

**MINUTES OF THE 209<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF  
THE TRUSTEES OF THE ROYAL AIR FORCE MUSEUM  
HELD VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE CALL  
ON MONDAY 28 SEPTEMBER 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 Catriona Lougher	(CL)
	Ms Julie McGarvey	(JM)
	Mr Nick Sanders	(NS)
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 Cdre Steve Horne (Director Air Staff RAF)	(SH)
Minutes	Mrs 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.
- 1.2 ■ advised that the BoB80 small event had been a success and Benny Goodman, the veteran in attendance, had reached his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- 1.3 ■ apologised for the postponement of the away day due to COVID-19 which would be held in person at an appropriate later date.
- 1.4 ■ congratulated the Museum staff on the great job they are doing during a difficult time.
- 1.5 Apologies for absence were received from ■.
- 1.6 There were no declarations or conflicts of interest reported.
- 1.7 ■ advised that the RAF Museum, along with the other national service museums, is unable to access the £1.57 billion DCMS funding. However, the Museum is liaising with Air Command and ■ would be meeting with the Directors of the NAM and NMRN the following day.

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

- 2.1 The minutes of the Board meeting held on 13 July 2020 were approved.
- 2.2 (3.13) Year to date totals for collections disposals will be provided in future reports – closed.
- 2.3 (3.14) The lifts have been reopened and the electronic panels will be replaced before assessing whether full replacement is required. ■■■ to report back - ongoing.
- 2.4 (3.15) The original structural engineers for the NCWE roof have been approached to undertake a review and this is being followed up by the Head of Estates – ongoing.
- 2.5 (3.19 and 4.4) A discussion on outreach including a High Street presence would have been picked up in the (now postponed) Board away day. It will be discussed at the next Development Committee as part of the reflection on COVID-19's impact on the Strategy 2030 and our response. ■■■ advised that discussion time could be included in the next Board meeting for Development Committee to update all Trustees and agree the Museum's priorities. In the meantime, outreach and digital both feature strongly in S2030 plans; the cancelled Spitfire tour would have been in town centres around the West Midlands and online sessions are now being delivered as part of the Museum's core offer to schools - ongoing.
- 2.6 (4.13 and 4.16) The fundraising presentation and fundraising brief were circulated with the Board papers. The latter is currently with designers before hardcopies can be distributed – closed.
- 2.7 (11.1) A Nominations and Governance committee was held on 9 September 2020 and the reports are included with the papers for this meeting – closed.
- 2.8 (11.2) A Board ethics workshop remains on the action log and will need to be an in-person workshop programmed within other Board priorities - ongoing.
- 2.9 (3.2) Colindale tube station closure is likely to be reduced to 12 weeks in Easter 2021 but remains subject to change - ongoing.
- 2.10 (4.9.9) The RAFMAF MOU will be circulated to the Board once received. ■■■ has a RAFMAF Board meeting today and will remind the Board – ongoing.
- 2.11 (3.16) ■■■ reported that a column is included in the H&S report to include the last three years' data as soon as available.

## **Item 3 - EXECUTIVE REPORT**

### **BP Monitor and KPI dashboard**

- 3.1 ■■■ thanked ■■■ and the SLT for their hard work.
- 3.2 (BP 25) ■■■ advised that the development of the autumn schools' programmes was complete and schools were now booking online with very few attending in person. ■■■ added that the RAF STEM team had agreed to run 15 online days and that the Key Stage 3 glider challenge has now moved online.
- 3.3 (BP 79) The IT team is testing the Microsoft Office version to enable multifactor authentication and comparing it with an alternative. It will be rolled out in October and progress reported to the next Audit and Risk Committee meeting.

- 3.4 (BP 81) The sign off list currently shows SLT approving the IT Strategy. However, it was agreed that this should report to the Development Committee with oversight from the Audit and Risk Committee.  
**Action: ■ to include the IT Strategy in DC and ARC reports**  
**■ to amend the sign off procedure list to reflect the change**
- 3.5 The new Head of Comms and Marketing started in role in March 2020.
- 3.6 Following a question from ■ advised that the KPI live labelled forecast shows the actuals to date and forecast figures thereafter.
- 3.7 ■ advised that the digital engagement KPI had risen hugely in July / August. ■ reported that this was driven mainly by the themed weeks and the Battle of Britain initiatives.  
**Action: ■ to include a dotted line where figures are not current.**
- 3.8 ■ reported visitor figures were at 40% compared to 2019-20 in July and 60% in August. SLT is now forecasting an operational deficit of £153K compared to the adjusted budget breakeven position.
- 3.9 ■ outlined the response to the ALVA data which now compares around 40 organisations. ■ congratulated the team on the great results on the visitor welcome.
- 3.10 ■ asked if there had been a decline in numbers over the last few weeks. ■ reported that following a positive summer numbers had dropped once schools reopened and again once COVID numbers had started to increase. The Museum was expecting 6k to 7k visitors at each site each week but was currently only welcoming 4K at each site. The next significant test would be October half term. However, visitor feedback has shown that people are confident to return to the Museum. ■ advised that schools had been slow to come back to onsite visits and the Museum was predicting these numbers will remain low. ■ advised that forecasts were based on visitor numbers achieving 90% of last year's by the end of the financial year and would need to reforecast downwards with total visitors for the year expected to be 430k. ■ reported a contingency of £226k.
- 3.11 ■ asked if there was further insight to be gained from visitor feedback. ■ reported that all visitors are sent a link to an online survey following their visit. 2,500 have responded to the 60 questions and overall the Museum is doing very well. However, cleanliness of surfaces, toilet areas and managing social distances are all issues that need continuous attention.
- 3.12 ■ was concerned at the chart for the disposals which note the reason as unknown. ■ clarified that these disposals are where paperwork is missing for retrospective destruction.
- 3.13 ■ asked whether YouTube was used for the Museum's online lecture programme. ■ advised that she would look at whether the Museum could post-publish (the Museum has its own YouTube channel) and that ChromeCast is currently being used for the lecture series.
- 3.14 ■ thanked the RAF for their support on the Cosford Lease, for collecting the RAF stories around COVID and for their partnership for the Battle of Britain event.
- 3.15 ■ asked who would be leading on the Museum branding. ■ advised that the new Head of Comms and Marketing is leading on this as part of the development of the

marketing strategy. ■ reported that the marketing strategy would be taking strategy 2030 and articulating this to the visitor; the audience development strategy will look at who our customers are; and the communications strategy will outline what it is we want to say to them, and how we say it. Workshops will start in October and RAF media and comms have been involved. Following a question for ■ confirmed that both internal workshops and external focus groups would be undertaken.

- 3.16 HNWI small group tours are in train and conversations underway regarding donations.
- 3.17 Following a question from ■ reported that the audience development work would enable the Museum to decide how best to engage with different groups.

#### **ITEM 4 – DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

- 4.1 ■ reported that the Committee had discussed whether the direction of Strategy 2030 was still relevant given the current climate and thought that the London and Cosford Master Plans and outreach are all still relevant. However, raising money will be difficult. The London Master Plan will be easier as it is in small chunks but part of the Cosford Master Plan includes capital build and the Museum would need to consider this alongside discussions on investing more in IT and outreach.
- 4.2 ■ reported that the SLT had reviewed Strategy 2030, are interrogating all costs and breaking the elements down into smaller chunks where possible. ■ stressed the need not to lose the opportunity to improve the Museums in an agile way so that visitors are engaged when they do visit. Strategy 2030 and both Master Plans include on site, off site and online development. This will be followed up at the next Development Committee and Board meetings.
- 4.3 ■ advised that the Cosford play area would not be ready for half term because of the delays due to COVID-19. However, the area should be ready by early November and would be marketed in advance. ■ reminded the Board to sign the licence for the change of use at the Cosford site which had been sent to them and to return in the post to ■ (only hard copies are permissible). ■ advised that funding for the Resource Hub will be a real challenge. NLHF applications are unlikely to open until April 2021. However, online and outreach engagement would continue in the meantime; Collections Online now has 451 objects on the catalogue and the Battle of Britain content is now live. ■ stressed the importance of getting the marketing right on Collections Online. ■ advised that once the website has been migrated to the new platform this would integrate more smoothly.
- 4.4 ■ reported that KPI 3 shows actual followers of 592k and asked if the Museum could drive more followers. ■ reported that total followers across the whole of the Museum's platforms has increased significantly. The online bookings had enabled greater engagement with visitors to drive them to our sites.

#### **ITEM 5 – RAFMEL BOARD**

- 5.1 ■ reported the key concern of the RAFMEL Board was the £3.6M contribution that RAFMEL is expected to make to Strategy 2030 which will require investment in commercial opportunities.
- 5.2 ■ outlined the concern about RAFMEL Board resilience as three directors would be retiring in 2021 and the skills base requires broadening.

- 5.3 ■ asked how the Museum would be driving customers online. ■ reported that the key reason for migration of the current website is to drive optimisation. Retail would now be integrated into all of the Museum's marketing campaigns. This had been done for the Battle of Britain anniversary and had proved successful in driving visitors to the Museum site. ■ voiced concern that the Museum is passive in its marketing of retail and advocated an active Christmas merchandising campaign. ■ suggested looking at buying adwords. ■ advised that there are eight principles on the psychology of influence and offered to speak with the new Head of Marketing and Comms. ■ reported that Christmas would see a campaign focused on gift experiences that no one else can offer, eg, the gift of Adopt an Artefact, the gift of membership and the gift of private group tours via a gift voucher to be redeemed later. ■ advised that this information should be out in October with images of the items supplied to the media, along with the story.  
**Action: ■ to put ■ in touch with Head of Comms to discuss the psychology of influence**
- 5.4 ■ advised that the Hurricane 80k challenge had shown that the Museum can generate significant income through online initiatives and reported that Adopt and Artefact had also proved popular.
- 5.5 ■ advised that the phasing of Master Plan projects underpinning Strategy 2030 and the associated Financial Framework was based on maximising visitor numbers which flow through to retail and fundraising success, as well as onsite and offsite digital engagement. A re-phasing of projects and the key assumptions would need to take place post COVID-19, and will be timed to support development of the Budget for 2021-22 and an update to the Business Plan and phasing of Strategy 2030 delivery.
- 5.6 ■ commented that he would like to see a plan of action and timelines put together. The plan should include when the website will be ready and how the Museum is theming its campaigns and its plans for Christmas.  
**Action: ■ to provide a plan of action and timelines asap**
- 5.7 ■ advised that only a compelling online offer and an ambitious plan would enable the success of RAFMEL. ■ suggested someone with online retail experience should be recruited onto the RAFMEL Board and ■ asked the Board to get in touch if they could recommend any experts. ■ asked ■ to suggest what RAF colleagues might look to purchase for Christmas.
- 5.8 ■ advised that she and ■ were working with the Nominations and Governance Committee on Trustee recruitment. ■ advised that RAFMEL is a separate legal entity so it is for their Board to recruit, though recommendations will be brought to the main Board for approval.
- 5.9 ■ advised that Christmas plans should be written in July for the media and suggested the Museum do this in future together with a lessons learned workshop post-Christmas in order to inform next year's campaign.
- 5.10 ■ suggested that the Museum may be in line with other museums on retail and commercial and thought it would useful to benchmark comparative organisations.  
**Action: ■ to provide comparative benchmarking on retail and commercial**

## **ITEM 6 – FINANCE COMMITTEE**

- 6.1 ■ reported that the reserve fund put the Museum in a relatively sound position. Fundraising is now better equipped going forward and although the Museum does not have the Centenary to hook into, the team have created some great initiatives.
- 6.2 ■ expressed concern on the unrestricted fundraising target. ■ acknowledged the challenge but reassured the Board that the Museum is currently above its year to date target, and the team continue to work to the adjusted targets, with a contingency held centrally to mitigate risk to the Museum if those targets are not met. ■ shared ■ concerns on fundraising and thought there should be a greater focus on legacy. ■ advised that a focus on legacies is covered in the fundraising strategy but is a longer term target.
- 6.3 ■ asked that the S&R Committee are kept in the loop regarding pay remit discussions. ■ reported that Air Command had attended the Finance Committee and timings presented an opportunity to discuss the remit in the context of the confirmed Civil Service pay award. ■ advised the Museum would be going back with a business case to Air Command for a funding uplift and would hope that the Museum would be able to offer an increase to the pay remit next year. ■ advised that she would be meeting the PNC next week to gain approval of the 0% pay increase, assuming Min(Lords) approval.

#### **Item 7 – NOMINATIONS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

- 7.1 ■ advised that a Committee meeting had been held to discuss Royal Charter which had previously been scrutinised by the Finance Committee. ■ advised that the Charter and Bye-Laws documents would be submitted to Privy Council with the Petition, but Privy Council may propose amendments which would then need subsequent full Board discussion and approval at the next meeting.  
**Approved: The Board approved the Petition and draft Charter and Bye Laws for submission to Privy Council.**
- 7.2 ■ reported that the Royal Charter creates a legal entity / corporate body and provides protection for the Board members as well as kudos for the Museum
- 7.3 ■ raised the issue of RAFMEL which is excluded from the Bye Laws. ■ advised that the Museum wanted to align the terms of the RAFMEL Board with those of the main Board and that she would ask the lawyers to look at the RAFMEL Articles and to develop an MOU between the Museum and RAFMEL as there is currently only a Deed of Covenant. ■ confirmed that there will be a main Board member on the Board of RAFMEL and reported that the Museum is the main shareholder and has shareholder rights owned by RAF Museum Investments Limited. ■ reported that the legal status of the Charter would enable the Museum to own the shares and assets in the future.  
**Action: ■ to speak with the lawyers to review RAFMEL Articles and develop a Memorandum of Understanding.**
- 7.4 RE advised that the Research Board is not a Committee of the Museum and suggested that the name be changed to the Research Advisory Board with the responsibility for the implementation of advice belonging to the SLT.  
**Action: Trustees agreed the change of name - ■ to follow up**
- 7.5 AP reported that the N&G Committee had discussed the retirement of Trustees and the recruitment of new Board members. The recent Board skills audit had shown those skills currently missing on the Board and the paper developed by ■ and ■ would be circulated to the Board for comment.

**Action: ■ to circulate the skills paper for comment by 7 October with silence implying consent.**

- 7.6 ■ would be willing to serve another three years as Chair but happy to step aside if the right candidate comes along.
- 7.7 ■ advised that the Committee had agreed that there should be a Deputy Chair with Senior Independent Director status.
- 7.8 ■ reported that Board recruitment must go through the Public Appointments process (apart from for co-opted Trustees). The Trustee role description was ready to go after input from the N&G Committee. ■ suggested using Nu Role to assist with recruitment.

### **Item 8 – Board Programme**

- 8.1 ■ suggested that fundraising should be a standard part of the Board agenda. ■ advised that capital fundraising and major projects report to the Development Committee and the unrestricted fundraising targets report to the Finance Committee. Following discussion it was agreed that that fundraising remain within the sub committees, but that additional detail be provided on activity within the Executive Report.
- Action: ■ to expand on fundraising activity in future Board Executive Reports**

### **Item 9 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- 9.1 The next meeting is scheduled for Monday 14 December at the London site.
- 9.2 ■ suggested the agenda might be RAG rated in future to help prioritise time. ■ explained that the Board meeting had been timed for a shorter period this quarter to enable the awayday which had then been cancelled.
- 9.3 ■ advised that following the success of the Battle of Britain 80<sup>th</sup> joint engagement he has suggested that someone from the Museum sits on the RAF engagement forum going forward.
- 9.4 ■ reiterated his thanks to ■ and the SLT for their leadership during these difficult times.

### **Item 10 – LONDON MASTER PLAN UPDATE**

- 10.1 ■ reported that ■ had been intending to share the overall footprint for the London Master Plan for discussion and approval of the direction of travel, and to agree the overall envelope. The Development Committee had seen the plans prior to the March Board meeting, when it was not followed up due to lockdown. Due to the timing of the meeting it was agreed that the plans would be shared with ■ outside of the meeting and potentially a special meeting convened for approval if required. ■ reassured the Board that the approaches to the Master Plans were modular and flexible.