

## National Galleries of Scotland Board of Trustees

Minute of the meeting of the Board of Trustees held virtually via MS Teams on Monday 22 June 2020, 1400hrs.

**Present:**

Benny Higgins (Chairman)	
Nick Pearce	Willie Watt
Tricia Bey	Alistair Dodds
Catherine Muirden	Audrey Carlin
Edward Green	Hannah Rudman
Tari Lang	Andrew Wilson

**In Attendance:**

Sir John Leighton, Director-General  
Jo Coomber  
Jacqueline Ridge  
Bryan Robertson  
Line Clausen Pedersen  
Valerie Urquhart (items 1-8)  
Christopher Baker (item 9)

**Apologies:** Rucelle Soutar

**Secretariat:** Elaine Anderson

### ***Open Business***

#### **1 Declarations of Interest**

There were no new declarations of interest.

#### **2 Chairman's Business**

The Chairman considered that the trustees should discuss the issues around Black Lives Matter in relation to NGS at this meeting.

#### **3 Minute of the meeting of 30 March 2020**

The minute of the meeting of 30 March was approved as a correct record.

#### **4 Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

#### **5 Director-General's Report**

The Director-General reported on matters of interest and gave a

brief update on how the NGS is managing during closure. Further discussion on the structure of the public programme was ongoing.

It was noted that no decision had been made yet on extending the furlough scheme at NGS beyond the end of July, but it was expected that more staff would be brought back into NGS at the start of August to align with reopening plans.

*Black Lives Matter:*

The Director-General explained the approach which NGS had been considering in response to the Black Lives Matter movement. It was important to raise awareness of actions already taken and underway in relation to combatting racism, and also equalities in general, while also looking to identify areas where we can do much more and also integrate this more fully into our strategy. We also need to interrogate our internal culture and policies as part of the effort to become an inclusive and diverse organisation.

It was noted that NGS was establishing a relevant Steering Group to take up the issues and work towards change. The Chairman had agreed to sponsor the group. In answer to a question from Ms Lang, the Director-General confirmed that consultation with colleagues and audiences would play a role in this process. Colleagues endorsed the need for action and looked forward to hearing more at the next meeting.

## **6 Business Continuity/Reopening Plans: Update on Progress**

Mr Robertson updated colleagues on progress towards reopening. It was noted that the Audit & Risk Committee was meeting on 16 July to consider the planning details and respond on behalf of the trustees.

The plan aligned with Scottish Government guidelines. Capacity numbers had been calculated.

Trustees appreciated the work carried out so far towards the reopening plans.

*Discussion partially redacted.*

## **Reserved Business**

*Redacted*

## **Open Business**

### **9 Reports**

#### **9.1 Collection**

*Christopher Baker in attendance*

The report was noted. Line Clausen Pedersen was welcomed to the meeting. Ms Pedersen shared her experience to date, looking forward to her new role at NGS.

##### **9.1.1 Artist Rooms Loan: Edward Ruscha, born 1937, Liberty 2011**

Approved with thanks to the Artist Rooms Foundation.

##### **9.1.2 Commissions Proposal**

Mr Baker explained the approach to portrait commissions at NGS. It was noted that all protected characteristics should be taken into account in our collecting policies, including the commissioning of works. The process was always confidential.

The long list was noted. Trustees approved the list of options and agreed that the potential sitters could be approached. Any additional ideas for commissions were welcomed.

Ms Bey queried whether this was an opportunity to consider under-represented groups in the collection, particularly in relation to Black Lives Matter. Mr Baker noted that there was a great deal of work to be done in this regard across the collection.

*Discussion partially redacted.*

#### **9.2 Public Engagement Report (including Public Programme 2020-21)**

Ms Coomber shared the content of the report. Potential visitor forecasts had been developed, assuming that there would be no international visitors until next Spring and numbers would be limited in the interim due to social distancing.

The plans for the public programme were noted.

It was noted that the new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system would provide significant opportunity to deepen engagement with visitors. Immediate feedback from visitors would enable fast response to changes required. Smartify would also assist in developing new channels of communication with visitors.

Ms Rudman noted that Instagram was the fastest growing source of engagement, but this wasn't being tracked. Colleagues agreed that it would be useful to monitor the growth in that regard.

It was noted that value-added content for Friends would be useful, particularly in the light of a limited number of paying shows in future.

Digital content: Colleagues noted that about 30% of those engaging in digital content in Scotland consider that it may encourage them to visit a museum or gallery.

It was noted that the online shop sales were going really well and had exceeded expectations. Ms Coomber agreed to share the numbers with trustees.

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Digitisation: digitising the collection was ongoing, but had significantly slowed down for resourcing reasons. A new management position had been advertised, but the recruitment was on hold during closure. It was noted that the photographers were on furlough alongside a number of key staff.

Ms Rudman commended the digital content which had been shared online.

Ms Coomber noted that the reduction in social distancing to 1m would have an effect in building demand and confidence. It would also allow additional capacity, which would particularly assist the catering offering.

#### 9.2.1 **Visitor Figures: January-March 2020**

Noted.

## 10 **Compliance & Risk**

### 10.1 **Year-end KPIs 2019-20**

Noted.

## 10.2 **Strategic Risk Register**

Noted. Colleagues discussed whether there should be more risk work carried out on different scenarios. The registers were currently considered one-dimensionally. Trustees sought reassurance that collection care risks were considered thoroughly. Storage remained one of the key risks.

## 10.3 **Covid-19 Risk Register**

Colleagues commended the establishment of a Covid-19 risk register and noted its content.

## 10.4 **Safeguarding (Protection of Children & Vulnerable Adults)**

Nothing to report.

## 11 **Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

## 12 **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Board of Trustees will be held on Monday 7 September 2020 at 1330 hrs