

Minutes of the 161st Meeting of the Museum Council held in the Boardroom at the National Army Museum Chelsea at 1000hrs on Thursday 22nd February 2018

Present

General Sir Richard Shirreff
Mr William Wells
Ms Jessica Spungin
Mr Patrick Aylmer
Mr John Duncan
Dr Paul Schreier
Mr Guy Perricone
Dr Jonathan Boff

Chairman

In Attendance

Mr Mike O'Connor
Ms Elizabeth Sutherland
Mr Mike Robbins
Brigadier Martyn Gamble

Interim Director General, NAM
Committee Clerk (Minutes), NAM
Chief Accountant, Army Resources
Head of Arms & Services, Home
Command

Item 1: Opening remarks

The Chairman welcomed all those present at the meeting including the Head of Arms & Services, Home Command. The new Director General will start on Monday 26 February.

Item 2: Register of Members' Interests

The *Register* was made available in accordance with Charity Commission advice and Dr Boff made an addition.

Item 3: Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from HRH The Duke of Kent, Royal Patron of the NAM, Mrs Judith Donovan, Mrs Sabine Vandenbroucke, Mrs Brenda Hobday, Lieutenant General Sir Simon Mayall and Mr Richard Hughes.

Item 4: Minutes of the 160th Meeting of Council, held on 23rd November 2017

Council approved the minutes of the 160th meeting and the Chairman was authorised to sign them as a true record.

Item 5: Matters Arising

The appointment of the new Audit & Risk Assurance Committee (A&RA) Member would be put on hold until the new Director General was in place.

The Chair of NAMTL updated Council on the catering contract.

The Interim Director General reported that two events assistants had been recruited to work with a part time consultant instead of an events manager, to generate corporate hire business. Good bookings were lined up for the year including a potential fashion show.

Item 5.1: Siborne Model

The Chairman had met with Lord Hague at RUSI and discussions were ongoing.

Item 6: Reports from Committees

6.1 Building for the Future Committee

A Member reported on behalf of the Building for the Future Committee (BfF). Final account negotiations with the management contractors Gilbert Ash were progressing.

6.2 Audit & Risk Assurance Committee

The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (A&RA) agreed new pro-forma which going forward will look at consolidated information for the NAM group, GiA, donations and NAMTL, allowing a clearer view. It will also compare actual versus budget rather than forecast for greater visibility. The Ministry of Defence (MoD) had assessed the Museum's fraud risk and there were no serious findings, theft of assets was identified but measures were in place and the NAM was given a clean bill of health.

6.3 NAMTL

The Chair reported on the performance of NAMTL. The Committee had met at the end of January and looked at various streams of revenue, which were below original projections. Priorities were to resolve the catering contract and progress event hiring and room bookings.

The NAM was attracting broadly pre-closure figures which although less than planned was not a bad start given four years of closure. The major drivers of NAMTL's revenue were Playbase, corporate hire, birthday parties and events.

Item 7: Finance Summaries

The Interim Director General explained the latest financial accounts which Council noted. Attention was drawn to page three which explained the increase in costs due to utilities, salaries and legal fees. The Special Forces Exhibition had been built into the cash flow.

The A&RA Chairman reported that the MoD had declined the NAM's request to lay their accounts in September. The compressed July time period would remain and the Finance team had produced a detailed timetable for review.

The Interim Director General confirmed the Museum currently had approximately £246k in non-public accounts with no caveats to cash them in. (Permission had been received by the Charity Commission to do so). The new Director General would need to become a signatory to cash in investments, which Council gave their approval for.

Item 8: Health & Safety Report

The Health & Safety report was brought back as a regular item on Council's agenda. Risk and Health & Safety policies were in place and the Interim Director General confirmed that the Museum was a safe institution. Council were happy to sign off the report.

Item 9: Special Forces Exhibition Update

The Interim Director General reported that preparations were running on track. The exhibition opens on 17 March 2018 with a select viewing on 19 March. A Coyote from Afghanistan had been installed in the foyer.

Item 10: WW1 Centenary Update

The Interim Director General circulated a paper on the WWI Centenary free activities which included workshops, pop-up events, talks and lectures for Members to review. A reasonable amount of these had been done by the Museum previously. Members were interested in hearing more about the pop-up events as they believed they would add value to the programme.

It was agreed last year that the travelling Munnings exhibition (sponsored by the Canadian War Museum) would have free hire of the NAM temporary exhibition gallery for six weeks.

A Member suggested marking the WWI centenary and perhaps getting the NAM some TV coverage by linking in with other Museums.

Item 11: Internal Audit Report

The A&RA Chairman summated the internal audit reports including one on governance and ran through the recommendations. The Museum had scored a very positive Green/Amber rating.

Item 12: Risk Workshop

The A&RA Chairman reported that the Museum had received a conservative Amber rating in the Risk Report which seemed ungenerous as the Interim Director General had produced a fulsome paper. The internal auditors suggested including a risk workshop as part of a management away-day. The Chairman took note of their recommendation and would ask the new Director General at the 90-day point.

Item 13: Council Sub-Committees

It was agreed the Terms of Reference for the new Development Committee would be reviewed when the new Director General was in place along with sub-committee structure.

A Member requested the agenda be enhanced with academic & education development, links with the Army and more of the positive things the Museum was trying to do. The Chairman agreed and suggested items for the new Director General for the next meeting should include a state of the nation, a look ahead and a more strategic look beyond.

Item 14: Any Other Business

The Interim Director General reported that the marketing team had been liaising with the Commonwealth Summit and offered some options. Council would be kept posted of developments.

A Member reported that they were trying to refresh the Academic Advisory Council as vacancies were arising. Council approved bringing in younger blood and to try to strike a gender balance. A potential academic chair was discussed as a matter for the new Director General to pursue. The NAM Development Trust (NAMDT) Chairman expressed an interest in sponsoring such a position, in association with a particular university perhaps.

A Member pointed out that we have 130 Regimental & Corps Museums and for many visitors it was the regiment that counted. The NAM looked after the whole Army, and as Regimental Museums were under pressure, it should be on the agenda for the Head of Arms and Services (Home Command) and his team, to preserve the history and heritage of our soldiers. The Chairman agreed that Council were conscious of the NAM's engagement with the Army and it was absolutely on the agenda for the new Director General to tackle.

In response to a query, the Interim Director General confirmed that we have collections, prints and a chandelier in the Indian Army Memorial Room at Sandhurst but would look into the labelling as it was not obvious from a Member's experience that the NAM had been attributed.

The Chairman thanked the Interim Director General for being a great stabiliser at a difficult time and for putting his arms around the whole team which they needed. Council were absolutely in debt for what he had done.

Item 15: Council Meeting Dates 2018

10am Thursday 3 May

10am Wednesday 18 July

10am Thursday 1 November

Interim Director General

Chairman