



## Board of Trustees

Minutes

VABT(22)5

Date: 24 November 2021

Time: 14.00-16.20

Venue: V&A South Kensington, Board Room

Present: Nicholas Coleridge CBE, Chair  
Jonathan Anderson  
Martin Bartle  
Allegra Berman  
Dr David Bomford  
Dr Genevieve Davies  
Ben Elliot  
Nick Hoffman  
Amanda Leveté CBE  
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  
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 5  
Catrin Jones, Chief Curator, V&A Wedgwood Collection, for item 7  
Jo Norman, Director of Research, NAL and Archives- for item 9

Apologies: Professor Lynda Nead, Dr Antonia Boström, Director of Collections

Minute taker: Sarah Foakes, Head of Governance and Administration

### 1. Welcome and Declarations of Interests

1.1 Nicholas Coleridge welcomed Trustees to the meeting.

1.2 There were no declarations of interest.

### 2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

2.1 The minutes of the previous meeting held on 20 September 2021 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 over the period of September and October 2021, including the successful return of the Anatolian Gold Ewer to Turkey in early November by the Gilbert Trust for the Arts.

4.2 A number of recent successes were highlighted, including a steady increase in visitor numbers to the museum and exhibitions, with Fabergé in London: Romance to Revolution now sold out until the end of January 2022. Good Progress has also been made with the concept and vision for Young V&A, the re-branded Museum of Childhood.

4.3 The need for a long-term strategic approach to preventative building maintenance in the face of climate change was also discussed, and Trustees were assured that this is being taken forward as a priority under the purview of the Trustees' Building Strategy Committee.

### **5. V&A East update**

5.1 Claire McKeown, V&A East Project Director, presented an update on progress at the two V&A East sites, showing the latest images from each construction site. The Board discussed the progress of the two programmes, noted the positive progress made at the V&A East Museum, and discussed in more detail some of the works and programme challenges at the V&A East Storehouse site.

### **6. Finance & Resources Report**

6.1 The Trustees received a briefing from Jane Ellis, Director of Finance and Resources, on the financial position and developments since the last meeting, including progress on the outcome of the Spending Review and the V&A's future Grant in Aid. More detail will likely be provided on the specifics of these settlements early next year.

6.2 The Trustees discussed current visitor levels and projections for next year within the context of how this will affect self-generated income. Whilst next year is expected to be challenging financially, a more stable situation is expected in 2023-24.

### **7 Wedgwood Strategy**

7.1 Catrin Jones, Chief Curator of the V&A Wedgwood Collection, provided an overview of the developing strategic and operational plans for the site over the next three years. Collections will be made more accessible by improving the visitor experience and expanding the digital infrastructure. This will allow for retention of the current key specialist ceramic demographic as well as widening access to audiences such as young people, families and cultural day trippers.

7.2 The Board endorsed the strategic direction, encouraging the team to be ambitious in their plans as well as ensuring alignment with the wider brand strategy rollout across all of the V&A sites currently underway.

## **8. Remobilisation update**

8.1 Tim Reeve, Deputy Director and Chief Operating Officer, briefed the Board on the increasing number of remobilisation activities taking place across the organisation.

8.2 Many positive indicators have been seen over the past two months, with visitor numbers averaging at 30,000 per week. Trustees were informed of the plan to move to seven-day opening as of Monday 4 April 2022, and were updated on Trustees' Finance Committee discussion of the financial risks and opportunities connected to this decision.

8.3 Trustees were assured that winter COVID-19 planning has been undertaken in case any form of restrictions are re-introduced and were provided with an overview.

## **9. National Art Library Review**

9.1 Jo Norman, Director of the V&A Research Institute, now including the National Art Library and Archives gave an update on the recent external review of the National Art Library and its findings, as well as an overview of the three-year transformation plan.

9.2 The proposed transformation includes the creation of a Chief Librarian position to lead a strategic overview of services provided; to ensure that they best serve a wide variety of users. A strategy to co-ordinate the digital priorities in the collection will allow the library to serve more diverse and international users, whilst still retaining a very high level of service in the library itself.

9.3 The Board was assured that digitisation work is being done in conjunction with other projects in this area to avoid duplication of effort and that clear messaging and a communications plan is in development. Trustees were also informed that the re-opening of the library in limited form is planned from mid January 2022.

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

10.1 The Chairman reminded all Trustees of the rules and guidance pertaining to conflicts of Interest, including the circumstances under which it would be pertinent for a Trustee to exclude themselves from a discussion or decision.

10.2 Trustees were also informed of the plan to conduct an external Board Effectiveness Review by the end of the Financial Year, in line with corporate governance good practice.

## **11. Any other business**

11.1 **Energy centre procurement.** At the November Trustees' Building Strategy Committee meeting, a recommendation was made to enter into a 15-year agreement with the Natural History Museum for energy provision. Because the specific terms of the agreement are still being finalised, Board approval was sought to delegate execution of the agreement to the Executive Board. This is on the condition that an adequate third-party rights clause is secured to enable the V&A to enforce the contract direct against the supplier. Approval was given.

**Acquisitions delegations limit.** At the November Finance Committee meeting, it was agreed that the delegations limit for acquisitions be increased from £100,000 to £500,000 before Board approval must be sought, in line with other institutions. The Board endorsed this decision.

11.2

**12. Reports from Committees**

**12.1 Trustees' Buildings Strategy Committee**

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2021 had been circulated in advance.

**12.2 Trustees Collections Committee**


The minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2021 had been circulated in advance.

**12.3 Trustees Research Committee**

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 October 2021 had been circulated in advance.

**12.4 Trustees Investment Committee**

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2021 had been circulated in advance. It was noted that the Committee had approved a re-balancing of the portfolio to reduce the high level of cash and cash equivalents.

  
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Date: 24/1/2022  
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Signed  
Nicholas Coleridge, Chair