



## Board of Trustees

Minutes

VABT(21)25

Date: 11 May 2021

Time: 14.00-16.30

Venue: Lydia & Manfred Gorvy Lecture Theatre

Present: Nicholas Coleridge CBE, Chair  
Martin Bartle  
Allegra Berman  
Dr David Bomford  
Dr Genevieve Davies  
Ben Elliot  
Nick Hoffman  
Amanda Leveté CBE

Professor Lynda Nead  
Kavita Puri  
Caroline Silver  
Amanda Spielman  
Marc St John  
Dr Paul Thompson  
Nigel Webb  
Anthony Misquitta (*Secretary to the Board & General Counsel*)

In attendance Dr Tristram Hunt, Director  
Dr Antonia Boström, Director of Collections  
Sophie Brendel, Director of Audiences, Commercial & Digital  
Dr Gus Casely-Hayford OBE, Director of V&A East  
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, Director of People & Change  
Dr Pip Simpson, Director of Design, Estate & Public Programmes  
Claire McKeown, V&A East Project Director, for item 7.

Apologies: Jonathan Anderson

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

### 1. Welcome and Declarations of Interests

- 1.1 Nicholas Coleridge welcomed Trustees to the meeting. Prior to the meeting Trustees had viewed the newly refurbished Raphael Court.
- 1.2 There were no declarations of interest in the agenda.

## **2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

- 2.1 The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 23 March 2021, and the Confidential Annex relating to that meeting, were approved by the Board.

## **3. Matters Arising**

- 3.1 The Board thanked the Executive Board for their work on the Recovery Planning.

## **4. Director's Report**

- 4.1 The Trustees received a briefing from the Director on the activities of the museum.
- 4.2 On behalf of the Board and following his death on 9 April 2021, the Director paid tribute to HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, whose interest in industrial design had led to a connection with the V&A.
- 4.3 The museum will reopen all galleries on 19 May 2021 with a comprehensive public programme including two major new exhibitions, *Alice: Curiouser and Curiouser*, and *Epic Iran*, as well as the new display *Katerina Jebb/Elizabeth Parker. Bags: Inside Out, Renaissance Watercolours* and *On Point: Royal Academy of Dance at 100* will all reopen. The Raphael Court will also reopen to the public following an extensive programme of refurbishment. The Trustees were briefed on future exhibitions which include *Fabergé in London: Romance to Revolution*.

The V&A will participate in the Applied Arts Pavilion Special Project at the Biennale Architettura 2021, postponed from 2020. Produced in collaboration with Shahed Saleem, *Three British Mosques* will explore contemporary multiculturalism through adapted spaces.

- 4.4 The Trustees were briefed on the work of the V&A's National Programmes and the Arts Council England/V&A Purchase Fund, which has continued throughout the pandemic.
- 4.5 The Director briefed Trustees on recent digital achievements, including a GLAMi award for the V&A's Explore the Collections and the soft launch of the V&A TikTok platform.
- 4.6 Collections Division Restructuring.

This item has been recorded under a Confidential Annex. Its contents are exempt from disclosure under Ss.22 and 43(2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

## **5. Finance & Resources Report**

### **5.1 Recovery Programme Update**

This item has been recorded under a Confidential Annex. Its contents are exempt from disclosure under s.43(2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 because publication would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of the V&A and its supply chain.

## 5.2 **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Update**

The Trustees received a briefing from Judy Roberts, Director of People and Change, on the work being undertaken around Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at the museum, across all sites. There has been considerable staff engagement with the V&A Anti-Racism Taskforce, set up in November 2021 and chaired by Helen Charman, Director of Learning and National Programmes. Objectives and recommendations linked to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion have been developed for consideration by the Executive Board. The work will be embedded across the culture of the museum through the updated Strategic Objectives, and through the V&A's gallery interpretation, acquisition policy and exhibition programme.

The Board thanked Judy Roberts for her presentation and endorsed the work being undertaken.

## 6. **Remobilisation Update**

6.1 Tim Reeve, Deputy Director and Chief Operating Officer, briefed the Board on plans to reopen the V&A on 19 May 2021.

6.2 The plans, which have been reviewed and approved by the museum's Remobilisation Group, include opening all galleries five days per week. As before, visitors will be asked to pre-book tickets and, as part of the museum's Test and Trace obligations, details of all visitors will be securely recorded. Currently it appears that Step 4 of the Government's Roadmap will be achieved on 21 June, however the museum will follow advice and regulations thereafter.

6.3 The Let's Do London campaign, produced with input from the V&A, was launched by the Mayor of London on 10 May. It aims to reset the offer for visitors to London, both domestically and internationally.

## 7. **V&A East Update**

7.1 Tim Reeve, Deputy Director & Chief Operating Officer, Dr Gus Casely-Hayford, Director of V&A East, and Claire McKeown, V&A East Project Director, presented an update on progress at the two V&A East sites, which is being recorded for posterity through a range of media. The work at Blythe House to decant the reserve collection, ahead of its move to the Collection & Research Centre, is on schedule.

7.2 Claire McKeown briefed the Trustees on a number of significant milestones which have been achieved. The Waterfront site is approximately three weeks ahead of the Rev 10 programme, with the installation of the cores and steel frame making good progress. The external cladding, which will be intrinsic to the distinctive façade of the Waterfront building, is now in production.

7.3 The Collection and Research Centre is moving forward to the revised programme, and installation of the adjustable pallet racking is underway. With partitions installed, the volume of the spaces within the building and the layout of the public network is being revealed.

7.4 Dr Gus Casely-Hayford, Director of V&A East, briefed the Trustees on the curatorial plans being developed for the audiences in east London to inspire, engage and retain a new generation of visitors. Work is underway to establish new ways to access the collection, including developing digital tools. As part of this work a significant outreach programme involving schools within the boroughs surrounding V&A East is in development. The museum is in discussion with a range of partners, locally, nationally and internationally to support the work at the two V&A East sites.

7.5 The Board commended the work achieved by the V&A East project and curatorial teams.

## 8. **V&A Technology Update**

### 8.1 **Technical Architecture**

Jane Ellis, Director of Finance & Resources, presented an overview of the museum's technical estate. A five-year rolling programme of investment to re-envision the design of the overarching architecture, to improve integration, applications and platforms, supported by new working practices, was proposed. The cost benefit analysis was shared with the Trustees.

The proposal, which had received input from Nick Hoffman, Martin Bartle and Marc St John, was approved by the Board of Trustees and will now be taken forward.

### 8.2 **Digital Update**

Sophie Brendel, Director of Audiences, Digital and Commercial, presented an overview of the V&A's digital activity. The new V&A Audiences, Digital and Commercial division, launched in January 2021, is collaborating across the museum to consolidate the approach to digital, with audiences, customers, the collection and revenue generation at the centre of its remit. With the museum's move to a multi-site operation, digital activity, engagement and outreach are increasingly significant. The success of the website, social media and Explore the Collections online demonstrates increasing online audience engagement and the V&A will be extending this work through a variety of platforms.

The Board thanked Sophie Brendel for her presentation.

## 9. **Development**

9.1 Jane Lawson, Director of Development, updated the Board on recent development activities.

## 10. **Chairman's Report**

10.1 Nicholas Coleridge noted that the assistance received from the Government had been crucial in maintaining the museum's core activities and, as a result of the support for capital works, an improved experience for visitors has been delivered.

**11. Any other business**

**11.1 Trustees' Covid-Liaison Committee**

The Board approved the proposal to close the Trustees' Covid Liaison Committee.

11.2 The next meeting is scheduled for 29 June 2021.

11.3 There was no further business.

**12. Reports from Committees**

12.1 **Trustees' Audit Committee:** The minutes of the meeting held on 19 April 2021 had been circulated in advance.

12.2 **Trustees Investment Committee:** The minutes of the meetings held on 10 March 2021 had been circulated in advance.

12.3 **Trustees' Research Committee:** The minutes of the meeting held on 21 April 2021 had been circulated in advance.

12.4 **Trustees' V&A East Committee:** The minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2021 had been circulated in advance.

Julia Downer  
11 May 2021

..... Date: .....

Signed  
Nicholas Coleridge, Chair