



Board of Trustees

Minutes

VABT(24)09

Date: 25 January 2024

Time: 1400 - 1630

Venue: The Boardroom, V&A South Kensington

Present: Nigel Webb (*Interim Chair*)

Jonathan Anderson

Martin Bartle

Allegra Berman

Prof Polly Blakesley

Dr David Bomford

Sir Ben Elliot

Rusty Elvidge

Amanda Leveté CBE - online

Prof Christoph Lindner

Kavita Puri

Amanda Spielman

Marc St John

Zewditu Gebreyohanes

Anthony Misquitta (*Secretary to the Board & General Counsel*)

In attendance: Dr Tristram Hunt, Director

Sophie Brendel, Director of Audiences, Commercial and Digital

Dr Gus Casely-Hayford OBE, Director of V&A East

Dr Helen Charman, Director of Learning, National Programmes and Young V&A

Jane Ellis, Director of Finance & Resources

Jane Lawson, Director of Development

Tim Reeve, Deputy Director & Chief Operating Officer

Judy Roberts, Director of People & Change

James Robinson, Interim Director of Collections

Dr Pip Simpson, Director of Design, Estate & Projects

Leonie Bell, Director of V&A Dundee – Item 7

Sophie Rouse, Head of Integrated Marketing and Insights – Item 8

Apologies: None

Minutes: Mary Witton, Directorate Office Manager

1. Welcome and Declarations of Interests

1.1 Nigel Webb, Interim Chair, opened the meeting and welcomed Prof Christoph Lindner, new President and Vice Chancellor elect of the RCA. Prof Lindner assumes the role of ex-officio Trustee, following the departure of Dr Paul Thompson in December. The Chair also acknowledged Martin Bartle's last V&A Board Meeting and thanked him for his great contribution to the Commercial development of the Museum over many years.

1.2 There were no declarations of interest.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting and matters arising

2.1 There was an amendment to the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 30 November, regarding Trustee assurance on loan agreements. The amendment would be made and the Minutes recirculated for approval. There were no further matters arising.

3. Director's Report

3.1 The Director updated the Board on key activities of the Museum between 13 November 2023 and 7 January 2024, including the future public programme and exhibitions scheduled to tour internationally. The successful start to the Adobe residency was highlighted, and the return of the V&A Illustration Awards for which 2000 works had been received.

3.2 The Director referred to the announcement of the renewable cultural partnership with Ghana, which facilitated the loan of a number of significant cultural objects to the Manhyia Palace Museum, in Kumasi, the capital of the Ashanti Region.

3.3 The Board were informed of recent appointments to the Executive Board.

4. V&A Dundee

Leonie Bell, Director of V&A Dundee, provided an update on activities across V&A Dundee, noting the economic impact report produced to mark Dundee's fifth anniversary, which had illustrated V&A Dundee's positive impact on the local economy. V&A Dundee, though still in its infancy, had shown itself to be a pivotal part of transforming the city. Recent funding confirmation from the Scottish Government had provided reassurance on future sustainability, as had the success of the first home-grown exhibition *Tartan* which had been commercially successful and was set to tour. The Museum was now looking forward to the rest of its first decade with renewed confidence.

The Board thanked the Director of V&A Dundee for her leadership and wished her team and the trustees of V&A Dundee (Design Dundee Limited) every future success.

5. Building Strategy Committee: V&A East Update

Tim Reeve, Deputy Director and Chief Operating Officer, updated the Board on progress at V&A East, including expected practical completion of the V&A East Museum in late January and signing of the 200-year lease on the premises. The fit-out stage continued on schedule and the shop and café designs were being refined.

At Storehouse, snagging was expected to complete by the end of February; the large object installations are nearly complete and over 50% of the total objects moved from Blythe House. The Board were updated on the progress of nearby residential developments and internal operational readiness and public programme planning.

6. Finance Committee: Q3 Update

Jane Ellis, Director of Finance & Resources, presented the Q3 forecast which showed a positive outlook overall. Commercial sales and memberships had performed strongly, in large part due to the success of the *Chanel* exhibition and membership retention would now be a priority. The overall contribution of *Chanel* to the finances was outlined.

7. Collections Committee: Hunt Deposition Plan

James Robinson, Interim Director of Collections, presented the current status of a funding plan to secure *The Deposition of Christ from the Cross* walrus ivory including expected contributions and fundraising targets. The Board discussed funding priorities and the composition of the Collections as regards owned or loaned high-value items.

8. Strategic Focus Item: Objective 2 – Transform Access to our Collection as a Public Asset and broaden its creative relevance and social impact.

Sophie Brendel, Director of Audiences, Commercial and Digital and Sophie Rouse, Head of Integrated Marketing and Insights presented the visuals for the new brand campaign which will go live in February. Trustees welcomed the playful, high-impact styling which would be seen across hoardings, digital and press as well as in-house on bags and lanyards. Trustees congratulated the teams on the excellent work completed.

9. Committee Focus: Trustees’ Audiences & Commercial Strategy Committee

Martin Bartle, Chair of the Trustees’ Audiences & Commercial Strategy Committee, gave an overview of the current work and priorities of the Committee.

10. Chair’s Report

The Interim Chair congratulated the three reappointed Trustees and updated the Board on the progress of the new Chair appointment and the Trustee recruitment round.

11. Reports from Committees

The Board noted the Minutes of Trustees’ Committees circulated in advance of the meeting. Committee chairs and Executive Board members reported significant items from their areas of focus since the previous Board meeting. Recently appointed co-opted members of Audit Committee and Young V&A Committee were noted.

12. Any other business

12.1 The Chair thanked Dr Pip Simpson for her work for the Museum over the last decade and wished her well in her new role at the Barbican.

Signed

Date:

Nigel Webb, Interim Chair