



**MINUTES OF THE 212th MEETING OF
THE TRUSTEES OF THE ROYAL AIR FORCE MUSEUM
HELD AT THE LONDON SITE ON MONDAY 5 JULY 2021**

Members Present:	Sir Andrew Pulford (Chair)	(AP)
	Ms Maggie Appleton (CEO)	(MA)
	Ms Laurie Benson (online via Teams)	(LB)
	Dr Carol Cole	(CC)
	Dr Rodney Eastwood	(RE)
	Mr Richard Holman	(RH)
	Ms Julie McGarvey	(JM)
	Mr Andrew Reid	(AR)
	Mr Nick Sanders (online via Teams)	(NS)
	Mr Michael Schindler	(MS)
In attendance	Ms Marguerite Jenkin (Director of Finance and Resources)	(MJ)
	Mr Barry Smith (Director of Visitor and Commercial Development)	(BS)
	Ms Karen Whitting (Director of Content and Programmes)	(KW)
	Air Vice-Marshal Simon Edwards (ACAS)	(SE)
	Mr Sebastian Cox (Head of AHB & Chair of RAFM Research Board (Item 8 only))	(SC)
	Mr Jonathan Field, Chair of RAFMEL	(JF)
Minutes	Mrs Vanessa White – (PA to the CEO)	(VW)

A Trustee only session took place ahead of the full meeting.

ITEM 1 – BOARD EFFECTIVENESS – REFLECTION AND NEXT STEPS

- 1.1 ■ advised that Trustees and SLT have developed some excellent thoughts on how to improve Board effectiveness. The intent is now to feed those ideas into a Board away day in the autumn.

ITEM 2 – CHAIR’S OPENING REMARKS / APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

- 2.1 ■ welcomed AVM Simon Edwards to the meeting and congratulated him on his appointment as the Assistant Chief of Air Staff (ACAS). ■ looked forward to ACAS being a regular attendee at Board meetings as the RAF representative. ■ also welcomed Jonathan Field’s attendance as RAFMEL Chair and appreciated the commercial insight Jonathan would bring to the meeting.
- 2.2 ■ highlighted the changes to the Board with the retirement of three Board members and new Trustees awaiting approval by the Minister. ■ will be retiring in one year and the Museum will be recruiting a new Chair.

- 2.3 There were no apologies for absence or new conflicts of loyalty or interest reported. However, as highlighted at a previous meeting, ■ will excuse herself from any audit procurement discussions.

ITEM 3 - APPROVAL OF MINUTES, MATTER ARISING, REVIEW OF ACTIONS TABLE

- 3.1 The minutes of the Board meeting held on 29 March 2021 were approved subject to a minor change on page 10, para 11.4 to read 'cover sheet' rather than 'cover notes'.
- 3.2 The Board is content to remove the completed actions from the actions log.
- 3.3 (4.9.9) For the benefit of ■ and ■, ■ advised that RAFMAF is the RAF Museum American Foundation which raises awareness and some funds in the US for the Museum. **Action: ■ to provide a next steps discussion paper for the Board.**

ITEM 4 - TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS RECOMMENDED BY A&R COMMITTEE (AND REVIEWED BY FINANCE COMMITTEE)

- 4.1 ■ advised that the NAO audit is almost complete, and the A&R Committee was reassured and extremely pleased by the report. The accounts are unqualified with only minor issues highlighted, none of which affect the cash situation. The NAO is happy to sign the accounts. ■ highlighted that the NAO had looked at the furlough scheme and could not find a single error and appreciated that the Museum had followed the letter and spirit of furlough support. ■ congratulated the Museum team on this achievement and ■ advised that the Museum's narrative of its work during COVID had been commended by the NAO as exemplary.
- 4.2 ■ reminded the Board that RAFMEL is audited by Hillier Hopkins and advised that, although a very difficult year, the Museum had achieved a surplus.
- 4.3 ■ recommended the annual report and financial statements to the Board on behalf of the Audit and Risk Committee.
Approved: The Board approved the annual report and financial statements for 2020-21.
- 2020-21 Q4 Finance Report**
- 4.4 ■ advised of a strong financial position due to the support of MOD which had offset the deficit and he highlighted the positive effect on morale the support had provided. RH also reminded the Board that significant expenditure has been delayed to manage costs and the Museum has benefited from the furlough scheme and a rent rebate. Although RAFMEL was unable to make any contribution for 2021, ■ believes the Museum is on a sound foundation to move forward. ■ highlighted the fundamental importance of the Grant in Aid provided to the Museum and the healthy level of trust between MOD, the RAF, and the Museum.
- 4.5 ■ advised caution on the expectation regarding the number of visitors returning post COVID-19 and their willingness to spend going forward.
- 4.6 ■ advised that the Museum should continue to invest in online commercial opportunities which will give greater financial security going forward.

ITEM 5 - PAY REMIT RECOMMENDED BY S&R COMMITTEE (APPROVAL WILL BE SUBJECT TO MINISTERIAL DECISION)

- 5.1 ■ reminded the Board that, at its previous meeting, Trustees had approved a necessary 2.2% increase to basic pay where required to comply with the mandatory National Minimum Wage and National Living Wage; a bonus pot of £45k; and the move from 40 paid contractual hours per week FTE including five hours paid lunchbreaks; to 35 paid contractual hours per week FTE plus five hours unpaid contractual lunchbreaks.
- 5.2 ■ reiterated that RAF Museum staff received no pay increase in 2019-20 during COVID-19 when other museums and public sector workers did. A zero pay remit would mean a second year with no uplift. ■ advised that given this, the Committee had agreed to recommend a 2% pay rise to the Board.
- 5.3 ■ advised that the Treasury and Cabinet Office have been clear that all Arm's Length Bodies are in the scope of this year's Pay Remit guidance of 0%, and that Museum Freedoms will not apply. This means that any Museums needing flexibility will have to seek Ministerial agreement. ■ advised that the Museum could submit a Business Case to put to MOD citing the pay pause last year.
- 5.4 ■ advised that the Museum benchmarks salaries across other organisations and has made a commitment to the Living Wage. ■ advised that inflation would also be a huge factor in the living standards of staff.
- 5.5 Following discussion, the Board requested the SRC to discuss staff salaries and benefits further. ■ advised that the issue of greatest concern is staff pensions which are being reviewed.
Action: ■ to discuss how to take the issue of staff benefits forward
- 5.6 **Approved: Following discussion the Board agreed to submit a Business Case for a 2% pay award.**

ITEM 6 – IT STRATEGY APPROVAL RECOMMENDED BY DEVELOPMENT AND A&R COMMITTEES

- 6.1 ■ advised that the IT strategy was discussed in some detail by the Development and A&R Committees, both of which highly recommended it to the Board for approval. Staff resilience had been discussed as a risk with some reassurance given by the increase in the size and ability of the team over the last few years.
- 6.2 ■ asked how often the table-top IT exercises take place. ■ advised that this will be done on an annual basis going forward.
Action: ■ to discuss table-top IT exercises outside the meeting
- 6.3 ■ was pleased with the work of the team and asked if the Museum holds cyber security insurance.
Action: ■ to follow up on cyber security insurance and report back to the Board.
- 6.4 ■ asked what issues kept the IT team awake. ■ advised the team's main concerns are implementing Strategy 2030 and moving from historic catching up to enabling more future focussed IT provision, as well as the quantity of work.

- 6.5 ■ highlighted the importance of sound IT infrastructure as well as digital skills and interest.
- 6.6 ■ asked if ■ was happy with the level of planned investment in IT. ■ advised that investment had increased markedly over the last five years and is adequate given affordability.
- 6.7 It was agreed that the IT strategy would be reported to the Development Committee in future.
Action: IT Strategy to report to the Development Committee in future

ITEM 7 – APPROVAL TO REQUEST / ACQUIRE CHINOOK FOR THE COLLECTION

- 7.1 **Approved: The Board approved that the Museum seek the acquisition of a Chinook for the Collection.**

ITEM 8 – RESEARCH BOARD REPORT

- 8.1 ■ welcomed ■ to the meeting as Chair of the Museum's Research Advisory Board.
- 8.2 ■ asked if there was a general direction of travel for the Research Board. ■ advised that for the coming years one of the primary objectives is assisting with the proposed Research Centre in London and ensuring that a clear understanding of researchers' expectations underpins the plans. The Research Advisory Board has also driven through initiatives such as the academic prize awards and the lecture series and conferences which provide younger scholars with a platform. The Board had approved the Research Strategy in 2018 and ■ advised that Research Board members also support Museum curators and encourage them to present to the Research Board and share their ideas for research so that the Board can provide advice and guidance. This had been paused recently but, hopefully post-COVID, will be resurrected.
- 8.3 ■ asked how much of the archives had been digitised. ■ advised that very little had been digitised. However, there is now a digital expert on the Board, and he will be speaking with the team about Middlesex University support for the initiative. ■ reported that AHB is in the process of digitising its own collection using reasonably priced scanners. ■ suggested there should be a target for digitising the collection and ■ suggested that this could be sponsored by a company such as CISCO. ■ was very pleased with the participation in online lectures and asked if the data could be used to enable those outside of the region / country to become ambassadors for the Museum. ■ advised that if participants have joined up, they are contacted. ■ further advised that now the website had migrated to the new platform all lectures will be uploaded and included on YouTube.

Action: ■ to look at the barriers to digitising the collection and provide options and a plan for the Development Committee meeting in November.

ITEM 9 – ANNUAL FUNDRAISING UPDATE

- 9.1 **Action: ■ to circulate his presentation to the Board.**
- 9.2 The Board congratulated the development team on being shortlisted for fundraising initiative of the year award at the M+H Awards.

ITEM 10 – EXECUTIVE REPORT

- 10.1 Visitor figures were over 5% ahead of the year to date target at the end of June with Cosford performance particularly strong. ■ advised that the launch of the play area and the radio adverts have clearly helped, and Google has seen a real spike in those searching for the RAF Museum.
- 10.2 ■ advised that the Attorney General and our lawyers have spoken, and the Royal Charter should go before HMTQ on 21 July for final approval.
- 10.3 ■ highlighted that the new streamlined KPIs, as agreed at the previous meeting, would be reported with Q1 figures in September. The Board was grateful for the narrative appendix to the CEO's report.
- 10.4 **Action: ■ to add the Board to the circulation list for Volunteering news.**

ITEM 11 – HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT 2020-21

- 11.1 ■ advised the Museum had been focused on bringing staff and visitors through COVID-19 re-opening. The Association of Leading Visitor Attractions (ALVA)'s evaluation demonstrated that the Museum has improved in all areas.
- 11.2 ■ highlighted the reported concerns about contractor attitude, blocked fire doors and people using the fire doors to leave site. ■ advised that the contractors are RAF ones at Cosford, rather than the Museum's, but it has been reported to the RAF. He also reported that pre-opening checks usually pick up on any incidences of blocked fire doors.
Action: ■ to look at the root cause of blocked fire doors and those exiting via fire exits.
- 11.3 ■ advised of a RIDDOR incident at Cosford.
- 11.4 ■ advised that H&S will be a standing item on the A&R Committee going forward so the detailed reporting can be focused there.

ITEM 12 – REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES AND ASSOCIATED BODIES

Staffing and Remuneration Committee

- 12.1 There were no questions regarding the Staffing and Remuneration Committee report.

Finance Committee

- 12.2 ■ passed her thanks to ■ for his work on the Finance Committee.

Development Committee

- 12.3 ■ advised that the Development Committee was looking to understand all the large projects at the same level where costs and fundability are known.
- 12.4 ■ reported that since the Board papers were circulated some concern has been expressed by Board members about the landscaping around Hendon. ■ asked whether what we have is what we expected from the landscaping. ■ advised that the new Head of Estates is now working with the landscapers to take this forward and ■ advised that, following it being raised with her by a Trustee, a cut of the bunds has been brought forward and is imminent.
Action: ■ to follow up on Centenary landscaping

Audit and Risk Committee

- 12.5 ■ advised that the internal audit next year hopes to concentrate on more specialist audits, ie, IT, security, H&S, and this year will undertake a site H&S audit. A good topic for the future will be the Museum's performance on environmental sustainability / Carbon Net Zero. The Museum will need to bring in specialist companies to undertake some of the work.
- 12.6 ■ advised that ■ joined the A&RC to discuss the NCWE roof bolt issue which the Committee is now content is being mitigated.

RAFMEEL

- 12.7 ■ advised that, with the retirement of ■ and ■, RAFMEEL will be losing 40 years of experience. ■ has agreed to sit alongside ■ on the Board until December. However, ■ reported that with ■ on the Board and five new external and impressive Directors recruited, brand, CRM, and public events sub groups have already been set up to help deliver visitor numbers going forward.
- 12.8 ■ advised that the wedding licence could be a game changer, particularly in London given the lack of venue availability. ■ is assisting with the messaging.
- 12.9 ■ would be happy to align the main Board and RAFMEEL terms more closely going forward.

ITEM 13 – BOARD PROGRAMME

- 13.1 ■ suggested that the Board take a high level view on collections on an annual basis. ■ advised that the newly formed Trustees Collections Development Group will be looking at any collections gaps and that, once a year in July, the Head of Collections and Head of Collections Services will report to the Board.
Action: ■ to add annual (July) Collections report to the Board Programme.

ITEM 14 – REFLECTIONS ON THE MEETING

- 14.1 It was suggested that more time be allotted for the fundraising report in future.
- 14.2 Extend Board meetings to four hours in length.
- 14.3 ■ suggested a thematic structure, collections; finances, etc.
- 14.4 ■ suggested circulating important documents ahead of time to cutting down the Board pack.

- 14.5 [REDACTED] referred to setting up a Trustees intranet (or Teams) site to enable posting documents and pre-meeting questions to enable more time for debate in the meeting.

ITEM 15 – AOB

- 15.1 Next meeting 27 September, 2.00pm – 6.00pm
- 15.2 [REDACTED] thanked [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] on behalf of the Museum and the RAF for their commitment, support and wise counsel in bringing the Museum forward to the position it is in today. Due to the COVID constraints the intent is to hold an event to thank them appropriately.