

## HORNIMAN PUBLIC MUSEUM AND PUBLIC PARK TRUST

Notes of the Board meeting of the Horniman Public Museum and Public Park Trust held on Thursday 26 March 2020 at the Horniman Museum and Gardens.

*This meeting was held virtually via Zoom conferencing.*

### **Present**

Eve Salomon  
Caroline Cole  
Geoff Crossick  
Bunt Ghosh  
Simon Hesketh

Nico Iacuzzi  
Sarah Kemp  
Mayowa Ochere  
Carole Souter  
Helen Williams

Nick Merriman (Chief Executive)

Paula Thomas (Board Secretary, Finance Director)

Victoria Pinnington (Director, Communications and Income Generation)

Tim Corum (Director, Curatorial and Public Engagement)

Kirsten Walker (Director, Collections Care and Estates)

### **1. Check in with everyone**

Trustees and management gave a brief update of their personal situation and how they were coping with the COVID-19 crisis.

### **2. CEO's update**

- All staff are well although one member of staff's husband with an underlying condition has the virus.
- All staff are now at home and working as far as possible, except for the Security team, Aquarium and Animal Walk staff, some cleaners cleaning the basic areas, Estates Manager and Deputy (two days each) and the Garden team.
- The Gardens are still open but opening hours are being reduced (some gardeners would need to come in even if closed, to carry out basic maintenance).
- Letters have been signed for key workers (about 40 in total) if required.
- The IT team is working hard to ensure connectivity for staff working from home.
- Managers are ensuring that they have some form of contact with all their staff and are trying to manage anxieties by maintaining social contact by a variety of means.
- Consideration is being given to how to support staff who are bereaved.
- When we are able to work more 'normally' remotely and snagging with the new website has been ironed out, more work will be done on developing digital content.
- Funders are being very supportive: DCMS are paying the first quarters' grant in advance (rather than the usual one month) and ACE have offered to pay six months grant in advance to any organisations requiring it. The NPO investment process has been postponed for one year. ACE have set up a £90m emergency response package for NPOs.

- Eligibility for the government's Job Retention Scheme is being investigated and a list of staff that could be put on furlough is being put together. If available this would reduce the impact on reserves.

### **3. Update by other SMT members of their areas**

#### *Communications and Income Generation (Victoria)*

- All the team are fine.
- They are covering external communications (mostly social media) whilst SMT are working on internal ones.
- They are also working on onsite signage which is difficult at the moment as there are changes every day.
- The new website is now up and the digital team is working on snagging and testing.
- Fundraising are operating remotely fairly well. Some applications they've been working on may need to be put in hold in the circumstances. Otherwise they are doing a lot of research for possible future funders/bids.
- The commercial team is trying to reschedule bookings/postpone until later in the year/next year.
- Staff are being identified for furlough where it is not feasible for them to work productively from home.

#### *Collections Conservation and Estates (Kirsten)*

- Two teams are still onsite ie. Security and Gardens.
- The Garden team is happy to come in for the time being. They are operating in two groups of three on a rotating basis and on reduced hours. They are generally working away from the public and social distancing is not a problem. Although open, the Gardens have been quite quiet and visitors behaving sensibly.
- The Security team is feeling the pressure and the weight of responsibility. Shifts are being amended to two a day to reduce the number of times staff needs to come on site.

#### *Curatorial and Public Engagement (Tim)*

- The Aquarium and Animal Walk teams are still going in on a rota basis to look after the livestock. The Zoo licence inspection, which was due today, has been cancelled and the license extended for at least three months.
- The rest of the teams are working well from home, exchanging information and communications.
- The curatorial teams are doing research and thinking about developing content. They are also giving some thought to what the landscape might look like in a year's time.
- The programming team is thinking about programming going forward and also the impact of the crisis on future ACE grants. Some grants we were thinking of going for have now been subsumed into the £90m resilience pot.
- The Schools team has been in touch with schools and is providing some engagement activities.

- The Community Engagement team has been in contact with various community partners and there have been more requests for assistance.
- The Volunteering team has been thinking about how volunteers can be retained for the future.
- The teams have all been thinking about what digital content they can deliver but are holding back from doing anything until we can be sure of delivery.

#### *Finance (Paula)*

- The teams are all well and are fully occupied with business as usual.
- The IT team is working hard to get everyone that needs to be connected and able to work remotely. As there have only previously been a handful of staff working remotely at any one time, this is not an easy task. There are insufficient work laptops to issue to staff so we have had to relax the remote working policy and allow staff to use their own devices. The IT Manager is happy that the firewalls etc will provide adequate security. They have been busy issuing instructions and helping staff to connect. Quite a few staff have Macs which are more difficult to connect and the team are working on a solution for this. With the increase in demand for access to the remote servers this has put a strain on the VPN and servers which IT are also working on to make improvements.
- We are approaching the year end and so the Finance team is incredibly busy as usual at this time. As our systems are very paper based adjustments have been made to our financial procedures during this period to ensure that invoices etc can be authorised and payments made. All the team have now got remote access to the finance system, payroll etc and should be able work fairly normally after a period of adjustment.
- There will be a knock effect on the yearend accounts production, timetable and audit but the full extent of this is as yet unknown. Some liaison with DCMS and the auditors will be required.
- The HR team is also busy dealing with staff issues arising out of the crisis. Most of the team have remote access and are able to work reasonably normally. They will be looking at launching the ELearning tool and thinking about other training opportunities for staff during this period.

#### *Questions and comments raised by trustees:*

- The Horniman is fortunate to have good funders.
- Is it helpful for trustees to look at the website? *Trustees are welcome to look at the website and feedback any comments. Staff are collating comments on a spreadsheet so as not to duplicate them. This can be sent to any trustee who would like to help.*
- When is it reasonable to start looking at starting events again? *All events have been cancelled to the end of June. We are still talking to partners about the summer events and are not making any commitments for the time being. On the positive side we have managed to extend Permian Monsters for no additional cost. Other things will be shifted as far as possible.*

- We need to think about the longer term future. This is important for staff morale.
- In terms of licensing under Creative Commons, this should be as unrestrictive as possible as it is a good way for the museum to contribute positively.
- If we put staff on furlough are we just going to pay the 80% refunded by HMRC? *We have committed to paying all staff in full for the time being unless going concern becomes an issue, in which case redundancies will need to be considered.*
- Keeping the Gardens open needs to be kept under review. It may become more popular once there is some nice weather. *It is currently being used responsibly and the Gardens and Security teams are working well together.*
- When will it be possible to produce a revised budget? ***This will be worked on next week and available for trustees to review in two weeks' time.***

#### 4. Specific issues

##### Horniman café

The CEO reported that Anthony Ienco, the Horniman Café owner, has approached us for potential support.

A meeting had been held between Anthony, the Finance Director and the Head of Commercial in which Anthony outlined his position.

He asked the Horniman to consider:

1. waiving the current quarter's commission/rent (January – March) to ease his cashflow and loss position;
2. granting a rent free period of up to nine months after the crisis to enable him to get on a stable footing once again.

Senior management considered his proposals and agreed:

1. to waive the current quarter's rent
2. to provide links to current government assistance for small businesses and employers
3. to ask Anthony and his accountant to produce a cashflow forecast and business plan for the next twelve months
4. to consider further support based on 3.

Trustees noted that as the Horniman is a charity it needs to be careful and think about the Charity Commission restrictions in providing support for other organisations. However it was also noted that guidance had been received from the Cabinet Office asking public sector organisations to support suppliers where ever possible in this time of crisis to reduce job losses and the risk of businesses going under. **The CEO agreed to follow this up further with DCMS.**

The trustees said they needed further information from Anthony about his cashflow and business plans before they could endorse management's agreement to the waiver of the current quarter's rent and also **agreed that further discussions should be held with the Café, advice provided where**

**possible and information sought over future prospects before any further support was considered for agreement by the Board.**

**5. AOB and next steps**

There was no other business. The Board agreed to meet again in two weeks' time.