



## HISTORIC ROYAL PALACES

### Minutes

**Meeting name:** HRP Trustees Board

**Time and date:** 9am – 11.30am, 4 February 2025

**Location:** Hampton Court, Garden Room

**Attendees:** Nicholas Coleridge - Chair (NC), Lisa Burger (LB), James Chalmers (JCh), Camilla Finlay (CF), Tim Knox (TK), Gordon Messenger (GM), Sarah Jenkins (SJ), Jo Twist (JT), Michael Wood (MW)

**In attendance:** John Barnes (JB), Nicola Andrews (NA), Jane Crowther (JC), Anupam Ganguli (AG), Andrew Jackson (AJ), Antonia Newman (AN), Tom O’Leary (TO’L), Adrian Phillips (AP), Dan Wolfe (DW), Stephen Corri (SC), Emma Marley (EM), Abby Flight (AF), Dan Ferguson (DF) for item 7

**Apologies:** Jonathan Bewes

### 1. Opening Business

1.1 The Chair welcomed James Chalmers to his first Board meeting as a trustee.

1.2 A lunch in honour of retiring trustees, Michael Stevens, William Fall and Michael Wood would be held following the meeting.

1.3 No conflicts of interest were recorded.

1.4 The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as a correct record.

1.5 The Board noted that actions arising from the previous meeting had been addressed or were include on the agenda for this meeting.

1.6 The Board noted that the current round of trustee recruitment had concluded. A shortlist would be compiled and candidates would be interviewed in the coming weeks.

- 1.7 The Chair noted his gratitude to trustees for their contributions to the full Board performance appraisal and his own appraisal, noting in particular thanks to Lisa Burger who had worked with the Company Secretary to coordinate the Chair appraisal process.
- 1.8 The Board looked forward to its next meeting which would be held at Hillsborough to allow trustees the opportunity to better understand the site and to meet with the local team.
- 1.9 The Chair would host Trustees for an informal gathering at Eton on 30 September.
- 1.10 The Board was very pleased to note a major donation which had been received, and that the relevant due diligence had been undertaken. The Chair would write personally to the donor to express the Board's gratitude.

## **2. Monitoring Performance**

### **2.1 CEO Report's July – October 2024**

The Board had received the CEO's reports for November to December 2024. In discussion trustees noted:

- Works at Kensington Palace were now under way
- The planning application for a building at Bury House had been refused and trustees were thanked for their robust support
- The significant impact of Storm Darragh which had resulted in closures and a reduction in visitor volume
- That Arts Council England re-accreditation had now been confirmed
- The success of HRP's Halloween programme across the palaces
- That *Poppy Fields at the Tower* had been very successful and visitor response had been overwhelmingly positive
- *Untold Lives* at Kensington Palace had received very good reviews across the media and from visitors who praised its contemporary design, storytelling and relatability
- That a new series of *Inside the Tower* was currently airing on Channel 5 with the first episode being viewed by 900,000 people

- How partnerships with a range of other charities through our *Amazing Days Out* programme were making it easier for children with multiple barriers to visit the palaces to have joyful, memory making days out with their families
- The HRP schools programme continued to go from strength to strength.
- Trustees were encouraged to attend and support as many events as possible and noted that the full list of events was included in the CEO's report
- An update on a commercial matter and supported the Executive's approach
- The very positive feedback received for *Relaxed Hour at the Tower* on 26 January which had provided the opportunity for neurodivergent and learning-disabled children and their families to visit when crowd levels, sound and lighting were limited to ensure they could enjoy the experience
- That HRP was included in the programme of national events to mark VE / VJ Day anniversaries in 2025
- The programme of sessions to engage all staff with the new strategy and our ambition to be a charity for everyone was progressing very well
- Trustees were saddened to hear of the passing of Terry Gough, HRP's former Head of Gardens and Parks who had been a member of the HRP team for 32 years
- The appointment of Anna Kimber as new Deputy Director of the Tower
- The appointment of Eleri Lynn as Chief Curator and Tracy Borman as HRP's Chief Historian

## 2.2 **Management Accounts**

The Board received and noted the December 2024 management accounts as well as a verbal update on the current position. Trustees were pleased to note HRP's continuing strong performance but also the need to maintain tight control of costs as HRP shaped to deliver its new strategy.

## 3. **Operating Plan and Budget for 25-28**

The Board approved the new Operating Plan and associated budget, noting that the performance of the investment into delivery of HRP's new Strategy

would be monitored through a range of targets across all our objectives which were being developed. Progress against these targets would be included in a dashboard which would be shared with the Board as a matter of course going forward.

4. **Pay and Reward review**

Trustees noted that the People Committee had recently considered an element of the pay and reward review and would be seeking the Board's view on next steps by email following the meeting.

5. **National programme**

The Board received a presentation on HRP's emerging national programme. The programme recognised the significant challenges faced by many people in engaging with culture and began to describe how HRP would address this offsite and online and through working in partnership with other charities. Trustees were very pleased to see this new initiative taking place and looked forward to further updates on its impact as part of the wider strategy.

6. **Risk Register**

The Board received and considered HRP's strategic level risk register, noting that the register was reviewed by the Audit, Risk & Assurance Committee at each of its meetings and the Executive and Senior Leadership teams also reviewed on it on a regular basis.

7. **Animals of the Tower**

The Board approved an investment into the *Animals of the Tower* project, noting the further scope the project might also give HRP to evolve its community engagement programme.

8. **Prisoners and Punishment at the Tower**

The Board approved an investment in the *Prisoners and Punishment* experience.

9. **Research Conduct and Ethics policies**

The Board approved policies on *Good Conduct in Research* and *Research Ethics*.

10. **Hampton Court Tennis Court Lane investment**

The Board approved an investment in conservation work on Tennis Court Lane at Hampton Court.

11. **St Katherine's Dock car parking spaces**

The Board approved the recommendation in relation to car parking spaces at St Katherine's dock.

12. **Microsoft Renewal**

The Board confirmed its approval to award a contract to Microsoft for a further three years.

**Governance Matters**

13. **Finance Committee meeting– 12 December 2024**

The Board noted the minutes of the Committee's meeting.

14. **Finance Committee meeting –22 January 2025**

The Board received verbal update on the Committee's meeting.

15. **People Committee - 6 December 2024**

The Board noted the minutes of the Committee's meeting.

16. **People Committee – 28 January 2025**

The Board received verbal update on the Committee's meeting.

17. **Summary of key discussions**

The Board noted a summary of key discussions from the various working groups meetings since the last Board meeting.