

Board of Directors of the Trustee Company

Summary of Meeting held on 6 July 2023

The Board met on 6 July between 11am and 12.30pm. The following Directors were in attendance: Professor Ian Gadd (Chair), Mr Michael Davis (Vice-Chair), Mr Stephen Bird, Mary Burton, Mr Chris Garcia, Mr David Hall, Dr Simon Hayhoe, Mr Joe Houlihan, Dr Farooq Houlihan, 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.

External presentation

The Board welcomed Rob Campbell, Head of Heritage Services, who gave a presentation about Heritage Services' approach to questions of diversity and decolonisation.

Tributes and obituaries

The Board noted the death of Bob Draper, Brenda Vicary-Finch, and Nancy Catchpole.

Grants

The Chair reported that Collections had received a grant of £6990 from the South-West Museum Development Small Grants scheme to support the storage, digitising, access and showcasing of BRLSI's maps and plans has been confirmed.

Accessibility

Following a concern raised by a visitor regarding provisions for visitors with disabilities, Mike Twohig (Chair of Premises) will prepare a summary of BRLSI's accessibility facilities.

Board matters

Following his re-election to the Council, Bharat Pankhania was re-confirmed as the Council's appointee to the Board.

Elections

The Board noted that, as four nominations had been received for four Board vacancies, no election was required. The nominees are: Chris Budd, David Hall, Andreas Wasmuht, and Joe Willson.

Statutory Accounts

Following a positive and useful 2022/23 audit clearance meeting with the new auditors, Monahan's, the Board approved the draft accounts for 2022/23 and authorised the Chair of the Finance Subcommittee to sign the accounts and Letter of Representation.

Strategy, Planning, and Operations

The Chair reminded the Board of the current agreed priorities:

- Ensuring that our mission is embedded into practice across the organisation
- Recruiting and retaining senior volunteer-managers
- Evaluating the impact of our new Interim Operations Manager on the Institution's revenues, staff, and operational effectiveness
- Improving the operational and governance structures of the Institution
- Developing a job specification and business case for a permanent senior staff management position, and ensuring a successful recruitment
- Developing and submitting a Heritage Lottery Funding bid
- Developing and implementing a bicentenary plan

Bicentenary

Director David Hall updated the Board on current plans for 2024, including plans for an event in the Parade Gardens, an exhibition, and festivals of science, engineering, and history. It was agreed that a Bicentenary subcommittee be established to support this work.

Adelard group

The Board approved a proposal, in consultation with the Adelard group and the Management Committee, to confirm the group's position within the Institution's operational and financial structures.

Operations

The Board discussed how to improve the operational efficiency of the organisation, and supported the proposal that the current Operations Manager be made a co-chair of the Management Committee. The Board agreed to return to the question of creating a permanent Operations Manager role at the next Board.

Royal Visit (confidential at the time)

The Board discussed plans for the visit of His Royal Highness, the Duke of Edinburgh, on 19 July, and confirmed that a rehearsal would take place on 17 July.

Energy Performance Certificate

The Chair reported that the building had been rated as 77D, just a few points from a 'C' rating.

Chair of Finance Subcommittee

The Board noted that the search for a new Chair of the Finance Subcommittee was ongoing but a potential candidate had been identified.

Collections

The Board received a report from the Collections Manager.

Membership

A revised membership policy was approved; the Board also agreed that membership 'benefits' would not be available to members in arrears.

Management Committees and Finance Subcommittee minutes

The minutes of recent meetings of the Management Committee and Finance Subcommittee were received.

The Board's next scheduled meeting is 14 September.