

National Galleries of Scotland Board of Trustees

Public minute of the meeting of the Board of Trustees held virtually via MS Teams on Monday 22 November 2021 at 1330hrs.

Present:

Benny Higgins (Chairman)	
Alistair Dodds	Lynn Richmond
Chris Sibbald	Audrey Carlin
Edward Green	Hannah Rudman (items 1-8.1.1)
Tari Lang	Andrew Wilson
Willie Watt	Rucelle Soutar
Nick Pearce	

In Attendance:

Sir John Leighton, Director-General
Jo Coomber
Jacqueline Ridge
Bryan Robertson
Line Clausen Pedersen
Valerie Urquhart (item 7)
John McAslan, Sarah Kirby, Joe Travers-Jones and Elliot Hill,
McAslan & Partners Architects (item 8.1.1.1)
Daniel Lockwood, Faithful & Gould (item 1.1.1)
Fiona Stewart (item 8.1)

Secretariat: Elaine Anderson

Open Business

1 Declarations of Interest

There were no new declarations of interest.

2 Chairman's Business

The Chairman updated trustees on the recent interviews for new Board members.

3 Minutes

3.1 Minute of the meeting of 14 September 2021

The minute of the meeting of 14 September 2021 was approved as a correct record.

3.2 Minute of the meeting of 28 October 2021

The minute of the meeting of 28 October 2021 was approved as a correct record.

4 **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

Reserved Business

5 **Director-General's Report**

Redacted.

Open Business

6 **Reports**

6.1 **Public Engagement Quarterly Report**

Ms Coomber updated trustees on recent learning activities. A new permanent playscape was being developed, designed by the artist Tessa Lynch.

Thanks to the strong programme, there had been good media coverage over the last two months.

The visitor pattern had changed significantly, with a strong move towards walk-ins rather than pre-booked tickets.

Ms Lang sought an update on whether the vaccination passport scheme was likely to be rolled out to museums and galleries. NGS had fed back to Scottish Government that the Covid risk was not high in museum spaces. If the scheme was rolled out to the sector, the implications would have a significant effect on visitor numbers and resultant costs on NGS's operations.

Mr Watt asked for reaction to the mystery shopper visits, noting that one piece of feedback had been particularly poor. Ms Coomber explained that the mystery shops had been carried out by families this time, therefore the insights had been different from previous visits. There was a clear opportunity to change things and improve family visits going forward.

Ms Coomber noted some of the negative feedback from the mystery shopper visits, some of which were already being addressed.

6.2 **Chief Operating Officer's Report**

Mr Robertson noted that all staff who could work from home were still doing so. This would continue until

Scottish Government guidelines changed.

A laptop had been provided for all staff working from home. Additional equipment was required however for the planned blended working model which would enable staff to work both at home and in the office.

The new Director of Operations had been reviewing the way in which we operate security and visitor services, seeking improvements to shift patterns and the visitor experience.

The five-year capital investment plan was under development and the Environmental Response Plan was now in place.

Mr Robertson updated trustees on the application for Cyber Essentials accreditation. There had been a small number of fails identified, which were in the process of being remedied. It was planned to re-apply in the coming weeks. There had been significant improvements in cyber security in recent months and much work carried out to mitigate security threats. A five-year plan was in place to develop IT systems.

Ms Rudman passed on the trustees' thanks to the IT team for the fantastic work already carried out, querying whether there had been any phishing tests sent out to colleagues recently. Mr Robertson noted that one of the recent security breaches had in fact been through a phishing attack.

The Chairman asked if there was a formal forum in the sector for information sharing in relation to cyber security. Mr Robertson noted that the government had a strong forum through which intel was shared. Mr Robertson noted that the Head of IT had prepared a briefing note on the recent SEPA cyber attack and a response plan was being developed to establish key learnings for NGS.

6.3 Collection & Research

Ms Clausen Pedersen outlined some key points from the paper and highlighted some recent acquisitions. There had been much activity in the team, including some learning & engagement activity relating to the SNG project.

The Conservation team has been working on four

Phoebe Anna Traquair tapestries, modifying the frames to better support the works.

Ms Clausen Pedersen was asked to reflect on her time in post so far, noting that the mood across the team was positive.

6.3.1 **New Acquisitions for Approval**

The requests for approval were noted and approved (listed below). Retrospective approval was given for the purchase of *Untitled* by Yoyoi Kusama, for which approval had been given outwith the meeting cycle on behalf of the trustees by the Chairman.

- *Untitled*, c1965 by Yoyoi Kusama
- *Wise Women* by Tessa Lynch
- Lipstick by Lucy McKenzie
- 'Red Red', A portrait of the poet Jackie Kay by Clae Eastgate
- Series of four photographs by Edyta Majewska
- Series of photographs by Kirsty Mackay
- Series of photographs by Craig Waddell
- *Bethlehem* by Sir David Wilkie
- *Labour of Love* by Michael Youds (Gift from the artist, who is a member of staff)
- *The Body Presumes Again and Again* by Karla Black (gift from the artist)
- *East Kilbride photographs* by Sylvia Grace Borda

The following Artist Rooms gifts were approved with thanks:

All by Jenny Holzer:

- The Beauty Worshipped, 2017

- You Enemy, 2017
- I placed my Feet, 2017
- They're Breathing, 2017

6.4 **Public Programme 2021-22**

The report was noted.

Reserved Business

7 **Financial Matters**

Valerie Urquhart in attendance

Redacted.

8 **Major Projects Progress Reports**

Redacted.

9 **Compliance & Risk**

9.1 **Performance Management 2021-22 Q2**

The results for Q2 were noted.

9.2 **Strategic Risk Register**

The changes to the risk register were noted.

9.3 **Safeguarding (Protection of Children & Vulnerable Adults)**

Nothing to report.

10 **Any Other Business**

The Chairman noted that Mr Dodds, Mr Green and Ms Lang were standing down from the Board at the end of the year. This was their last Board meeting. They were thanked for their contribution over the last eight years.

11 **Date of Next Meeting**

Monday 31 January 2022 at 1330 hours.