

## HISTORIC ROYAL PALACES

### Minutes

Meeting name: Board of Trustees

Time and Date of meeting: 9.30am, 20<sup>th</sup> July 2021

Location: Garden Room, Hampton Court Palace  
Microsoft Teams

Attendees: Rupert Gavin (Chairman), Camilla Finlay, Lord Houghton, Sarah Jenkins, Tim Knox, Carole Souter, Sir Michael Stevens, Robert Swannell, Sue Wilkinson

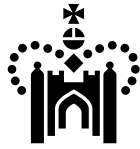
In attendance: John Barnes (JB), Nicola Andrews (NA), Sue Hall (SH), Andrew Jackson (AJ), Tom O’Leary (TO’L), Adrian Phillips, Dan Wolfe, Lorna Hudson, Rosie Baines (minutes)

Apologies: Zeinab Badawi, Jo Twist, Michael Wood, Jane Crowther

#### 1. Opening Business

- 1.1 The Chairman welcomed the Trustees including new Trustee Camilla Finlay, and the Executive to the meeting. Regarding conflicts of interest, Tim Knox is partner of Todd Longstaffe-Gowan and Secretary of Todd Longstaffe-Gowan Ltd, which provides landscape design services for HRP. Todd Longstaffe-Gowan is also an Honorary Patron of HRP. Carole Souter is Chair of the National Trust/University of Oxford Partnership Board and is chairing the Oriel College Commission into the Rhodes legacy, of which Zeinab Badawi is a member. Robert Swannell is Chairman of UK Government Investments.
- 1.2 The minutes from the meeting of 20<sup>th</sup> April 2021 were approved, with one amendment to the name of the review being led by Sarah Jenkins – the review is now confirmed as the Staff Diversity, Inclusivity and Equality review.
- 1.3 Actions from the last meeting were discussed. Regarding action 7.1.1, JB will present wording options for the Objects amendment to HRP’s Royal Charter to Trustees at next Trustee meeting

#### 2. Monitoring Performance



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### 2.1 CEO's update – June 2021:

2.1.1 The Trustees noted the positive outcome of correspondence with the Charity Commission and agreed that we should aim to be similarly proactive in the future.

2.1.2 The new statue of Diana, Princess of Wales has now been opened to the public, generating widespread media coverage and bringing visitors to the Palace.

### 2.2 CEO's Update – July 2021:

2.2.1 Trustees discussed systems capabilities, as exemplified by the need to address our ticketing system. Regarding other IS systems, Trustees sought assurance that the team has sufficient capacity and skills to support the organisation - SH confirmed that these details are being covered in the current Finance Directorate review.

2.2.2 The Trustees heard from NA and AJ regarding the relaxation of restrictions on 19th July. It was confirmed that many of our safety measures are still in place, although no longer mandatory. Capacities for spaces have been lifted where possible.

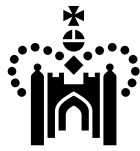
2.2.3 Trustees sought confirmation of HRP's timeline for sharing the sustainability strategy indicated in the annual plans and to address Cultural Recovery Fund requirements. SH confirmed that this will be brought to Trustees in September, and that the Executive is considering the investment needed.

### 2.3 Financial review against the April Reforecast, and June Management Accounts:

2.3.1 All finance papers have now been consolidated into one paper with Management Accounts as an appendix, to facilitate reading.

2.3.2 Performance is ahead of the April reforecast, primarily as we had not budgeted being open prior to June. Forecasts have not been updated at this point, as we are tracking in line, and slightly better than the April reforecast.

2.3.3 Trustees discussed comparative data on visitor numbers from other organisations. While there is no comparative data, anecdotally the Palaces' performances are similar to comparable attractions in London, with visitor numbers being stronger in weekend hotspots and locations with an outdoor offer.



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- 2.3.4 It was noted that our visitor mix in some locations and, therefore, yield has been better than forecast, for example due to the absence of international visitors, and fewer discounted tickets being taken up.
- 2.3.5 Trustees sought assurance that our customer service standards remain high in the light of changing rules and customers' expectations of refunds. DW confirmed that we will return to providing regular reports into customer feedback when resource allows.

### **3. Conservation Focus**

#### 3.1 Conservation Update:

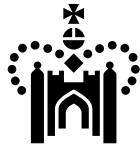
- 3.1.1 Trustees discussed the team's success in grant applications over the past year. With such grants often aimed at 'oven-ready' projects, AP confirmed that the team are consistently developing projects to reach this stage.
- 3.1.2 Trustees considered the pre-pandemic level of estate maintenance, noting the investment required to keep sites in a constant state and the influence of big projects, such as HCP mains electrics, on budgets.

#### 3.2 Investment Decision:

- 3.2.1 AP's team is in contact with DCMS regarding the timing of infrastructure grant-funded projects, since they must be started before the grants are received - DCMS has agreed to this.
- 3.2.2 Trustees discussed the risk in HCP mains electrics project phases being delayed from their original timetable - AP confirmed that the risk relates to business continuity rather than safety, and that each time a phase is completed the risk reduces substantially.
- 3.2.3 Trustees approved the commitment required, noting that the projects are fully grant-funded.

### **4. Education Focus**

#### 4.1 Education Update:

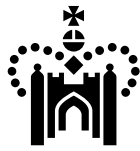


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- 4.1.1 TO'L updated Trustees on the Schools programme over the course of the pandemic – after a long down period while staff were on furlough the programme is now back up and running, with strong bookings through to next academic year.
  - 4.1.2 Contracts for live interpretation are being tendered, following the ending of our contract with Past Pleasures last year.
  - 4.1.3 Trustees discussed the importance of joining up the education strategy with digital ambition, utilising the Campaign Board, and bringing the development team on board at an early stage.
- 4.2 Tower Platinum Jubilee Educational aspects:
- 4.2.1 TO'L reported that our first approaches to schools have been met with great enthusiasm and are very encouraging as our first engagement with the public regarding the project. SW will share contacts with TO'L to assist in reaching disadvantaged schools.
  - 4.2.2 Trustees noted the well-developed plans for engaging children in schools and discussed the opportunities to involve older students through work experience or volunteering. TO'L confirmed that a Volunteer Engagement Manager is being recruited, and other plans are in development.
  - 4.2.3 Planning permission will go shortly to Tower Hamlets, at which point some information about the project will be published on their portal.
  - 4.2.4 The Media team is working on potential media collaborations, and interest received so far is very encouraging.
  - 4.2.5 There will be a further investment decision on this project in September.

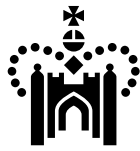
## 5. Governance Matters

- 5.1 Board Effectiveness Review:



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- 5.1.1 Paper and Appendix 1 were taken as read. The Board noted that the conclusions of the last Board Effectiveness Review had been fully actioned. They also concurred with the conclusions of the 20/21 Board Effectiveness Review, noting the management feedback.
- 5.1.2 Digital Programming: A late paper was tabled giving the status, to date, of the programme and the update being planned for the Board. Trustees asked that the update be combined with a briefing on the current digital strategy. This will be an agenda item at the next Trustees Meeting. It was agreed that the closure report of the completed 2018 Digital Transformation project would be useful to see at this point – RB to circulate.
- 5.2 Code of Practice Update:
  - 5.2.1 Updates included document references, job titles and updating corporate responsibilities to include a duty of safeguarding.
  - 5.2.2 Trustees approved the updated Code of Practice.
- 5.3 Changes to HRP's top structure:
  - 5.3.1 Following SH's resignation, a review of role remit and team structure is being conducted, as is normal after the departure of a Director. Views are being sought from Executive level, Finance Directorate staff and some Trustees. The review will be presented to the People Committee who may then make a recommendation to the Board of Trustees.
  - 5.3.2 Sir Mike Stevens asked to be kept directly consulted on the emerging conclusions in relation to the Finance role. JB will contact MS directly on this matter.
- 5.4 Terms of Reference Updates:
  - 5.4.1 Updated Terms of Reference were approved for the Audit and Risk, Finance and Investment, and People Committees.
- 5.5 Finance & Investment Committee minutes from 27<sup>th</sup> May 2021:



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5.5.1 The minutes were noted

5.6 Audit & Risk Committee minutes from 24<sup>th</sup> March 2021:

5.6.1 MS noted the overall assessment of control for 2020-21.

5.6.2 Recently the Audit & Risk Committee has focused on issues arising from changing ways of working, such as streamlining the exercise of governance, and supporting the organisation to move back towards strategic risk management as well as operational.

5.6.3 There has also been a focus on Information Security, given the general increase in likelihood and impact of external attacks. Trustees agreed with the Committee's suggestion that staff training be prioritised in this area.

5.6.4 The NAO have been delayed in their signing-off of the HRP accounts, but not due to any concern over content. It is likely that the accounts will be ready for approval at the next (30<sup>th</sup> September) Board Meeting. This would still meet the revised timescale for laying the accounts before parliament.

5.6.5 The minutes were noted

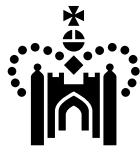
5.7 Terms of Reference of the Staff Diversity, Inclusivity and Equality Review:

5.7.1 The Staff Diversity, Inclusivity and Equality review is now underway. It will look to understand current challenges and barriers, learn about best practices, and deliver an action plan.

5.7.2 A desk audit and listening exercise are in progress, which will be followed by details to be shared with Trustees in August. The final review will be ready to share by October.

5.7.3 Trustees sought assurance that the Executive have capacity to engage with the information coming from focus groups, and eventually from the review. JB confirmed that actions will be developed in consultation with staff, having regard to priorities and resources.

## 6. Any Other Business



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6.1 An overview of important FOI requests will be presented to Trustees as part of the regular Board Meeting CEO reports.

Next meeting: 30<sup>th</sup> September, 9.30am

### Meeting Actions

Item	Action	Whom	Status
1.3	JB to circulate wording options for the Objects amendment to HRP's Royal Charter	JB	On September Trustees agenda
2.2.3	Sustainability Action Plan to be presented to Trustees in September	SH	On September Trustees agenda
5.1.2	May 2018 Digital Transformation Report to be circulated to Trustees	RB	Complete
5.3.2	MS to be consulted on conclusions of the Finance role review	JB	
6.1	An overview of FOI requests to be added to regular content of Board Meeting CEO reports.	JB	Complete