



## Board of Trustees

Minutes

VABT(23)03

Date: 26 January 2023

Time: 14:00-16:00

Venue: V&A South Kensington, Board Room

Present: Sir Nicholas Coleridge CBE, Chair  
Jonathan Anderson  
Martin Bartle  
Allegra Berman  
Professor Polly Blakesley  
Dr David Bomford  
Ben Elliot – online  
Rusty Elvidge  
Nick Hoffman  
Amanda Leveté CBE  
Kavita Puri  
Amanda Spielman  
Marc St John – online  
Dr Paul Thompson  
Nigel Webb  
Zewditu Gebreyohanes – online  
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 Helen Charman, Director of Learning & National Programmes  
Jane Ellis, Director of Finance & Resources  
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 – Item 4  
Jo Norman, Director of Research, NAL and V&A Archives – Item 6.2  
Simon Sladen, Senior Curator, Theatre & Performance – Item 6.2

Apologies: Dr Genevieve Davies  
Dr Gus Casely-Hayford OBE, Director of V&A East  
Jane Lawson, Director of Development

Minutes: Mary Witton, Directorate Office Manager

## **1. Welcome and Declarations of Interests**

- 1.1 The Chairman welcomed Trustees to the meeting and noted his thanks to departing Trustee, Dr Genevieve Davies, who had made such a significant contribution to the V&A in the areas of Research, Collections and Philanthropy.
- 1.2 The Chairman highlighted project progress with the Young V&A opening later this year on schedule, Phase II of the Photography Centre opening this Spring and positive developments at the V&A East Storehouse and Museum project with practical completion upcoming on both sites.
- 1.3 There were no declarations of interest.

## **2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting and matters arising**

- 2.1 The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 1 December 2022 were approved. There were no matters arising.

## **3. Director's Report**

- 3.1 The Director noted his thanks to the Young V&A project team for their work.
- 3.2 *Donatello: Sculpting the Renaissance*, which opens at the V&A in February, had been awarded 'Exhibition of the Year' by *Apollo* magazine following runs in Florence and Berlin.
- 3.3 The Board noted that following previous discussion, the EDI policy would be discussed annually at the Audit Committee and then at the main Board.
- 3.4 The Trustees received a briefing from the Director on his activities and those of the museum over the period of November 2022 to January 2023, which included his recent travel to India and Saudi Arabia to attend cultural events.
- 3.5 The Board discussed the challenging environment for exhibition visitor numbers and memberships, the data behind the figures and future strategy. The impact of the cost-of-living crisis and lower international visitors were being felt across the sector and the potential longer-term impact on finances was considered.

## **4. Building Strategy Committee: V&A East update**

- 4.1 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, with images of both including installation of the new V&A sign at the Museum.

4.2 The V&A East Museum remains on schedule for handover to the V&A, although recent current delays to the LLDC programme are being closely monitored. The V&A East Storehouse is heading towards practical completion with the decant planned to commence in May. Constructive discussions continue to be held with DCMS.

4.3 Strong progress continued to be made against other key workstreams, and a new Chief Curator, Brendan Cormier, had been appointed to replace Catherine Ince.

## **5. Finance Committee: Finance update**

5.1 The Trustees received a briefing from Jane Ellis, Director of Finance and Resources, on the financial position since the last meeting. Trading conditions remained challenging, with some impact on Membership and paid exhibitions, although on-site retail continued to perform strongly. It was expected that the challenging external factors would remain through much of the next financial year despite the exciting public programme and new openings which lie ahead.

5.2 The key commercial assumptions relating to next year would be discussed at the February meeting of the Trustees' Audiences and Commercial Committee and Finance Committee in March before the full budget was presented to the next Board Meeting at the end of March.

5.3 The Board discussed the framework agreement and museum freedoms on pay awards.

## **6. Strategic Focus items**

### **6.1 Key Recent Acquisitions**

Dr Antonia Boström, Director of Collections, updated the Board on recent acquisitions. The Board noted the range and depth of items being collected and the governance of the acquisitions process.

The Board noted that a large part of the acquisitions fund would be re-allocated next year to ensure consistent cataloguing across the collection.

The Board discussed the acceptance in lieu scheme, the rigorous acceptance policy of the Museum and the possibility of more strategic funding for fashion in line with that currently in place for photography.

### **6.2 'Curator of the Future' findings**

Jo Norman, Director of Research, NAL and V&A Archives, and Simon Sladen, Senior Curator, Theatre & Performance, presented findings of the recent research conducted on the changing nature of the curatorial role both in relation to the new V&A sites and new methods of communication.

The project sought, through training and the redevelopment of the Assistant Curator Programme, to establish how digital confidence could be increased, and a common set of skills and values developed across the family of sites which would still allow for individual venue flexibility.

**7. Committee Focus: Trustees' Collections Committee**

David Bomford, Chair of the Trustees' Collections Committee (TCC), presented an overview of the TCC's work and focus. The Board noted that Collections Committee was the first of the Committee Focus items added to the Board Agenda following the Board Effectiveness Review in 2022. Other Committees would present at future Board Meetings.

**8. Chairman's Report**

8.1 The Chairman reported the planned Summer Party at the V&A.

**9. Any other business**

10.1 No further business was discussed.

Signed .....  
Nicholas Coleridge, Chair

Date: .....