



## Board of Trustees

### Minutes

VABT(21)40

Date: 29 June 2021

Time: 14.00-16.30

Venue: Lydia & Manfred Gorvy Lecture Theatre

Present: Nicholas Coleridge CBE, Chair  
Martin Bartle  
Allegra Berman  
Dr David Bomford  
Ben Elliot  
Nick Hoffman  
Amanda Leveté CBE  
Kavita Puri  
Caroline Silver  
Amanda Spielman  
Marc St John  
Nigel Webb  
Anthony Misquitta (*Secretary to the Board & General Counsel*)

In attendance Dr Tristram Hunt, Director  
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  
Dr Genevieve Davies  
Professor Lynda Nead  
Dr Paul Thompson  
Dr Antonia Boström, Director of Collections

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 Design: 1900-Now Galleries, which had recently reopened to great acclaim.
- 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 11 May 2021, and the Confidential Annex relating to that meeting, were approved by the Board.

## **3. Matters Arising**

- 3.1 There were no matters arising.

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

- 4.1 The Trustees received a briefing from the Director on the activities of the museum since it reopened to the public on 19 May 2021. The museum had hosted visits by HRH The Duchess of Cambridge, V&A Patron, and HRH The Duchess of Cornwall.
- 4.2 The visitor numbers have reached good levels supported by a well-received public programme, including *Epic Iran* and *Alice: Curiouser and Curiouser* which had both opened to 5-Star reviews, and the reopening of *Bags: Inside Out*. A number of new displays have been curated during the lockdown period, including Japanese Studio Crafts and Contemporary Ceramic Art from the Middle East.
- 4.3 The Trustees were briefed on the restructuring of the Collections Division which has reached the final stages. As part of the process Geoff Marsh, Director of V&A Theatre Collections, will leave the museum in September 2021. The Board noted his considerable achievements, which included the moving of the Theatre Museum to the V&A South Kensington site as well as the curation of a number of transformative exhibitions. Dr Julius Bryant will assume the honorary title of Keeper Emeritus and will work on a range of research projects.

The Trustees were advised that due to changes to the structure of the Museum of Childhood to ensure that it connects with the V&A's redesign operational plans, Gina Koutsika, Creative and Skills Director, will leave the museum. The Board recorded its thanks for her work over the past two years as custodian of the National Childhood Collection, and her work to refocus the Museum of Childhood.

As part of the consolidation of the V&A Research Institute, a review of the National Art Library, the associated Reading Rooms, the Print and Drawings Study Room and the V&A Registry and Archives is taking place, involving external advice and extensive consultation within the museum.

- 4.4 The Trustees were briefed on the new partnership proposal between the V&A and the RIBA which will bring a range of benefits to both institutions, revitalising the architectural galleries at the V&A.

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

### **5.1 Annual Report of the Trustees' Audit Committee to the Board of Trustees**

The Annual Report of the Trustees' Audit Committee to the Board of Trustees, and the Annual Report and Accounts for 2020-2021, had been circulated to Trustees. The Annual

Report and Accounts had been considered fully by both the Trustees' Audit and Finance Committees, and will be laid before Parliament shortly.

## **5.2 V&A Annual Report & Accounts 2020-21**

The Board approved the Annual Report and Accounts for 2020-21, and thanked the Director of Finance and Resources for their preparation. As Ministerial approval is awaited, the Board approved the delegation of responsibility for approving any changes arising from Ministerial review to the Director and Chair of Trustees.

## **6. Remobilisation Update**

- 6.1 Tim Reeve, Deputy Director and Chief Operating Officer, briefed the Board on the operation of the museum since it reopened on 19 May. The visitor numbers have been steadily increasing within Covid-safe protocols and on a 5-day per week operating model, with the exhibitions running at or near to capacity. An initiative to maximise the delivery of additional exhibition tickets to the public has been successfully introduced.
- 6.2 The Government's road map out of lockdown was being monitored and Step 4 is awaited on 19 July, at which point it is hoped that visitor levels will be permitted to be increased. Consideration is being given to new ways of working for V&A staff with consultation underway to inform a trial over the next 6 months.
- 6.3 The Trustees were briefed on the achievements of the remobilisation of the museum against the Interim Strategic Plan, which had been presented at the Board meeting on 23 March 2021.

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

- 7.1 Tim Reeve, Deputy Director & Chief Operating Officer, and Claire McKeown, V&A East Project Director, presented an update on progress at the two V&A East sites.
- 7.2 Since the previous Board meeting good headway had been achieved with the installation of the steel frame at the Waterfront Museum. The pre-cast concrete panels are in production and will begin to arrive on site for installation later this year. Images showing recent advancements at the Waterfront Museum were shared with the Trustees.
- 7.3 The Collection and Research Centre (CRC) is moving forward to the revised programme and is on track to meet the January 2022 practical completion date. The review by the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and Mace into the impact of the Covid delays concludes imminently. The Trustees viewed a fly-through of the CRC.
- 7.4 The Trustees were briefed ahead of a major press announcement taking place on 30 June at Here East, to set out the creative vision of Dr Gus Casely-Hayford for the two V&A East sites. The final names for the sites will be launched: V&A East Museum and V&A East Storehouse, and major acquisitions presented including a portrait by artist Kehinde Wiley. Associated initiatives, including the V&A East Youth Collective Programme, will be presented.

7.5 The Board commended the work achieved by the V&A East team.

## 8. **International Strategy Update**

8.1 Nick Marchand, Head of International Programmes, joined the meeting to present an overview of the international business plan, which had been reviewed by the Executive Board. The Trustees had been briefed previously on the international strategy framework in January 2020 and November 2020.

8.2 A business plan has been developed to grow specific partnerships, such as the successful collaboration, V&A at Design Society, Shekou, and to take forward new opportunities in exhibitions and audience development, strengthen the V&A's international reputation and influence, and generate new income streams to support the V&A's recovery planning. The financial projections and targets were set out for the Board.

8.3 Cultural engagement in China in general is supported by the UK Government and draws on the considerable strength of the V&A's collections. It was noted that other international museums are developing links with a range of overseas institutions.

8.4 The Trustees discussed the potential risks around international activity; these will be monitored through the Trustees' Audit Committee, and by a newly formed Board Sub-Committee which will cover Audiences and Commercial Strategy.

The business plan will be taken forward to the next stage. The Board thanked Nick Marchand for his work.

## 9. **Sustainability Strategy Update**

9.1 Sara Kassam, Sustainability Lead, joined the meeting to present an overview of work being undertaken by the V&A around sustainability. The Plan, which had been circulated to the Board, has been drawn up following a period of consultation and evaluation and had been reviewed by the Trustees' Building Strategy Committee. An action plan, identifying key issues and actions to be priorities over the next three years, and in the context of a long term net zero carbon target, was shared with the Board, and progress will be monitored by the Sustainability Steering Group.

## 10. **Development**

10.1 Jane Lawson, Director of Development, updated the Board on recent development activities, including new sponsorship partners for forthcoming exhibitions.

## 11. **Chairman's Report**

11.1 On behalf of the Board of Trustees, Nicholas Coleridge thanked Julia Downer, Governance Officer, for her work and great professionalism, with this being her last meeting before stepping down from the V&A.

## 12. **Any other business**

12.1 **Board Sub-Committees**

The Board approved the proposal to close the Trustees' Visitor Experience and Trustees' Commercial Strategy Committees.

The Board approved the proposal to form the Trustees' Audiences & Commercial Committee; Trustees had been provided with the Terms of Reference.

12.2 The next meeting is scheduled for 20 September 2021.

12.3 There was no further business.

**13. Reports from Committees**

13.1 **Trustees' Audit Committee:** The minutes of the meeting held on 16 June 2021 had been circulated in advance.

13.2 **Trustees Building Strategy Committee:** The minutes of the meetings held on 02 June 2021 had been circulated in advance.

13.3 **Trustees' Collections Committee:** The minutes of the meeting held on 09 June 2021 had been circulated in advance.

13.4 **Trustees' Finance Committee:** The minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2021 had been circulated in advance.

Julia Downer  
29 June 2021

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

Signed  
Nicholas Coleridge, Chair