

NATIONAL ARMY MUSEUM COUNCIL

Minutes of the 176 Meeting of the NAM Council at 10:00hrs on Thursday 4 November 2021 at the NAM Chelsea & by video conference

Present

Lieutenant General Sir Simon Mayall (Chair), Lieutenant General Sir George Norton (Deputy Chair), Mr William Wells, Mr Patrick Aylmer, Dr Paul Schreier, Mrs Sabine Vandenbroucke, Mr Guy Perricone, Mrs Judith Donovan, Mr John Duncan (by Zoom).

In Attendance

Brigadier Justin Maciejewski (Director), Mr Mike O'Connor (Deputy Director), Mr Glyn Pryor (Head of Research & Academic Access), Ms Lizzy Sutherland (Clerk to Council, Minutes) Mr Richard Hughes (by Zoom, Honorary Legal Advisor), Mr Timothy Cooke (Chair, NAM Development Trust), Mr Jamie Wilson (Chair, MAG), Mr Mike Robbins (Army Chief Accountant), Mr Jeremy Fowler (Army Heritage Branch).

Item 1. Council Administration

Item 1.1 Chairman's Opening Remarks

The Chair opened the meeting by paying tribute to his predecessor who served as Chair for seven years.

New Member and Deputy Chairman Lieutenant General Sir George Norton was welcomed to his first meeting.

It was agreed that Council would meet three times a year going forward, along with the Performance, Audit & Risk Assurance Committee, Development Committee and NAMTL. The Collections & Research Committee would continue to meet twice a year.

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, Field Marshal Chapple, Professor Jonathan Boff and Professor Andrew Roberts.

Item 1.4 Minutes of the Previous Meeting & Matters Arising

The minutes were approved as a true record.

Item 2. Director's Update

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The Director spoke to his slides and gave Council an overview of performance. Numbers were recovering from the pandemic, footfall was at almost 50% despite opening five days (instead of seven) to the public. NAM was recovering more quickly than other museums in central London. Members were encouraged by the positive reviews on TripAdvisor at +13%.

The volunteers pool had been stood down during Covid but numbers needed to be rebuilt as it was estimated that only a third would return. This would allow for extra capacity on the collections side and enable guided group tours to be facilitated.

Marketing and Communications, with a focus on communications, would also be rebuilt in the spring. Building NAM's research capability, as laid out in the Royal Charter was a priority. The strategy will be refreshed next month.

Exhibitions were discussed. The NAM intended to hold one large exhibition which lasted for two years, and two smaller exhibitions in the Focus gallery each year with partners. The savings would be spent on historical research.

The Director thanked the Army and NAM Development Trust for their support in acquiring the Lady Butler painting for the nation 'Dawn of Waterloo. The 'Reveille' in the bivouac of the Scots Greys on the morning of the battle, 1815'.

Covid had hit the Museum's ability to reach the Unrestricted Reserves goal but the ambition still remained.

Item 3. Finance Summaries to 30 September 2021

The Deputy Director reported the Museum was still recovering from the impact of Covid but was in a reasonably healthy position due to the reorganisation that was carried out at the latter part of the last FY.

Item 4. Annual Accounts

Consolidated financial statements had been scrutinised by the Performance, Audit & Risk Assurance Committee (PA&RA) and the National Audit Office (NAO), all substantive testing had been completed, minor amends had been incorporated and the non-qualified accounts would go to the Audit Comptroller for sign off before being provisionally laid in Parliament. Council approved the annual accounts.

Item 5. Reports from Sub-Committees & NAMTL Board

Item 5.1 Performance, Audit & Risk Assurance Committee

The PA&RA Chair raised the amount of attention audits received during the year. Although the statutory audit and internal audit gave the Board more confidence, he proposed revising the audit plan to allow the Accounts Team some audit-free-months. Council fully supported the idea.

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As the Committee reviewed the Risk Register at each of their meetings, it was agreed it would only be reported to Council on an annual basis going forward.

Item 5.2 Collections & Research Committee

The bid for the Lady Butler painting 'Dawn of Waterloo' was endorsed. Council had considered the procedures and process carefully and was satisfied with the extensive checks and balances in place.

The potential partnership with the University of Birmingham was discussed and Council agreed on the context of building NAM's research capability to explore a pilot project but to maintain an open approach.

Item 5.3 NAMTL Board

The Chair of NAMTL Board confirmed there were no going concerns issues. PlayBase was performing well and birthday parties/room hire bookings were returning. The Board said goodbye to Mr David Smurthwaite and thanked him for 33 years of service to the Museum.

Item 5.4 Ad-Hoc Investment Group – Reserves Report

The Chair reported on the selection process on 1 October where three investment management companies presented to the Group. The investment manager that most closely matched the criteria was selected and Council endorsed their appointment to manage NAM's investments.

Item 6. Health & Safety Report

The Deputy Director reported the Museum remained a healthy and safe institution.

Item 7. NAM Institute Update (NAMI)

The Head of Research and Academic Access joined the meeting for this item and presented slides on work in progress, focusing on approach and perspective.

Item 8. Any Other Business

Item 8.1 Council Recruitment

Council agreed to recruit more Members than needed so there was a pool of candidates who could start when vacancies arose. The NAM was not under OCPA but would track the process using NPDB guidelines.

There was no other business and the Chair closed the meeting.