

Board of Directors of the Trustee Company

Summary of Meeting held on 10 November 2022

The Board met on 10 November between 7.15pm and 9.30pm. The following Directors were in attendance: Professor Ian Gadd (Chair), Mr Michael Davis (Vice-Chair), Mr Stephen Bird, Mary Burton, Mrs Julie Cole, Mr Chris Garcia, Prof Barry Gilbertson, Mr David Hall, Dr Simon Hayhoe, Mr Joe Houlihan, Dr Farooq Mughal, Mr Rob Randall, Dr Joe Willson.

The following is a summary of the Board's discussions, actions, and decisions; it is not necessarily presented in the precise order in which items were discussed and excludes confidential and commercially sensitive matters.

Tributes and obituaries

Matt Williams, Collections Manager, reported the death of Tim Gulliford, a collections volunteer for many years.

Donations received

A donation of £500 from deceased member Stanley Atkinson, which was facilitated by Kevin Doyle and a donation of £1000 from a current member had been received.

Outgoing and incoming Directors

Keepsakes were presented to departing Directors Dick Bateman and Jonathan Dawes during the pre-AGM reception. Departing Director Daniela De Angeli was unable to attend so the Chair will make separate arrangements to meet and present her keepsake.

The Board welcomed Mary Burton as the newest elected Director.

New Members' Event

The new members' reception on the evening of 21 September went well. We had 37 attendees and feedback was very positive: "I thought it an excellent event and met a range of interesting like-minded people, I am certainly encouraged to attend events and recommend BRLSI to others"; "It was great to meet so many interesting people"; "just what we needed to break the ice"; "I was also able to meet many interesting people"; "What a convivial evening"; "It was a very enjoyable evening". We also identified a few potential

volunteers. We are grateful to Claire Sweetnam and Gerie Herbert for co-ordinating arrangements, to Andreas Wasmuht, Joe Wilson, Rob Randall and Rachel Small for their presentations, to Matt Williams, Rob Randall, and Jude Harris for curating a ‘pop-up exhibition’, and to Mary Burton, Rachel Small, Fran Pinheiro, and Sally Wasmuht for helping with food, drinks and other logistics on the night, and Penny Law, Dick Bateman, and Michael Davis for ‘working the room’. We intend to make this an annual event.

Auditors

Following the vote at the AGM, BRLSI has appointed Monahans as auditors.

Digital and Communications Subcommittee

Joe Houlihan will be stepping down as Chair of the Digital and Communication subcommittee following its January meeting. He will continue to manage BRLSI’s YouTube Channel, to run the Military History convenor group, to work with the Adelard Group, and continue his duties as a director. The Board thanked him for his service in his role as Chair of this subcommittee.

Jane Austen trail

The BRLSI Bath Discovery Trails smartphone app was funded by the Art Fund and launched in 2021: this included four walking trails around Bath, each linked to an object on permanent display in the Jenyns room. A new trail — on Jane Austen — has now been added to the app. We’re grateful to Betty Suchar (volunteer), Matt Williams (Collections Manager), and Rupert Bassett (Bath Spa University) for their work in creating this new trail.

Interim Operations Manager

An advert for a 6-month Operations Manager role was posted late last month on our website, on LinkedIn, and Indeed (a job posting website). The deadline is 11 November.

Grant development

A working party has been established to explore a possible application to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Policies Review

The Board has established a working party of Directors to review and, where necessary, revise our portfolio of policies.

Members wishing to raise a matter to the Board or attend the Board as an observer

The Board agreed the following guidance:

Member has a matter to bring to the Board's attention

- The member should contact the Chair and/or Secretary at least one month before the next scheduled Board meeting
- The Chair will consider the request and s/he or a delegated Director discuss it further with the member
- If the Chair (or their delegate) feels that this is an item worthy of consideration by the Board, the member will be asked to draft a short paper using the Board's usual template; the Chair (or their delegate) may assist in the drafting of this paper
- The paper will be shared with the Board in advance of the meeting
- The member would be invited to attend the Board while their item is being discussed
- If the Chair (or their delegate) does not feel the item proposed should be presented to the Board they will explain their reasoning in writing to the member, and report this to the Board at the next meeting

Member wishes to observe a Board meeting

- The member should contact the Chair and/or Secretary at least one month before the next scheduled Board meeting
- The member should explain their interest in attending a meeting
- The Chair will structure the agenda to disaggregate any sensitive or confidential matters
- A redacted agenda will be shared with the member in advance
- The member will only be able to attend the meeting for the non-confidential/non-sensitive agenda items which will be confirmed, with indicative times, in writing in advance by the Chair; the member will need to leave the meeting once the agenda moves to confidential and sensitive items
- As an observer, the member would not be expected to contribute to discussion; if they wish to speak to any item, they should indicate this to the Chair in advance who, at their discretion, may invite them to speak
- A Chair may, in exceptional circumstances, refuse a member's request; they must explain their refusal in writing, and this should be reported at the next Board meeting.

This guidance will be posted on the BRLSI website

Collections Report

A report was received from the Collections Manager which noted:

- the success of the Beyond Beastly exhibition;
- recognition of Jude Harris's sterling work in co-curating exhibitions for many years;
- the selection of 'minerals' for the 2023 exhibition theme

Director responsibilities

In response to a paper from the Management Committee, the Board supported a view that, in principle, Elected Directors should be expected to fill a senior volunteer position but, noting workloads, there was a need for flexibility in the levels of expectation. Appointed Directors could also step up for discretionary roles that best suited an individual's skills and availability of time.

Use of 'Royal' in BRLSI's name

In August, the Board made a submission to the Cabinet Office seeking formal confirmation of our right to use 'Royal' in our name, citing its long usage. We received a reply in October that the Cabinet Office does not object to our continued use of the title Royal and for its use in our logo.

Strategy

The Chair led a discussion on the priorities that he had highlighted at the AGM:

- Stabilise our budget as much as we can
- Increase revenues (especially from room hire)
- Increase volunteer and staff capacity
- Hold more social events
- Involve members more in our planning
- Revise our operational structures to improve decision-making and provide better accountability
- Build new local partnerships
- Secure new grants
- Use our bicentenary to reaffirm our charitable aims and make BRLSI Bath's space for ideas and knowledge

BANES's Place Prospectus

The Chair reported on the 'Place Prospectus' recently published by BANES.

Membership

The Board formally approved a list of new members. Membership currently stands at 756.

Complimentary Memberships

Complimentary memberships have been traditionally issued to the holders of three public offices in Bath: MP, Mayor, and Council Leader. However, these had always been awarded to the individuals rather than the offices, necessitating regular renewals. Following the advice of the Membership Secretary, the Board agreed to grant complimentary memberships in perpetuity to the current incumbents of those three public offices.

Management Committee and Finance Subcommittee

The minutes of recent meetings of both these committees were received.

The Board's next scheduled meeting is 12 January 2023.