

Board of Trustees
29 September 2023

Present:

Members:

Ashok Ahir (President and Chair)	Gronw Percy (Treasurer)
Andrew Evans (Vice President)	David Hay
Lee Yale-Helms	Lydia Rumsey
Janet Wademan	Hannah Lindsay
Susan Davies	Gwenllian Lansdown Davies
Elaine Treharne	Anwen Jones

Executive Team:

Peter ap Llwyd	Chief Executive and Librarian
Owain Roberts	Director of Collections and Digital Services

Also present:

Annwen Isaac	HR Manager
Emyr Evans	Acting Head of Finance Department
Owen Llywelyn	Head of Learning and Engagement

Minutes:

Carol Edwards	Governance Manager and Clerk to the Board of Trustees
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Observers:

Manon Maragakis	Welsh Government
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1.1 Welcome from the chair, opening remarks and apologies

The Chair welcomed all attendees to the meeting, extending a special welcome to Owen Llywelyn, Head of Learning and Engagement, who was representing Rhian Gibson.

Apologies were received from Quentin Howard and Rhian Gibson.

1.2 Declaration of interests relevant to the agenda

Staff present declared an interest in item 3.11 as active members of the Library pension scheme.

1.3 Minutes of the meeting held on 28 July 2023 and discussion of matters arising

The minutes of the meeting on 28 July were approved as an accurate record of the issues discussed.

Private funds application – the Board approved the application to use £30k of private funds to develop the Library grounds at its meeting on 28 July, and Rich Roberts has now started this work.

Section 2 Report of the Chief Executive and Librarian

The Chief Executive and Librarian reported on the following, which were not included in his report;

- he and the President will meet with the Deputy Minister on 9 October for their six monthly meeting
- he has written to the Welsh Government to ask about indemnity insurance in relation to the health and safety situation - he will report further on this after hearing back from the Welsh Government

The Library was congratulated on its attendance at the National Eisteddfod, particularly the Peace Petition partnership events and the launch of the University of Wales Trinity Saint David Strategic Partnership. Disappointment was expressed that more Trustees were not attending our events and activities, in order to experience the community work and engagement that happens. Members felt that a large number of invitations were being sent to them, and that it would be beneficial if more notice was given as to the timing of some of these events. It was agreed to report this to Rhian Gibson.

The Library has been asked to consider selecting one of the works currently on display in the upper foyer to be part of the permanent collection as the legacy of the Somalia project, and to display it publicly to bring attention to the project.

Section 3 Strategic Affairs

3.1 Deaccessioning Scheme

A paper was submitted by Owain Roberts for information to address the Trustees' request for more information on the plans to use deaccessioning as a means of mitigating a risk of limited storage space, and to provide an overview of all of the Library's deaccessioning activities across all its collections.

A Deaccessioning Task Force was established in May 2023, which has worked on identifying categories of material suitable for deaccession, evaluating the cost and effort of deaccessing the content, ensuring cross-departmental discussion and consideration of deaccession work while ensuring that the potential for optimising the existing space is also realised as part of the process.

Regarding storage space, it was asked if it would be possible to consider the problem of lack of space in the Donations Acceptance Policy which is to be presented under item 3.5, by including a clause to say that the Library reserves the right not to accept donations of material to the collections. This was noted as a point to consider.

Members were assured that any deaccessioning work was assessed against the deaccessioning policy. Following a question about digital preservation, it was reported that digital preservation is an important field and part of the Library's day-to-day work. It has been noted that this field requires continuous attention due to the pace of technological advancements. The Library has a Collections Care Policy and digital preservation sits alongside physical preservation in that Policy. It was noted that the Library is also part of the Digital Preservation Consortium in terms of ensuring digital preservation for the future.

A freedom of information request was recently received from the BBC regarding missing items within the Library – this was in the context of the losses the British Library has recently experienced. There are approximately 1,200 misplaced/missing items within the Library which is a very small percentage of the total collections. The list is live, and various items on it have been restored to their correct location since the freedom of information request was responded to.

Mitigation measures to address losses include security measures in the reading rooms, managing staff loans, and inspection of high value items. However, it was asked whether it was possible to place missing items on the risk register of the collections department.

3.2 Health, Safety and Wellbeing Annual Report

The report was presented by Annwen Isaac; it was previously submitted to the Performance, Quality and Governance Committee, when the figures for average staff absences were requested.

Annwen noted that average staff leave was 3.6 days, which is less than the national figure of 7.8 days, with stress and work pressure accounting for a large part of the absences.

Members were happy to approve the report, and Annwen was thanked for preparing it.

3.2.1 Asbestos Risk Management

Mark Stevens was thanked for preparing a report on the management of asbestos risk in the building, and also for his diligent work in recent weeks to provide assurances that there was no RAAC present on the Library site at all.

3.3 Equality Annual Report

The report was presented by Annwen Isaac; this report had also previously been submitted to the Performance, Quality and Governance Committee.

It has been suggested that the Library consider staff experiences in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion, and extend an invitation to staff networks to attend the Board to talk about any problems they face in the workplace. We agreed to consider this in the future. It was also noted that it would be beneficial for the Library to consider joining the Diverse Cymru Culture Competency Accreditation Scheme, a scheme that helps organisations implement good practice in the workplace.

In response to a request on whether Welsh language training is available to Trustees, Annwen Isaac noted that any interested Trustees should contact her for further information.

There was praise for the work of the volunteering scheme, especially as it added additional value to the work of the Library.

Members were happy to approve the report, and Annwen was thanked for preparing it.

3. 4 Fundraising Strategy – revised version

Richard Roberts presented a revised draft of the strategy, which now includes key performance indicators for the 5 objectives. The Trustees were happy with this addition but wanted to see information regarding the cost of carrying out the work outlined in the strategy. Richard Roberts agreed to include this.

A Grants Officer has been appointed who will help Richard Roberts with the work of applying to trusts and organisations for grants.

The Trustees were happy to approve the strategy, providing an addition of delivery cost was included.

3.5 Policy on Accepting Donations and Contributions

The Trustees were happy to approve the policy introduced by Richard Roberts, providing that the following were included;

- include the Executive Team as a step between the Head of Fundraising and the Board under the principles of proxy
- reference to the Private Funds Investment Policy

3.6 Audience Engagement (relating to the Covid Resilience Fund application)

Richard Roberts was thanked for preparing a paper that gives the Trustees a better understanding of the engagement works underway.

It was agreed that further work was needed in this area, which includes an assessment of our audiences, both current and potential, and Rhian Gibson, Owen Llywelyn and Rhodri ap Dyfrig were asked to discuss this further and present a draft plan to the Board meeting in November.

3.7 Terms of Reference for the Board of Trustees

The terms of reference were presented by the Clerk of the Board, as this had been one of the recommendations arising from the recent Board Effectiveness Review report.

The Clerk was thanked for preparing this, and it was approved by the Trustees.

3.8 Corporate Governance Framework - a review

Following a request from the Trustees in June, a clause was drafted to be included in the Corporate Governance Framework on how decisions are taken between Board meetings, when that has to be done. A clause was submitted to the Performance, Quality and Governance Committee and recommended to the Board for approval.

The clause was approved subject to the following changes to point 8.3(a)

- change *face-to-face* to read *in person*, and *seek opinions* to *share opinions*
- add a sentence to say that trustees agree to their email addresses being shared amongst themselves and with relevant staff for the purpose of sharing information and opinions, and reaching a decision
- add a bullet point to explain how a vote will be taken

The Clerk will circulate an amended version to the Trustees following the meeting.

3.9 Action Plan – Fourth Street report

Owen Llywelyn submitted a report prepared by Rhian Gibson which laid out the work in progress arising from the Fourth Street and Mather & Co. reports and which include;

- the Library grounds
- full inspection of our signs and different floor zones
- interior work to improve public spaces
- improvements to Pendinas and the Shop – the Library is already working with a retail specialist to develop the Shop
- audience research

A further update will be provided to the Board in November on the above developments.

3.10 CIPFA Recommendations

The Treasurer provided an update on the next steps to address the recommendations of the CIPFA reports and the financial challenges facing the Library.

Following the discussion at the July Board meeting, the Treasurer and Chief Executive and Librarian have concluded that the best way forward is to arrange a roundtable discussion on the Library's fiscal position and financial sustainability as soon as possible with the Library's senior management. This will be followed by further discussions with the Board and the Finance and Resources Committee,

The Chief Executive and Librarian along with other chief executives met with Jason Thomas, the Welsh Government's Director of Culture, Sport and Tourism last Tuesday to discuss the budget. It was suggested then that the 2024/2025 budget may be the same as this year, or 5% or 10% less. The Library has provided Jason Thomas with a paper outlining the areas that can be looked at in terms of reducing operational costs, including reviewing the pension arrangements.

If there is a reduction in the budget, then the strategic plan and action plan will have to be revisited to ensure that we are working within the budget that will be provided. This will be discussed in the roundtable discussion. The strategic plan will be reviewed in light of the findings of those discussions, with a paper presented to the Board in November.

3.5 Pension Scheme – verbal update

Discussed in a closed session; nothing further to report.

Section 4 Corporate Affairs

4.1 Financial Reporting

4.1.1 Management Accounts August 2023

Management accounts were submitted in August 2023 by Emyr Evans.

There is quite a bit of surplus against the budget and the buffers need to be identified and the budget updated; the budget as it remains suggests that we are spending less than has been budgeted for, and Emyr Evans is working on aligning expenditure against the budget.

It was noted that from now on the Executive Team is going to ask department heads to justify spending by their staff, and that requests for expenditure need to be approved by the Executive Team.

4.1.2 Private Fund Commitments

Emyr Evans presented a table of the commitments of the private funds, current and past expenditure, emphasizing that this is a live document that will be updated regularly. This draft will be discussed further by the Finance and Resources Committee at its meeting on 17 October.

Emyr Evans was thanked for preparing the document, the first time the current Board has received such a document. From now on, this will be a standing item on the agenda of each Board meeting.

4.2 Compliance and Risk

4.2.1 Corporate Risk Register

No issues to report.

Section 5: Committee reports

5.1 Quality and Performance Committee Draft Minutes 14.08.23

The minutes were presented by the chair of the committee, the President.

As a result of the concern that the 1921 Census resource was not prominently placed on the Library's website, this has now been placed in a more noticeable place. Staff were asked to consider promoting this resource better as it is a free resource, and we are the only site that offers it outside the National Archives.

5.2 Draft Minutes of Buildings Panel 06.09.23

In the absence of the chair of the last meeting, Quentin Howard, any questions or comments should be directed to the Clerk of the Board, who will pass them on to Quentin Howard and Mark Stevens.

Section 6: Any other matters

6.1 Appointment of Trustees – update

Interviews were conducted in early September and names have been submitted to the Deputy Minister for her approval. The 2 appointments are Welsh Government appointments.

6.2 Anti-Fraud Seminar

An anti-fraud seminar will be held on Teams on Friday 27 October from 11.00 - 1.00. Stephen Tooby, Head of Welsh Government Anti-Fraud will deliver the seminar.

6.3 PhD Scheme

The Library is a partner in a consortium with the AHRC which funds 15 PhDs over 3 years, and a number of applications have gone through the "declaration of interest" stage to the next stage - these will be developed into full applications.

6.4 Retirement

Today, Elgar Pugh, Conservation Officer, retires from the Library after 52 years of service; the Trustees were extended a welcome to join the staff to wish Elgar well at a farewell tea in Pendinas.

Next meeting:

Friday, November 24 at 10.00 in the Council Chamber

ACTION POINTS ARISING FROM THE MEETING ON 27.07.23

Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility	Date implemented/expected
	Sharing action points resulting from the Board effectiveness workshop with Board members and the Clerk	Andrew Evans	✓

ACTION POINTS ARISING FROM THE MEETING ON 29.09.23

Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility	Date implemented/expected
Report of the Chief Executive and Librarian	Transmitting a message to communications directorate staff regarding the frequency of sending invitations to trustees	Clerk	✓
Deaccession Scheme	Contain <i>missing items</i> on the departmental risk register of the collections department	Owain Roberts	✓
Equality Annual Report	Sharing information with the Trustees regarding Welsh language learning courses	Annwen Isaac	✓
Fundraising Strategy	Include cost of carrying out the work outlined	Rich Roberts	✓
Policy on Accepting Donations and Contributions	a) Involve the Executive Team as a stepping stone between the Head of Fundraising and the board under delegation principles b) include reference to the Private Funds Investment Policy	Rich Roberts	✓
Audience Engagement	Discuss further and submit further information to the November meeting	Rhian Gibson, Rich Roberts and Rhodri ap Dyfrig	✓
Corporate Governance Framework	Amend the framework in accordance with what was stated in the minutes, and circulate it to the Trustees for information	Clerk	✓
Fourth Street Action Plan	Further update on developments	Rhian Gibson	✓
CIPFA Recommendations	Submit a paper to the Board on implementation of recommendations	Chief Executive / Treasurer	✓
Private Fund Commitments	Ensuring it is a standing item on the agenda of the Board and the Finance and Resources Committee	Clerk	✓