

**MINUTES OF THE 207<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF  
THE TRUSTEES OF THE ROYAL AIR FORCE MUSEUM  
HELD VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE CALL  
ON MONDAY 23 MARCH 2020**

Members Present:	Sir Andrew Pulford (Chair)	(AP)
	Ms Maggie Appleton (CEO)	(MA)
	Mr Peter Bateson	(PB)
	Ms Laurie Benson	(LB)
	Dr Carol Cole	(CC)
	Dr Rodney Eastwood	(RE)
	Mr Richard Holman	(RH)
	Ms Julie McGarvey	(JM)
	Mr Andrew Reid	(AR)
	Mr Nick Sanders	(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 Ian Gale (ACAS)	(IG)
Minutes	Vanessa White – PA to the CEO	(VW)

**ITEM 1 – CHAIR’S OPENING REMARKS / APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

- 1.1 ■ welcomed everyone to the online meeting during these unprecedented times. The Board’s priority is the health, safety and wellbeing of employees, ensuring compliance with Government requirements and the financial viability of the Museum.
- 1.2 Apologies for absence were received from ■.
- 1.3 There were no declarations or conflicts of interest reported.

**ITEM 2 - APPROVAL OF MINUTES, MATTER ARISING, REVIEW OF ACTIONS TABLE**

- 2.1 The minutes of the 2 December 2019 Board meeting were approved.
- 2.2 (11.3) ■ reported that a doodle poll would be used to reschedule the Away Day.
- 2.3 (11.4) Should read ■ rather than ■.
- 2.4 (6.4) The safeguarding session would go ahead at the July Board meeting.

- 2.5 (10.1) The paper on exit options was previously circulated and would be reviewed later in the year.
- 2.6 (3.2) Any updates on the Colindale tube station refurbishment would be circulated.
- 2.7 (4.10) The review of Business Plan PIs is included in the planning work for this year.
- 2.8 (4.9.9) The RAFMAF Board is working on its own strategy linked to the Museum's Strategy 2030, after which it would review the MOU and give feed back to the Museum.

### **Item 3 - EXECUTIVE REPORT**

- 3.1 ■ acknowledged the exemplary response of the SLT and all colleagues over the last few weeks in response to the coronavirus.
- 3.2 The Museum made the decision to close last Tuesday (17 March) in coordination with other national museums. The Museum's Business Continuity Plan moved smoothly into gear with the Business Continuity Team and SLT liaising throughout the day to plan the closure, mobilise to home working and ensure that a skeleton team was in place to oversee and protect essential functions (security, collections, estates and IT).
- 3.3 ■ advised that DCMS were pushing Government for support for their museums and encouraging them to repurpose a number of pots of cultural funding to support museums across the sector with critical cashflow issues. The RAFM is working with the other Service museums and MOD to ensure a joined-up approach. The MOD lead for Service museums is in touch with the lead at DCMS and the three national Service museum Finance Directors used their pre-arranged meeting to invite along our MOD sponsor for discussion and follow up.
- 3.4 ■ outlined the importance of the Board approving the 2020-21 budget recommended by Finance Committee before closure as a baseline to enable later negotiation for additional support. She proposed that the Finance Committee meet in four to six weeks' time to consider a detailed reforecast with a recommendation to come to the full Board at an online extraordinary meeting on 11 May (the date all Trustees are holding for the away day).
- 3.5 The SLT is planning to repurpose significant amounts of activity online. For example, workshops and children's activity sheets were being made available for families, the Hurricane 80k challenge would now be online and the Collections Online project would be accelerated. The Battle of Britain Spitfire tour has been postponed but the team will continue to work on the exhibitions for launch after re-opening.
- 3.6 ■ advised that the SLT were focusing on keeping staff engaged and motivated during the closure period and would be looking at phasing the re-opening to mobilise creatively and effectively when the time comes.
- 3.7 There is currently a skeleton staff of three at each site and the IT team were excellent at mobilising home working. The communications team would be co-ordinating online visitor engagement during this period, the HR team were checking in with line managers to ensure teams and individuals are supported and colleagues are using the Intranet to keep in touch and share work and other information.
- 3.8 The New Head of Comms, ■, started in post today and would be creating a structured internal communications plan.

- 3.9 The SLT has created a Covid-19 Risk Register and would share this with the Board over the coming weeks.
- 3.10 ■ thanked the SLT for ensuring continuity at this difficult time.
- 3.11 ■ advised that his team have been working on communications to send messages of optimism and using assets to keep the national spirits up. The Red Arrows and BBMF would shortly start to mobilise on this. Following a question from ■ assured the Board that Museum employees' wages were secure and that she and ■ would continue to liaise with the Museum's MOD sponsor regarding potential additional GIA to make up for lack of revenue generation during the period of Covid-19.
- 3.12 ■ advised that in addition to the activity outlined by ■, Access and Learning had been working with the children's author, Tom Palmer, who would be preparing an online story for the Museum on the Battle of Britain. There were also materials asking families to share what they've created from the Museum's workshops online. Work continues to share Battle of Britain stories online and RAF Stories would be expanded. Collections Online was due to go live at the end of June and remote working means that most of the team would be able to productively add to this. ■ asked how confident the Museum is that it could reach out to the public. ■ advised that stories were pushed out through Instagram, Twitter and Facebook as well as the Museum's website. Instagram is currently the most popular. ■ asked Trustees to share with SLT any ideas on how to broaden the attraction during this period of enforced isolation. ■ suggested getting in touch with every online and hardcopy publication and create a package of content the public could engage with at home and online. ■ suggested reaching out to broadcasters.  
**Action: All to share ideas with ■**
- 3.13 ■ advised that all physical events until June had been cancelled. However, Hurricane 80, a virtual 80k run, would be heavily promoted and linked to BoB80. This period provided an opportunity to push forward the online shop, but, as the situation inevitably worsens there would be a question over fulfilment due to access to the site. Meanwhile, the Museum was taking the opportunity to re-platform and relaunch the retail website.
- 3.14 ■ advised that the fundraising team were focusing on how we maintain and build relationships and engagement online, with creative ideas to continue raising funds.
- 3.15 ■ reported that the RAF and RAF Museum BoB80 meetings would continue to ensure all were joined up for this important anniversary, albeit that much activity would be repurposed online.
- 3.16 Following a question from ■ advised that the Museum was paying everyone 100% of their salary and in the early phase of closure needed colleagues to be available. However, individuals were also being encouraged to take their leave based on the analysis of each team's work.
- 3.17 ■ advised that site security comprises a skeleton staff of VEAs and retail staff on a rota. BS added that some back of house colleagues may need training in case of infection across the current team. However, there should be adequate cover as there were ten members of staff in London and Cosford who could cover critical issues. The Museum gates were open as LBB were using the site so their staff could support vulnerable people during this time. This movement on the site would also prove useful from a security aspect. There should be no loss of car parking income as LBB key workers would need to continue to work throughout this period.

- 3.18 As this is the first day of school closures, the impact on Museum staff looking after children at home is not yet known.
- 3.19 ■ reported that the Finance Team had been concentrating on setting up homeworking and ensuring the Museum could pay suppliers as well as keeping to the year-end timetable. Pending budget approval today the SLT will scenario plan the reforecast to take into account variable costs, set costs and project cost savings. ■ advised that cleaners and security were fundamental services but the Museum might be able to reduce the service to save cost. ■ would consider consultants' costs which could provide some savings, but remain mindful and supportive during this challenging time. ■ advised that the Museum should prioritise looking after staff – both direct and contractors' - wherever possible.
- 3.20 ■ observed that a meeting in six weeks' time should give ■ and SLT time to prepare some financial modelling and suggested the Museum assumes the worst and hopes for the best, producing models of best, worse and in between. Assuming the worst is an assumption of no self-generated income across the next financial year and planning what the Museum can afford within its reduced income stream. ■ said that the Board should have input into decision-making as to continuation of work on major projects.

#### **ITEM 4 – STRATEGY 2030**

- 4.1 The Cosford Master Plan  
**Approved: The Board approved the go ahead for the playground groundworks tender and award.**
- 4.2 The London Master Plan  
Consultation, costing and phasing options to continue on the London Master Plan without committing further expenditure to major project elements.

#### **ITEM 5 – FINANCE**

- 5.1 ■ advised that all activities should be kept to a minimum and the Museum should not commit to any major project work.
- 5.2 ■ reminded trustees that the Museum's Reserves Policy was to maintain two months' operational expenditure; it would also hold designated funds of c.£3M for Strategy 2030 at the end of March. Staff costs were £500k each month and the Museum had assured grant-in-aid of 70% of costs and was currently holding unrestricted cash reserve of £1.5M prior to receipt of any GIA for 2020-21. The Museum was holding over £5M in restricted and designated funds. In extremis, the Museum could use the £3M designated funds and ■ would contact the Finance Committee should there be any red flags of concern during this period.
- 5.3 ■ advised that the Dowding wall from the Battle of Britain exhibitions involved commissioning small contractors to carry on the work at home. The project would enable online engagement such as the Museum has never achieved before. The Museum could pause the physical work on the Dowding wall and continue with the virtual.
- 5.4 The Museum had committed to the Cosford playground design and build and was about to go out to tender for the groundworks with a clause that the Museum reserves the right to withdraw or postpone the works. £40K had been budgeted for groundworks and £136K for the installation.

- 5.5 ■ reported that the current uncommitted build costs for the BoB project were c.£200K. It was agreed that no further spending commitment would be made until after the Trustee review of the re-forecast on 11 May.
- 5.6 ■ suggested the Museum look at contracts to ensure there were no penalties and be aware of the risk of some suppliers going bust.
- 5.7 ■ would like to see a column in the Business Plan that quantifies the cost of major projects and ■ advised that some projects, such as the toilet blocks at a cost of £200k are already on hold.
- 5.8 **Approved: The Board approved the pre Covid-19 baseline Budget and Business Plan 2020-21.**  
**Action: ■ to circulate Museum reforecast 2020-21 scenarios to the Finance Committee in time for their meeting in approximately six weeks' time.**  
**Approved: The Board approved the delay of some physical projects but to go ahead with virtual projects.**
- 5.9 The Finance Committee would meet in six weeks' time and an Extraordinary Board meeting would be held on 11 May.
- 5.10 ■ advised that the Museum was communicating with volunteers as well as paid employees and were considering setting up a buddying scheme within the RAF Museum family. ■ assured Trustees that staff welfare was a priority during this challenging time.
- 5.11 ■ advised that Royal Charter was on track and the next stage was to give the names of those supporting the Museum to the Privy Council. The Museum sponsors would be the current CAS, former CASs, and Baroness Goldie. The Museum's lawyers would draft the Charter which would come to the Board for discussion and approval at the July meeting.

## **ITEM 6 – RAFMEL BOARD**

- 6.1 **The Board noted the RAFMEL Board's approval of the pre-Covid-19 RAFMEL Budget 2020-21 as a baseline marker. Assumptions would be reviewed as part of the wider Museum reforecast scenarios.**
- 6.2 ■ reported a strong January / February for RAFMEL. ■ said he would personally have been more radical on ensuring all visitors exit through the shop. Exit discussions would be scheduled for the summer meeting.

## **ITEM 7 – DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

- 7.1 ■ reported the progress on projects and an interesting presentation from NORR, the architects working with the team on the London Master Plan H345 feasibility study at the last Development Committee meeting.
- 7.2 The Development Committee recommended that the Board approve the Resource Hub in Cosford as the priority project within the Cosford Master Plan.  
**Approved: The Board approved the submission of the Expression of Interest and a Stage 1 bid to NHLF for the Cosford Resource Hub**

## **Item 8 – AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE**

- 8.1 ■ reported that both Museum and RAFMEL audits were now taking place remotely which was a challenge to both the Museum and the auditors but they were hopeful the timetable would be met. ■ advised that the Stock Exchange had advised a hold on accounts for listed companies.
- 8.2 ■ would update on the risk workshop later in the year but confirmed that the session had been a useful one, with reassurance that the Museum's Strategic Risk Register included major risks discussed.
- 8.3 ■ asked if internal auditors could work offsite on projects and ■ advised that the 2019 – 20 internal audit reviews were almost complete, with final queries able to be answered remotely.
- 8.4 ■ advised that a timely and useful SMG facilitated risk workshop had been held a few weeks prior to the Covid-19 crisis.

## **Item 9 – STAFFING AND REMUNERATION COMMITTEE**

- 9.1 ■ drew the Board's attention to the papers previously circulated. ■ asked for assurance that volunteers were always considered and ■ reported that volunteers' comms were in place, there was weekly contact and a buddying system was being set up to support both paid employees and volunteers.
- 9.2 ■ reported that the pay remit proposal was written and discussed prior to Covid-19. ■ advised that the SLT had been bringing the approval forward to be in line with accounts but given the current circumstances do not feel it is right to be asking for approval of 2% now. Following discussion, it was agreed to defer the decision to 1 July.  
**Agreed: The Board agreed to defer the discussion on the pay remit and prior year bonuses until July.**

## **Item 10 – BOARD EFFECTIVENESS**

- 10.1 **Agreed: The Board agreed to postpone the Board Effectiveness review and questionnaire until later in the year.**

## **Item 11 – BOARD PROGRAMME**

- 11.1 An extraordinary meeting would be held online on 11 May to approve the reforecast budget.
- 11.2 **Action: ■ to look for a Board away day date in October / November.**

## **Item 12 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- 12.1 ■ suggested a note from the Board to Museum staff to bolster their spirits.  
**Action: ■ to craft a note and forward to ■**

- 12.2 ■ extended congratulations to the Museum team for being so responsive. He looked forward to continuing to work with the Museum on BoB80.
- 12.3 The next meeting would be held on 13 July 2020 at the London site beginning with a safeguarding briefing.
- 12.4 ■ added congratulations to the team on their business continuity implementation and to the teams for their responsiveness.