

Minutes of the Board of Trustees

Held in the Reading Room at 10:00 on 17th April, 2019

Trustees present: Margaret Knight (MK), Derek Knight (DK), John Reeves (JR), Robert Guyver (RG), Henry French (HF), Geoff Roberts (GR), Sandra Bond (SB), Christopher Chanter (CC) (arrived 1033)

Staff present: Emma Dunn (ED)

In attendance: Ian Watt

1. **Apologies:** Richard Templeton (RT), Lindsay Roderick (LR), Katharine Chant (KC), Anne Howard (AH)

2. **Conflicts of Interest:** None recorded

3. **Minutes of the last meeting of 13th March, 2019**

In Item 7, dementia Information Sessions, it was noted that Mary Noon rather than SB would be part of the building walk through. With this amendment the minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record.

4. **Matters arising**

Item 5: MK said that the Strategic Planning Day will now probably take place in July.

Item 7: JR advocated caution with regard to DEI in the Devon County Show. We need to know what we are committing to in terms of costs and what the cost benefits may be in term of potential new members. These events can be very labour intensive. DK said that he was waiting for clarification from Ian Varndell.

Item 12: RG said that he had spoken to the Canon Chancellor who is cautious about the idea of a debate on attitudes to 19th century Christian missionary activity. He felt that representation by indigenous people. MK said that such debates on potentially contentious subjects would need careful consideration.

5. **Chair's report: MK**

MK noted that Version 15 of the Forward Plan, which has been circulated to Trustees, would form the basis for discussion at the Strategic Planning Day.

She thanked ED for her work in establishing so efficiently an exciting Saturday activities programme.

6. **Hon Treasurer's Report: MK**

At 16th March the balance of the Current Account stood at £23,305. Whilst this figure is high, the painting of the outside of the building will commence in May, and will cost a significant amount. COIF have reported that worldwide equities have recovered, so the DEI's investments should have increased in value, and this should be reflected in the mid-year figures, which are due shortly.

JR said that the bank account for the project will be moved to the Co-Operative Bank in June. Debit cards for AH and MN have been ordered. He and DK now have

access to internet banking, and potential access for Lee Bingham is being considered.

2018/19 Budget Report

JR reported that subscription income is broadly on track. Both total income and expenditure levels at the end of the financial year are likely to be lower than forecast, but income will exceed expenditure. Donations have been lower than expected. A new laptop is needed, and Tom Chant will be consulted about this.

ED said that Clare Maudling's departure would impact on the delivery of activity in the library. JR replied that there will be a General Contingency line in next year's budget, and the F, HR & M Committee will be looking at team development. It will also be a matter for the Strategic Planning meeting.

[CC arrived at 1033]

Draft 2019/20 Budget

JR presented the first draft of next year's proposed budget. He said that some adjustments would be needed. In particular fire protection will cost 31,500 and some salaries will need to be revised. This will result in the General Contingencies figure of around £2,500.

It was agreed that a 5% increase in subscription income was reasonable. As no increase in subscription rates is planned, this will require an increase in the number of paying members.

JR stated that he has worked to rationalise budget heads, merging, for example, sales of books and of cards, booklets and photocopying.

The expenditure figures for staff only reflect salary costs, not employee pension contributions, and will therefore need to be increased. Marketing includes the production of the Newsletter. ED said that marketing remains a weakness which needs addressing.

JR

The Housekeeper's salary will need to be increased in line with the new legal Living Wage. DK noted that in future people hiring rooms will deal directly with Tea on the Green for refreshments, rather than going through the Institution.

On the proposal of MK, seconded by CC the draft budget was, subject to necessary changes, adopted. JR will present a final budget for approval at the June board meeting.

JR

Risk Register

JR explained the draft Risk Register and proposed its adoption. It will be subject to regular review and a more detailed discussion at the May board meeting. MK proposed that it be a standing item on board agendas. JR will manage the document, but ownership will reside with the Board of Trustees. This was agreed.

DK

CC suggested that all trustees, volunteers and paid staff should have fire training. DK is looking into this, and will ask AH to administer the fire quiz to trustees.

Hon. Treasurer's Job Description

This, having been circulated to trustees, was agreed.

Finance, HR & Membership Committee

JR reported that staff have been notified of pension changes, and he is considering

the advantages and disadvantages of moving the bookkeeper to PAYE.

Membership

JR presented Jeremy Lawford and Clare Radstone's written report. Membership numbers are broadly stable, despite a very low enrolment figure for March 2019. As of 29th March total membership stands at 757.

7. Hon Secretary's report: DK

Minutes of the Housekeeping Committee

DK reported that the meeting of the Housekeeping Committee scheduled for 16th April had been cancelled.

The minutes of the Committee meeting of 12th March had been circulated to trustees. The clock in the Inner Library has now been returned from being repaired. The Reading Room chairs are being refurbished, at a cost of £90 each, by the Devon Disability Collective.

Housekeeping Charges

DK explained the rational for proposed changes in housekeeping charges, which had been circulated to trustees. On the proposal of JR, seconded by CC, these were agreed.

Food Hygiene Certificate Inspection

An inspection has recently been conducted by the local authority. DK said that it is unlikely that the DEI will retain its current 5 star rating, as the kitchen is below the required standard. DK will obtain quotations for the work necessary to bring it up to standard.

DK informed the trustees of correspondence received. The Devon Buildings Group conference will take place on 8th June and the World of Country Life open day on 2nd May. He said that the new Administrative Assistant was proving to be a great asset.

8. Partnership and Programme Manager's report: ED

Minutes of the P & P Committee of 11th March

These were accepted.

Presentation of Focus Group findings and draft project proposal

ED reported on these matters.

In excess of 50 hours of discussion had taken place, with trustees, members, stakeholders and the public. Three strands of the proposed future project had been identified; The building, the collection and the programme.

Concerning the building, a reconfiguration is proposed of the front hall to create a reception area, along with the conversion of the current Secretary's Office to members' use and a display space. Reinstating the wall separating the cloak room from the ladies lavatory would provide a new membership room. The Stirling room could be converted for educational use, by the University and others. It is also proposed to refurbish the Reading Room and open up the cupola. A new build on the ground floor could provide lavatories; a maps, prints and drawings room; and space for plant and a lift to the first floor. On the first floor the new build would provide space for office and collection focussed staff and a service area with running water.

The conservation of the building and collection require a new environmentally stable heating system, with a new boiler and proper control of air circulation, along

with humidifiers and dehumidifiers as appropriate. The damp in the wall adjoining the cottage and the east facing wall need to be addressed, as do the floor joists in the inner library. There is a need for rewiring throughout, to include enhanced WiFi and future proofing.

With regard to the collection a collection review needs to be undertaken to identify themes to inform a research strategy, which will be planned in collaboration with the University. Conservation of specific collection items will be to support the programme. Small groups for member led research will be encouraged along with collaborative doctoral award funded by AHRC and the University. There is a need to progress with digitisation. Thematic displays in the new display spaces are envisaged. Library staffing issues will be addressed within the operational budget.

The new partnerships and programme strand could involve a twilight debates programme in partnership with other bodies; a targeted Saturday programme aimed at widening participation; a new programme for older junior members; partnerships with the Exeter Mathematics School and others to provide mathematics and science based activities for schoolchildren; postgraduate groups meeting in the refurbished Stirling Room; a philosophy café drop in group; and evergreen gardeners wellness group; talks, events and displays on the themes of hidden history and lives unwritten; and the commissioning of portraits of former Librarian Eliza Squance and other female notables.

In terms of staffing this proposed project would require a project manager & programme manager; library time (for example 10% of library staff time to be funded by the project); administration and bookkeeping backfill; the employment of architect, engineer and building contractors; specialist contractors and academics to support the collection and programme; and a funded volunteer training programme for University and DEI members.

The anticipated draft costs are:

Building reconfiguration	£70,000
Library insulation	£50,000
Heating and services	£100,000
New build	£170,000
Architect, engineers etc	£100,000
Collection & research (over 3 years)	£90,000
Project and programme (over 3 years)	£45,000
Staffing (over 3 years)	£135,000
Total	£760,000

ED explained that the next step is to proceed with an expression of interest to the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Then a Round 1 application for a development grant will need to be submitted this year. It will then take a year to proceed to a full bid.

On the proposal of MK, seconded by GR, the Board approved the proposal that an expression of interest be made.

MK proposed a vote of thanks to ED for all her work on this project. This was approved with applause.

9. Librarian's report: AH

No report was submitted.

10. Health & Safety: AH: Nothing to report.

11. Any other business

SD and GR explained the plans for the Summer Excursion to Beer Quarry. The Board expressed its thanks to them for the work they had undertaken in arranging this.

The meeting closed at 1220.

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 17th April 2019 at 10:00