

**Present:**

Andrew Wathey (AW - Chair) Chair of The National Archives' Board  
Nigel Baker (NB) Non-executive Board Member  
Sonia Cargan (SC) Non-executive Board Member  
Lopa Patel (LP) Non-executive Board Member  
Emmajane Avery (EJA) Director of Public Engagement and Sector Leadership  
Lucy Fletcher (LF) Director for Public Records Access and Government Services  
Hannah Lee (HL) Joint Director of People, Inclusion and Change  
Gemma MacLagan Ram (GMR) Research and Commercial Development Director  
Peter Mills (PM) Interim Director of Finance  
Saul Nassé (SN) Chief Executive and Keeper  
John Sheridan (JS) Digital Director  
Lucy Windmill (LW) Joint Director of People, Inclusion and Change

**Also present:**

Jenna Birley (JB) Interim Board Secretary (Minutes)  
Corporate Performance and Risk Manager (Items 7 and 8)  
Campbell Tickell (Observing)  
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Graham Hancock (GH), Interim Head of Financial Planning, Performance and Analysis (Item 7)  
Head of Advocacy and Partnerships Team (Item 5)  
Eleanor Leahy (EL), Head of Philanthropy, The National Archives Trust (Item 3)  
David Lough (DL), Chair of The National Archives Trust (Item 3)  
Tina Morton (TM), Head of Archive Sector Leadership (Item 5)  
Sam Whaley (SW) Head of Strategy

**1. Welcome & Chair's Remarks, Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest**

- 1.1. AW welcomed everyone to the meeting, particularly Campbell Tickell who were observing the meeting as part of the Board Effectiveness Review.
- 1.2. Apologies for absence had been received from Rommel Pereira. There were no other apologies for absence.
- 1.3. NB declared an interest in United Media.

**2. Chief Executive's Report**

- 2.1. The Board received a report providing an update on the work and priorities of the Chief Executive and the activities of the Executive Team.
- 2.2. SN provided an update on the closing week of the MI5 exhibition, noting a record number of visitors.

- 2.3. SN provided an update on the transfer of the Parliamentary Archives which included the expected timeline for completion. The National Archives was finalising external communications, and it was hoped completion and opening could be announced shortly.
- 2.4. The Board noted the upcoming annual file release and LF provided a brief overview of the material to be opened.
- 2.5. SN informed the Board that recruitment for the two new Executive Directors had been completed. The National Archives would welcome Tobi Adetimilehin as its new Finance Director in December 2025, and Claire Wightman, its new Director for People, Inclusion and Change, in January 2026.
- 2.6. The Board discussed the update. The information about the first research reports that had been published was noted and welcomed by the Board.
- 2.7. The Board asked for more information about the income generation from The Gazette. JS provided further information about the expected patterns in income, particularly the impact of Members' Voluntary Liquidations (MVLs).
- 2.8. LF provided an update on the accompanying paper on the Public Office Accountability Bill which concerned police records and whether they ought to be deemed "public records".
- 2.9. The Board:
  - (i) Welcomed and noted the update.

### **3. Update from The National Archives Trust**

- 3.1. GMR introduced this item and the accompanying paper which detailed options to establish a position on The National Archives' future fundraising structure and relationship with The National Archives Trust ('the Trust').
- 3.2. The Board discussed the options as presented and requested that they have sight of the legal advice concerning potential employment law and charity law implications. The Board also requested clarification on the composition of, and relationship with, any proposed grant-giving Board that may result from changes made to the Trust's operation.
- 3.3. The Board thanked GMR for the paper but noted the requests for further information to be provided in a refreshed iteration of the proposals. The Board accepted this may need to come out of committee.

*Action by: GMR*

*DL and EL joined the meeting.*

- 3.4. The Board welcomed DL and EL to the meeting. EL delivered a presentation on the performance of the Trust over the last twelve months and DL provided a general overview of the philanthropic landscape and associated implications for their work.
- 3.5. The Board:
  - (i) Received and noted the update;

- (ii) Requested a refreshed iteration of the proposals for future ways of working with the Trust, which it expected to receive out of committee.
- (iii) Warmly thanked DL for his work as Chair of the Trust, noting his exceptional service and the hard work he had contributed throughout his tenure.

*DL and EL left the meeting.*

#### **4. Update on the Northeast Project**

- 4.1. SW introduced this paper which was taken as read and invited questions and comments from the Board.
- 4.2. The Board appreciated the update on the project, noting the last one they had received had been in the summer of 2024.
- 4.3. The Board asked for further information about which heritage organisations The National Archives was working with in-area to develop the project and noted the potential impacts of local government reorganisation.
- 4.4. The Board asked what The National Archives' offer in the Northeast would look like. SW responded that there was work to be done to develop this, though possible options included: an exhibition space; a regional office space; storage for duplicate series and a collaboration/research space.
- 4.5. The Board were supportive of the Northeast project and requested further information on its direction and pace in future updates.
- 4.6. The Board:
  - (i) Received and noted the update.

#### **5. Government's Vision for the Archive Sector**

*TM and the Head of Advocacy and Partnerships Team joined the meeting.*

- 5.1. LF introduced this item and highlighted the extensive collaboration between The National Archives and archive sector stakeholders, amongst others, to develop the final version. The Executive Team were confident that the document was a reflection of the sector and LF added that it would be accompanied by annual delivery plans.
- 5.2. The Board provided feedback on the vision document. It was suggested that there could be a stronger emphasis on archives underpinning democratic society, supporting inquiries and reliable information. It was also suggested that the team consider including an image reflective of the Ministry of Defence service records when the final accompanying images are selected.
- 5.3. The Board asked whether the team had any ways to demonstrate the value of archives using data. PM informed the Board that he had recommended the team discuss this issue with economists from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).

5.4. The Board discussed the need for conversations around the vision to be mindful of parallel conversations about funding, particularly given that The National Archives receives its settlement direct from Treasury, rather than the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. In agreement with the Executive Team, the Board recommended a reframing of the narrative away from focusing on underfunding and towards the role of government in sustaining archives.

5.5. The Board:

- (i) Welcomed and endorsed the Government's Vision for the Archive Sector; and
- (ii) Recommended The National Archives' Executive Team be mindful of how the vision is presented in order for it to gain traction with ministers.

*TM and the Head of Advocacy and Partnerships Team left the meeting.*

## **6. Board Forward Plan**

6.1. The Board reviewed the outline of the Board Forward Plan for 2026. AW invited the Board to discuss the items listed and suggest any other items they thought should be included.

6.2. The Board wanted to add an item concerning engagement, particularly with children and young people, which could include observing events run at The National Archives.

6.3. The Board also discussed adding an item on Artificial Intelligence (AI), possibly to reflect on the EU AI Act and a session on AI in archives.

6.4. GMR asked to move the commercial deep dive item to the autumn of 2026.

6.5. The Board:

- (i) Received and noted the Forward Plan; and
- (ii) Agreed to make the changes to the plan as noted above.

*Action by: JB, SW*

## **7. Finance and Corporate Performance Items**

*GH and the Corporate Performance and Risk Manager joined the meeting.*

### **6+6 Management Accounts**

7.1. The Board received the 6+6 Financial Forecast. The Accounts presented a revised down income which was the predicted impact of MVLs over the tax year. PM highlighted the need to profile the budget to account for seasonal variations on income and expenditure.

7.2. LP suggested future reports detail performance information first, followed by the management accounts.

7.3. PM informed the Board that the Executive Team would be looking at their departmental budgets and listing projects to be stepped up or down to ensure the spend is in line with the budget.

## **October Management Accounts**

7.4. The Board was presented with the October Management Accounts for review.

## **Q2 Business Priorities Metrics 2025-26**

7.5. The Board received the Q2 Business Priorities Metrics report.

7.6. The Board received an update on priority five and noted that The National Archives was awaiting clarification from Treasury regarding consultancy spend.

7.7. The Board noted SN's update concerning priority two.

7.8. The Board received a verbal update on the National Digital Library.

*GH left the meeting.*

## **Corporate Performance Dashboard**

7.9. The Board reviewed the Corporate Performance Dashboard. The Board noted this dashboard was still being developed according to feedback from the Directorates and agreed that it would be helpful to show targets in a more consistent way across the data. Additionally, the data presented should be concise and aligned with TNA's strategic priorities.

7.10. The Board asked SN to consider adding commentary on the performance dashboard in his regular Chief Executive's update.

7.11. The Board:

- (i) Reviewed and endorsed the 6+6 Management Accounts and the approach to managing the budget;
- (ii) Reviewed and endorsed the October Management Accounts;
- (iii) Reviewed and endorsed the Q2 business priorities metrics and their RAG ratings; and
- (iv) Reviewed and noted the Corporate Performance Dashboard.

*The Corporate Performance and Risk Manager left the meeting.*

## **8. Update from the Audit and Risk Committee**

8.1. NB provided a verbal update on the meeting held on 13 October 2025. The Committee had received updates on Martyn's Law, cyber security and public inquiries.

8.2. The Committee had requested The National Archives consider adding climate change to the corporate risk register.

8.3. The Board:

- (i) Received and noted the verbal update.

## **9. Update from Finance and Performance Committee**

- 9.1. LP provided a verbal update on the work of the Finance and Performance Committee since the last Board meeting. The Committee had discussed The National Archives' contract with Workday, the recent letter to the Public Accounts Office, and had taken a deep dive into people metrics.
- 9.2. The Board:
  - (i) Received and noted the verbal update.

## **10. Non-Executive Board Member Verbal Updates**

- 10.1. Non-executive Board Members (NEBMs) each provided a verbal update on their recent activity, including insights from other organisations.
- 10.2. NB noted his participation in surveys and the Board Effectiveness Review and that he would be undergoing safeguarding training the following day.
- 10.3. LP noted that she had recently completed the safeguarding training and also worked on the Board Effectiveness Review. She had also attended the Focus on RICHeS presentation and had found it useful.
- 10.4. SC noted taking part in the recruitment exercise for the People, Inclusion and Change Director at The National Archives. She would be undertaking her safeguarding training the following day.
- 10.5. AW noted attending a recent dinner with colleagues from the British Library and productive discussions with the Churchill Archives. He had also recently taken part in the recruitment exercises for Directors at The National Archives.

## **11. Minutes, Matters Arising and Actions**

- 11.1. Subject to some minor amendments, the minutes of the meeting held on 18 September 2025 were agreed as a true and accurate record.
- 11.2. The Board agreed the notes of the strategy session held on 14 October 2025.
- 11.3. The Board reviewed and agreed the Actions Log. It was noted that one action would be considered at the next Board meeting due to the rescheduling of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting.

## **12. Any Other Business**

- 12.1. SN asked the Board whether members would be interested in taking part in Accreditation presentations. The Board were keen to take part should diaries allow.

## **Reflections from the meeting**

- 12.2. The Board noted and welcomed the balance of strategic and compliance items on the agenda. Additionally, it was felt that the pace of the meeting had been good.
- 12.3. LF thanked the Board for their support of The National Archives Executive Team through such a busy period while they worked on significant projects.
- 12.4. The Board noted that it is important to consider implications of possible obstacles to The National Archives’ ability to achieve its strategic objectives.

**Items for information**

- 12.5. There were no items for information.

**There being no further business, the meeting closed at 14:45.**