

MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Kensington Palace, Monday 18th June 2012

Minutes

Present: Charles Mackay (Chairman)
Sir Alan Reid (Deputy Chairman)
Sophie Andreae
Dawn Austwick
Ian Barlow
Liz Cleaver
Lord Dannatt
Sue Farr
Malcolm Reading
Sir Adrian Montague (after item 2)

Apologies: Jonathan Marsden
Sir Trevor McDonald

In Attendance: Michael Day - Chief Executive
John Barnes - Conservation and Learning Director
Tania Fitzgerald - Finance Director
Alyson Lawton - Trust and Company Secretary
Jane McKeown - Head of Financial Accounting
Julian Whitehead - Security Advisor (for item 1 to 2)



Historic Royal Palaces is the independent charity that looks after the Tower of London, Hampton Court Palace, the Banqueting House, Kensington Palace and Kew Palace. We help everyone explore the story of how monarchs and people have shaped society, in some of the greatest palaces ever built.

We receive no funding from the Government or the Crown, so we depend on the support of our visitors, members, donors, volunteers and sponsors.

1. Chairman's comments

- 1.1 The Chairman noted the apologies received. The main purpose of this meeting was to sign off the Annual Review and Financial Statements and discuss the Board Effectiveness Review.

2. The Annual Security Report 2011/12

- 2.1 The Board noted the contents of the Annual Security Report. Julian Whitehead, Security Advisor identified two matters affecting security work in 2012; The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge will move in to their new permanent home at Kensington Palace, and the London Olympics. The Board discussed potential security challenges as a result of the increased profile of our palaces. The Chief Executive was satisfied that there was enough experience and wisdom within the organisation to ensure that any responses were proportionate.

The Board thanked the Security Advisor and approved the report. It will now be forwarded to the Department for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport in accordance with our contract.

3. The Annual Health, Safety and Environment Report 2011/12

- 3.1 The Board noted the contents of the Annual Health, Safety and Environmental report. The Conservation and Learning Director reminded the Board that it had been a year of high activity and significant construction. There had been no serious accidents.

He was now pleased to confirm that following a range of initiatives, the trend of increased staff accidents first noted in June 2012 had now reversed.

Although visitor accident rates were generally low, there had been a slight increase but with plausible reasons. Visitor numbers are also now greater at some sites. For instance at Kensington, visitors have been 70% up on budget but with no significant increase in accidents. We had learnt lessons from materials already used for surfaces at Hampton Court. As in previous years, accidents at Hampton Court were far greater than the Tower. Proportionately more young families and older people visited Hampton Court than the Tower and accidents were greater in these two groups and were mostly minor slips and trips. Hampton Court also had larger outdoor areas. Although we do encourage “near miss” reporting, it is not done consistently. Sir Adrian Montague recommended that these should be published more actively and management should emphasise the desirability of reporting “near misses”.

The Chief Executive noted that as part of our ambition to be more family friendly, the more physical activity we provide for children, the more the rate of minor accidents would be likely to increase. We would always be careful with aspects of safety but Trustees felt it was right to accept this consequence. The Conservation and Learning Director noted that we record all accidents on our property even when they are not necessarily caused by our actions. For instance, children playing in the grounds on scooters.

The Board asked John Barnes to thank the Health and Safety Advisor and approved the report. It will now be forwarded to the Department for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport in accordance with our contract with them to manage the palaces.

4. The Audit Committee held on 14th June 2012

- 4.1 The Chairman of the Audit Committee, Dawn Austwick gave a verbal report of the meeting. The main purpose had been to go through the year-end accounts. The National Audit Office had given a clean audit report. There had been no matters arising.

David Hingley, Head of Visitor Services at Hampton Court had also attended to talk about managing risk in visitor services and the Audit Committee had been impressed with his presentation.

The Governance Statement had replaced the Statement of Internal Control in the Financial Statements. The Board debated whether individual trustee attendance records should be included as recommended by the National Audit Office. After a range of views were expressed, the Board agreed to publish individual records.

5. The Report from the National Audit Office

- 5.1 The Board noted the contents of the report. As the National Audit Office had chosen not to attend this meeting, the Finance Director identified the key points from their report. The audit had gone well and all the outstanding points had been completed. She explained a number of minor changes which would be made to the draft letter of representation. The Board agreed that the good report reflected well on the finance department at Historic Royal Palaces.

Jane Mckeown, Head of Financial Accounting confirmed that there were no outstanding issues. The Board thanked her and the finance team for their work.

6. The Trustees' and Directors' Register of Interests

- 6.1 The Board noted the contents of the report and agreed to update the Trust and Company Secretary with any further changes.

7. The Risk Register

- 7.1 The Board noted the contents of the report and the risks in the register.

8. The Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2012

- 8.1 The Board noted the contents of the report. Jane McKeown explained key movements for Trustees. Ian Barlow felt that the Governance Statement should include an analysis of the key risks affecting the organisation rather than concentrating on the process of how risks were managed. This was the first year of the Governance Statement and we had, following the guidance, modified the Statement of Internal Control produced in previous years. It was agreed that in future years, we would consider a revised approach to report the key risks as identified in the risk register. The Board discussed and then approved the Financial Statements and thanked Tania Fitzgerald and the rest of the Finance team for their work in preparing them.

9. The Annual Review 2011/12

- 9.1 The Board noted the contents of the Review and agreed that it represented a successful year of activity across all areas. The Board approved the Review with thanks to those involved.

10. Review of Board Effectiveness

- 10.1 The Board noted the contents of the Chairman's report which was based on in depth interviews with each of the Trustees. The Chairman had concluded that the effectiveness of the Board and its committees remained at a very high level over the last year. However Trustees were also aware of the dangers of complacency and the need to work hard, individually and as a Board, to ensure that the Board remains as effective as possible. The Board agreed that the report fairly reflected their views and agreed the actions.

The Board discussed how attendance at events and site visits could be improved. Further detail on each event at the earliest opportunity would help them to understand their role at them and improve attendance rates. The Board also debated feedback from the Executive Board and a range of views was aired.

11. Any Other Business

- 11.1 There was no other business.

12. Next meeting: Hampton Court Palace: 25th July 2012