright's *Kaufmann Office* (1935-37), which will be installed at the Collection & Research Centre.
- 4.6 The museum has launched a Culture in Crisis digital portal, a free worldwide resource providing a register of cultural heritage preservation projects.

Action Point – the Board asked to receive a presentation on this work at a future meeting.

- 4.7 The museum has been gifted Auguste Rodin's 1912 sculpture of Vaslav Nijinsky, in memory of Robin Howard, the founder of the Contemporary Dance Trust.
- 4.8 The Trustees were advised that the recent Economic Impact Report on V&A Dundee had revealed a benefit to the city of Dundee of £21m, and £75m to the Scottish economy.

Phil Long, Director of V&A Dundee, and Lesley Knox, outgoing Chair, were both awarded the OBE in the 2020 New Year Honours List.

5. **V&A and RIBA Architectural Partnership**

- 5.1 The Trustees had received a confidential briefing paper setting out the long-standing partnership between the V&A and the Royal Institute of British Architects, RIBA. TH presented the museum's position to the Board.
- 5.2 It was agreed that the Director would write to the CEO of RIBA regarding the arrangements for the space rented by RIBA at South Kensington, proposing some outcomes for the partnership for the years ahead. The Chair will also communicate a similar message to the RIBA Board.
- 5.3 **Action Points:** TH to report back to the Board at the next meeting.

6. **V&A East**

- 6.1 Claire McKeown, V&A East Project Director, joined the meeting to update the Trustees on progress since the previous Board meeting.
- 6.2 Construction work commenced at the Collection & Research Centre in November 2019. The final details of the design by Diller, Scofidio & Renfro will be completed by the end of March. The latest interior images of the public network were shared with the Board. Work will begin in February 2020 on the conservation of the Agra Colonnade and the Altamira Palace ceiling, with work already underway on the Kaufmann Office.
- 6.3 The East Bank development, including the Waterfront Museum, through the LLDC is working with the Partners to reduce costs through value engineering on various aspects of the project. The V&A's "red lines" have been agreed with the V&A East Steering Group and the Trustees' Future Plan and V&A East Committee.
- 6.4 Construction work on the Waterfront Museum has started, and Trustees viewed the programme including the scheduled appointment of contractors for various work packages. Images were shared showing progress to date.

The Trustees welcomed the plans and commended the progress made on both sites.

- 6.5 Tim Reeve (TR) updated the Board on the partnership with the Smithsonian Institution (SI).

The partnership has been reset following discussions between the V&A and the SI, and following the Smithsonian Board of Regents meeting held on 27 January 2020. While the co-curated gallery at the Waterfront Museum will go forward, the involvement of the SI will be scaled back with the length of the partnership reduced to two years, and the SI temporary exhibitions removed. The fundraising programme being organised by the Foundation for Future London (FFL) will be revised.
- 6.6 The Trustees were reminded that the V&A's business plan is underwritten by the Greater London Authority and the Mayor of London. It was agreed that the Trustees' Finance

Committee and the FuturePlan and V&A East Committee should monitor the financial implications.

6.7 The Trustees supported the position taken by the Executive Board.

6.8 **Action Point:** The V&A Chair will write to FFL, City Hall and LLDC setting out the museum's position, and requesting urgent meetings.

7. **Museum of Childhood: FuturePlan Update**

7.1 The Trustees received a briefing from TH and Dr Pip Simpson on the next phase of the FuturePlan programme involving the Museum of Childhood in Bethnal Green.

7.2 The project will recast the Museum of Childhood to become a world-leading museum of design and creativity for children, families and young people through the refurbishment and adaptation of the galleries, incorporating state of the art learning studios.

7.3 The refined designs, which are strongly supported by recent in-depth audience research, were presented to the Board.

7.4 The Trustees agreed the proposal to temporarily close the Museum of Childhood for two years, which will be announced in February 2020.

7.5 Having examined the risks and opportunities of this project, including the fund-raising programme, the Trustees were unanimous in their commitment to its full realisation but asked that the museum be sensitive to the timing of other FuturePlan projects.

8. **International Strategy: Part 1, China & North-East Asia**

8.1 Nick Marchand, Head of International Programmes, (NM) joined the meeting to brief the Trustees on aspects of the V&A's International Strategy, focussing on China and North-East Asia.

8.2 The framework for the international strategy in China and North-East Asia was set out. Trustees were reminded of the successful partnership with China Merchants Group at Design Society in Shenzhen which has led to new initiatives and has raised the profile of the V&A within China. A number of V&A exhibitions are due to tour in China and North-East Asia during 2020 with others being planned.

8.3 The Trustees were briefed on a variety of cultural projects underway in China involving international partnerships. It was felt that the V&A is well placed to build new relationships and become involved in a range of opportunities within China, both curatorial and commercial as well as through the Learning Academy.

8.4 The Board was reminded of the V&A's long-standing relationships with cultural and commercial institutions in both South Korea and Japan which are reflected in the Asia Galleries and in the public programme.

8.5 The Board thanked NM for his presentation; Part 2 of the International Strategy will be presented to the Trustees at the May Board meeting.

9. **Sustainability Strategy**

9.1 The Trustees were briefed by PS on the V&A's Sustainability Strategy and the initiatives underway, which include the recruitment of a Sustainability Officer to drive forward the work.

9.2 Whilst there are challenges in working within an historic building, the museum has achieved a significant reduction in CO2 emissions at a time of rising visitor numbers. It was noted that sustainability is intrinsic to current and future capital projects.

9.3 **Action Point:** The Trustees asked for a further update on sustainability at the November 2020 Board meeting.

10. **Chair's Report**

10.1 The Chair had reported to the Trustees in the course of the meeting.

11. **Development Report**

11.1 Ben Elliot updated Trustees on the activities of the Development Department and the status of current sponsorship and fundraising initiatives.

12. **Reports from Committees**

12.1 **Trustees' Collections Committee**

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2019 had been circulated in advance.

12.2 **Trustees' Commercial Strategy Committee**

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2019 had been circulated in advance.

12.3 **Trustees' Visitor Experience Committee**

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2019 were circulated in advance.

12.4 **Trustees' Future Plan and V&A East Committee**

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2020 were circulated at the meeting.

12.5 **Trustees' Museum of Childhood Committee**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 January were circulated at the meeting.

13. Any Other Business

13.1 The next meeting will be held on 25 March 2020.

13.2 There was no further business.

Julia Downer
29 January 2020

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Signed
Nicholas Coleridge, Chairman