



**MINUTES OF THE 224TH MEETING OF
THE TRUSTEES OF THE ROYAL AIR FORCE MUSEUM
HELD AT THE LONDON SITE ON MONDAY 1 JULY 2024**

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| Present: | Sir Stephen Hillier (Chair) | (SSH) |
| | Mr John Banks | (JB) |
| | Mr David Cooper | (DC) |
| | 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 Suraya Marshall (ACAS) | (SM) |
| | 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: | Josh Chana | (JC) |
| 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 thanked the SLT for the meeting papers and welcomed ACAS to her first meeting as the RAF’s representative on the Board.
- 1.2 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 19 March 2024.
- 2.2 The Board was happy to remove any completed items. Any open items would be covered later in the Board meeting.

ITEM 3 – TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

- 3.1 The annual report has been scrutinised by the ARRC which made only minor amendments and were content to recommend the annual report for Board approval, subject to there being no material concerns in the final completion audit report.
- 3.2 The NAO have introduced new software which means they are slightly late in sample requests. However, they are doing everything they can to remain on track for publication and have raised nothing of material concern. The final completion report is scheduled for 12 July for laying before Parliament on 18 July.
- 3.3 The NAO report will include a list of unadjusted errors which are immaterial and therefore will not be changed.
- 3.4 **Approved: The Board approved the Annual Report and Financial Statements subject to no material concerns in the final completion audit report, and a check of the energy consumption figures. The Board was happy to delegate the final approval to the Chair of ARRC with those provisos**
- 3.5 The annual Letter of Representation was presented with the ARRC's recommendation. The CEO confirmed that she is confident there is nothing she is aware of that would preclude her from signing the Letter of Representation. The Chair thanked the ARRC and finance team
Approved: The Board approved the Annual Letter of Representation

ITEM 4 – RAFM DESIGNATED / RESTRICTED FUNDS ALLOCATION

- 4.1 Following discussion, and on the recommendation of the ARRC, the Board approved the creation of a resilience fund in a restricted account to be held for either a major event or a compelling investment which provides a good return on investment.
Approved: The Board approved the new Restricted Resilience Fund
- 4.2 Following discussion, and recommendation by the ARRC, the Board agreed to the allocation of the year-end transfer (including the Business Rates rebate) to the Strategy 2030 Designated Fund
Approved: The Board approved the allocation of the year-end transfer to the Strategy 2030 Designated Fund
- 4.3 The Board had previously agreed that the move of the Midlands shop be included in the capital project. It is now shown in the updated budget figure but no additional funds had been allocated. Following further discussion and recommendation by ARRC, the Board agreed to allocate from the Designated funds to the RAFMMDP.
Approved: The Board approved the allocation from the Designated Fund towards the RAFM Midlands shop move
- 4.4 Following discussion on the delegation of authority to the CEO / Accounting Officer to allocate Strategy 2030 Designated Funds to urgent H&S works. Trustees emphasised that the Museum must not hold on to money as a contingency against future events if

there were emergency health and safety issues which need tackling now. ARRC recommended the delegation of authority to the CEO and advised that ongoing planned maintenance should mean that most health and safety issues are addressed before they become urgent. Any urgent spend approved would be reported to the following ARRC meeting.

Approved: The Board approved the delegation of authority to the CEO / Accounting Officer to allocate Strategy 2030 Designated Funds to urgent H&S works

- 4.5 More has been invested in cyber than ever before and the Head of IT will raise any issues if he considers there to be a risk which could be mitigated with additional funding. An IT infrastructure review is underway, and the Museum should ensure that the hardware is the best we can afford, and that recovery measures are a priority. Regular phishing tests are undertaken, and ongoing training given.
- 4.6 Trustees advised that the Museum should be ambitious in its cyber security. It was agreed that the IT infrastructure review should report to the August ARRC ahead of discussion at the September Board. The Museum holds cyber insurance and all staff must attend the IHaSCO training in addition to ongoing phishing testing and feedback.
Action: IT infrastructure review will be presented to August ARRC and September Board

ITEM 5 – RAFM MIDLANDS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME COSTS AND FUNDING UPDATE

- 5.1 The paper circulated to the Board had been reviewed by the MPPC and ARRC. Costs are continuing to move with the Midlands Programme.
- 5.2 The Business Plan for the Midlands Programme will report to the September Board meeting for formal approval to submit the Second round bid to the NLHF. Between now and September more work will go into scrutinising costings. Trustees would like to ensure any risks are understood by the September meeting.
- 5.3 Costs were developed from the design stage and the development phase has highlighted issues which have enabled greater understanding and investment in surveys to close off risks. A significant cost change is the gas heating replacement with an air source pump in H1 and the resultant need for greater insulation which in turn requires a more robust building. One of the NLHF outcomes is environmental sustainability and the Museum will apply to Salix for the relevant carbon-reduction aspects at the September round. Following Trustees' support to go out to main contractor tender now, 14 companies had expressed an interest and five would be asked to tender with work paused until permission to start is given.
- 5.4 Trustees discussed the request for the Voted Loan process whereby, if given Board approval, this would go to MOD for approval prior to Treasury. The Museum had previously taken out a Voted Loan for Centenary which had been paid back before the project works started. The NLHF committee and Board would be held in March which would be the final deadline, but the November date is the ideal so that it can be included in the application. The Board would need confidence that the funds can be repaid before committing to the loan. Trustees asked the SLT to provide the rationale behind the repayment through the business case, as to whether it would be through increased visitor numbers, RAFMEL donation, fundraising, etc.
Action: SLT to provide a business case on the Voted Loan for the September Board meeting
Approved: The Board approved that the SLT continue to pursue the Voted Loan option

- 5.5 The variance between NHLF Round 1 and Round 2 costs are in line with inflation across the rest of the industry.

ITEM 6 – EXECUTIVE REPORT

- 6.1 The Board reflected on the challenging revenue budget for 2024-25, particularly with the risk to visitor numbers in London due to the Colindale Station closure between June and December. A drop in the June visitor numbers compared to budget when the station closed had been mitigated by overachievement in April and May.
- 6.2 The Museum is still in negotiations on the pay remit. Once agreed, the pay remit will be submitted to Air Command for approval.
- 6.3 Trustees noted the excellent 930k visitor figure for 2023-24 and the best ever year for RAFMEL trading performance.
- 6.4 There is still some work to do on KPIs which is being paused for the new DFR to review later in the year.

ITEM 7 – COLLECTIONS AND RESEARCH REPORT

- 7.1 The Board noted the collaborative and outreach talks colleagues have given and conferences they have attended. They welcomed the acquisition of the first Gulf War Medal from the RAF Police, Bill Hickson's collection which is already on collections online, and highlighted the 50% increase in Collections Online entries.
- 7.2 The development of the Stafford team was highlighted and the increase from three to nine members of staff working towards the Stafford move project (the additional roles moving from other sites complemented by NLHF posts). Regarding the Collections Review, the team have completed the review of 12,000 large objects which started ten years ago, and 2,000 objects have been earmarked for potential transfer. The team has moved over 40 large objects over the last year within the UK and abroad.
- 7.3 The biggest challenge remained resources, in terms of people and budget, alongside the scale of the collection. Just 0.5% of the collection is physically on display with a slight percentage increase on those displayed online. Ensuring that collections are loaned out where possible and considering whether the Museum is the right home would ensure more objects are available to the public. The Museum is at the start of the digital journey and nationally important objects should go online first. Objects from the 1980s onwards are missing from the collection and the Museum must be proactive in collecting. Trustees suggested connecting with interested organisations and reaching out to individuals via the RAFBF etc and putting an advert in the RAFA magazine.
- 7.4 The Board visit to Stafford would take place on 29 o meet the team and see the progress made.

ITEM 8 – SUSTAINABILITY REPORT

- 8.1 Huge progress had been made on Carbon Literacy training and following a bronze award, the Museum is working towards silver and ultimately gold awards. The Board of Trustees will be asked if they are interested in joining the training. The Museum is empowering staff and volunteers to be carbon literate, and this sends a message out to funders. The sustainability pathway is the main focus on Scope 1 and Scope 2

emissions with all departments having carbon literacy objectives in their business plan. The Museum's operational impact around sustainable transport, energy efficiency and consumption, minimising the water we use, non-irrigation of green spaces and the swale which takes water away from the car park in London are all ways of engaging our audiences with our sustainability story, and enable our teams to monitor progress against business objectives.

- 8.2 The RAF Midlands Development Programme has sustainability as the heart of our submission to the NLHF.
- 8.3 The London Master Plan will see the replacement of the heating system as part of the Salix funding.
- 8.4 The Museum takes a sustainable approach to exhibitions in terms of the materials we use and re-use, and flags this to visitors.
- 8.5 Measuring carbon omissions for Scope 3 is much more difficult than for Scopes 1 and 2 but the team hopes to gather data and report on Scope 3 fully in the coming years.
- 8.6 Regarding partnerships, the CEO reported that she Chairs the Environment and Ecology group for the National Museums Directors Council (NMDC), and the Museum is working with the London Borough of Barnet and hosting their forthcoming climate action awards ceremony. The Museum is also a member of the Association of Leading Visitors Attraction (ALVA)'s sustainability group has joined 'Fit for the Future' linked to the MDP, and working with the other Service museums on what we can do collaboratively.
- 8.7 The Museum is calculating emissions across all three sites and when Stafford closes this will see a reduction in our emissions. The team will analyse the data hangar by hangar and look at mapping this with visitor numbers, if there is a leak, etc, which should provide more interesting and useful analysis.
- 8.8 Trustees highlighted the importance of ensuring teams are empowered and inspired to make changes for quick wins.
- 8.9 Asked why electricity usage has gone up and emissions have gone down the Board was advised that the energy company is now reporting more accurately. Carbon literacy training has made a significant impact for those who have attended, and the Museum is capturing team activity that supports our sustainability journey. The same pressure on sustainability should be put on merchandise providers and other contractors and the Museum's sustainability commitment is shared with all suppliers. The Museum may need to consider its appetite for a reduction in RAFMEL profit to enable greater sustainability. The Museum will be exploring the RAF's sustainability journey in its collecting and storytelling.
- 8.10 The Accredited Carbon Literacy training is either a full day onsite or two half days online. Equally, the Board could have a short, unaccredited briefing.

ITEM 9 – HEALTH & SAFETY QUARTERLY REPORT

- 9.1 ARRC had considered the H&S quarterly report.
- 9.2 Changes had been made to the operational team structure following the resignation of the Head of Operations London. The Midlands Head of Operations now leads across both sites with an operations manager at the London site and one at the Midlands site, enabling a more joined up and strategic overview. Two major incident simulations

would be taking place. The first is in July at the Midlands site in partnership with the Air Ambulance, working on a major first aid incident. The second is in London in September working with the London Fire Brigade on a major fire incident and collections retrieval.

- 9.3 There have been financial and resourcing issues around Covid and the lack of a Head of Estates for a year, but the Estates operational handbook is being updated and will provide the tool to ensure that all checks are undertaken and help towards a long term maintenance plan.
- 9.4 The list of policies and procedure approvals are on BoardEffect and can be brought to ARRC if Trustees would like to review
Action: Policy and Procedure approvals list to be tabled at next ARRC
- 9.5 The new contractor management procedure was rolled out in May with the overall object to reduce the number of contractor incidents. These are being measured on a month by month basis. The rolling average for contractor issues will be included in the report once the data is available.

ITEM 10 – SUMMARY REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES AND ASSOCIATED BODIES

- 10.1 **Major Projects and Programme Committee (MPPC)**
- 10.1.1 Most issues were covered earlier in the meeting but the Chair highlighted the programme on a page which enables an easy snapshot of the RAFMMP. This will be updated for each meeting and comments on the format and content are welcome.
- 10.1.2 The NLHF have advised that, if successful, our grant letter would need to be signed off by RAFMIL (which holds Museum assets).
- 10.2 **RAFMEI**
- 10.2.1 The Chair reflected that eight years ago RAFMEI made no profit, so the result for 2023-24 is outstanding and he gave congratulations to the SLT for attracting over 900k visitors to come to the Museum. There is no room for complacency and Trustees highlighted the tube station closure challenge, with some mitigation by way of bus replacement services. There is an opportunity around social media interactions, which are up by 300-400% this year, and the restructure of the team and new digital marketing manager have enabled better digital awareness. However, the challenge is commercialising that and ensuring we have the onsite experiences and equipment to back up our online voice. The Museum Chair gave a vote of thanks from the Board to RAFMEI for their support and expertise.
- 10.3 **Audit Risk & Resources Committee (ARRC)**
- 10.3.1 The Chair highlighted the previously circulated report and advised that the issues covered by the ARRC had been further discussed or approved by the Board earlier in the meeting.

ITEM 11 – REFLECTIONS ON THE MEETING

- 11.1 **Action: SLT to consider Board discussions on cyber, risk H&S, KPIs and policy review**

ITEM 12 – BOARD PROGRAMME

- 12.1 The Board was content with the forthcoming programme.

- 12.2 The Deputy Chair has agreed to undertake an informal review of the combined committees and the benefit/impact on the SLT. She advised that she would report to the September meeting.

ITEM 13 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS / NEXT MEETING

- 13.1 The next Board meeting will be held on 23 September at the Midlands site.
11.30-12.00am meet the team (Visitor Centre)
12.00-4.00pm Board meeting
4.00-5.00pm meet with RAFMEL
6.00-9.00pm Autumn Reception