Public minute of the meeting of the Board of Trustees held in the AK Bell Room, Portrait on Monday 11 September 2023 at 1400hrs.

Present: Benny Higgins (Chair)  
Rucelle Soutar  Lynn Richmond  
Chris Sibbald  Dawn Thomson  
Hannah Rudman  Gemma Gray  
Jim McConville

In Attendance: Sir John Leighton, Director-General  
Bryan Robertson  
Anne Lyden  
Imogen Gibbon  
Valerie Urquhart  
Adam Christie  
Isobel Griffin, Clara de la Pena McTigue and Charlotte Park (item 6.1.4)  
Kathryn Farrell (item 10.3)

Apologies: Audrey Carlin  Jacqueline Ridge  
Professor Kate Sang  Isabella Miller  
Apphia Campbell

Secretariat: Elaine Anderson

Open Business

1 Declarations of Interest

There were no new declarations of interest.

2 Chairman’s Business

Committee Membership

The Board approved the appointment of Chris Sibbald to the Major Capital Programme Committee and Dawn Thomson to the Ethics Committee.
3 Minutes

3.1 Minute of the meeting of 5 June 2023

The minute of the meeting of 5 June 2023 was approved.

4 Matters Arising

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

5 Director-General’s Report

The Director-General updated trustees on recent events and challenges, commenting that the Grayson Perry exhibition was proving very successful.

Discussion redacted

The Director-General noted that his last working day would be 8 December 2023.

Open Business

6 Reports

6.1 Collection Report

Ms Gibbon noted the acquisition of Unknown Man by Ken Currie, sharing the importance of the work and inviting trustees to view it at the Portrait Gallery.

Ms Gibbon shared details of some of the other recent acquisitions. Two works had come to NGS via the Acceptance in Lieu scheme: La Lecture dans un Parc, about 1926 by Marie Laurencin and Portrait de Jacqueline accoudee, 1959; published 1960 by Pablo Picasso.

The loans programme continued to be active, noting that Mueck’s A Girl had recently been installed at Fondation Cartier in Paris. Other activities delivered across the team were noted.

Reserved Business

6.1.1 Proposed Acquisitions

Redacted
6.1.4 Conservation Presentation

Isobel Griffin, Clara de la Pena McTigue and Charlotte Park in attendance

Ms Griffin outlined the work of the conservation team, which included heritage science as well as conserving objects. Much time was spent on new acquisitions as well as exhibitions preparation.

Ms Griffin explained that the future move to The Art Works facility would offer great opportunity for managing the collection in the future.

Ms de la Pena McTigue, Senior Paper Conservator, shared some of the recent work carried out by the team and explained some of the science behind treatment.

Ms Park shared some of the techniques used in conserving watercolours.

Trustees thanked the team for the presentation and the Chairman asked if the Board could visit the studio in the near future.

Ms Rudman asked if students of conservation had the opportunity to work in the department. It was noted that there were internship opportunities at NGS and that a paper conservation course was starting at Glasgow University next year. This would provide opportunity for further collaboration.

Open Business

6.2 Public Programme 2023-25

The forthcoming public programme was noted.

Ms Lyden noted the current success of the Grayson Perry exhibition. Mr Christie noted that the numbers were ahead of expectation.

The Alberta Whittle: Create Dangerously exhibition was ongoing. Ms Lyden noted that the exhibition was proving challenging for some visitors. Findings were being pulled together from the Critical Friends group to inform future management of the anti-racism message.
6.3 **Audience & Digital Quarterly Report**

Mr Christie highlighted some areas in the report. Visitor numbers were very positive and were returning to pre-pandemic levels. The numbers were even higher at the National.

The Grayson Perry show was well ahead of projections and was proving very successful. The uptake of the audio guide had been good so far.

The new brand was gradually being embedded and the new uniforms were in place. It was noted that there had been little press interest in the new brand.

The membership scheme had been updated and new, re-usable cards had been issued.

Ms Rudman asked if video could be made alongside the audio content for the Grayson Perry. Mr Christie agreed to check the permissions. Mr Christie noted also that the use of Perry himself for the audio voice had proved very successful.

6.4 **Chief Operating Officer’s Report**

Mr Robertson explained the work carried out recently on recruiting Visitor Assistants, which would assist in attaining a consistent visitor experience. The Security and Visitor Engagement Team had also undergone a change to enable staff to work at all sites.

The SNG project was on track for opening on 30 September.

A Business Resilience Plan had been developed. The Plan was tested following the recent vandalism of the painting in the Portrait Gallery.

*Public Sector Reform*

Mr Robertson agreed to bring back a paper to a future meeting on developments with the latest round of public sector reform.

*Reserved business*

*Redacted.*

*Reserved Business*

7 **Financial Matters**
Open Business

10 Compliance & Risk

10.1 Business Plan & KPIs: Q1 2023-24

Noted.

10.2 Strategic Risk Register

Noted.

10.3 Draft Gaelic Language Plan 2023-28

Kathryn Farrell, Compliance Manager, in attendance
Ms Farrell explained that this was the third iteration of the Gaelic Language Plan, which was due for submission to Bord na Gaelic the following week. This was a compliance requirement under the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005.

Ms Farrell explained the commitments outlined in the Plan. The Plan had to contribute to the National Gaelic Language Plan. The Plan was not ambitious, but there was good buy-in across the galleries and some progress had been made.

Ms Farrell was thanked for the development of the Plan and for gathering momentum in this area.

Trustees approved the Plan.

10.4 Safeguarding

Ms Anderson noted that some colleagues still had to undergo training. This would be planned in due course.

Any Other Business
The Chairman noted that this was Ms Urquhart’s last meeting before retiring and thanked her for her contribution to the galleries.

12  Date of Next Meeting

Monday 27 November 2023 at 1400 hours.