



# Meeting Minutes

MEETING TITLE	Public Minutes of the English Heritage Trust Board Meeting	
DATE	9 <sup>th</sup> December 2024	
LOCATION	100 Wood Street, London EC2V 7AN	
PRESENT	Gerard Lemos - Chair Kay Boycott Tony Cates – by Teams Seb James Peter Liney	Sir Jonathan Marsden Dr Chris Michaels – Deputy Chair Kunle Olulode Prof. William Whyte Sue Wilkinson – by Teams
ATTENDING	Senior Leadership Team: Nick Merriman – Chief Executive Louise Dando – Marketing Director Addison Devlin – Head of Finance Kate Logan – Historic Properties Director Lindsey Rennard – interim Head of Fundraising Matt Thompson – interim Curatorial Director - by Teams Rob Woodside – Estates Director Nick Wright – CFO	Sarah O’Grady – interim Head of Governance (minutes)  Observer: Duncan Wilson – Chief Executive of Historic England except item 6).
APOLOGIES	Tanvi Gokhale - Trustee Sue Fisher – Development Director Tonya Nelson – Arts Council England observer	

<sup>ARC</sup> in the Minutes denotes an item which has previously been scrutinised by the Audit and Risk Committee.

The meeting was preceded by a private session for the Board attended by Nick Merriman, Peter Rimmer (Transition Director), Nick Wright and Sarah O’Grady only.

## 1. Announcements and Declarations of Interest

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, including those Trustees attending virtually (due to the change of date of the meeting).

1.1. The Chair noted that this was the last meeting attended by Louise Dando, Marketing Director. He recorded thanks on behalf of EH and the Board. The Chair welcomed Lindsey Rennard, interim Head of Fundraising, and Sarah O’Grady, interim Head of Governance.

1.2. There were no new declarations of interest.

## 2. Chief Executive’s Quarterly Strategic Report (Nick Merriman, CEO)

2.1. The report was taken as read. It highlighted issues of strategic importance and major operational matters arising over the past quarter. ....

2.2. Key achievements included major pledges of support for the Stonehenge Learning Centre, from the Friends of Kenwood in support of an exhibition to take place in 2025 and an award from the National Lottery Heritage Fund for Berwick Barracks. Whitby Abbey has been awarded a Sandford Award for its educational offer and five of EH's gardens have been awarded Britain in Bloom Awards, recognising the importance of the gardens as well as buildings. ...

2.3. Key challenges included the impact of the recent Storm Darragh. This had caused many sites to close, including Stonehenge. This had an impact on visitor numbers and risked damage to properties. The Budget on 30<sup>th</sup> October included announcements which would have an impact on the charity's finances due to the increase in employers' National Insurance Contributions and increase in the National Minimum/Living Wage. ...

2.4. The Board noted that it was hoped that the initial temporary work at Witley Court would start over the winter. ...

2.5. Trustee feedback included ...

2.6. The Board **NOTED** the Report.

### 3. CFO Report (Nick Wright, CFO) (ARC)

3.1. The Report was taken as read. It summarised the year-to-date financial performance to October 2024 and the full year forecast. The Paper included a summary of the discussion at the November 2024 Audit & Risk Committee regarding the Reserves Policy and the Corporate Risk Register.

The CFO highlighted that it continued to be a challenging year so far due to poor weather (typified by the recent Storm Darragh), a slowdown in the recovery of inbound tourism, an increase in outbound tourism and the increase in the cost of living.

3.2 ...

3.3. Trustee feedback included ...

3.4. The Board **NOTED** the Report

### 4. Progress on the development of a Strategic Plan 2025 - 2030 (Nick Merriman, CEO)

4.1. The Report was taken as read. It was highlighted that following the submission of a high-level 10-year Vision for 2025-2035, it was proposed that there be a series of 5-year rolling Plans rather than 3-year ones. These would enable longer-term planning. There would be an annual One Plan making clear the priorities for the year ahead with a dashboard, which would sit alongside the annual budget.

4.2. A presentation was given on key aspects of the direction of travel so far including work on the vision of '*Heritage is for everybody*', the Mission, the 5-year strategy which would focus on the two strategic goals of 'Care' and 'Share' and the enabling goal of 'Grow', and proposed 10 Strategic Objectives for 2025-30. The detailed work will take place early in 2025 .... The work had not been as advanced as hoped due to the need to address the financial challenges.

4.3 ...

4.4. Trustee feedback:

The overall direction of travel and proposals was welcomed by Trustees, including the Vision, having One Plan and extending the span of Plans from 3 to 5 years.

...

4.5. The Board **NOTED** the Report.

## 5 Content Principles (Matt Thompson, interim Curatorial Director)

5.1 The Paper was taken as read. Key aspects were highlighted by MT. The aim of establishing the Principles is that, in order to maximise the impact of the charity's story-telling/sharing, a more strategic approach will be taken to the creation and use of content across all platforms, including digital platforms and in real life. They include not just creating content but curating better the existing content.

5.2 The Principles are driven by the move from mainly developing and using content around individual sites, to becoming England's history-teller as the only organisation devoted to engaging people in England's past at the local and national level. Partners will be sought as appropriate to help deliver content. There is a lot of interest in the charity's work, including internationally, as demonstrated by the media interest in the recent stories about the display of a Roman knife handle in the shape of a gladiator and recent findings regarding the origins of some of the stone used to construct Stonehenge.

5.3 Trustee feedback included:

The draft Principles were welcomed, including the way that content would be used in different ways across the organisation and the way that platforms would be used differently.

...

### 5.4 Actions:

- Trustees to send any more comments to MT by 20<sup>th</sup> January 2025.
- SO'G to arrange an ad-hoc virtual session with MT to which Trustees will be invited to input further into the development of the Principles, ahead of the March Board meeting.

6 ...

## 7 Any Other Business

7.1 ...

## Consent Papers

By consent, the Board **APPROVED**:

- The draft Minutes of the October Board meeting and notes of the private session
- The Project Management Framework and revisions to the Board Scheme of Delegation (ARC)

## Information Papers

The Board **NOTED** the following Papers

- Monthly Performance Report (October) (ARC)
- Health & Safety Report (ARC)
- CRM Benefits Realisation (ARC)
- Annual Local Management Agreement Report
- Committee Minutes - ARC September 2024 and RemCo June 2024
- 2025 Board and Committee dates

## Next meeting

The next scheduled Board meeting is on 12th March 2025.

Minutes: Sarah O'Grady, Interim Head of Governance