



**MINUTES OF THE 225TH MEETING OF
THE TRUSTEES OF THE ROYAL AIR FORCE MUSEUM
HELD AT THE MIDLANDS SITE ON MONDAY 23 SEPTEMBER 2024**

Present:	Sir Stephen Hillier (Chair)	(SSH)
	Mr John Banks	(JB)
	Mr Josh Chana	(JC)
	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 (online)	(PR)
	Mr Nick Sanders	(NS)
	AVM Suraya Marshall (ACAS)	(SM)
	Ms Maggie Appleton (CEO)	(MA)

In attendance:	Ms Karen Whitting (Director of Content and Programmes) (online)	(KW)
	Mr Barry Smith (Director of Visitor and Commercial Services)	(BS)
	Mrs Kam Sandhu-Patel (Head of HR & Volunteering) (item 8)	(KS)
	Mr Edward Sharman (Head of Development) (item 5)	(ES)

Apologies: None

Minutes: Mrs Vanessa White (EPA 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. He reminded the Board that there would be a joint meeting with RAFMEL Directors following the meeting followed by the annual Autumn Reception in the National Cold War Hangar in the evening.
- 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 1 July 2024.
- 2.2 The Board was happy to remove any completed items from the actions table. Any open items would be covered later in the Board meeting.

- 2.3 (3.4) The Marine Craft paper is due to report to the Board in March 2025.
- 2.4 (4.6) The KPIs will be revisited in Q4 once the new Director of Finance and Resources is in place.

ITEM 3 – GOVERNANCE

- 3.1 The Deputy Chair had undertaken a review of the combined committees and provided a paper for the meeting.
- 3.2 She had consulted with Committee Chairs and reported the overall feeling that the quality and quantity of the Committee reports needs more focus, but that this work is already underway. The PGC is running smoothly; fundraising for the MDP remains the challenge for MPPC; and, as the most business heavy committee, ARRC Trustees are working to ensure that the appropriate amount of time is given to audit, risk and finance.
- 3.3 The review had been undertaken following the combining of committees as the Board was conscious that committee membership was now shared by fewer Trustees after slimming the Board down. The Board was also aware of the time commitment for the SLT in producing committee papers. Heads of Departments have stepped up well to own relevant paper preparation and, although early days, the combining of the Committees is proving helpful.
- 3.4 The new Head of Finance had embraced the role and provided some good quality papers for the ARRC.

MOD Public Bodies Review tracker

- 3.5 The Service Museums Review was published in March, and that a progress update by the end of September has been requested. The tracker was included with the Board papers and there were no red flags. The review recommendations will be monitored for / completed in three years.

Action: The CEO to follow up with Air Command and the Public Bodies Review team to focus the recommendations.

ITEM 4 – EXECUTIVE REPORT

- 4.1 The CEO highlighted her previously circulated report, advising that the key decisions for the Board relate to the Midlands Development Programme.
- 4.2 On the BP Monitor for Q1, the Museum is ahead of target but there is concern around visitor figures, especially in the Midlands, for Q2. September is looking more positive, but SLT continue to monitor the budget monthly to ensure a breakeven position by the end of the year.
- 4.3 Trustees discussed the reason behind the drop in visitor figures in the Midlands. The sector as a whole had suffered and across leading visitor attractions, charged for entry venues have suffered greater than free to enter venues. The Museum will therefore be running campaigns highlighting our free to enter, high value day out through a series of family focused promotions.
- 4.4 The Museum is waiting for Ministerial approval for the pay remit. While the National Museum Freedoms mean that the Museum is able to offer average pay awards in

excess of caps set out in the Pay Remit Guidance, they should continue to engage with their Sponsor Department during the process.

- 4.5 The Board highlighted the positive Trip Advisor and Marsh Awards received earlier in the year.
- 4.6 Trustees noted the work with Noor Khan's family to secure the loan of the George Cross for three years. A small display will launch in December at the Winter Reception.
- 4.7 The Board Collections Champion highlighted the Collections Review and advised that any items for disposal must first be offered for loan to accredited UK Museums. If there is no interest from other Museums, the items are then able to go to auction. The Museum has spoken with the auction houses who advise that that the value and type of items would not attract sufficient interest for a sale. The Museum is therefore looking at holding its own auction through the website.

Business Plan & KPIs

- 4.8 The piece of work on aligning KPIs would take place once the new Director of Finance and Resources is in place.

ITEM 5 – FUNDRAISING UPDATE

- 5.1 Trustees asked what the impact of the cost of living has been on fundraising. The Head of Development suggested that the impact is only just being felt and this is backed up by the drop in visitor figures. Many families are deciding they cannot afford days out or when they do, they spend less.
- 5.2 The Museum's Ethics Advisory Group advise on whether the Museum should seek or accept sponsorship from potential donors. The Ethics Advisory Group had not had any contentious opportunities to discuss recently but would be happy to support if helpful.
- 5.3 Trustees were asked if they were sufficiently confident on the fundraising pipeline to commit to the application for a Government Voted Loan and that the Museum would be able repay it if fundraising were unsuccessful. The Board took comfort that the Museum has until summer 2027 to raise the funds and that bridging a fundraising gap to enable a NLHF application is a key purpose for Voted Loans. The Museum is further ahead on fundraising than it was for the Centenary programme, when it had been granted a Government loan and all the funding was in place before drawdown.

**ITEM 6 – RAFM MIDLANDS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME - APPROVAL TO SUBMIT
SECOND ROUND NLHF APPLICATION**

Second Round NLHF Submission

- 6.1 MPPC and ARRC had recommended the submission of a second round application to the NLHF for Board approval.

Government Voted Loan

- 6.2 ARRC had interrogated and recommended the loan submission. Variables had been modelled around funding reduction, contingency and inflation and each had been included for contingency/inflation within the Midlands Programme budget. Trustees highlighted the inability to make any further cuts to the programme as value engineering had already taken any desirables out of the project. The main contractors will be asked

to review the programmes for further cost savings and MPPC have asked to see the tenders to ensure the right challenge.

6.3 If the Museum is successful with the loan application, there are 2½ years left to raise the funds. The Midlands Programme is a resilience plan for the future of the Museum and vacating Stafford would bring significant efficiencies and financial savings. The risk of not applying for a voted loan outweighed the risk of doing so.

6.4 Trustees were content with the recommendation and reassured about the timings, with the caveat that more modelling be done in parallel and any showstoppers reported back to the Trustees along with regular Board monitoring. The Business Case should put more emphasis on the work that the Museum has already done to value engineer the project.

Approved: The Board agreed that the CEO apply for the Government Voted Loan.

Approved: The Board approved the submission of a Round 2 bid to the NLHF

Collections Hub Phase 2

6.5 Trustees had discussed the Collections Hub at their Away Day at the beginning of the year and the report provided an update to the work. The Museum is working with RAF Cosford on the options to extend the Museum Curtilage; to make improvements to H9; or to use the adjacent Hangar (which is in better condition) if it becomes available. The Collections Hub Phase 2 plan has been worked up by an architect and remains a future Master Plan project following the move out of Stafford.

ITEM 7 – HEALTH & SAFETY QUARTERLY REPORT

7.1 ARRC had scrutinised the H&S report.

7.2 The chimney issues, the emergency lighting and H3/4/5 roof work have all been resolved.

7.3 SLT are focused on the repair and upgrade to the lifts in London.

7.4 The lamppost which fell was the only one on the whole site with that specific bolt, which has now been replaced. An incident whereby the fryers were left on by caterers was picked up by the Museum staff as part of closure procedures and the Museum has followed up with the caterers and their staff have been provided with further training.

7.5 From the next Board meeting onwards, the figures would show trending data of incidents over time and how they correlate to visitor figures. Trustees were advised there is a daily check, with clarity over who onsite is responsible, and that the landscape is regularly monitored. The Head of Operations covers both sites and there is an operations manager at each who is responsible and contactable 24/7.

Action: Include trend reporting for both visitor and non visitor incidents and an update on the regularity of estates checks

7.6 The Museum is fully up to date with H&S training and the Board will be provided with a report on completion of mandatory health and safety training.

Action: Provide a report on the completion of mandatory health and safety training for the next meeting

ITEM 8 – EDI ANNUAL REPORT

8.1 The Museum has an active EDI working group that meets monthly.

- 8.2 The Head of HR highlighted the informal gender pay gap report (the museum is not legally required to report) and advised that the mostly female SLT push the gender pay gap up slightly positively for women.
- 8.3 The Museum will be rolling out sexual harassment in the workplace training next year and is currently reinforcing that it is mandatory. 100% of staff complete mandatory training whereas this is much less for volunteers. Only 12% of volunteers take up Safeguarding training even though support to complete the training is provided. Volunteers have now been advised of the deadline to complete the training, and they will not be able to continue if they have not completed it. This has been accompanied by further offers of support if volunteers need it.

ITEM 9 – SUMMARY REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES AND ASSOCIATED BODIES

Major Projects and Programme Committee (MPPC)

- 9.1 MPPC reported some risk around the Salix project timings. The Director Content and Programmes has taken over leadership of the Salix programme and advised that the funding is time critical as well as outcome and output focused. Design and some delivery must be done this year with the project finalised next year. However, order times for some of the equipment may fall outside of that timescale. The Board will be kept up to date with the complexity and risk of the project.

- 9.2 The Board was advised that digitisation progress will report to the December meeting.

RAFMEL

- 9.3 A drop in footfall during August was reported. Overseas visitors usually come in May/June/July and the fall in numbers in August came from domestic visitors.

People and Governance Committee

- 9.4 The PGC recommended for Board approval the transfer of the employee pension provider. There is always risk, but the change would enable staff greater agency over the level of risk they are willing to take. There is nothing in the proposal which increases the risk compared to the current scheme. The Museum had brought in independent pension advisors and would do so again.

Recommend: The Board recommended following up the change of pension provider, subject to a further report providing recommendations

- 9.5 It was agreed that Board approval of the policy approvals list was not required by the Board but it would be uploaded to BoardEffect.

Action: Send the Approvals BE link to the Board

Audit Risk and Resources Committee

- 9.6 The new Internal Auditors are in place and audit has been undertaken on the commercial strategy with no issues raised. The review focused on whether the correct structure, documents and governance are in place.

- 9.7 ARRC had received a presentation on IT infrastructure and were content that there is much positive activity progressing to make the Museum more resilient. Cyber security has a constant focus from the Committee and the Museum is on top of this but with no complacency.

- 9.8 The Voted Loan and the Midlands Programme both carry risk and ARRC assessed whether the risks are reasonable and manageable based on the information provided.

- 9.9 The ARRC also looked at strategic risks. Three of them have a residual score higher than our appetite, so will be revisited at the next ARRC to see if there is anything further which can be done to mitigate them or whether the risks are at the wrong level.
- 9.10 ARRC would have ownership of the approvals list to ensure the Museum has the right policies and the right people signing them off regularly.
- 9.11 The MDP risk register reports to MPPC, but any red risks are captured in the corporate risk register which is reported to ARRC.

ITEM 10 – REFLECTIONS ON THE MEETING

- 10.1 Positive EDI progress while reflecting that the reporting is still in its infancy.

ITEM 11 – BOARD PROGRAMME

- 11.1 **Action: Add reporting actions to the December Programme**

ITEM 12 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS / NEXT MEETING

- 12.1 The Board was content with the forthcoming programme.
- 12.2 The next meeting will be held at the London Site on 16 December, starting with a "meet the team" at 11.30am.