



Board of Trustees

Minutes

VABT(22)13

Date: 19 January 2022

Time: 14.00-16.30

Venue: V&A South Kensington, Board Room

Present: Nicholas Coleridge CBE, Chair
Jonathan Anderson
Martin Bartle
Allegra Berman (from 1500)
Dr David Bomford
Dr Genevieve Davies
Ben Elliot
Nick Hoffman
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

Nick Marchand, Head of International Programmes, Item 7
David Archer, Socia – Board Effectiveness observer

Apologies: Amanda Leveté CBE,

Minute taker: Mary Witton, Assistant to Directorate

1. Welcome and Declarations of Interests

- 1.1 Nicholas Coleridge welcomed Trustees to the meeting, and also David Archer from Socia who would be observing proceedings as part of the Board Effectiveness Review.
- 1.2 There were no declarations of interest.
- 1.3 Confirmation had been received that Kavita Puri has been re-appointed to serve a second term as a Trustee.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

- 2.1 There was one amendment to the Minutes of the previous meeting regarding an addition to Investment Committee as follows:

It was noted that the Committee had approved a re-balancing of the portfolio to reduce the high level of cash and cash equivalents.

- 2.2 The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 24 November 2021 were approved with this amendment 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 November 2021 to January 2022, including the success of current exhibitions. *Alice: Curiouser and Curiouser* had now closed after a very successful run and was due to open later this year in China. *Faberge in London: Romance to Revolution* had maintained strong interest and contributed to good commercial sales over the Christmas period.

- 4.2 The rise of the Omicron Covid variant before Christmas had necessitated changes to visitor and staff safety procedures. Staff received regular updates on changes via email and the intranet, and visitors through the website and onsite messaging.

- 4.3 The move back to 7-day opening from April was welcomed. All entry and exit doors would be open, including the revamped Cromwell Road main entrance, and signage was being prepared. Maintaining some element of pre-booking for non-exhibition entry remained under review, whilst ensuring that there was strong messaging through all channels that walk up visitors were welcome.

- 4.4 Attention was drawn to a scam App that purported to be an official V&A App. Sophie Brendel agreed to look into how this could be removed and would report back to the Board.

- 4.5 The Board noted the contribution the V&A had made to the Queen's Platinum Jubilee by administering the emblem competition, resulting in a strong visual to front the year's celebrations. A display on the competition would form part of the displays in June.

- 4.6 The Board noted that recent problems with water ingress and flooding due to heavy rain had been rectified, however this would be an ongoing issue with climate change and in the longer term adaptation and mitigation plans would be taken forward through the Trustees' Building Strategy Committee.

- 4.7 Recent Collections' acquisitions had included an abolitionist mug and a sampler. The current Collections were being reviewed to establish other items held, as part of a review and evaluation of this area.

5. V&A East update

5.1 Tim Reeve, Deputy Director & Chief Operating Officer, presented an update on progress at the two V&A East sites, showing the latest images from each construction site. The Board noted the successful topping-out ceremony at the V&A East Museum which continued ahead of schedule. The V&A East Storehouse programme continues to be challenging, and the next two weeks would be critical to establishing the reliability of the July practical completion date. A full report on budget and programme impacts would be brought to the next Board Meeting in March.

5.2 Nigel Webb was thanked by the Chairman and the Board for his time, expertise and commitment in monitoring this project so carefully.

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 confirmation of initial funding in the recent comprehensive spending review. Capital funding for infrastructure projects and COVID support funding for 2022/23 was still awaited from DCMS.

6.2 The Trustees discussed the financial impacts of the return to 7-day opening, the opening of the new museums in East London and the pressure on reserves in the event of no further bailout funding being secured.

6.3 The transition to a new family of sites with the opening of the two new museums in V&A East and the regeneration of the YV&A site in Bethnal Green, would mean the visitor numbers and income would remain uncertain until 2025/26.

7 Update on International Strategy 2022/23

7.1 Nick Marchand, Head of International Programmes, presented an update on the International Strategy and in particular our partnerships in China in the years ahead.

7.2 The Board discussed reputational risk and cultural sensitivity, cost/revenue ratios and diversifying across regions. It was noted that NE Asia was currently driving the agenda but other markets were being evaluated for the future.

8. Brand Strategy – overview of progress and key milestones

8.1 Sophie Brendel, Director of Audiences, Commercial and Digital, presented the Brand Strategy overview, including the Brand strategy development, the 'Brand Design' and 'Brand Activation' stages.

8.2 The Board noted the excellent quality of companies and specialists who had been engaged to work on this programme and the drive towards cohesion in the new family of sites model. The Board praised the huge amount of background work done and the strong position the Museum was now in for roll-out in the Spring/Summer.

9. Remobilisation Update

9.1 Tim Reeve, Deputy Director & Chief Operating Officer, updated the Board on the remobilisation of the Museum following the pandemic closures and challenges.

9.2 The Board noted that the recent move to Plan B following the rise of the Omicron variant had been weathered successfully. The emphasis was now on building back momentum in advance of the return to 7-day opening from April.

9.3 Tim Reeve was thanked by the Board for his careful monitoring and clear operational guidance through the changing stages of the pandemic.

10. Stephenson Blake Collection

These items have been recorded under a Confidential Annex. The contents are exempt from disclosure under:

- S.36(2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ("FOIA") because publication would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of the V&A and its staff; and
- S.42(1) of the FOIA because legal professional privilege applies to the information

11. Chairman's Report

11.1 The Chairman described to the Board the process of the Board Effectiveness Review, confirming that the two previous reviews had been conducted internally. Following new guidance on best practice, every third review should be conducted by an external appraiser. 'Socia' had been engaged through selective process to conduct the appraisal and they would be observing Board Committees and interviewing Trustees and members of the Executive Board. The report would be circulated to the Board and reviewed at the Board Awayday on May 12, 2022.

11.2 The Chairman unveiled the new Trustee and Executive Board Photograph taken in November 2021, which would be displayed on the Secretariat staircase with the other V&A record of office photographs.

12. Any other business

12.1 There was no further business.

Reports from Committees

12.2	Trustees' Buildings Strategy Committee	18 November 2021	Nigel Webb, Minutes circulated with Agenda, VABT(22)8
12.3	Trustees' V&A East Committee	30 November 2021	Kavita Puri, Minutes circulated with the Agenda, VABT(22)9
12.4	Trustees' Collections Committee	8 December 2021	David Bomford, Minutes circulated with the Agenda, VABT(22)10
12.5	Trustees' Building Strategy Committee	17 January 2021	Nigel Webb, Minutes circulated with the Agenda, VABT(22)11

Nicholas Coleridge
23rd March 2022

..... Date: 23/03/2022
Signed
Nicholas Coleridge, Chair