

## **NATIONAL ARMY MUSEUM COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the 179<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the NAM Council at 10:00hrs on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2022 in the boardroom at the NAM Chelsea**

#### **Present**

Lieutenant General Sir Simon Mayall (Chair), Lieutenant General Sir George Norton (Deputy Chair, by Zoom), Mr William Wells, Mrs Sabine Vandenbroucke, Mr Guy Perricone, Mrs Judith Donovan, Dr Paul Schreier, Mr Patrick Aylmer, Mr Timothy Cooke, Professor Ali Ansari, Ms Sue Mackenzie.

#### **In Attendance**

Brigadier Justin Maciejewski (Director, National Army Museum), Mr Mike O'Connor (Deputy Director, NAM) Ms Teresa Scott (Item 2.1, Assistant Director, Human Resources, NAM), Miss Nikki Elvin (Item 3, Head of Communications & Campaigns, NAM), Ms Brenda Hobday (Honorary Marketing Advisor), Mr Mike Robbins (Army Chief Accountant), Brigadier Alex Potts (Chief of Staff Regional Command), Ms Lizzy Sutherland (Clerk to Council, NAM, Minutes).

#### **Item 1. Council Administration**

##### **Item 1.1 Chairman's Opening Remarks**

The Chair welcomed new Members Professor Ali Ansari, Mrs Sue Mackenzie & Mr Tim Cooke.

The Chair announced that Professor Roberts would become Lord Roberts of Belgravia.

##### **Item 1.2 Register of Members' Interests**

The Register was made available in accordance with Charity Commission advice and Mr Finney made an addition.

##### **Item 1.3 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from HRH the Duke of Kent, Professor Andrew Roberts, Professor Jonathan Boff, Mr John Duncan, and Mr Richard Hughes.

##### **Item 1.4 Minutes of the Previous Meeting & Matters Arising**

The minutes were approved as a true record.

#### **Items 2. Director's Update**

The Director presented slides. The past three years had been difficult, and the recovery felt harder than the pandemic itself. Much effort had gone into recruiting. Interviewing and reviewing job specifications had been time consuming for management.

Visitor numbers to London Museums remained below pre-pandemic levels. National visitors had not returned but a small number of North Americans and European tourists were coming back. Regional museums and National Trust properties were doing well by comparison, the struggle was very much a London issue. Rail strikes and the cost-of-living crisis had also impacted visitor numbers.

A new planning cycle had begun, and the strategy will be worked on between now and February 2023.

The Museum was undergoing a major gallery refreshment programme which will be completed by September 2023. Members advised advertising the closure on the website to manage visitor expectations.

The atrium will see the *History of the Flag* which will bring colour to the space.

In response to a query, the Director confirmed that digital engagement will be deprioritised (except for Friday Insight) to free up capacity for the gallery refreshment. However, web content revitalisation continued, along with the nationwide digital schools offer.

It was agreed the NAM should get onto podcasts rather than produce one at this stage.

The Fellowships were building slowly but one had fallen through which meant there will be three Fellowships in place by April 2023.

The NAM intended to publish a book in the spring which looked at the iconography of the Indian Army. It was a pilot project with the United Service Institution in Delhi.

The Collection Management System was under review and an off the shelf system was being considered to improve integration.

## **2.1 Introduction to the Head of Communications**

The Head of Communications and Campaigns joined the meeting to present slides. 'Where we've come from, where we're heading and what we've learnt along the way', was shared with Council for their expertise and advice. The NAM would "tell the story of soldiers and the armies they served in, across the world and down the centuries". NAM's vision was to engage and inspire audiences. Brand awareness will be built through press articles, poster campaigns and social media.

The Head of Comms reassured Council that the new comms team encapsulated the strategy with a good mix of military and arts sector experience. Alongside the team, a freelance designer and agency support for media buying and advertising would be used.

Council supported the mission.

## **Item 3. Staffing Update**

The Assistant Director, Human Resources, joined the meeting to update Council.

The new system had been useful in tracking performance management and aligning it with business goals. The staff survey tool was used recently to measure staff satisfaction, with engagement at 44%. Members suggested conducting a survey every six months to monitor trends.

Exceptional performance in year was rewarded with the return of the Recognition Scheme.

Pay negotiations with the Union was still ongoing. The NAM was pay linked with the Ministry of Defence.

Volunteers were building back gradually, and new team leaders were being trained on managing volunteers.

The Chair suggested doing a deeper dive on people issues, and for the Remunerations & Appointments Committee to meet twice a year which Members agreed with.

Staff sick leave had been low which suggested staff satisfaction.

New non-remunerative schemes 'Lunch and Learn' and an annual Away Day were introduced for all staff and further benefits were being explored.

#### **Item 4. Updates from Committees and NAMTL Board**

##### **4.1 Development/NAM Foundation**

The Committee Chair updated Council on the sale of 29 Tite Street which had been delayed by the economic crisis.

Cadogan, RBKC and the Polish Cultural Institute were all supporters of the Chelsea History Festival, and it was hoped the Qataris will get involved next year.

The Battlefield Tour was reinstated for 2023 and will go to Crete in May. Council was invited to join the tour.

##### **4.2 NAMTL**

The NAMTL Board met last month with three new NEDs all with retail and event management backgrounds.

Council agreed the NAMTL Board will sit in the new Enterprise Committee.

Playbase and birthday parties were performing well. Overall NAMTL was in a good place but there were challenges down the line, starting with a revitalisation of the Shop.

##### **4.3 Performance, Audit & Risk Assurance**

The audit was completed successfully, and the NAM was given a clean bill of health.

The Environmental Report which feeds into the museum's carbon reporting was discussed and Members advised communicating the NAM's green credentials more widely.

The Committee also welcomed the appointment of a new Data Officer who will focus on GDPR.

Preparedness for cyber-attacks with staff training and regular penetration testing was in place.

##### **4.4 Collections & Research**

The Committee met two months ago and there were no concerns to highlight.

The new Head of Archives was in position.

Important acquisitions included Field Marshall Chapple's collection of uniforms and the Army's Establishment Tables 1953-1980 which will give a real insight into how the Army organised itself.

The NAM will host the congress of the International Committee for Museums of Arms and Military History (ICOMAM) in 2024 which will be the first London-based convening of ICOMAM since 1963.

Conservation had begun on the Lady Butler painting which should be fully restored by Spring 2023.

#### **Item 5. Finance Summaries to 30 September 2022**

The Deputy Director confirmed the NAM was in a relatively healthy state and Council were satisfied.

#### **Item 6. Annual Accounts 2021/22**

The unqualified Annual Accounts were signed off and will go to the Comptroller for final approval from the NAO before being laid at Parliament next week.

#### **Item 7. Health & Safety Report**

The Deputy Director confirmed that Health and Safety practices continued to be monitored to ensure that the Museum was 'as far as is reasonably practicable' a safe place to work and visit.

#### **Item 8.1 Any Other Business**

##### **8.1 Whistleblowing Policy**

The updated Whistleblowing Policy was approved.

##### **8.2 Council meeting date 1 March 2023**

Members agreed to move the next Council meeting from 1 March to 28 February at 1400hrs.

#### **Item 9. Council Housekeeping**

##### **9.1 Committee Structure**

Members agreed 'research' should be moved from the Collections Committee to the Development Committee.

Council also agreed ownership of committees which aligned with the Senior Leadership Team:

Enterprise Committee – AD Enterprise  
Remunerations & Appointments Committee – AD Human Resources  
Performance, Audit & Risk Assurance Committee – Deputy Director  
Collections Committee – AD Collections & Programme  
Research & Development Committee – Research Director

## **9.2 Terms of Reference for the Enterprise Committee, Research & Development Committee and Performance, Audit & Risk Assurance Committee**

The three Terms of Reference were reviewed and approved.

## **9.3 Director Stepped Down as NAMTL Board Director**

Council noted the Director had stepped down as a NAMTL Board Director and supported his decision.

## **9.4 New Members on Committees**

The Chair had written to new Members to suggest committee membership:

Ali Ansari – Research & Development Committee  
Sue Mackenzie – Performance, Audit & Risk Assurance Committee  
Paul Davies - Performance, Audit & Risk Assurance Committee  
Chris Finney – Enterprise Committee  
Katie Best – Enterprise Committee  
Neil Johnson – Remunerations & Appointments Committee

Council and the new Members were comfortable.

## **9.4 Council Effectiveness**

A Member suggested using a scorecard to assess Members skills and identify what additional training might be required. Everyone agreed it would be useful exercise and to have an annual training day following Council in November every year.

The Chair thanked Mr Wells and Mr Duncan for their tremendous contributions as this was their final meeting.

There was no other business, and the Chair closed the meeting.