

NATIONAL ARMY MUSEUM COUNCIL

Minutes of the 167th Meeting of the Museum Council held in the Boardroom at the National Army Museum Chelsea, at 1000hrs on Wednesday 31st July 2019

Present

General Sir Richard Shirreff (Chair), Lt Gen Sir Simon Mayall (Deputy Chair), Mr. William Wells, Mrs. Judith Donovan, Mr. Patrick Aylmer, Dr. Paul Schreier and Mrs. Sabine Vandenbroucke.

In Attendance

Field Marshal Sir John Chapple (Honorary Vice Patron), Ms. Brenda Hobday (Honorary Marketing Advisor), Mr. Mike Robbins (Chief Accountant, Army Resources), Brigadier Justin Maciejewski (Director, National Army Museum), Mr. Mike O'Connor (Deputy Director Operations & Resources), Ms. Dawn Watkins (Item 2.1 & 5.3, Assistant Director, Enterprise) and Ms. Lizzy Sutherland (Committee Clerk, Minutes).

Item 1. Council Administration

Item 1.1 Chairman's Opening Remarks

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Item 1.2 Register of Members' Interests

The Register was made available in accordance with Charity Commission advice and no amendments or additions were made.

Item 1.3 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from HRH The Duke of Kent, Royal Patron of the NAM, Mr. John Duncan, Mr. Guy Perricone, Professor Jonathan Boff, Ms. Jessica Spungin, Mr. Richard Hughes (Honorary Legal Advisor) and Brigadier Simon Banton (Head of Arms & Services, Home Command).

Item 1.4 Minutes of the Previous Meeting & Matters Arising

The Minutes were approved and signed as a true record. The Chairman ran through matters arising and the action tracker was updated.

Item 2 Directors Update

2.1 Performance & Visitor Analysis

The Assistant Director (Enterprise) joined the meeting and presented slides on curatorial Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and digital KPIs. Further work on KPIs would be progressed once the strategy plan had been finalised.

School visits had increased in the last quarter, venue hire was up along with Play Base numbers and website visits were now growing organically. TripAdvisor ratings had gone up since the visitor experience team were brought in-house and there was a further increase in the number of volunteers at the Museum. New readers at the Templer Study Centre (TSC) were growing quarter on quarter. Staff turnover had dropped and leavers were mostly junior staff who had moved on or specialists who had outgrown the institution.

2.3 Sponsor Update

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General Graham had concluded the Army's heritage study which the NAM helped to shape over the past four months. The NAM is a core member on the Army's Museums Panel which will delve into the Army's heritage strategy, governance, activity and future landscape. General Tickell would become the new Deputy Chief of General Staff in August 2019.

2.4 Friends & Patrons Update

The Director was pleased to report two new Patrons had joined in July.

The Deputy Chair reported a good offer had been proposed to the Society of Friends of the National Army Museum and 92% of friends voted to join the Museum. The scheme will go live in January 2020 Council were pleased the matter was so well managed and thanked the Deputy Chairman.

Item 3. Draft Strategy

The draft strategy was presented by Dr. Schreier. A huge amount of work had been done on planning and sequencing and the move to implementation would require careful planning and dedicated resource. Council were thanked for their involvement. NAM staff workshops provided useful input and were a good warm up for what lay ahead. The strategy group also spoke with the NAM Development Trust who expressed their support for the Museum's research effort.

Alignment and overlap in conversations with staff and Council Members became apparent; improving agility, structure, core processes and prioritising were at the heart of positive change and would help to attract and retain talent.

The Chelsea History Festival website went live this week. The ambition was to develop a Chalke Valley History Festival for London. A joint venture with Royal Hospital Chelsea would be formalised next year and numerous speakers and events were already lined up for 2020. The NAM was keen to work with local partners to strengthen its functions which Council agreed with.

Item 4. Finance Summaries

The Deputy Director (Operations & Resources) outlined quarter one accounts. The Performance, Audit and Risk Assurance Committee was satisfied, there had been no issues with the interim report to the National Audit Office and Council were content the Museum was in a good position.

Item 5. Reports from Committees

5.1 Building for the Future

The Deputy Director was pleased to report the issues the Building Management System had been refined. The project was positively closing up.

5.2 Performance, Audit & Risk Assurance (PA&RA)

The PA&RA Chair reported the NAM's management accounts were healthy.

The internal audit topics for next year are security and the accession and disposal of objects. The risk deep dive topics included; comparing NAM's major exhibitions for trends and lessons learnt; how to optimise events hire performance, and insurance. The October PA&RA meeting will look at risk around Human Resources and the Chairman invited Members to come along to a PA&RA meeting if it was of interest.

5.3 NAMTL

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The Assistant Director (Enterprise) ran through NAMTL's performance in the first quarter. The book variance from quarter to quarter was due to the timing of book launches but the core stock of book sales had seen an increase.

5.4 Development Committee (and NAMF/NAMDT Consolidation)

The Chair of the Development Committee updated Council on three matters: The Committee's Terms of Reference had been revised and would be circulated; a broad corporate sponsors target list had been reviewed and responsibilities for initial contact would be allocated to Members.

Item 6. Health & Safety Report

The Deputy Director briefed Council on a quiet quarter with nothing to report on RIDDOR. Members complimented and thanked the Deputy Director on his rigorous Health & Safety report. New readers at the Templer Study Centre (TSC) were growing quarter on quarter.

Item 7. Any Other Business

The Director proposed placing and rotating three to five objects/artworks in senior CGS offices with NAM labelling. The Director was keen to bring Army heritage to life in some secure workspaces and promote the NAM brand. Council were comfortable with this idea.

The Honorary Vice Patron made the point there was an increasing Indian population in the UK who were very interested in history and the NAM was the Museum which held the history and heritage from before World War One; a fact to be conscious of considering the increasing interest amongst a growing community. The Director agreed and outlined various initiatives; the revitalisation of the Indian Army Memorial Room at Sandhurst; the curatorial museum programme with India; plans to better tell the story of Indian soldiers who served alongside us in galleries and a research fellowship with Cambridge University focusing on Indian military heritage.

The Honorary Vice Patron also proffered; the NAM was the only Army Museum in the world which existed alongside 141 regimental museums covering the same history and heritage, something which made the Museum unique. The Director agreed and with the NAM on the new Army Heritage Strategy Panel the Museum had a better chance to manage the constellation of museums and support those who will endure and help those who might fall.

The Chairman thanked everyone for a productive meeting and looked forward to seeing the NAM's thoughts on strategy implementation.

Council 2019 Meeting Dates:

10am – 12.30pm Wednesday 6 November 2019