National Galleries of Scotland
Board of Trustees

Public minute of the meeting of the Board of Trustees held in the Modern Two Boardroom on Monday 29 January 2024 at 1400hrs.

Present: Benny Higgins (Chair)
Rucelle Soutar       Lynn Richmond
Chris Sibbald       Jim McConville
Gemma Gray          Audrey Carlin
Professor Kate Sang

In Attendance: Anne Lyden, Director-General
Bryan Robertson
Donella Steel
Isabella Miller
Jacqueline Ridge
Line Clausen Pedersen

Apologies: Dawn Thomson
Apphia Campbell
Hannah Rudman
Imogen Gibbon

Secretariat: Elaine Anderson

Open Business

1 Declarations of Interest

There were no new declarations of interest.

2 Chairman’s Business

It was noted that this was Ms Soutar’s final meeting following a decision not to stand for a second term. There would therefore be two vacancies on the Board, which would be recruited in due course.

3 Minutes

3.1 Minute of the meeting of 27 November 2023
The minute of the meeting of 27 November 2023 was approved.

4 Matters Arising

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

Reserved Business

5 Director-General’s Report

Discussion redacted.

Open Business

6 Reports

6.1 Collection Report

Ms Clausen Pedersen was welcomed back to the Board following her maternity leave.

Ms Clausen Pedersen introduced the Collection & Research report, noting two recent gifts into the collection. It was noted also the drive to collect more works by female artists.

The Chairman asked if it would be possible to bring newly acquired works into the Boardroom from time to time.

Delivery of the Nobel Laureates commission had begun, with the arrival of the portrait of Sir Angus Deaton.

Ms Clausen Pedersen drew attention to the other activities outlined in the report.

It was noted that a portrait of Sir John Leighton by Michael Youds would be entering the collection over the next month.

6.2 Public Programme 2024-25
Ms Clausen Pedersen shared details of the current and future programme.

Mr Sibbald commented that the Trading Company was keen to evolve the programme to establish more exhibitions from the permanent collection which may have commercial opportunity. Ms Clausen Pedersen considered that there was opportunity, but not necessarily the capacity. There may be scope to review the approach to the exhibitions programme.

The Director-General noted that a number of exhibition runs had been extended so that fewer shows were displayed, but that didn’t always assist the commerciality. Further discussion was required to find the optimum programme which was deliverable within resources, but also commercial.

6.3 **Audience & Digital Quarterly Report**
Ms Miller shared the Audience & Digital report. 2023 had hit the 2m visitor level. This was driven by the success of the SNG. The PG had also rallied over the last year. Modern One and Two visitor numbers had dropped, but it was hoped to turn this around.

The Christmas gift promotion had been successful. The Friends offer had improved significantly following a review of the loyalty scheme.

The “click to open” rate was higher than industry average. Ms Miller considered that the connection between social media posts and the visitor experience was really strong. The current marketing team was relatively new and was delivering an excellent service.

Trading Company – sales had been exceptional in Q3 following the success of the Grayson Perry exhibition. The Link shop had done extremely well in Q3.

The Director-General noted that numbers in the sector were still slightly behind pre-Covid levels. The older demographic was definitely lower in number than previously. The prediction was that numbers would not return to pre-Covid levels until 2025.

**Reserved Business**

6.4 **Chief Operating Officer’s Report**

*Discussion redacted.*
Reserved Business
7 Financial Matters

Redacted.

8 Major Projects Progress Reports

Redacted.

Open Business
9 Compliance & Risk

9.1 Safeguarding

Nothing to report.

10 Any Other Business

There was no other business.

11 Date of Next Meeting

Monday 25 March 2024, to take place at the Portrait Gallery.