

Public Minutes of The National Archives' Board		THE	
		NATIONAL	
Held on 19 October 2022 at 10:00 at The National Archives, Kew and via Video Conference (VC)		ARCHIVES	

Present:

Andrew Wathey (AW - Chair) Chair of The National Archives' Board
Sonia Cargan (SC) Non-executive Board Member (via VC)
Rommel Pereira (RP) Non-executive Board Member
Mark Richards (MR) Non-executive Board Member (via VC)
Ros Scott (RS) Non-executive Board Member
Emmajane Avery (EJA) Director of Public Engagement
Neil Curtis (NC) Chief Operating Officer
Lucy Fletcher (LF) Director for Public Records Access and Government Services (via VC)
Jeff James (JJ) Chief Executive and Keeper
Valerie Johnson (VJ) Director of Research and Collections
Gemma Maclagan Ram (GMR) Commercial Director
Andrea Metcalf (AM) Director of People, Inclusion and Change (via VC)
John Sheridan (JS) Digital Director (via VC)
Aaron Smith (AS) Corporate Services Director

Also present:

Sir Anthony Seldon (SAS) Chair and Trustee, The National Archives Trust (for item 1 via VC)
Tadas Khazanavicius (TK) Executive Director, The National Archives Trust (for item 1)
Asha Bagayat (AB) Head of Governance (Minutes)
Isabel Saunders (IS) Senior Governance Co-ordinator (for items 9-10)
Sam Whaley (SW) Head of Strategy and CEO's Office

1.0 Update from the National Archives Trust

- 1.1 AW welcomed SAS and TK to the meeting.
- 1.2 SAS provided an update on the Trust, noting that progress on its ambitions since its launch in February 2020 had been impacted by the pandemic. However, things were gaining momentum and he was pleased to welcome TK to the organisation. He thanked colleagues at The National Archives for their support, noting that the relationship between the two organisations was collaborative and working effectively.
- 1.3 TK then introduced himself and outlined his background and experience and set out his aims and priorities over the next few months, including holding a Trust away day, which The National Archives' Board would be invited to.
- 1.4 There was a discussion around the post-pandemic funding landscape and the opportunities and challenges these presented to the Trust.
- 1.5 AW thanked SAS and TK for attending the meeting and providing an update.

2.0 Apologies and Declarations of Interest

2.1 There were no apologies for absence.

2.2 There were no declarations of interest.

3.0 Commercial Strategy

3.1 Following discussion and agreement on the direction of travel of the Commercial Strategy at the July meeting, the Board was presented with a more detailed five year strategy for adoption. The draft presented took into account the uncertainty and risks around the environment in which The National Archives operates and proposed a simplified and clear statement of intent.

3.2 GMR introduced the item and noted that many early infancy conversations were taking place with potential partners and particularly highlighted the opportunities around digital, but emphasized that these required balancing with resource constraints.

3.3 There was a discussion around The National Archives' core mission and our aim and purpose of being commercially ambitious. The impact of The National Archives' status as a non-ministerial department and previous conversations around commercial freedoms were also noted. The Board felt that conversations around these should be revisited at a future date.

3.4 Whilst the Board generally welcomed the high-level document, comments were made in relation to optimism, the scale of the opportunities, prioritisation of the different workstreams and also the criteria for decision-making around these. In response, GMR noted that the business plan would be produced next and she welcomed the Board's support in developing this and advising on prioritisation and charging.

3.5 Commercial opportunities and issues around wider areas of The National Archives' business, such as records management and conservation consultancy, were also noted and there was agreement these needed to be linked to the culture programme and People strategy to socialise with staff.

3.6 The Board:

- (i) Welcomed the vision and endorsed the direction of the Strategy;
- (ii) Agreed to set up a Board working group to explore the issues raised above in greater depth and advise on the development of the commercial business plan; and
- (iii) Looked forward to sight of the business plan, when ready.

Action by: GMR

4.0 Executive Team Updates

4.1 The Board received a report on Executive Team activities.

4.2 An update was provided on a potential partnership project.

- 4.3 The Board was pleased to note that access to records series FCO141 had been restored.
- 4.4 Recruitment of an Independent Member of the Audit and Risk Committee was underway, with the aim of completion by the end of the year.
- 4.4 The Board:
- (i) Noted the report and updates; and
 - (ii) Asked to be kept updated on developments with regards to national and international collaborative projects.

5.0 Non-executive Board Member Verbal Updates

- 5.1 Non-executive Board Members (NEBMs) each provided a verbal update on their recent activity, including insights from other organisations.
- 5.2 All NEBMs noted attending the Nominations and Governance meeting on 26 September, the Board Awayday on 7 October, and one to one meetings with AW.
- 5.3 RP noted meeting the new Director at NAO and stressing to them the importance of benchmarking data to support our work.
- 5.4 RS noted her meeting with Jess Nelson, Head of Collections, Expertise and Engagement regarding records related to the Stockton and Darlington Railway and attending one of our Talk Events on poverty.
- 5.5 MR noted his meeting with TK, Executive Director of The National Archives Trust. He also noted upcoming changes to the Charities Act, which will allow museums and galleries to return collection items.
- 5.6 AW noted attending the Manorial Documents Conference, the DCMS ALB CEO & Chairs' meeting, and the training meeting of the Advisory Council on National Records and Archives.
- 5.7 The Board noted the updates.

6.0 Audit & Risk Committee Chair's Update

- 6.1 RP provided an update on the 7 September Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) meeting and commended NC on his COO's update report. The Committee had a good discussion surfacing issues of risk and their mitigations and also organisational resilience in relation to the cost of living. The Committee had also agreed to defer its annual effectiveness review, in light of the Board's decision to undertake an external board effectiveness review in early 2023.
- 6.2 The Board:
- (i) Received and noted the verbal update; and

- (ii) Received and noted the draft minutes of the 7 September meeting.

7.0 August & September Management Accounts

7.1 The Board received the August Financial Report, which presented a slight overspend in capital. AS set out the key areas of risk and noted that a paper will be presented to the December Audit and Risk Committee setting these out, along with the steps management were taking to deliver on budget. The September Management Accounts were delayed and would be circulated to Board out-of-committee.

7.2 The Board:

- (i) Received and endorsed the August Financial Report;
- (ii) Noted the key areas of risks to the budget; and
- (iii) Looked forward to receiving the September accounts out-of-committee.

Action by: AS

8.0 Q2 Strategic Business Priorities

8.1 The Board received a performance update on the Q2 Strategic Intent business priorities and their RAG ratings and noted the issues around resourcing and prioritisation.

8.2 The Board:

- (i) Noted and endorsed the Q2 Strategic Intent business priorities update and endorsed the RAG ratings and commentary;
- (ii) Supported aligning next year's business priorities with the budget; and
- (iii) Suggested Management consider bringing a high level summary progress report to each meeting for assurance.

Action by: NC

9.0 Update on the Board Effectiveness Action Plan 2022

9.1 The Board received an update on progress on the 2022 Board Effectiveness Action Plan and noted the items not on track and the reasons behind these and the next steps.

9.2 The Board:

- (i) Noted the progress report and endorsed the status of each item within the action plan.

10.0 Board Working and Enhancing Effectiveness

10.1 Pertaining to an item on the 2022 Board Effectiveness Action Plan, the Board had a session on enhancing its workings and effectiveness. This included a presentation given by AB, which recapped on the findings of the last survey and posed discussion questions around areas where there was not 100% agreement to the statements.

10.2 The key themes coming out of the session were technology around hybrid meetings to support participation; running more knowledge and exchange sessions with guest speakers from the

sector; enhancing the quality of strategic discussions, particularly around the theme of digital, and running masterclasses for members to gain a greater understanding of more complex subject matters to equip them to contribute to the discussions; and setting a year's agenda in advance to ensure the Board was discussing the right items at the right time.

- 10.3 AW thanked colleagues for their comments and agreed JJ, AB and he would review how to take the comments and feedback received forward.

Action by: AW, JJ, AB

11.0 Minutes, Matters Arising and Action Log

- 11.1 Subject to minor amendments, the minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 2022 were approved as a correct record.
- 11.2 The Board approved the record of its out-of-committee business.
- 11.3 The Board reviewed the Actions Log.

12.0 Any Other Business

- 12.1 There were no items of any other business.

Items for information

- 12.2 The Board received and noted one item for information: October Talk Magazine.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 13.31