

Minutes of The National Archives' Board		THE
		NATIONAL
Held on 22 March 2022 at 10:00 at The National Archives, Kew and via Video Conference (VC)		ARCHIVES

Present:

Lesley Cowley (LC - Chair) Chair of The National Archives' Board
Sonia Cargan (SC) Non-executive Board Member
Rommel Pereira (RP) Non-executive Board Member
Mark Richards (MR) Non-executive Board Member
Ros Scott (RS) Non-executive Board Member (via VC)
Emmajane Avery (EJA) Director of Public Engagement
Neil Curtis (NC) Chief Operating Officer
Lucy Fletcher (LF) Director for Public Records Access and Government Services
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
John Sheridan (JS) Digital Director
Aaron Smith (AS) Corporate Services Director (via VC)

Also present:

Darren Austin (DA) Head of Procurement, Project Delivery and Contract Management (Item 8 via VC)
Asha Bagayat (AB) Head of Governance (Minutes) (via VC)
Adrian Butler (AdB) Interim Head of Finance (Items 9 and 10 via VC)
Jane Craigie-Payne (JCP) Head of HR and OD (Item 7 via VC)
Elana Kudelka (EK) Governance Coordinator
Sam Whaley (SW) Head of Strategy and CEO's Office

1.0 Apologies and Declarations of Interest

- 1.1 There were no apologies for absence.
- 1.2 RS declared an interest in the Parliamentary Archives partnership project (Item 5) as a former member of the Parliamentary Restorations and Renewal Committee. There were no further declarations of interest.

2.0 Minutes, Matters Arising and Action Log

- 2.1 Subject to minor amendments, the minutes of the meeting held on 22 February 2022 were approved as a correct record.
- 2.2 The Board reviewed the Actions Log. SW provided an update on his latest discussions with DCMS with regards to the Framework Agreement.

3.0 Strategic Discussion: People and the Cultural Programme

- 3.1 The Board participated in a strategic discussion around people and the type of culture we want The National Archives to have, which is aligned to *Archives for Everyone*.
- 3.2 AM introduced the discussion, noting that the paper posed a set of questions to support discussion around transforming our culture, as well as providing thoughts on the structure and approach of the culture programme.
- 3.3 A lengthy discussion ensued. The main threads of the discussion related to our brand identity (Civil Service and culture sector), the challenges of embedding transformation in a hybrid working environment, values and behaviours. Ensuring our strengths align with our strategic objectives and being clear and firm on the criteria for recognition and reward and the importance of onboarding middle managers to successfully deliver the culture programme.
- 3.4 The Board:
- (i) Welcomed the initial strategic discussion and thanked AM for her paper which had aided the discussions; and
 - (ii) Noted that a draft culture programme will be developed in light of the direction and feedback received and will be presented to Board at its 19 July meeting.

Action by: AM

4.0 Strategic Discussion: Public Engagement Strategy

- 4.1 The Board participated in a strategic discussion on developing The National Archives' Public Engagement Strategy, which seeks to specifically reference and support *Archives for Everyone* and 'Becoming the Inclusive Archive'.
- 4.2 EJA introduced the item and gave a presentation outlining the five proposed pillars around which the strategy will be structured, giving context and examples. She also noted the key dates and milestones of the project.
- 4.3 A lengthy discussion ensued. The main threads of the discussion related to understanding our audiences, ensuring inclusion is woven through all the pillars, ensuring onsite and online engagement is considered together, and ensuring the digital, commercial and people strategies are linked in.
- 4.4 The Board:
- (i) Welcomed the initial strategic discussion and thanked EJA for her presentation;
 - (ii) Broadly supported the five pillars structure; and
 - (iii) Noted that the draft strategy document will be developed in light of the direction and feedback received and will be presented to Board at its 19 July meeting.

Action by: EJA

5.0 Executive Team Updates

- 5.1 The Board received a report on Executive Team activities.
- 5.2 JJ provided an update on the recruitment of the Chair of The National Archives' Board.
- 5.3 There was a discussion around The National Archives' response to the situation in Ukraine. See also paras 6.4, 7.5, 10.4 and 11.5 below. JJ noted that following a resolution by the International Council on Archives (ICA) Executive Board, The National Archives' Executive Team had also agreed to suspend relations with Russian cultural institutions and sought Board's endorsement of this.
- 5.4 The Board:
- (i) Received and noted the Executive Team updates; and
 - (ii) Endorsed the Executive Team's resolution to suspend relations with cultural institutions, in support for Ukraine.

Action by: AB/NC

6.0 Non-executive Board Member Verbal Updates

- 6.1 Non-executive Board Members (NEBMs) each provided a verbal update on their recent activity, including insights from other organisations.
- 6.2 LC provided an update on her activities, including insights from another Board on the review of arm's length bodies.
- 6.3 SC noted her regular meetings with AM and upcoming interviews for the new Head of Equity, Inclusion and Diversity role.
- 6.4 RS noted putting a few of her Parliamentary colleagues interested in archives in touch with relevant people at The National Archives. She also reported on attending a briefing given by the Ukrainian Culture Institute and noted the concerns around the loss of Ukrainian culture, archives and history amidst the war.
- 6.5 RP noted the upcoming retirement of the Director of the National Audit Office.
- 6.6 The Board noted the updates.

7.0 Staff Survey Results and Wellbeing Update

- 7.1 The Board received the 2021 Civil Service People Survey results, which provide a measure of how our staff experience the organisation and in particular through the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions and was invited to comment on the corporate response to the feedback provided. The Board also received an update on corporate wellbeing initiatives.
- 7.2 JCP introduced the report and outlined the key highlights from the staff survey results. In response to questions, she noted that disclosure rates were not sufficient enough to enable meaningful analysis.

7.3 There was a discussion around the challenges of recruitment. In response, AM noted some of the recruitment initiatives she was looking to introduce, specifically in relation to securing digital skills, including the opportunities offered by the Digital, Data and Technology (DDaT) framework.

7.4 In respect of the wellbeing update, the Board noted the mental health and wellbeing initiatives, including usage of the Employee Assistance Programme, and received assurances that the organisation was keeping a close eye on the impact of the conflict in Ukraine and rising cost of living and energy prices upon staff, volunteers and partners.

7.5 The Board:

- (i) Received and noted the Civil Service People Survey results and the Executive Team's corporate response to them;
- (ii) Received and noted the update on our wellbeing initiatives; and
- (iii) Asked to receive updates on the usage of the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) through the Executive Team Update Report.

Action by: AM

8.0 Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)

8.1 The Board received an update on the ERP project and was invited to endorse the Executive Team's decision with regards to next steps on the procurement and implementation of the system (to integrate and replace existing HR and Finance systems into a single platform), whilst the project team sought further clarity on the scope and pricing.

8.2 NC introduced the item and outlined the discussions and deliberations of the Executive Team.

There was a discussion around the variance and our confidence in the latest implementation costs for a fully integrated ERP solution, as well as the annual licensing costs, which are significantly higher than the original business case considered by the Board in January 2020.

8.3 Drawing upon his insights from other organisations, RP noted that implementing an ERP system has financial risks and relied upon having key people in post to act as change agents. He was keen for the Audit and Risk Committee, as well as the Internal Auditors, to support the delivery of the programme.

8.5 The Board:

- (i) Received and noted the update;
- (ii) Subject to the assurances that were provided, expressed support for the programme; and
- (iii) Endorsed the Executive Team's decision, subject to review and agreement of the full business case that would be provided to the Cabinet Office. The full business case would be considered out-of-committee.

Action by: NC/DA

9.0 Budget 2022-23

- 9.1 The Board received the 2022-21 Budget as agreed by the Executive Team, outlining the Baseline spend and the investment funds allocated to initiatives that best support our strategy *Archives for Everyone* and represent the best use of public money.
- 9.2 NC introduced the Budget and noted that we have received confirmation from HM Treasury on the accounting treatment of the 1921 Census income, which will be fully disclosed in the accounts. There was also a discussion around the risks to the budget, particularly around recruitment and rising energy costs, some of which have been built in, as well as income being driven by external factors.
- 9.3 The Board:
- (i) Received and endorsed the 2022-23 Budget as agreed by the Executive Team.

10.0 Corporate Reports

February Financial Report

- 10.1 The Board received the February 2022 Monthly Financial Report, which presented a slightly reduced underspend since the last report.
- 10.2 AdB introduced the report and noted the active steps to manage the underspend position.

Corporate Risk Register

- 10.3 The Board was invited to review the Corporate Risk Register, which was the same version as presented to the Audit and Risk Committee on 4 February.
- 10.4 NC introduced the item and noted that the Executive Team had commissioned the production of a Ukraine Risk Register for its consideration, which will be subsequently shared with Board and the Audit and Risk Committee.
- 10.5 The Board:
- (i) Noted the February Financial Report;
 - (ii) Noted and endorsed the Corporate Risk Register; and
 - (ii) Endorsed the creation of a separate Ukraine Risk Register and asked that it be shared with it out-of-committee for endorsement.

Action by: NC/AB

11.0 Any Other Business

Forward Work Programme

- 11.1 The Board reviewed the Forward Work Programme for Board meetings and agreed to

reschedule the annual meeting with the Chair of the Friends of The National Archives to later in the year.

Action by: AB/EJA

Vote of thanks to LC

- 11.2 JJ led the vote of thanks and farewell to LC, who will be coming to the end of her second term on the Board on 31 March 2022. In his speech, JJ noted that LC was our first Lead Non-executive Board Member and will be leaving as the first Chair of The National Archives' Board. He noted the enormous impact she has had on the organisation and all that we have achieved during her time, including establishing The National Archives Trust, operating through two years of COVID-19, launching the 1921 Census, receiving an increased Spending Review settlement and moving forward in our partnership with the Parliamentary Archives. He highlighted LC's role in appointing most of the Board members presently in the room and noted that she was leaving the organisation in a stronger position. He highlighted the personal impact of LC on building trust and openness, staying strategic, her encouragement, good humour and fantastic chairing skills. On behalf of the Board, he wished LC every success in her new portfolio of roles and presented her with farewell gifts and a card.
- 11.3 In response, LC drew on the Jim Collins analogy of 'getting the right people on the bus for any journey'. She had been proud to be the first Chair of The National Archives' Board, to have helped get such a great team on board and for the organisation's many achievements over the last six years. Whilst it was now time for her to leave the bus, it would be important for The National Archives not to slow down on our continuing journey and she was looking forward to watching us on our future travels. She thanked all of the Board members and key colleagues.
- 11.4 There was a round of applause for LC.

Items for information

- 11.5 The Board received and noted one item for information on The National Archives' response to the situation in Ukraine.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 15.03