

National Library of Scotland Board Meeting

Date: Wednesday 30 June 2021.

Participants

Present:

- Simon Learoyd (Chair – SL),
- Helen Durndell (Vice Chair - HD),
- Noreen Adams (NA),
- Elizabeth Carmichael (EC),
- Ruth Crawford QC (RC),
- Dianne Haley (DH),
- Lesley McPherson (LMcP),
- Adrienne Scullion (AS),
- Amina Shah (ASh),
- Melissa Terras (MT),
- Robert Wallen (RW).

In attendance:

- Andrew Webster QC,
- Faculty of Advocates (AW),
- Matt Fellion (MF);
- John Scally (JS),
- Anthony Gillespie (AG),

- Jackie Cromarty (JCr)
- Kathy Hutton (KH).

Part time:

- Stuart Lewis (SLe),
- Robin Smith (RS);
- John Coll (JC),
- Joe Marshall (JM),
- Lucy Clement (LC).

Minutes of meeting

1. Chair's Welcome

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting including Andrew Webster QC from the Faculty of Advocates and Matt Fellion representing the trade unions.

The Chair recorded a note of thanks and appreciation to Iain Marley, who recently resigned from the Board. for his enormous contribution over the last 6 years.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were noted from Alan Horn.

3. Declarations of Interests

The Chair requested any declarations be made at the appropriate time in the agenda.

4. Horizon scanning

During discussion, the Board noted the proposed lessening of some pandemic social distancing restrictions by the Scottish Government (SG), the resulting impact of this on the physical operation of the Library and what the post pandemic environment means for the strategy of Reaching People.

5. Minutes of the meeting of 31 March 2021

The Board approved the minutes.

6. Actions outstanding and matters arising from previous meetings

The Board noted all actions were complete or scheduled for future meetings.

7. National Librarian's Report

JS highlighted:

- The recent Library Conference 'Looking to the Future: Collaboration, Creativity and Change' organised by the 2020 Intern Cohort which had been hugely successful.
- The 'Anchor Pensioners' Christmas Party 1965 moving image where crowdsourcing helped to identify the event, the purpose and the location.
- The sustained increase in use of our content on Wikipedia, a 25% increase this quarter in page views helping us reach a wider audience. The NLS.UK domain has also seen an increased use of 25% on last year from annual session numbers.
- JS advised that the two Associate Director roles which will shortly become vacant will be filled on an interim basis internally for 12

months. This allows the new Chief Executive time to review and lead on a permanent recruitment or a revised structure.

- The Library is mindful of the SG's recently announced indicative dates for proposed easing of pandemic restrictions and continues to take a cautious approach to increasing capacity in the Reading Rooms and the opening of other onsite offerings.
- The Library continues to support staff to work from home where possible. A revised Flexible Working Policy will allow staff to apply to work from home on a more permanent basis where practicable. The Policy will be rolled out on a phased basis.
- The Board agreed they were supportive of the Library's cautious approach to re-opening of Library services in line with SG guidance and recognised the Library is also sensitive to any staff concerns. JS advised he would keep the Board apprised on the further re-opening of Library services.
- The Board requested advice on the Library's overall approach to supporting 'Covid vaccinations' at the appropriate time and as SG guidance develops.
- The Chair thanked JS for the update observing the report again demonstrated the impressive work of Library staff during these uncertain times. The Board noted the report.

8. Library Plan update – 2020/21 – Q4

JS advised that, as expected and as previously advised to the Board, the second lockdown in December has impacted progress in a number of areas. It was worth noting however, that exceptional progress has been made in many areas such as the Music Retro Conversion Project which has added a quarter of a million items to the main catalogue.

AG highlighted:

- Excellent progress has been made in relation to the cataloguing of Hidden Collections, with this indicator increasing from 23% to 52%.
- Almost half of the annual objectives continue to be assessed as 'Green' which means that they remain on track for the year. Covid has obviously had a significant impact on many objectives.
- The Chair noted the remarkable achievements given the challenges presented by the pandemic and, on behalf of the Board, asked JS to extend thanks to staff for the exceptional amount of work they have achieved in such a difficult year. AG confirmed the positive work by staff would be captured within the Annual Reports and Accounts.
- The Board concurred with the identified 'top 10' objectives for FY2021/22 and noted they would receive regular updates on these. The Board noted the report.

9. Audit Committee (AC) Chair update

Dianne Haley advised:

- The recent Audit Committee had discussed a wide range of items including updates on the Strategic Risk Register, IT infrastructure and the annual procurement report
- The Committee had noted the proposed internal audit areas suggested by the Board and will consider these for the 2022/23 internal audit plan. The Committee were also pleased to see the good progress made by Library staff in completing recommendations from previous audits.

The Committee also received an update on collection protection programme of work which clearly set out the options and proposed way forward.

10. Staffing & Remuneration (S&R) Committee Chair update

HD advised:

- The Committee had received an initial update on the digital skills survey and staff survey and had also discussed consideration of a framework or strategy for workforce planning as the new Chief Executive and Board Chair came into post.
- The Library had reported a high level of completion of appraisals and forward job plans which was welcomed by the Committee.
- The Flexible Working Policy was also reviewed. The Committee had also received an update on the next steps for this year's pay award where the trade unions have requested the Library consider a possible reduction in working week hours.

11. Governance Committee Chair update

ASh advised work had started on pulling out the key recommendations from the recent Board effectiveness review and the Committee will update Board in due course.

The Chair thanked the Committee Chairs for their comprehensive updates which again helped to demonstrate the breadth of work of the Board Committees and the assurance this provided to the Board.

Robin Smith (RS) joined the meeting.

12. Major Acquisition

Robin Smith provided an overview of a potential acquisition (the Honresfield Library) which included for example significant manuscripts of Robert Burns and Walter Scott. A consortium of interested libraries and other parties have been afforded the opportunity to raise funds to purchase the collection in its

entirety. The governance for the consortium is expected to be agreed shortly. The National Library will lead the effort on behalf of Scottish institutions.

The Board approved the Library's full participation in the work of the consortium and depending on the fundraising outcome, the proposed purchase of the Scottish manuscripts in the collection. The Board noted that fundraising, in its various elements, has already started and is based on a common consortium approach with no party committed to raising a specific amount separately. The Board looked forward to receiving updates in the next couple of months on this important initiative.

SL thanked Robin Smith for the report and on behalf of the Board noted her many achievements and contribution over 30 years with the Library.

Robin Smith left the meeting. John Coll joined the meeting.

13. GB public spaces

John Coll advised the relevant Task and Finish Group has redefined the project vision, which is audience focussed, all as detailed in the paper.

The Board noted that the Task and Finish Group will continue to engage with the existing Board sub-group as the proposals develop towards providing the November Board with a robust proposed programme of works.

The Chair thanked JC for the update. The Board noted the report and looked forward to receiving the proposals in November.

14. Strategic Risk Register

AG confirmed the Strategy Risk Register (SRR) had been reviewed at the last Audit Committee with the strategic risks remaining 'steady' since the last update to the Board.

The Library continues to be outside the current agreed risk appetite for S1 (Significant Loss or Damage to the Collections) as this is assessed as a Low/Medium risk compared to the agreed Low appetite. This relates to the need for work particularly at Causewayside to improve fire protection. This is a long-term issue which the Library is proactively managing and which the Scottish Government has agreed in principle to support with funding from FY22/23.

The Board agreed the wording for S4 (Significant Reduction in Financial Resources) as detailed in the paper be amended and the risk level associated with this adjusted to 'Major' and 'Moderate', reflecting a positive financial position. Dianne Haley confirmed the Audit Committee had discussed the amendments and had been comfortable with the proposed change.

15. Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy

JC referred to the paper outlining the Library's approach to safeguarding. JC advised the above noted updated policy had been reviewed by the S&R Committee and subsequently, a digital safeguarding element has been added. Safeguarding officers and relevant staff within the Library have already undergone foundation level training with further advanced training to follow. Awareness of safeguarding is also now built into the induction process and those with public facing roles will also receive training to reflect different levels of possible interaction with those defined within the Policy.

Elizabeth Carmichael, recently appointed as the Board's Safeguarding Trustee, confirmed she would also shortly undergo training with the intention to make this available to Board members thereafter. EC advised the intention for today was to continue to raise the Board's awareness in this area and that the Board would receive its first annual safeguarding report in November

The Chair thanked JC and EC for the comprehensive update and also recorded a note of thanks to Elizabeth Carmichael for taking on the role of

Board Safeguarding Trustee. The Board also noted the important input from one of the Library's interns, Hannah Lindsay.

The Board noted the report. The Board also noted that the November Board will receive recommendations on any appropriate security checks for future Board recruitment.

John Coll left the meeting.

16. Fundraising update

Lucy Clement discussed the paper outlining progress with external fundraising in FY 20/21. She advised fundraising targets had been adversely affected as a result of the restrictions from the pandemic and the focus of funding towards the national emergency. As a result of increased digital engagement, however, it had been possible to grow the Library's donor base during this time and significant effort had focused on maintaining existing relationships. The coming year will continue to present fundraising challenges however the various activities taking place across the Library will help to support this.

The Chair thanked LC for the update and asked for thanks to be passed to all staff involved in maintaining relationships with donors in this challenging time. The Board noted the report and the 'Fundraising Code of Practice Checklist' which has been produced following an overall positive internal audit.

Lucy Clement left the meeting.

17. Collection Management Policy

JM provided an overview of the Collection Management Policy which is intended to develop areas of relevant policies within a coherent overall framework. A Task and Finish Group from across the Library has developed the Policy and carried out appropriate benchmarking.

This Policy will cover areas such as the Library's approach to managing the collections and how to work more effectively. The Policy also dovetails with the Collection Development Policy on which the Board were updated in March of this year. A Policy documenting the Library's ethnical approach to the management of collections is also intended for inclusion within the framework.

The Chair thanked JM for the informative overview. The Board welcomed the reminder during presentation that we are all temporary custodians of the collections and that this work on collections management is intended to continue the work of widening and improving access as defined within the Library's strategy. The Board looked forward to receiving updates as work progresses including around the ethical considerations.

Joe Marshall left the meeting.

18. Forward Board Agenda

As previously discussed, the Board agreed it would welcome discussion on the suggested topics in the coming year.

The Chair advised preparation for the proposed November Away Day will shortly start around the broad themes noted in the paper. Board members were asked to suggest any other topics they would like considered for the Away Day within the next week.

The Board noted that the intended meeting format for future Board meetings would move at the same pace as the Library's public offering.

19. Quarter 4 Finance Report 2020/21

With the paper taken as read, AG highlighted:

- The preliminary results show an overall positive finance position.
- The value of funds under treasury management has increased.

- The Library has been successful with a number of grant requests from the NLS Foundation which support the Reaching People strategy.

The Chair thanked AG for the update. The Board noted the Library is presently in a satisfactory financial position.

20. Health & Safety report

AG advised two 'near misses' had been reported since the last update to the Board. The first was caused by an adjoining building's contractor and was swiftly resolved. The second involved the Library's unoccupied storage building and work was underway to ensure no further issues arise.

The Board noted that the S&R Committee receive regular updates on relevant aspects of staff welfare.

The Chair thanked AG for the update. The Board noted the report.

21. Approved minutes

The Board noted:

Audit Committee minutes of 8 February 2021.

22. NLS Foundation minutes

The Board noted the minutes of 3 February and 8 February 2021.

23. Date of next meeting:

Wednesday 29 September 2021.