



**MINUTES OF THE 227TH MEETING OF
THE TRUSTEES OF THE ROYAL AIR FORCE MUSEUM
HELD AT THE LONDON SITE ON THURSDAY 27 MARCH 2025**

Present:	Sir Stephen Hillier (Chair)	(SSH)
	Mr John Banks	(JB)
	Mr Josh Chana (online)	(JC)
	Mr David Cooper	(DC)
	Mr Jonathan Field	(JF)
	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)
Attendance:	Mr Barry Smith (Director Visitor and Commercial Services)	(BS)
	Ms Kirsty Vlemmiks (Director Finance and Resources)	(KV)
	Ms Karen Whitting (Director Content and Programmes)	(KW)
	Ms Julie Brierley (Head of Learning and Engagement Midlands) (pre-meet) (online)	(SC)
	Mr Harry Raffal (Head of Collections and Research) (item 7)	(HR)
	Mr Adam Shepherd (Head of Collections Services (item 7)	(AS)
Apologies:	Matthew Gilpin	(MG)
Minutes:	Mrs Vanessa White (EPA to the CEO)	(VW)

A Trustee Safeguarding briefing and discussion and Trustee/ CEO session took place ahead of the full meeting.

Safeguarding briefing

- S.1 The Learning and Engagement team shared a presentation regarding Safeguarding Governance and Board responsibilities and invited questions.
- S.2 Following a question from the Board the CEO advised that basic DBS checks and references take place for all appointments. However, the Museum is only able to undertake enhanced DBS checks on those who work front of house or are in learning and engagement team roles. All staff have safer recruitment training and anyone who may be in contact with the same child or vulnerable adult on a regular or prolonged basis are subject to enhanced DBS checks.
- S.3 Safeguarding scenario training highlights that colleagues should never be alone with a child or vulnerable adult.

- S.4 Trustees are responsible for ensuring the Museum has a strong safeguarding culture and Trustees took comfort from recent safeguarding training and highlighted the need to ensure that staff are reporting incidents. Trustees were content that they have oversight through safeguarding reports to the Board. The PGC receives thorough safeguarding reports that the Museum ensures that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- S.5 Online safeguarding issues are treated in the same way as in-person issues and the Museum has a duty of care for those people interviewed through RAF Stories, and support is provided where people are vulnerable.
- S.6 Enhanced DBS reports are renewed every two years and updates reported to the PGC.
- S.7 Trustees were grateful for the safeguarding presentation and report and content that the Museum is taking the right steps on Safeguarding.

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

- 1.12 The Chair advised he is now the Chair of Association of Accounting Technicians and another Trustee advised that his father served on marine craft during WWII and the Museum's marine craft would be discussed at the meeting.

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

- 2.1 The Board approved the minutes of 16 December 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 (4.15) It was agreed to remove the EAG TORs cross referencing from the action log as this would be followed up at their next meeting.
- 2.4 (6.6) Business continuity and cyber security. All staff have been trained, with new starters trained within their six month probationary period, although most takes place within the three month probationary period.

ITEM 3 – GOVERNANCE

- 3.1 **Board Effectiveness Review**
 - 3.1.1 The effectiveness review is undertaken internally annually and externally every three years.
 - 3.1.2 The February anonymous review gave a generally positive response on relationships and focus. The quantity of Board papers remains a concern, but were much improved this quarter.
 - 3.1.3 Strategy 2030 is regularly reviewed by the Board and Trustees expressed confidence that they have oversight of the strategy and that the deep dives at Away Days helped the Board focus. It was suggested the Board review the strategy in view of the current pace of global and societal change.

Action: Arrange an annual Strategy review at the July meeting

3.1.4 The next external Board Effectiveness review will be in January 2027, three years following the publication of the Public Bodies Review and six months after three new Trustees are expected to have been on-boarded.

3.2 **Trustee recruitment**

3.2.1 The PGC recommended the Trustee Recruitment paper for Board approval given the retirement next year of three Board members. The PGC felt that 11 Trustees is a good number to enable useful discussion and to populate the Committees.

3.2.2 The skills and experience review suggested that museums, fundraising and IT/digital experience are least covered by Trustee experience, but are not totally absent. There is also a shortage of women and people with a disability on the Board, underlining the need to ensure a diverse recruitment round.

3.2.3 The Museum will cast its net wide to attract a diverse group of applicants.

3.2.4 **Action: Trustees were encouraged to let the CEO know if they have any suitable candidates who may want to apply.**

3.2.5 The Chair would Chair the interview panel, along with a sponsor branch representative, a member of the PGC and an independent member.

3.2.6 **Approved: The Board approved the recruitment of three new Board members**

3.3 **Board Away Day record and actions**

3.3.1 The CEO thanked the Board for a helpful away day, highlighted the actions recorded from it and invited questions.

3.3.2 The CEO advised that the major cyber incident exercise is schedule to take place this year.

3.4 **Committees and RAFMEL Terms of Reference approval**

3.4.1 All Terms of Reference were reviewed by Committees and are available on BoardEffect.

3.4.2 **Approved: The Board approved the Committees and RAFMEL Terms of Reference.**

ITEM 4 – EXECUTIVE REPORT

4.1 Trustees noted the ambitious budget assumptions for 2025-26, and that the RAFMEL targets had been discussed in detail and approved by the RAFMEL Board.

4.2 The Museum was grateful to Air Command for the additional support to cover the NI increases. The Museum is also looking forward to working with Air Command and DCMS on capital funding approaches.

4.3 The potential Cosford Lease increase is a major risk for the Museum. Much of the increase relates to the improvements the Museum has made over time. Air Command is working with DIO to find a solution.

4.4 The confidence from RAFMEL for the 2025-26 targets comes from planned activity and the lessons learned from last year and RAFMEL welcomed the challenge. Previously

approved closure days enabled the Museum to charge for large scale events, which were a helpful contribution.

- 4.5 The Board gave a vote of thanks for the support of the Air Command team.
- 4.6 Trustees commended the team on their work with the NLHF application.
- 4.7 The Board was reminded of the Spring Reception on 13 May at the Midlands site and the planned public launch of the Midlands project on 31 May.
- 4.8 The Board noted the collections review and approved the aircraft disposals.

Approved: The Board approved the disposal of 17 aircraft

- 4.9 The Museum receives live visitors figures daily.
- 4.10 The Museum has claimed the applicable Salix funding for the London decarbonisation programme in H3 and H4, but there was a delay on the planned closure for the electrical upgrade works and it is hoped the closure period can now take place during the quieter November period, to lessen the impact on visitor figures.
- 4.11 Trustees noted that the branding refresh, details of which are on BoardEffect.
- 4.12 Carbon Literacy training was excellent for awareness while highlighting that calculating environmental impact is not an exact science.
- 4.13 Trustees noted the excellent written feedback following the Sisters' Iftar at the Midlands site.

Activity Report

- 4.14 The Board noted the activity report.

BP Monitor 2024-25 Q3

- 4.15 The Board noted the BP Monitor.

KPIs 2024-25 Q3

- 4.18 KPIs are under review with a report due to come to the July Board.

ITEM 5 – Pay Remit

- 5.1 The pay remit had been discussed with PGC, and was driven by affordability and guidance on public sector pay.

ITEM 6 – BUSINESS PLAN / BUDGET

Three Year Business Plan 2024-2027

- 6.1 ARRC recommended the three year plan to the Board for approval.
- 6.2 A more detailed plan with outputs which has been reviewed by ARRC is available on BoardEffect for review.
- 6.3 **Approved: The Board approved the three year Business Plan 2024-27**

Budget 2024-25

- 6.4 A breakeven position was reported with a challenging budget containing greater risk than previous years, particularly due to the potential lease increase. On balance the ARRC was happy to recommend the budget to the Board for approval.
- 6.5 The Museum supports cleaning and security contracts to pay the Living Wage
- 6.6 Next year's visitor activity programme is key to help turn around the visitor figures.
- 6.7 **Action: Schedule a review of the budget risks at the next Board meeting to enable mitigations to take place if required**
- 6.8 Measures would be needed if the increase in the lease cost goes ahead and there is a risk to the budget of capital project cost growth or a major unexpected estates issue.
- 6.9 **Approved: The Board approved the 2024-25 Budget, noting the risks around lease cost increase, the pay remit and visitor figures. They agreed that the lease cost increase sit outside the budget until there is clarity.**

ITEM 7 – MARINE CRAFT OPTIONS REPORT

- 7.1 An options paper on the marine craft was circulated ahead of the meeting.
- 7.2 Trustees discussed the national significance of the marine craft and that the stories of the people who served on them are not well told in other institutions.
- 7.3 Initial conservation costs have been identified which will only enable the boats to be stabilised. Ongoing costs were not known at this stage.
- 7.4 The marine craft tell an important story on their contribution to the Second World War effort in rescuing 5,000 aircrew (a significant number of whom were US crew) and 3,000 civilians.
- 7.5 The Museum's marine craft are the only remaining vessels of their type and make a compelling story but Trustees expressed concern over the ongoing financial impact and current affordability
- 7.6 The Museum highlighted the financial liability of starting the process and the NHMF stipulations on what must be invested to secure the conservation of the vessels.
- 7.7 If it were to conserve the boats, the Museum would recruit a volunteer group to work on their restoration once they are stable. This should reduce the costs but there would remain a lifelong conservation commitment.
- 7.8 **Approved: Trustees approved an EOI to NLHF for the marine craft. Board commitment to progress any further than the EOI would not be made until more information was available.**

ITEM 8 – HEALTH AND SAFETY QUARTERLY REPORT

- 8.1 ARRC had reviewed and were content that there were no particular themes for concern in the health and safety report.
- 8.2 The challenge is always around what more the Museum should/could be doing to uncover issues we might be unaware of. Mitigations in place are estates condition

reports, daily inspections and surveys, as well as newly agreed regular walkarounds by Estates and VES teams.

ITEM 9 – SUMMARY REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES AND ASSOCIATED BODIES

Major Projects and Programme Committee (MPPC)

- 9.1 Fundraising continues on the MDP with the agreement for a 10% contingency.
- 9.2 The whole Salix grant will be drawn down in year one with much still to do in year two. Salix are happy with the work the Museum has undertaken to date.
- 9.3 There has been a delay in establishing the pay to play area due to the enabling Salix works, which impacted on 2024-25 income targets. However the Museum is prioritising this and the opening is now budgeted (in terms of income) for December 2025, with the team aiming for October half term.

RAFMEL

- 9.4 The RAFMEL Chair highlighted a graph on the impact of including car parking in RAFMEL and would be happy to share the business plan if required.

People and Governance Committee

- 9.5 All key business had been discussed earlier in the meeting.

Audit Risk & Resources Committee (ARRC)

- 9.6 The internal audit topics of risk management and the scrutiny of the finances/budget were highlighted.
- 9.7 ARRC received many detailed papers to scrutinise. Some progress has been made but work continues to reduce the number of papers.
- 9.8 The ARRC Chair highlighted the valuable contribution of Air Command and NAO representatives at ARRC.
- 9.9 The internal and external audit reports make up 60-70% of the papers and the Museum would push the auditors to reduce their reports.

ITEM 10 – REFLECTIONS ON THE MEETING

- 10.1 The SLT continues to work on the length of the Board papers and the executive summaries were welcomed.

ITEM 11 – BOARD PROGRAMME

- 11.1 Nothing to report.

ITEM 12 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS / NEXT MEETING

- 12.1 Trustees were pleased that the 24/7 cyber cover is included in the budget.
- 12.2 The next meeting will be held at the London site on 10 July 2025 at 11.00am.