



**MINUTES OF THE 223rd MEETING OF  
THE TRUSTEES OF THE ROYAL AIR FORCE MUSEUM  
HELD AT THE LONDON SITE ON TUESDAY 19 MARCH 2024**

Present:	Sir Stephen Hillier (Chair)	(SSH)
	Mr John Banks	(JB)
	Mr Josh Chana (online)	(JC)
	Dr Carol Cole	(CC)
	Mr David Cooper	(DC)
	Dr Rodney Eastwood	(RE)
	Mr Jonathan Field	(JF)
	Mr Matthew Gilpin	(MG)
	Ms Hemma Gooljar	(HG)
	Mr Waseem Mahmood	(WM)
	Ms Julie McGarvey	(JMcG)
	AM Peter Ruddock	(PR)
	Mr Nick Sanders	(NS)
	AVM Tim Jones (ACAS)	(TJ)
	Ms Maggie Appleton (CEO)	(MA)
In attendance:	Ms Marguerite Jenkin (Director of Finance and Resources)	(MJ)
	Ms Karen Whitting (Director of Content and Programmes)	(KW)
	Mr Barry Smith (Director of Visitor and Commercial Services)	(BS)
Apologies:	None	
Minutes:	Mrs Vanessa White (EA to the CEO)	(VW)

**A Trustee / CEO session took place ahead of the full meeting.**

**ITEM 1 – CHAIR’S OPENING REMARKS / APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / CONFLICTS OF INTEREST / NOTIFICATION OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS INTEREST / NOTIFICATION OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked SLT for the papers.
- 1.2 There were no apologies for absence.
- 1.3 There were no new conflicts of interest reported.

## **ITEM 2 - APPROVAL OF MINUTES, MATTERS ARISING, REVIEW OF ACTIONS TABLE**

- 2.1 The Board approved the minutes of 14 December 2023.
- 2.2 The Board was happy to remove any completed items. All open items would be covered later in the Board meeting.

## **ITEM 3 – GOVERNANCE**

- 3.1 Committee membership has been discussed at length across meetings and at the Board Away Day.  
**Approved: The Board approved the Committee membership**
- 3.2 The Chair highlighted the need for a Board Safeguarding champion and asked volunteers to contact him or the CEO outside of the meeting.  
**Action: Trustee Safeguarding Champion volunteers to contact the Chair/CEO**
- 3.3 Board Away Day actions were circulated with the Board papers and visitor projections had been reviewed for the Midlands in response to Trustee discussions.
- 3.4 Trustees discussed the care of the RAF Marine Craft noting there are other marine craft in the collection and that the Museum had worked with other museums to explore a conservation solution. Trustees noted the importance of the story of the wartime period of marine craft and the number of lives saved during the period.  
**Action: A paper regarding the marine craft will be developed as discussed at the away day**
- 3.5 The remaining Board Away Day actions would be followed up through Committees.
- 3.6 Next year's away day is to be held at RAF Waddington.

## **ITEM 4 – EXECUTIVE REPORT**

- 4.1 Trustees noted the business rates rebate and gave warm thanks to Air Command for their support. The major risk to the Museum with regards to visitor and income projections is to the London site next financial year with the closure of the Northern Line for a week this Easter and of Colindale tube station from June to December.
- 4.2 The Public Body Review was published last month. The Museum/ACAS/DRes will monitor progress, along with RAF Cosford colleagues to keep a joined up approach for the Midlands site.
- 4.3 The Board was grateful for the activity report which highlights activities across the Museum during the last quarter.
- 4.4 Trustees discussed the Business Plan Monitor Q3 2023-24. KPIs were reported to the December Board and were scrutinised at the last ARRC who also take an in depth look at H&S every quarter. Detailed Performance Indicators would be uploaded onto BoardEffect in one place so that Trustees are able to look across all committees' indicators more easily.
- 4.5 Trustees asked SLT to review at the whole reporting exercise and to update Trustees on KPI reporting at future ARRC and Board meetings.

- 4.6 Visitor figures are extremely positive, and the Museum will exceed the forecast of 889k. The team was targeting 900k and now hope to reach 917k. This will be a record for the Museum outside of the RAF Centenary year, being 30% above pre-Centenary levels and the only other year it has exceeded 900k visitors. RAFMEL is on track for its most successful year and hopes to reach £1M net profit for the first time. However, 2024-25 will bring challenges due to the Colindale Station closure.
- 4.7 A request has been made to Air Command that the Museum closes a number of days per annum (for both sites) to enable a small number of charged-for event days. Closed days would be flagged on the website at least a month in advance and any visitors turning up who were unaware of the closure would be welcomed. Trustees noted the increase in audience diversity during these events. The Museum awaits Air Command approval as its sponsor. body  
**Recommendation: The Board gave its support for event closure days proposal**
- 4.8 The annual sustainability report will be presented to the July Board meeting. The heating replacement programme enabled by the Salix grant will contribute significantly towards the Museum's carbon emissions reduction goal. Baseline data would be available at the next Board meeting. The Museum would continue with the current top up heating and rarely receives negative feedback on the temperature from visitors during the day.
- 4.9 Fundraising progresses well but there is much to do to raise the balance of the Midlands Programme funding in the next eight months. The NLHF is very supportive of the programme, but support for an uplift will very much depend on the demand from other heritage organisations and what funds are available.
- 4.10 Trustees noted the Digital Marketing tender and advised that this reports to RAFMEL.

## **ITEM 5 – PAY REMIT**

- 5.1 **Approved: The Board approved the pay remit proposal for negotiation with the PNC**

## **ITEM 6 – BUSINESS PLAN / BUDGET 2024-25**

- 6.1 Trustees noted the challenge to reach a breakeven position and highlighted the assumptions, cost savings and opportunities but that the RAFMEL target is based on the improved corporate catering contract and the launch of the new soft play area in October.
- 6.2 Trustees noted the significant amount of work required to bring the Museum to a breakeven position and that some of the savings are from elements which may help towards generating income.
- 6.3 In response to a question from the Board, Trustees were advised that the DCMS Mend Fund is not open to National Museums.
- 6.4 Operationally speaking, the Museum has less flexibility due to below-inflation GIA increases with the added risk of unpredictable visitor numbers for the London site due to not yet knowing TfL's mitigation plans for the Colindale station closure. Budget holders have been flexible, but the Museum is at risk of dampening spirits with constant cuts.

- 6.5 The Museum cannot assume that visitor swill simply return once Colindale station reopens, and the team will need to work on a clear communications plan for the recovery.
- 6.6 **Approved: Trustees approved the Business Plan and Budget for 2024-25**

## **ITEM 7 – HEALTH & SAFETY**

- 7.1 ARRC had reviewed the H&S quarterly report and no major incidents were reported. The ARRC had enquired about the two accidents last year which are now resolved.
- 7.2 The contractor induction review has been completed and is being rolled out via a three-tier induction process. The team is currently planning a large-scale incident exercise in discussion with the Fire Brigade in London and with Midlands Air Ambulance at the Midlands site. Both would involve all teams, including marketing and comms.
- 7.3 Risks raised during the independent H&S review had been worked through beginning with the red risks. The traffic light system currently being implemented should lead to contractor-related incidents reducing over the next few Board meetings.
- 7.4 **Action: A report will be provided on contractor management measures**

## **ITEM 8 – SUMMARY REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES AND ASSOCIATED BODIES**

- 8.1 **Major Projects and Programme Committee (MPPC)**
  - 8.1.1 The Museum had received very positive feedback from the NLHF at a meeting in February. There will be an in-person all day review with the NLHF in June preceded by the Museum's submission of the draft Round 2 application.
  - 8.1.2 Testing of new volunteering roles is underway and the first group had signed up to work at the Stafford site to prepare for the collections move. The team is also exploring opportunities for companies to engage via volunteering days to help pack the collection, etc.
  - 8.1.3 Inflation and legislation changes are adding to costs and advised the June application is still an interim assessment before the full submission in November.
  - 8.1.4 Market intelligence is suggesting that contractors would not be interested in a single stage tender. The Museum cannot afford a failed tender and the project team is likely to be recommending a two-stage process. A report will be presented to SLT in April and approval may be needed by MPPC/ARRC and the Board ahead of the next quarterly meeting cycle.
  - 8.1.5 Trustees asked that the team provide the Midlands plan on a page for the Board that summarises the main costs, phases, decision points and outcomes.  
**Action: Team to provide a one-page Midlands plan overview for the next Board meeting**
- 8.2 **RAFMEI**
  - 8.2.1 The new catering contract offers a much better return than previously. However, there are some corporate areas which need minor works to bring them up to standard. The Museum will closely monitor the new catering contractors to ensure they are delivering.
- 8.3 **People & Governance Committee (PGC)**

- 8.3.1 The the recent meeting was the first since the SRC and NGC had combined. PGC had invited PNC representatives to the Committee to discuss staff matters and it was clear from their feedback that job satisfaction is largely based on day-to-day operational issues such as communication between teams, rather than strategic issues such as EDI and pensions. The Committee was reassured by the feedback, while remaining keen to keep abreast of and respond to staff concerns.
- 8.3.2 The Committee agreed that safeguarding and EDI training should be mandatory for all volunteers.
- 8.3.3 Reasonable assurance was given during the recruitment and retention internal audit.
- 8.3.4 The PGC has discussed the Pay Remit at length and recommend it to the Board for approval as per the earlier discussions.
- 8.3.6 CRS would be providing the Board development session ahead of the July meeting.
- 8.4 **Audit Risk & Resources Committee (ARRC)**
- 8.4.1 Following interviews, Azets have been appointed as internal auditors for the Service Museums. The ARRC will consider audit topics for next year.
- 8.4.2 The NAO has increased its audit fee by 20% over the last few years but the service is very good. NAO began the interim audit last week, aiming to complete prior to parliamentary recess.
- 8.4.3 The Colindale station closure has been added to the Strategic Risk Register and following discussion about cyber security, all agreed that the Museum has come a long way. Phishing tests take place regularly and training is mandatory when colleagues fail to report a Phishing email. The RAF provided reassurance that the Museum is following the right procedures and have offered that Cyber-Reservists can assist with scenarios. Cyber will be wrapped into the Museum's Business Continuity planning, and the Museum will plan a table top incident test supported by the RAF Reserves. The Museum holds cyber security insurance and Cyber Essentials Accreditation and is working towards Cyber Essentials Plus.
- 8.4.4 Trustees noted that the three-chair approval process needs re-specifying with the Committee changes. ARRC will review and report back.
- 8.4.5 Following the Salix grant towards the replacement heating system, the Museum needed to commit the Trustee-approved £500k. Trustees noted the risk of uncovering further requirements and therefore increased costs and the 10% contingency built into the Salix project. Following the RAF Centenary work, much of the Museum has already been surveyed. Monthly meetings with Salix are part of the grant specification, and the money must be spent within two years. The Museum has access to appropriate contractors via the London Borough of Barnet. Visibility of solar panels would be a positive message for visitors and the Museum is considering siting options including a canopy over the back car park, an array of panels around the back of H6, or on the bunds. The design and feasibility work will take place in 2024-25 and will be an enabler for EV charging. The Board noted the upgrade to the UK Power network will support the Museum's increased power requirements over the next few years.
- 8.4.6 Trustees highlighted the Salix grant as an enabler on the Museum's path to net zero path and providing the ability to find solutions around its aged infrastructure. There is no big financial bonus to the heating replacement project and payback is 45 years if the whole cost is factored in. The opportunity for the next Salix round in September is to

wrap in the relatable items for the RAF Museum Midlands programme which would contribute to Midlands' match funding.

**ITEM 9 – REFLECTIONS ON THE MEETING**

- 9.1 The Chair thanked the SLT for their work and the Board was content that the meeting papers enabled the required outcomes.

**ITEM 10 – BOARD PROGRAMME**

- 10.1 The Board was content with the forthcoming programme.

**ITEM 11 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS / NEXT MEETING**

- 11.1 The Chair gave a vote of thanks on behalf of the Board to retiring Trustees for their exceptional achievement and commitment to the Museum.
- 11.2 The next Board meeting will be held on 1 July at the London site starting with a Board development session at 11.00am.