



## Meeting Minutes

MEETING TITLE	Public Minutes of the English Heritage Trust Board Meeting	
DATE	12 <sup>th</sup> March 2025	
LOCATION	100 Wood Street, London EC2V 7AN	
PRESENT	Lord Gerard Lemos - Chair Kay Boycott Tony Cates Peter Liney	Sir Jonathan Marsden Dr Chris Michaels – Deputy Chair Kunle Olulode MBE Rev. Prof. William Whyte
ATTENDING	<p><b>Senior Leadership Team:</b> Dr Nick Merriman OBE – Chief Executive Kate Logan – Historic Properties Director Lindsey Rennard – interim Head Development Operations Matt Thompson – interim Curatorial Director Rob Woodside – Estates Director Nick Wright – CFO</p> <p><b>Other</b> Sarah O’Grady – interim Head of Governance (minutes) Beth Stone, Head of Onsite visitor experience (for item 9)</p>	Observer: Duncan Wilson – Chief Executive of Historic England
APOLOGIES	Trustees: The Hon. Sebastian James, Sue Wilkinson, Tanvi Gokhale Tonya Nelson – Arts Council England observer	

(ARC) 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, and Sarah O’Grady only.

### 1. Announcements, apologies and Declarations of Interest

1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were as noted above.

1.2 ....

1.3 The Chair noted that this was the last meeting attended by Rob Woodside, Estates Director. On behalf of the Board he gave thanks to RW for the significant contributions which he had made to English Heritage.

1.4 The Chair declared two new interests since the last meeting – that he had been appointed as a Labour Peer to the House of Lords and the House of Lords Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, There were no other new declarations of interest.

### 2. Chief Executive’s Quarterly Strategic Report - Dr Nick Merriman

2.1 The report was taken as read. It highlighted issues of strategic importance and major operational matters arising over the previous quarter, including the Reshaping English Heritage Programme affecting staff roles and numbers. There had been a large number of responses to the consultation, which had been carefully considered, leading to the timetable being extended.

2.2 Trustees key comments/questions ...

### 2.3 National Lottery Heritage Fund applications pipeline

NM gave a presentation on the NLHF potential pipeline for applications and projects. Bids so far are thought to have been modest in comparison to the organisation's size and status and there is the potential to significantly increase these. There is some internal capacity, however, there will need to be investment in developing Bids to RIBA Stage 2 eg engage an external design team and surveyors. A more holistic approach was being taken to projects. Some smaller projects may be stopped to free up resources. There is also an expectation amongst funders that there will be match-funding.

Trustees' key comments/questions ...

The Board **NOTED** the Report.

#### **Actions:**

- NM to report on key non-financial benefits of the Reshaping Programme.
- ...
- NW: ARC to have oversight of the progress of the NLHF pipeline to include progress and ensuring follow-up.

### **3 CFO Report – Finance, Monthly Performance Report, Budget and Operational Plan 2025/26 and Financial Projections (ARC) – Nick Wright, CFO**

The Paper was taken as read. NW highlighted key aspects eg visitor numbers and the proposed uplift in membership prices. ...

TC, the Chair of ARC, reported that the issues had been scrutinised at ARC including the proposed increase in membership fees. NW had responded following the meeting to ARC's outstanding questions and no further changes had been made to the draft Budget being recommended to the Board.

Trustees' key comments/questions: ...

The Board:

- **NOTED** the CFO's Report
- **APPROVED** the 2025-26 Annual Budget

#### **Actions:**

- NW: draft Investment Strategy to be brought to the Board for decision (annually), including options, with prior scrutiny by ARC.
- NW: Report to ARC on the CRM benefits targets and realisation

### **4 Reserves Policy (ARC) – Nick Wright, CFO**

The Paper was taken as read. TC reported that the issues had been discussed by ARC which recommended the proposed Policy to the Board.

Trustees' key comments/questions: ...

The Board **APPROVED** the Reserves Policy.

**5 Strategic Planning: One Plan, Annual Plan and 5 year rolling Plan (ARC) – Dr Nick Merriman, CEO**

The Paper was taken as read. NM highlighted that this is the first time English Heritage had had a unified Plan for the whole organisation. The development of the Strategic Plan 2025-30 and the One Plan for 2025-26 had been impacted by the Reshaping Programme and two of the five Senior Leadership Team members were not yet in post. As the 5-year Plan will be updated annually and 2025 is a year of transition for the organisation as the new structure beds in, initial planning focussed on 2025-26. The Plan had been welcomed by ARC.

The Board endorsed the Plans and **RECOMMENDED** them for implementation.

**6 Technology Capital Programme Budget 2025/26 – Nick Wright, CFO**

The Paper, which set out a summary of the proposed programme and proposed Technology Services' capital budget for 2025/26, was taken as read. ...

After discussion ... the Board **APPROVED** the Technology Services' Capital Budget Proposal 2025/26.

**7 Conservation Maintenance Programme – Rob Woodside, Estates Director**

The Paper was taken as read. It informed Trustees of the priorities for the Conservation Maintenance Programme for 2025/26. The Paper set out that, following the final expenditure of the ... Conservation Maintenance Programme grant in March 2023, English Heritage remains committed to addressing the greatest conservation risks and priorities across the National Heritage Collection. Changing circumstances have, however, necessitated a significant decrease in the level of available funds since the 3-year programme was approved by the Board of Trustees for the years 2024/25 to 2026/27. The 2025/26 budget will be the lowest level of conservation project expenditure since the charity was founded in 2015....

After discussion, the Board:

- **APPROVED** the Conservation Maintenance Programme for 2025/6
- **NOTED** the implications of the reduced budget on the ongoing Programme

**8 Annual Site Investment Programme Report (ARC) – Kate Logan, Historic Properties Director**

The Paper was taken as read. It set out the proposed programme of works planned in 2025/26 which should complete in time for, or will be launched in, the 2026 main visitor season. The Board was updated on recent projects completed, works underway and changes to the Programme.

After discussion of the Report, including noting the importance of investment for commercial opportunities as well as conservation, the Board:

- **NOTED** the projects delivered since March 2024
- **NOTED** projects launching in 2025
- **APPROVED** the Site Investment Plan for 2025-26
- **NOTED** the update on projects over £5m

**9 Stonehenge Learning Centre & Neolithic Classroom (ARC) – Kate Logan, Historic Properties Director**

The Paper was taken as read, with KL highlighting key points. The Board's approval was sought for the commencement of works on the Stonehenge Learning Centre and Neolithic Classroom project and approval of the appointment of the key contractors.

After discussion, the Board **APPROVED** the commencement of the Stonehenge Learning Centre and Neolithic Classroom project including the appointment of the 2 key contractors as proposed.

**10 Visitor Experience - Beth Stone, Head of on-Site Visitor Experience**

BS gave a presentation primarily based on the feedback received from the annual Visitor Survey which was carried out at 20 Sites. BS reported that there were matters to celebrate including high levels of satisfaction and that satisfaction has improved at some Sites, excluding Stonehenge. ... Teams are developing action plans to address some of the issues raised.

After discussion of some of the issues raised, the Board thanked BS and the teams for their work and **NOTED** the Report.

**11 Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

**12 Consent Papers**

By consent, the Board **APPROVED**:

- The draft Minutes of the December 2025 Board meeting and notes of the private session
- The Modern Slavery Statement (ARC)

**13 Information Papers**

The Board **NOTED** the following Papers:

- Monthly Performance Report
- Committee Minutes - ARC November 2024
- 2025 and 2026 Board and Committee dates

**14 Next meeting**

The next scheduled Board meeting is on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2025.

Minutes: Sarah O'Grady, Interim Head of Governance