

HISTORIC ROYAL PALACES
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Minutes
Hampton Court Palace, Wednesday 16th March 2005

Present: Trustees:
Sir Nigel Mobbs (Chairman)
Bridget Cherry (agenda items 1 to 13 & 16)
Angela Heylin
Simon Jones
Alan Reid
Sir Hugh Roberts
Sir Roger Wheeler
Gillian Wolfe

In attendance: Michael Day
John Barnes
Annabelle Boyes
Geoffrey Field
Rod Giddins
Danny Homan
Graham Josephs
Alyson Lawton
Sally O'Neill

Apologies: Lord Inge (Deputy Chairman)

1. Chairman's Comments

1.1 The Chairman reported that he had recently attended the selection panel at the DCMS. Two outstanding candidates had emerged and their names had been proposed to Lord McIntosh for appointment.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 2nd February were approved and would now be made available to the public but subject to any exemptions that might apply within the Freedom of Information Act.

3. Matters arising

3.1 There were no matters arising.

4. Development Council

4.1 Angela Heylin reported on the recent work of the Development Council.

5. The Audit Committee

5.1 The Board received the minutes of the Audit Committee Meeting held on the 3rd March 2005. The Chairman of the Committee reported that it had been a good meeting focussing on process to ensure that the right people were making the decisions to vary the audit programme. He reported that with the changes proposed, the process in the future should be even better than it has been. Both the National Audit Office and Grant Thornton presented their audit plans and the Committee probed them to ensure Historic Royal Palaces was obtaining value for money. In general, management have been catching up on actions outstanding from Internal Audits. In future, the system proposed would allow focus on the more serious outstanding actions.

6. The Chief Executive's Report

6.1 The Board noted the contents of the Chief Executive's report, including that:

- Discussions on the use of the State Apartments at Kensington Palace had been concluded with the Royal Household resulting in a relaxation of the earlier agreement.
- Since the report had been written, an article had appeared in the Sunday Times about English Heritage that linked Historic Royal Palaces in the reporting. He advised Trustees that he understood that the Secretary of State had written to English Heritage to advise them that the article was incorrect and that he had asked the DCMS to give similar reassurance to Historic Royal Palaces. He had also seen and been asked to comment on a draft of the pamphlet referred to in the article.
- It was agreed that more work needed to be done on developing the exhibition plans for Kensington Palace.

7. The Finance Director's Report

7.1 The Board noted the contents of the Finance Director's report. Visitor numbers had been disappointing in February due in part to the very bad weather and a strong performance over Easter would be required to reach forecast. However it may not be possible to claw back the numbers and this was reflected in the sensitivities. Events income continued to be a great success, and within Retail, performance was strong at the Westgate shop. Trustees were encouraged by her advice that the resulting year end deficit was likely to be better than quarter 3 forecast by around £0.7million.

8. The Strategic Plan 2005-2008

- 8.1** The Chief Executives briefed the Board on the contents of the plan, which sets strategic aims in five main areas. The plan had a lot of detail but for the first time, it drew together and aligned many individual strategies and programmes into one document as well as the work on the cause (revised for Trustees' comments) and the four blueprints. Below this plan, were individual departmental Annual Operating Plans for next year which were being cascaded into individual staff plans. The full reserves policy would come for formal approval to the Trustees' Meeting in May together with a more detailed presentation on the blueprint work. If actions in the plan are subject to funds being raised, this had been indicated. Trustees reviewed the plan by section and discussed matters arising.
- 8.2** The Finance Director explained the financial elements of the plan including the sensitivities and the proposal to designate funds for Kew and Clore, as is the practice in other charities. After designation, our free reserves would still remain at the target of £2 million. Trustees thanked the Finance Director for her clear explanation of the complexities and agreed if they needed further clarification of the plan, they would contact her.
- 8.3** Trustees thanked the Chief Executive and his team, approved the Strategic Plan for 2005-2008 and within it, the detailed Annual Operating Plan (and Budget) for 2005/6. The Chief Executive advised Trustees that it was intended that the plan would be reviewed and rolled forward annually by a further year.

9. The Board of Trustees Assessment Process

- 9.1** The Board noted the contents of the Chairman's report on the results of the questionnaire. The Chairman concluded it had been a satisfactory exercise and that the main issues identified were being addressed. He suggested that the results should be forwarded to the DCMS and that the review should be noted in the Statement of Internal Control.

10. The Royal Tennis Court – Second Court Proposal

- 10.1** The Board noted the contents of the Chief Executive's paper and after discussion agreed that they needed significant reassurance on the financial viability of any proposal and to see a clear benefit to Historic Royal Palaces before they were able to consider any further detail. The proposal must not divert Historic Royal Palaces from its own plans.

11. Hampton Court Palace Views Management Plan

- 11.1** The Trustees agreed to endorse the revised Hampton Court Palace Views Management Plan as an Historic Royal Palaces policy document and noted that it would now be forwarded to local authorities and be placed on our website.

12. Historic Landscape Assessment and Landscape Development Strategy for the Hampton Court Station/Jolly Boatman site

12.1 The Board noted the contents of the Conservation Director's report.

The Board agreed:

- To endorse the Historic Landscape assessment and Landscape Development strategy for Hampton Court Station/ Jolly Boatman sites, and the vision that it contains.
- That, as soon as a formal application for planning permission is made, Historic Royal Palaces should ask the First Secretary of State to issue an article 14 direction to ensure that the local authority cannot approve the application without proper consideration being given to the national significance of the site.

13. The Clore Learning Centre

13.1 The Board noted the update on progress.

13.2 It was agreed that the Board of Trustees should see the plans as a whole before they were finalised and that Bridget Cherry should join the Trustees' Sub Group looking at the plans in detail.

14. The Tower Environs Scheme

14.1 The Board noted the contents of the Conservation Director's report. The Conservation Director reported that since the report had been written, he had agreed to an extension to the end of April for the draft final account.

15. Kew Palace

15.1 The Board noted the contents of the progress report on Kew Palace. Trustees were pleased to hear of the very good relationship that had been developed with the Director and his team at The Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew.

16. The Three Quays Development

16.1 Trustees endorsed the approach to the Three Quays Development.

17. Re tender of Audioguides

17.1 The Conservation Director briefed Trustees on the contract referring to his report, correcting the costs that were incorrect in the report. The Board approved the re-tendered contract at the revised cost for audio guide provision at Historic Royal Palaces with Antenna Audio Ltd, with effect from 1st April 2005.

18. Any other business

18.1 The Chairman noted that this was Simon Jones' and Gillian Wolfe's last meeting as Trustees of Historic Royal Palaces and thanked them both for their significant contribution to the work of the charity. The Chairman presented them both with lifetime passes.

18.2 Use of the Seal

During the past month the Seal had been used on the following documents:

- The lease for the occupation by "Eat" of Unit 2 The Vaults, Tower Hill Terrace..
- The Lease in favour of Five Star Catering and the related Catering Standards Document.
- The cost statement submitted for reimbursement to the EU Master Programme for research work on the protection of organic objects in Historic Buildings.

19. Next Meeting

19.1 The next Meeting will be held at Kensington Palace on Wednesday, 18th May 2005.