

## **NATIONAL ARMY MUSEUM COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the 185<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the NAM Council at 10.00hrs – 12.30hrs on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2024 in the Boardroom at the NAM Chelsea**

#### **Present**

Lieutenant General Sir Simon Mayall (Chair), Lieutenant General Sir George Norton (Deputy Chair), Mr Tim Cooke, Mrs Judith Donovan, Mr Neil Johnson, Mr Paul Davies, Mr Chris Finney GC, Prof Ali Ansari, Lord Andrew Roberts, Mr Paul Schreier, Mrs Sabine Vandenbroucke, Dr Katie Best, Prof Helen Parr, Mrs Sue Mackenzie

#### **In Attendance**

Brigadier Justin Maciejewski (Director, National Army Museum), Mr Mike O'Connor (Deputy Director NAM) Mrs Manuela McDermid (External Minute Taker), Mr Chris Horner (Chair, Members Advisory Group), Brigadier Nick Doyle, (Head of Arms and Services), Mr Richard Hughes (Legal Advisor)

### **Item 1. Council Administration**

#### **Item 1.1 Chairman's Opening Remarks**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

It was noted that this is the last council meeting for Mrs Judith Donovan and Mrs Sabine Vandenbroucke.

The Chair welcomed new Members Dr Katie Best and Prof Helen Parr.

#### **Item 1.2 Register of Members' Interests**

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

#### **Item 1.3 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from HRH the Duke of Kent and Mr Mike Robbins (Army Chief Accountant)

#### **Item 1.4 Minutes of the Previous Meeting & Matters Arising**

The minutes were approved as a true record.

### **Item 2. Director's Update**

The Director shared his performance dashboard slide with the Council.

#### **2.1 Performance Update**

The Chelsea History festival saw an additional 5,000 visitors, bringing us to 80 short of our targets for the year. Marketing costs were reduced by limiting leaflet distribution to local areas and focusing on online advertising, resulting in a small profit overall.

The Play Base has experienced a decline in numbers. Web traffic continues to show healthy growth. Despite recent changes in GDPR, we are still seeing good numbers, with 2.2 million hits, and 13% of visitors are engaging with our collections.

Patron numbers are showing healthy growth, but membership numbers have seen a decline. NAMTL has experienced similar fluctuations. Retail and venue hire have shown some growth.

We have made progress in photographing more objects, with plans to have the entire collection online by April 2025. Staff turnover has decreased from 24% last year to 15%, which aligns with our historic norms. Our volunteer numbers continue to grow steadily.

We are in the process of establishing a new legal entity for CHQ. A simple, streamlined document to cover NAM, RHC and CPG responsibilities will be drafted for this purpose. We are also exploring the possibility of a joint research partnership with Sandhurst. We are categorising our research in line with IRO status criteria, working towards IRO accreditation.

The development of the Soane Stable building next door does not appear to have negatively impacted our operations.

## **2.2 Project Oscar**

A slide on the building development on Tite Street was shared.

## **2.3 Project Valour**

Subject to planning permission, the new gallery design will be announced very soon. This would cover both the design of the proposed new wing of NAM, and the exhibition and learning programme. The funding would provide the flexibility to implement various planned initiatives.

## **2.4 HUNSY 25**

Slides showcasing the proposed uniforms were shared.

A couple of recent acquisitions were noted, including a painting of The Duke of Marlborough by Enoch Seeman.

## **2.4 De Laszlo**

The Honorary Legal Advisor and his colleagues were thanked on behalf of the Council for providing clear legal advice.

It was noted that pursuing the legal case further would be costly raising the question of whether it's worth the financial outlay.

## **Item 3. Updates from Sub-Committees & NAMTL**

### **3.1 Development Committee**

The Chair provided an update on the fundraising efforts, which are currently focused on research and attracting public grants. The format of the Muster magazine has changed, reflecting new directions in the publication.

Research is now gaining momentum, particularly in areas of military history. The Friday Programme continues, with upcoming talks scheduled. The records project is also ongoing. Several publishing projects are underway.

### **3.2 NAMTL/Enterprise Committee**

Play Base and birthday parties are not generating the expected revenue and are underperforming. Retail is showing improvement. The party packages have become less appealing and somewhat outdated. There is a need to refresh and improve these offerings.

### **3.3 Performance, Audit and Risk Assessment Committee**

The Internal Auditors have provided an action plan with key points to be implemented over the next six months.

### **3.4 Collections & Research**

A copy of the Collections Development Policy was circulated for Council approval. An update was provided on collections security and auditing efforts.

### **3.5 People & Remunerations Committee**

The staff turnover rate is at a comfortable level, with a good balance overall. Regular staff engagement surveys continue to be completed, and they are still considered valuable. The 360-feedback process was introduced this year and was well received. The pension scheme remains unchanged, and sickness absence is reported to be below the national average. Volunteer numbers have remained stable.

### **Item 4. Finance Summaries to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024**

The Consolidated Financial Statements are ready for the Chair's signature and reflect a strong financial position.

### **Item 5. Health & Safety Report**

The Deputy Director reported to the six-monthly statistics for the Health and Safety report that there was still a concern over the number of accidents, albeit minor in, Playbase. Members of staff supervising this area are reminded to be proactive. There have been no RIDDOR incidents during this period.

### **5.1 Litigation**

NAM via an expert witness has been prepared a new quote and this has been sent to the other party it does show the costs are higher compared to three years ago. The other party has been issued with a letter requesting a without prejudice meeting to discuss the Museum's claim against their design.

The final invoice for the floor work in the Soldier Gallery has been received from the contractor, detailing the cost of the required work this has been passed to the contractor.

### **Item 6. Any Other Business**

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