

Board of Directors of the Trustee Company

Summary of Meeting held on 12 and 19 January 2023

The Board met on 12 January 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, Mr David Hall, Dr Simon Hayhoe, Dr Farooq Mughal, Cllr Bharat Pankhania, Mr Rob Randall, Dr Joe Willson

Due to the lengthy agenda, the meeting was then adjourned and reconvened on 19 January between 6pm and 7pm. The following Directors were in attendance: Professor Ian Gadd (Chair), Mr Michael Davis (Vice-Chair), Mr Stephen Bird, Mary Burton, Mr David Hall, Mr Joe Houlihan.

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

Roger Whelan, member since 2017 and a regular speaker at Queen Square, died in December.

Director resignation

Director Barry Gilbertson has stepped down from the Board, due to a substantially increasing workload in another external role. The Board noted Barry's valuable contribution to the Board and to BRLSI more generally since he was elected in 2021. During his time on the Board he has brought wisdom, caniness, professionalism, wit, and good humour to our deliberations and decisions. He will continue to engage with BRLSI through the World Heritage series of talks that he has organised.

Christmas lecture and reception

Tristram Hunt, Director of the V&A, gave our Christmas lecture on 19 December. It was a sellout event at Queen Square with over 60 attendees online. The lecture was preceded by both a dinner for Dr Hunt and a reception in the Jenyns room; in addition, a pop-up exhibition was installed in the Lonsdale Room (which can also be seen on our website). The event went exceptionally well and Dr Hunt's lecture was very positively received. The Chair

expressed his gratitude to all the staff and visitors who ensured that the event ran as smoothly and successfully as it did, especially Stuart Reynolds who secured Dr Hunt as speaker (but who was unfortunately unable to attend the lecture itself), Gerie Herbert who co-ordinated all the arrangements, Matt Williams who curated the exhibition, and John Law who stepped in to handle the Zoom logistics at the last minute. The recording of the lecture will be made available only to members through the website.

Association of Independent Museums workshop (20 October)

BRLSI is a member of the Association of Independent Museums and Director Julie Cole reported on a workshop held at the Story Museum in Oxford in October.

Programmes Subcommittee

Andreas Wasmuht stepped down as Chair of the Programmes Subcommittee in November; the chairmanship is rotating amongst the convenors on a quarterly basis. The Board expressed its deep gratitude to him for his transformative work in this role, in particular for successfully moving BRLSI's programmes to online-only following lockdown in March 2020 and ensuring that online/hybrid talks are now a routine part of BRLSI's programming.

Interim Operations Manager

James Hamilton will be starting as Interim Operations Manager on 13 February. James comes to us with particular experience in customer relations, retail, marketing, revenue generation, and successfully motivating and managing small teams of staff.

Moore Room refurbishment

Mike Twohig reported that the refurbishment of the Moore Room is virtually complete and only requires last minute making good and clearing of furniture oddments prior to it being occupied by a new tenant.

Grant development

Director Chris Garcia reported on the initial work of a working group of volunteers and staff which was developing a possible Heritage Lottery Fund grant application.

Coronation

The coronation of King Charles III is confirmed for Saturday 6 May with a bank holiday on Monday 8 May. The Board discussed how the Institution might mark the occasion, and requested further suggestions from the Management Committee.

Social programme

Gerie Herbert (Communication and Activities Manager) presented a proposed overview of social activities for the coming year. The Board welcomed the paper and approved it.

Programme sponsorship

Andreas Wasmuht presented a paper on 'BRLSI Programme Sponsorship opportunities' to the Board; this had already been discussed by the Management Committee in October. The Board approved the proposal in principle and asked that the Chair liaise further with Andreas about the next steps.

Management Committees minutes

The minutes of recent meetings of the Management Committee were received.

Policies

A revised version of Data Management policy was reviewed; some minor corrections were advised and it was formally approved by electronic vote after the meeting.M

Membership

The Board formally approved a list of new members. Membership currently stands at 745.

Museum Association Code of Ethics

At the recommendation of Director Stephen Bird, the Board approved the adoption of the Museum Association's Code of Ethics.

Charity Governance Code

Director Julie Cole drew the Board's attention to the multi-level Charity Governance Code that has been prepared by the National Council of Voluntary Organisations. As the Code's website states:

'The Code is not a legal or regulatory requirement. It draws upon, but is fundamentally different to, the Charity Commission's guidance. Instead, the Code sets the principles and recommended practice for good governance and is deliberately aspirational: some elements of the Code will be a stretch for many

charities to achieve. This is intentional: we want the Code to be a tool for continuous improvement towards the highest standards.'

The Charity Commission endorses the code but is not involved in its application; however, the Code will be a very useful benchmarking tool, especially should the Institution be audited or subject to external scrutiny.

The Code takes different forms depending on the size of the charity. As we have staff but are otherwise not substantial in size, we would be considered a 'smaller charity'.

The Code for Smaller Charities is available for download at https://www.charitygovernancecode.org/pdf_gen?tabs_cookie=1

The Board agreed that this is a useful template and established a working group to consider how it might be used as a reviewing tool.

'Volunteer-Managers'

The Board discussed the challenges around recruiting volunteers willing to take on significant operational responsibilities such as chairing committees/subcommittees and agreed some actions to be taken.

Bicentenary

The Chair and Director David Hall presented a co-drafted paper outlining a vision for the bicentenary with some suggested activities. The Board welcomed the paper and agreed in principle to its approach.

The Board reconvened on 19 January to continue discussion.

The Board discussed possible bicentenary ideas at length.

Strategic priorities and planning

The Board discussed key priorities and how best to manage these going forward.

The Board's next scheduled meeting is 9 March