

National Galleries of Scotland Board of Trustees

Public minute of the meeting of the Board of Trustees held virtually via MS Teams on Monday 31 January 2022 at 1330hrs.

Present: Benny Higgins (Chairman)
Audrey Carlin Lynn Richmond
Chris Sibbald Nick Pearce
Hannah Rudman Kate Sang
Andrew Wilson Jim McConville
Rucelle Soutar

In Attendance: Sir John Leighton, Director-General
Jo Coomber
Jacqueline Ridge
Bryan Robertson
Line Clausen Pedersen
Valerie Urquhart (items 7-11)
Patrick Elliott (item 6.2.1)

Apologies: Willie Watt
Apphia Campbell

Secretariat: Elaine Anderson

Open Business

1 Declarations of Interest

There were no new declarations of interest.

2 Chairman's Business

The Chairman welcomed three new trustees to the Board, Professor Kate Sang, Jim McConville and Apphia Campbell.

3 Minutes

3.1 Minute of the meeting of 22 November 2021

The minute of the meeting of 22 November 2021 was approved as a correct record.

Ms Carlin noted that she was not able to commit to the time to join the Audit & Risk Committee. The Chairman had agreed to join the Audit & Risk Committee in the short term to provide the connectivity to the Major Capital Programme Committee.

4 **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising which were not already covered on the agenda.

Reserved Business

5 **Director-General's Report**

Redacted.

Open Business

6 **Reports**

6.1 **Collection & Research**

Ms Clausen Pedersen shared the highlights from the paper. 60 works had been accessioned in the previous two months.

Ms Clausen Pedersen asked Trustees to note the publication of *The Impressionist Era: The Story of Scotland's French Masterpieces* by Frances Fowle.

6.2 **Public Programme 2021-23**

Ms Clausen Pedersen outlined the forthcoming public programme.

6.2.1 **New Arrivals Exhibition**

Presentation from Patrick Elliott, Chief Curator

Mr Elliott joined the meeting and presented some highlights from the New Arrivals show. Trustees noted the extent of the works purchased and the funding attracted from elsewhere which enabled the purchase of major works.

Works included pieces by Leonora Carrington, Salvador Dali, Dorothea Tanning, Jenny Saville, Mark Chagall (Acceptance in Lieu), Peter Doig (gift), Damien Hirst (Cultural Gifts Scheme), Wangechi Mutu and Magritte (gift).

The holdings of female surrealist artists had increased significantly. The AIL scheme (Acceptance in Lieu) was a major source of acquisitions, including *The Horse Rider* by Mark Chagall. Other works had been gifted following exhibitions.

Mr Elliott noted the work carried out by curators in nurturing relationships with collectors in order to secure future bequests and gifts.

6.3 **Public Engagement Quarterly Report**

Ms Coomber updated colleagues on recent events within the Public Engagement team. Trustees were encouraged to view the video produced by the Learning & Engagement team which outlined some of the excellent community work being undertaken.

Ms Coomber noted the exceptional performance of the Trading Company in the last quarter.

Building on Learning & Engagement work, there were a number of activities planned in the near future to encourage visitors back on site.

The re-brand was in progress and plans for relaunch would be discussed at the Board in due course.

A major review of the Trading Company had been carried out, which would be shared and discussed in due course. There was a need to revisit the plans for Open Access, which had been approved by trustees 3 years ago.

Mr Sibbald noted the frustration of visitors over the Turner queues. Entry was often significantly delayed, despite timed slots. Ms Coomber noted that discussions were ongoing about ticketing in general and how this is being managed going forward.

Mr McConville queried what the top themes were from visitor feedback. Ms Coomber noted that this was dependent on a number of factors and offered an opportunity to discuss this outwith the Board meeting.

Ms Richmond queried the likely approach towards Open Access. Ms Coomber explained that the original intention, with the blessing of trustees, had been to allow free access for all to our collection images. Following discussion, it was concluded that the opportunity for licencing needed to be reviewed from a commercial perspective.

Professor Pearce noted that academic institutions did expect free access to collection images and this was the norm.

6.4 **Chief Operating Officer's Report**

Mr Robertson shared highlights from the Chief Operating Office report.

It was noted that although the application for Cyber Essentials accreditation had failed at the end of last year, work was underway to address the minor issues raised. It was planned to re-apply for accreditation in March. Trustees however were satisfied with the robust approach to cyber security, while noting that accreditation had yet to be achieved.

A plan was in place to allow the return of office staff to site in the coming months. A blended working model was being developed and the return would be staggered. The technology, meeting structures and working culture all needed taken into consideration before a blended working model could work effectively.

A staff survey had recently closed and the results would be shared with trustees in March. Initial findings were positive.

Mr Robertson shared the initial output from the recent Security and Visitor Services review, carried out by the new Director of Operations. Significant changes were planned, bringing greater flexibility and a stronger focus on the visitor experience.

Reserved Business

7 **Financial Matters**
Valerie Urquhart in attendance
Redacted.

8 **Major Projects Progress Reports**
Redacted.

9 **Compliance & Risk**

9.1 **Code of Conduct: Revised Version**

Ms Anderson noted that a new Code of Conduct had been produced, based on the Model Code of Conduct from the Standards Commission for Scotland. The revised Code of Conduct was adopted by the Board.

9.2 Safeguarding (Protection of Children & Vulnerable Adults)

Nothing to report.

10 Any Other Business

There was no other business.

11 Date of Next Meeting

Monday 28 March 2022 at 1330 hours.