



## Board of Trustees

### Minutes

Date: 2 May 2013 (211th meeting)

Time: 14.00

Venue: V&A Board Room

Present: Sir Paul Ruddock (Chairman)

João Baptista

Nicholas Coleridge

Mark Damazer

Edwin Davies

Margot Finn

Andrew Hochhauser

Steve McGuckin

Michelle Ogundehin

Samir Shah

Sir John Sorrell

Bob Stefanowski

Harold Tillman

Edmund de Waal

Evelyn Welch

In attendance: Martin Roth, Director, V&A

Brian Chester, Director of Finance, V&A

Caroline Felton, Deputy Director, Operations, V&A

Moir Gemmill, Director of Design, V&A

Jane Lawson, Director of Development, V&A

Jo Prosser, Commercial Director, V&A

Vernon Rapley, Head of Security and Visitor Services, V&A

Damien Whitmore, Director of Public Affairs & Programming, V&A

Paul Williamson, Acting Deputy Director – Collections

Apologies: Dame Theresa Sackler

Paul Thompson

#### **1 Declaration of Interests**

1.1 There were no declarations of interest.

#### **2 Minutes of the previous meeting (7 March 2013)**

2.1 The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

#### **3 Matters arising (including Finance Update)**

3.1 The Board noted the Finance Director's paper providing a finance update covering the following points:

- update on the March 2013 year end result;
- the DCMS spending review for 2015/16;
- a comparison of staffing and salary levels with other museums.

## 4 Hollywood Costumes Evaluation

*Martin Roth*

- 4.1 A report on the outcomes of the Hollywood Costumes exhibition was presented by the Director. The exhibition had been a great critical and popular success with acclaim for exhibition content, narrative, interpretation, design, and the very high production values, including the audiovisual element of the exhibition. The exhibition had been a catalyst for the acquisition of the BFI's costume collection. It had been the second busiest exhibition in the history of the V&A and had received 250,000 visits. 6,000 new members had joined the Friends of the V&A and the original sponsorship target had been exceeded. This success had created some organisational challenges, however.
- 4.2 The report included a number of recommendations including improving the visitor experience. In future an 'exhibition director' with overall authority for each exhibition would be appointed. Some of the lessons of the Hollywood Costume exhibition had already been put into practice for the David Bowie exhibition and improved regulation of queues and complimentary tickets had resulted.
- 4.4 The Board praised the review and noted that the exhibition had been a new experience in terms of genre. A further, longer term, review of consequent developments in research and display was requested. There was also a discussion of the impact on the Friends of the V&A of increased membership and funds.

**Action: The management was requested to make the review of exhibitions in this way systematic. Finance Director to formulate a suitable template.**

## 5 VAE Presentation

*Jo Prosser*

- 5.1 Jo Prosser made a presentation to the Board about V&A Enterprises. She outlined the different aspects of VAE's work, which included: publishing, brand licensing, image licensing, product design, commissions and collaborations, digital partnerships, online shopping, consumer marketing and press, off-site and pop-up branches, catalogue and retail, both business-to-business and business-to-customer. VAE was a market leader among UK museums in terms of total revenue (2011-2012) and reputation. VAE worked to drive revenue, reputation and profile for the V&A by developing a commercially credible, successful articulation of the brand. The success of the branding for the Bowie exhibition across all media demonstrated the benefits of having a brand that was well recognised globally.
- 5.2 There was a discussion about the organisational relationship between VAE and the Museum. It was noted that the Chairman of VAE, Rodney Fitch, would shortly be retiring and would be succeeded by Mark Sebba of Net-a-Porter. The Board was mindful of the need to maximize the ways in which VAE can generate cash for the Museum at a time when GIA is being reduced and wished to be presented with options for how this might be done. The Chairman asked Jo Prosser to return to the July Board meeting to make a presentation on the future strategy for VAE and its relationship with the V&A. This presentation should be created in conjunction with the Director, Chief Operating Officer and Finance Director, and in consultation with V&A management. The Board wished to receive options and proposals from the management of the V&A and VAE as to possible ways forward.

**Action: Jo Prosser and Brian Chester to prepare a paper and presentation for the July Board**

meeting as to how the relationship between the V&A and VAE should progress.

**Post Meeting Note: The Chairman agreed that the paper and presentation would be presented to the September Board Meeting.**

## **6 Digital FuturePlan Update**

*Jon Cheyne*

- 6.1 Jon Cheyne, Head of Information Systems Services, made a presentation to the Board about Digital FuturePlan, the plans for digital and technology at the Museum for the next three years. The Museum's technology needed to be equal to its reputation as the world's leading museum of art and design. Four main areas for improvement had been identified: (1) Network stability; (2) larger capacity for asset storage; (3) IT department restructuring; (4) creation of a design programme. Digital FuturePlan was the strategy that had been developed in response to these requirements. Jon Cheyne outlined specific plans in more detail.
- 6.2 It was noted that digital development was governed by the Technology Strategy Committee, chaired by Mark Damazer, and run by management via the Digital FuturePlan Programme. IT projects were managed in stages under the management of the Digital FuturePlan team and costs checked at each stage.
- 6.3 The relationship between digital developments in the V&A's exhibitions and the existing galleries was discussed, particularly the need to avoid the permanent galleries falling behind exhibitions in terms of new digital developments. It was noted that digital developments were embedded in FuturePlan 2 as demonstrated in the new Furniture Gallery. The infrastructure for wifi was part of FuturePlan and the digital provision for existing, older galleries could be revised and upgraded at any time.
- 6.4 The following points were also noted:
- the content development opportunities offered by digital were excellent, with the knowledge base continually growing, but that updating materials involves a huge amount of curatorial work;
  - the digital dimension had effects across the Museum and managing projects on time and within budget was a core consideration for the Technology Strategy Committee;
  - keeping abreast of consumer taste in terms of digital developments was essential;
  - the tension between what generates income and what is for public service remains constant;
  - measures are in place for Disaster Recovery.

## **7 Director's Report (including Strategy Update)**

- 7.1 The Report had been circulated prior to the meeting.
- 7.2 The Director updated the Board on the following points:
- Paul Williamson was Acting Deputy Director - Collections while Beth McKillop was taking a leave of absence for health reasons;
  - the visit figures for the David Bowie Is exhibition had contributed to the highest visit figures in the Museum's 150 year history;
  - fraudulent tickets to the Bowie exhibition had appeared for sale on the internet. The matter had been reported to the police and V&A staff had been briefed on how to identify the forged tickets. Entry would be refused to anyone with a forged ticket but

- the visitors affected would be permitted to purchase a real ticket at face value;
- fundraising for the 1600-1800 Galleries continued;
- his visit to Brazil and Chile, including a meeting with the Minister for Culture of Brazil and a visit to the Museo de la Moda in Santiago in Chile.

7.3 The Director updated the Board on the progress of his strategic vision for the V&A. There would be a review of strategic priorities and core processes in order to formulate an organisational change programme. There would be ongoing consultation with key staff from the V&A and VAE to identify detailed options and opportunities. Individual Trustees would also be asked for their advice and input. The outcomes would be reported back to the Board in September 2013.

**Action: Director to report to the Board on outcomes of Strategy Review at September 2013 meeting.**

7.4 The Director updated the Board on the status of the Museum's application for funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund for the Exhibition Road project.

**Action: Director of Projects and Director of Development to prepare paper on funding for Exhibition Road project to be presented at July Board meeting.**

7.5 The Director reported that the interviews for the post of Chief Operating Officer had been concluded and a verbal acceptance had been received from the successful candidate. Subject to satisfactory completion of HR procedures, the new Chief Operating Officer would start work in August.

## 8 Chairman's Report

The Chairman had visited Dundee with Moira Gemmill for the purposes of fundraising for the V&A at Dundee project. He had spoken in a debate at Chelsea College of Arts and Design on the theme of the ways in which philanthropy can be stimulated to support cultural and educational institutions. The Chairman had met the Chancellor of the Exchequer with the Chairmen of the British Museum, Tate, and the Arts Council to draw his attention to the contribution made by arts organisations to the economy and the effects that would result from cuts in the sector.

## 9 Reports from Committees and VAE Board

### 9.1 Audit Committee

The Committee had met on 30 April 2013 and the following points were noted:

- Two reports on Collections Management had been received. A mock review of the Collections Management process had been undertaken to test the likelihood of reaccreditation and the outcome had been positive. Management had agreed to the recommendations to strengthen the process.
- The Museum's work on sustainability had been approved and Steve Hyde, Head of Estates, had been congratulated on his work in this area.
- The online shop had been reviewed by Internal Audit.
- The draft assurance statement had been agreed by Internal Audit as being reasonable.
- The draft plan for 2013/2014 approved by the Committee.
- DCMS had required arms-length bodies to consolidate financial data and the V&A was ready to supply the information on time.
- The Audit Committee had requested a report on the relationship between the V&A and V&A Enterprises.

- Risk Register - retention of talent to be included into succession planning.

## 9.2 **Buildings Strategy Committee**

The Buildings Strategy Committee had met on 23 April 2013 at Blythe House and the following points were noted:

- the strategic importance of Blythe House to the plans of the V&A in terms of The Clothworkers' Centre, the need to consolidate the Museum's storage from other locations, and as a through-space for FuturePlan projects at the South Kensington site and for exhibitions;
- the tender process for the Exhibition Road building was under way;
- the strategy for the Museum of Childhood was now to focus on renovating the existing building and redisplaying the collections;
- the next stage of the Europe 1600-1800 Galleries was out to tender.

## 9.3 **Collections**

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2013 had been circulated previously.

## 9.4 **Development**

The Development Report had been circulated previously.

## 9.5 **Museum of Childhood Committee**

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 28 March 2013 had been circulated previously.

## 9.6 **Technology Strategy Committee**

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2013 had been circulated previously.

## 9.7 **VAE**

The draft minutes of the VAE Board meeting held on 28 March 2013 had been circulated previously.

## 9.8 **Research Advisory Committee**

The Research Advisory Committee was a newly constituted Committee of the Board and had held its first meeting on 2 May 2013. A discussion had been held about enhancing the range and number of MA programmes. It had been recognised that it was a difficult economic market in which to recruit students for MA courses because of increasing fee levels and so more information was required before proceeding. The V&A's Head of Research was exploring the possibility of developing an MA with a social science dimension which might make use of the Museum of Childhood's constituencies but, before doing this, the research capacity at the Museum of Childhood needed to be increased. The V&A had three AHRHC PhD students. The importance of Blythe House to the V&A's research activities was emphasised.

**Action: Research Advisory Committee minutes to be a Board agenda item in future, as appropriate.**

**10 Any other business**

There was no other business.

*Clare Inglis*

*2 May 2013*

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
(Sir Paul Ruddock, Chairman)