

Minutes of the Board of Trustees held 5pm 30th June 2021- Upper Reading Room

Trustees Present: Henry French (HF), Geoff Roberts (GR), Sandra Bond (SBo), Shane Cormie (SC), John Reeves (JR) (chair), Richard Templeton (RT), Ruth O'Neale (RON), Imogen Dudley (IG), Christopher Chanter (CC).
(RT, CH, EL, MB present via zoom)

New trustees to be co-opted: Judith Morgane, Colin Higgins, Moragh Brooksbank (from 6pm), Charlotte Easton

Apologies: None

Staff present: Emma Laws (EL), Emma Dunn (ED)

Minutes: RON.

1. JR welcomed all new trustees and everyone introduced themselves.
2. Conflicts of interest. None recorded.
3. Approval of the board minutes held 19th May for approval* (JR)- These were approved.
4. Matters arising:
 - The board reviewed the minutes and noted the following matters arising:
 - Page 1- the following action is carried forward: **JR to draft a planned maintenance plan based on the Quinquennial review and work with RT and SC to incorporate this into financial and fundraising planning.**
 - Page 2- Courtenay room, to be covered under directors' updates.
 - Page 3- noted members' feedback on fee increase has been largely positive to date.
5. Appointment of new trustees. Prior to the meeting 6/9 trustees had confirmed agreement to the new trustees being co-opted onto the board and the remaining 3 trustees agreed in the meeting.

ACTION: Trustees induction morning to be arranged for a saturday morning in July. A doodle poll to be circulated (ED).

Agreed to keep the timing and day of trustee meetings as it is now until the AGM on 21/10/21, and the subsequent Annual Meeting of Trustees which is the planning meeting to agree dates and times for trustee meetings for the forthcoming year.
6. **Directors Updates (ED. EL)**

Director of Project and Programme (ED).

Project. ED summarised recent activity; the DEI submitted a round two application to NLHF in May, response due Sept. Capital works are at RIBA stage 2, options appraisal, to progress to stage 3 (tenders) listed building consent is needed. Have had Historic England site visit, and in principle they are happy (approve removal of upper reading room partition, one potential concern regarding the access point to the extension so ED considering options/modelling and will further discuss with them, proposal of glazing the front door is not supported so looking at options to achieve the "open door feel").GR suggested MB may have some useful advice so proposed she is contacted. ED noted we are still awaiting the official

response from Exeter City Council. Regarding current works it was noted the new boiler has been installed and this is being tested.

ACTION; trustees to feed ideas into ED ie under floor heating, screened off reception etc for the “open door feel”.

ACTION: ED will email MB separately to ask her advice.

Conservation management plan. ED discussed recommendations in this (from p111):

Suggested policy updates.

6.1 Care of building and site.

ACTION; to draft a policy on the care of the fabric of the building (ED).

6.2 To have a policy for disaster and security (inc new fire strategy), ED confirmed this is in hand.

6.3 Use of the building (venue hire etc) ED confirmed we have a procedure in place

6.4 Access and equality, ED confirmed the recent access audit recommendations being taken forward

6.5 Learning and engagement, ED confirmed this is being addressed via the programme and partnerships (i.e. the Exeter heritage partnership which HF is chair of). The suggestion for a guidebook was discussed and trustees were in favour of this but it was agreed not to be an immediate priority. CH recommended a potential publisher (Scala) and CC suggested potentially pricing.

ACTION: ED to potentially commission Jo Cox to help write this but ED needs to find funding for this.

6.6 To have a policy for heating (ED confirmed this is being addressed by the new boiler and eco friendly heating to be installed)

6.7 Environmental issues. This was discussed and it was noted that there may be a need for a green champion in the staff team (to monitor use of plastic, change from older light fittings etc).

JM has an intern looking at this at St Nicholas Priory and may have some good practice that can be shared.

ACTION: JM to share report with ED when available.

ED confirmed Co-curation is the focus of the next project steering group.

Programme; ED confirmed it is still a phased reopening, not operating events at capacity; Small rule of 6 workshops and tours. The first Courtenay room high tea was held as part of the pilot for bringing catering back using a freelance caterer. The conclusion was the front of house was great, food was great but behind the scenes some refinement is needed. There was a good response from members. Additional pilot teas/lunches now bookable, to be reviewed in Sept, booking via webcollect (on website). High teas are being offered to members only as it is a “value add” for being a member. ED did some enrichment work with St Peters recently but due to rising covid cases in schools future plans are back online and the usual summer enrichment activities won't be possible.

Lunchtime lectures, ED has speakers lined up. ED also noted there is a volunteers thank you party on the 8th (3-5pm thurs), tea cake and cream tea which trustees are welcome to attend. Post restrictions ED is planning various live events, the theme for the coming autumn/winter season is “community culture” and there will be a keynote lecture from the new head of history at the University on coffee house culture, the date for this has not yet been published. ED also has plans for other talks on community gardening, live literature, history and some newer topics, keen there is not just a focus on the past. ED has put out a call for papers from members. GR asked if the talks can be offered as paid webinars similar to what RAMM can offer but ED confirmed due to the current wifi challenges this isn't an option.

ACTION: ED noted Trustees usually lead the thanks in lectures so ED will want a rota of trustees for 6 events.

Heritage open days in September were discussed and it was confirmed trustees support the recommendation of having daily tours.

ED talked about the challenge in recruiting enough volunteers and needing to move the library volunteer to do front of house when there is a shortage. There was a proposal of having non members volunteer as “project volunteers” solely to do front of house responsibilities. Some concerns were discussed i.e. building security and it was confirmed any new volunteers would have full training and induction. It was discussed that allow non members to volunteer may encourage different kinds of people to get involved with the DEI who may then become members.

ACTION; to be discussed at the next leadership team meeting (JR).

Director of Research and Collections. (EL). Since reopening a slow but steady trickle of research bookings, 1-2/day. Positive feedback on the new research service but noted some longstanding members may not realise the value of the personal service. Getting enquiries from further afield now the catalogue is more widely available. Getting people who will pay to see the collection who are not members. EL thanked SB, SC for help in getting the books tidy ready for collections review.

EL updated on progress on the endangered booklist and current conservation work. The endangered booklist for 2021 is being compiled. EL is planning two lots of endangered books a year so two "rescues". EL reminded all trustees of the magazine auction; please spread the word, the deadline is 16th July and there have been very few bids.

ED noted the digitisation work is parked pending funding; could take up to 4 mths to hear about the bids. EL will promote the project locally (asked to do this by Pilgrim Trust a potential funder). EL doing a talk and some promotion.

ED updated trustees on "Inclusive cataloguing", best practice being developed by the National Library of Scotland, British Library and Wellcome Trust. The intent of this is ensuring catalogue records do not offend people with protected characteristics, use indigenous names on maps, indexes etc. EL noted the tension between terminology, access and cultural sensitivity. One of the proposed actions is DEI could add an explanatory disclaimer on the website. EL noted this would align with intended outcomes of collection review. ED felt this may help us highlight the collection review, could use this as an opportunity. As the university host the catalogue for DEI it was noted this added another facet to any efforts to amend how items are described. CH contributed to some of the emerging good practice on this so offered his experience and advice to EL.

ACTION: CH to contact EL and share his advice/knowledge.

7. Membership Update and reports* (GR)
Membership reports noted with thanks to the membership secretaries. GR explained the intent of the new Membership growth strategy group. It is expected this group will work in a coordinated way with the Fundraising group.. The terms of reference were discussed and it was agreed these were adopted. Trustees were invited to put themselves forward to join the group. New trustees agreed they would confirm what they are happy to volunteer for after the induction meeting mentioned above
8. Additional trustee roles -Equality & Diversity lead
This is a new role and it was agreed this can be decided once membership of the new groups has been agreed.
9. Risk register.
ED noted the main change since the last review was for risk 3. Trustees confirmed they had reviewed the updated risk register and had no suggested changes or questions on this.
10. Fundraising update
ED described the background and intent of contracting with Larkowl. ED confirmed there is in project budget £10k for building fundraising capacity. JM has worked with them at St Nicholas Priory and said they were excellent and ED confirmed she had references from St Nicholas and National Trust. JR noted Larkowl advice will be sought about tax and vat as well as catering, tiered membership etc. ED said Larkowl will be booked for a number of days over the next 18mths. Trustees agreed DEI can contract with Larkowl for this work. SC described the terms of reference for the new Fundraising group and trustees agreed these were adopted. New trustees agreed they would confirm what they are happy to volunteer for after the induction meeting mentioned above. SC confirmed EL has been added to the group.
11. Leadership Team update (GR, JR, RON, RT, ED, EL)
JR went through the main action points from the report of meeting 17th June 2021. The main items related to a request from a local history society for a corporate membership. The leadership team recommended that DEI cease to offer corporate and life memberships and trustees agreed this. It was noted that potential new membership options i.e patron memberships will be explored with Larkowl.

JR introduced the email etiquette and privacy policy drafted by EL and explained the importance of all DEI communications being via DEI email. It was noted the only exception is HF who has dispensation to use his University email. GR asked if a simple summary of the key points of the policy could be created.

Trustees agreed the adoption of the new policy.

ACTION: EL agreed to create a bullet point “dos and don’ts”

12. Finance Advisory Group update (RT, JR)
RT summarised the key points to note on the new budget.
Trustees approved the new budget.
RT noted it would be helpful for the balance sheet to have comparison figures for last year so will discuss with Lee.
13. HR Group update (SC, GRE, RON)
RON summarised the main points from the report of meeting 25th May 2021. The main matter arising is a recommendation that all trustees do equality and diversity training. It was discussed in the meeting and agreed SC, GR, RON should find some options for online training which all trustees, staff and volunteers can do. JR and SC noted they had some information on potential courses (National Trust and London library).
ACTION: HR group to research and recommend some training options (RON, SC, GR).
14. Key holder list and trustee contact details
RON reminded all trustees that it was agreed in May that those who felt comfortable to should share their personal telephone numbers so trustees can more easily contact each other.
ACTION: Trustees to share contact details with RON by end July.
RON updated trustees that Ceri has been contacting prior keyholders and getting keys returned. Current trustee keyholders are JR, RON and GR. The usefulness of having trustees who can be keyholders was discussed and agreed and JM and CE offered to become keyholders.
ACTION: RON to contact CM to arrange keyholder induction for JM and CE.
15. **AOB**
Code of conduct and trustee declaration.
RON noted that not all trustees seem to have seen these documents and signed the declaration. It was agreed that these would be reshared and all would sign the declaration.
ACTION: RON to reshare the documents and all trustees to print and sign and return the declaration for trustees' files.

New procedure on handling death notices.

JR and EL explained the context of this and trustees agreed to adopt this new procedure.

Use of Google and Microsoft.

RON explained the DEI uses gmail for trustee email but that documentation is stored on microsoft onedrive. The use of google and microsoft may be reviewed as part of the digital upgrade but the current focus is on infrastructure (ie upgrading the wifi). RON noted Tom Chant is very willing to help with any queries new trustees have. JM suggested there should be some consideration of supplier ethics when deciding on future choices for office software and this was noted.

Meeting ended 6:50pm.

