



Historic Royal Palaces is the charity that looks after:

**Tower of London**  
**Hampton Court Palace**  
**Banqueting House**  
**Kensington Palace**  
**Kew Palace**  
**Hillsborough Castle and Gardens**

We help everyone explore the story of how monarchs and people have shaped society, in some of the greatest palaces ever built.

We raise all our own funds and depend on the support of our visitors, members, donors, sponsors and volunteers.

## Minutes

Meeting name: **Board of Trustees**

Date of meeting: **Wednesday 15 July 2020**

Location: **Via videoconference**

Attendees: Rupert Gavin (Chairman), Zeinab Badawi, Lord Houghton, Sarah Jenkins, Jane Kennedy, Tim Knox, Carole Souter, Sir Michael Stevens, Robert Swannell, Dr Jo Twist, Sue Wilkinson, Professor Michael Wood

In attendance: Nicola Andrews, John Barnes, Jane Crowther, Gina George, Rachael Gilleard, Sue Hall, Andrew Jackson, Tom O'Leary, Adrian Phillips, Dan Wolfe

Apologies: None

### 1. Opening business

- 1.1 The Chairman welcomed Trustees and the Executive to the meeting, reminding the Board that a substantial number of staff were still on furlough and that therefore staff capacity was limited.
- 1.2 Regarding conflicts of interest, Jane Kennedy is a Senior Partner of Purcell. Purcell has been selected as the architect for the build of the Orangery Learning Centre at Kensington Palace. 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 Oxford University Oriel College Commission into the Rhodes legacy. Robert Swannell is Chairman of UK Government Investments.
- 1.3 The minutes of the meetings of 21 May and 17 June were approved.



## 2. Verbal update

### 2.1 *Palace re-opening*

The Tower opened on 10 July. There has been excellent visitor response and the team has taken away a lot of learning about managing the visitor experience. Lord Houghton suggested that this could be an opportunity to provide a more tailored visitor experience. Andrew Jackson agreed that this has shown the possibilities for using timed ticketing and that this will be an integral part of creating a new and better visitor experience. Sarah Jenkins encouraged the Executive to capture this positivity and use it for social advocacy.

Nicola Andrews reported that the new opening regime at Hampton Court Palace has provided the opportunity to test fundamentally different staffing structures. The palace interiors will open on 17 July. Visit numbers are reasonable, and generating a small profit. There will be a mini food festival in August and the Concours of Elegance festival in September, which it is hoped will drive more visits. Kensington Palace will open on 30 July.

### 2.2 *Staffing*

Jane Crowther reported that all staff had accepted the temporary 20% pay reduction/ reduction in working hours. Voluntary redundancy applications to date are 130. If all of these are accepted it is estimated that this will yield approximately 50% of the currently-anticipated savings target. 70 staff have applied to reduce their hours or take unpaid leave. The deadline for voluntary redundancy applications has been extended.

Relationships with the Trade Unions continue to be reasonably good. A staff forum has been set up with 15 members of staff elected by their colleagues.

The Executive Board has begun to look a more detail in the revised organisation structure (the headlines to be presented later in the meeting). If necessary, consultation on compulsory redundancy will begin in September, with a view to completing changes by the end of the calendar year.

Lord Houghton questioned whether it was preferable to keep fewer staff, on full pay, than more staff on lower pay. John Barnes explained that reduced pay was a short-term measure, and that the organisation would need to shrink. Robert Swannell questioned



whether any voluntary redundancies were being refused – the Executive is making a case by case assessment of all applications, but the current principle is that all will be accepted unless critical to the functioning of the organisation.

### **2.3 *Financial position***

Ministerial approval is awaited for the Financial Statements, after which they will be signed off by the NAO. In the current financial year, HRP is £1.1m ahead of budget for the first three months, due to a £500k better performance in membership and a donation.

In terms of cash management, revised rates have been received from various providers. The Investment Committee will be convened to approve the final selection.

The £4m overdraft has been utilised, but more disinvestment will occur in August. At there moment there is sufficient cash to pay staff in July.

HRP has made a successful application to the Heritage Emergency fund for £219,000 and, in addition to the previous c\$500k donation, has received a pledge of support of £1m for the Kensington Palace Orangery Learning Centre, on the condition that it can be completed. Robert Swannell reported that the Campaign Board was very engaged and hoping to raise a significant sum to support the Tower Moat Garden project.

## **3. Government funding**

- 3.1 A £1.57bn support package has been announced for arts, culture and heritage, although it will be for this financial year only. It is understood that HRP will be eligible to apply, but priority will be given to organisations in danger of immediate insolvency. John Barnes has spoken to Heritage England and the National Lottery Heritage Fund, who are some of the decision-makers. We are also investigating the possibility that HRP may be able to benefit from a fund to re-start halted construction work.

The Tower Moat Garden project appears to be of interest to the DCMS, and we are exploring links to other Jubilee and Commonwealth-related events. The project will be presented to Trustees later in the year.

The Case for Support is with DCMS and is being considered, along with other funding requests.



#### **4. Inclusivity**

Carole Souter's interest, as Chair of the Oxford University Oriel College Commission into the Rhodes legacy, was noted.

The Board agreed that it was important for HRP to be clear about its intentions for inclusivity. Sue Wilkinson encouraged the Executive to consider the principles on which this will be based.

The Board noted the need to maintain dialogue with the Royal Collection Trust. The Board also noted that a letter had been received from the Secretary of State on statues and memorials in public places. The Chairman recommended that a case by case approach should be taken to the collections in HRP's care.

Sarah Jenkins noted that we should communicate what HRP has already done/ is doing to demonstrate that it is serious about taking action.

Michael Wood stated that artefacts were capable of intense scrutiny, and this should provide an opportunity for debate, as well as telling the stories of the lives of people connected to the palaces.

#### **5. Digital update**

- 5.1 The Board noted that the opportunities for HRP's digital work was due to be discussed with a small group of Trustees. Robert Swannell expressed his opinion that this presented a real opportunity for a whole-HRP digital strategy and that there would likely be interest from a corporate sponsor.

#### **6. Subcommittees**

- 6.1 Sir Michael Stevens reported that at its last meeting the Audit and Risk Committee, as well as considering the Financial Statements, reviewed HRP's readiness for re-opening in a COVID-secure way. The ARC was impressed by the through work done by teams.

#### **7. Organisation and governance**

##### **7.1 *Charity Commission alert***

Trustees noted the alert from the Charity Commission on the importance of transparent and accountable governance, and that a fuller report would be brought to the Board in September.



7.2 *Strategic session*

In the current circumstances, the Board agreed to move the strategic session from the end of September to January 2021.

7.3 *Register of interests*

The Board noted the register of interests, and changes since the last one.

*The Executive, except John Barnes, Jane Crowther and Rachael Gilleard, left the meeting.*

8. **Organisational re-design**

- 8.1 John Barnes presented the new high-level structure for the organisation. This creates a new Commercial Department, combining functions from Retail and Catering and Communications & Development. The Public Engagement department will take on some functions from Communications & Development. There are less significant changes in other Directorates. Further detail of the structure will be provided in August.

The Board debated the merits of the new structure and unanimously supported it. The Board also supported the appointment of Dan Wolfe as the Director responsible for the new Commercial Department.

Next meeting, 12pm, 25 August 2020.

