

Meeting Minutes

MEETING TITLE	Minutes of the English Heritage Trust Board Meeting	
DATE	15 th October 2025	
LOCATION	St John's College. Oxford	
PRESENT	Dr Chris Michaels – Acting Chair Kay Boycott Tony Cates Peter Liney	Kunle Olulode MBE Rev. Prof. William Whyte Sue Wilkinson OBE
ATTENDING	Senior Leadership Team: Geoff Parkin, interim CEO Ruth Blazye: Income, Growth & Marketing Director Andrea Haug – People & Culture Director Kate Logan – Operations, Experience & Engagement Director Dr Matt Thompson –Conservation, Curatorial & Learning Director Nick Wright – CFO Other Sarah O'Grady – interim Head of Governance (minutes)	Observer: Emma Squires, Co-CEO of Historic England
APOLOGIES	Trustees: Tanvi Gokhale Sebastian James Sir Jonathan Marsden Lloyd Fleming, Arts Council England observer Neil Mendoza: Chair of Historic England	

Note:

- (ARC) in the Minutes denotes an item which has previously been scrutinised by the Audit and Risk Committee.

1. Announcements, apologies and declarations of Interest

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were as noted above. There were no new declarations of interest. CM thanked WW for hosting the meeting and the SLT for the quality of the papers.
- 1.2 NW announced that he would be leaving EHT to take up the position of CFO with another organisation. CM thanked NW for the excellent job that he had done and wished him well on behalf of EHT.

2 CEO update

The Quarterly Strategic and Operational Report was taken as read.

GLP highlighted key points including progress on the 10-point Near Term Plan setting out EHT's priorities and the Governance Plan. He briefed the Board on recent developments including a recent meeting between the Leadership teams of EHT and Historic England (HE). Paul Farmer had been appointed as a Trustee by HE, subject to completion of the due diligence etc processes.

KL reported that new Regional Leadership Teams had been established. Annual high-level plans were being developed. She reported on some issues on Sites, including a collapsed wall at Tintagel and successful events including the Battle of Hastings event.

The Board **NOTED** the Report. It decided that future reports did not need to include the CEO's diary events.

Action: SOG to invite Andrew Wiseman, General Counsel, HE, to speak at the December Board meeting about the role of and relationship with HE.

3 CFO Report

The Paper, which included the September flash report and the current 2025-26 forecast, was taken as read. NW highlighted key points. The financial climate within which EHT is operating continued to be very challenging. Work was underway to identify efficiencies and improve ways of working, including across teams, which would bring benefits. Planned mitigations were in place to address the otherwise forecasted deficit. The Budget-setting process is underway. A cautious approach was being taken as regards an increase in visitor numbers. The first draft would be taken to the November ARC meeting and the December Board meeting.

NW reported on the current position on some major projects as set out in his Report.

NW and TC reported on the key discussions at the recent Audit & Risk Committee Meeting. These included the outcome of a recent cyber security exercise. There is also work underway to improve the management of contractors

Key comments from Trustees included:

- questions regarding the pay settlement
- the initiative regarding productivity, including better working across teams, was welcomed
- the CRM benefits realisation outcome update is to be brought to a Board meeting
- issues arising from the cyber security exercise

The Board **NOTED** the Report.

4 PwC draft Internal Audit Report on conservation and EHT's response: Matt Thompson, Conservation, Curatorial & Learning Director

MT gave a presentation highlighting the background to the Report, key findings and the response. Areas highlighted by the Report included limitations on the understanding of condition and challenges in translating information into action. The Report is in draft as further work needs to be undertaken. PwC will produce an Action Plan. It recognises the challenges brought by the Reshaping Programme and that improvements are underway in any event. A benefit of the Reshaping Programme, however, was that communications across teams had improved, with improved workflows and data being integrated. A different system is being used to assess

priorities, bringing in the experience of people on the Sites and thinking about other factors including value, vulnerabilities, profitability, amenity value and compliance requirements. Discussions are taking place with HE regarding KPIs under the Property Licence and Operating Agreement to bring clarity and assurance whilst recognising the complexity of the estate. EHT has the capability but not sufficient resources, so the work will take time.

Key comments from Trustees included:

- The consequences of re-grading should be brought to the Board
- The governance framework should be clear and link into HE and HECC.
- The work being undertaken by DCMS on the social value of culture and heritage should be taken into account

The Board **NOTED** the Report

Action: ARC to review progress in a years' time and again in 2-3 years' time.

5 Reward Review: Andrea Haug, Director of People & Culture

The Paper, which included issues with the current situation. the proposed changes in detail and the reasoning behind them, was taken as read. AH highlighted key points. The proposals had been discussed at the Remuneration Committee, which supported the proposals The work had started some 18 months ago and had been paused due the Reshaping Programme. There is currently a very complex pay structure.

The Trustees discussed the proposals.

.....

The Board **APPROVED** the proposals as amended.

.....

6 Near Term Plan: progress: Kate Logan. Operations, Experience & Engagement Director & and Ruth Blazye, Income, Growth & Marketing Director

KL and RB updated the Board on some work in progress under the Near-Term Plan. The presentations had been included in the meeting papers.

6.1 Productivity Programme update

KL gave a presentation on the productivity plans and possible efficiencies being identified eg on administration, training, rostering and optimising staff. There are linked projects eg digitisation of timesheets. Objectives include freeing up managers' time and cost-saving through productivity improvements. A Programme Productivity Board has been established. Quarterly reports will go to Senior Leadership Team meetings.

Trustees supported the work.

.....

6.2 Brand re-set and driving growth.

RB highlighted key points in the presentation slides including work in the areas of membership acquisition, fundraising, corporate partnerships and brand positioning. She reported that there has been a big drive to improve memberships rates including summer discounting.

The Board **NOTED** the Reports

7 Any other business

There was no other business

8 Historic England

Emma Squire, co-CEO of Historic England, informed the Board about some of HE's and DCMS's current priorities and challenges regarding funding. HE's leadership is supportive of what they have heard about the direction of travel EHT is taking.

.....

Close