

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF WALES
Minutes of the Meeting of the Board
held in Aberystwyth
on Friday, 24 April 2015
between 10.00am and 12.00pm
and between 1.00pm and 2.30pm

Present:

Professor Sir Deian Hopkin, President	Colin R John, Treasurer	Hugh Thomas
Tricia Carter, Vice-President	Enid Morgan	Wyn Penri Jones
Gareth Haulfryn Williams	Roy Roberts	Roy Evans
Michael Trickey	Phil Cooper	Susan Davies

Members of Staff:

Aled Gruffydd Jones	Chief Executive and Librarian
David Michael	Head of the Directorate of Corporate Resources
Avril Jones	Head of the Directorate of Collections and Public Programmes
Pedr ap Llwyd	Secretary and Head of Governance

Others:

Linda Tomos	CyMAL
Rebecca Johnson	CyMAL
Doug Jones	Whitley
Siân Thomas	Whitley
Annwen Isaac	Staff

Open Session

Section 1 Formal Items

1.1 President's Welcome and Apologies

The President welcomed all those present, especially Lord Aberdare following his recent operation.

Huw Williams had tendered his apologies.

1.2 Declarations of Interest

Gareth Haulfryn Williams had previously declared an interest in those matters which the Library discusses occasionally with the Heritage Lottery Fund as he performs an occasional advisory role to the Fund.

Michael Trickey had previously declared an interest in those matters which the Library discusses occasionally with the Welsh Government as he is married to a member of the Welsh Government's Cabinet.

Tricia Carter had previously declared an interest in those matters which the Library discusses occasionally with the Welsh Government as she is a Non-Executive Director of the Corporate Governance Committee, Department of Finance and Corporate Services, Welsh Government.

Huw Williams had previously declared an interest in matters where the Library would be advised by Geldards LLP.

1.3 Approving the minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved subject to the rewording of minute 5.2. The correct wording was:

“At the request of the President, the Board agreed to commission an external independent review of the operation of the Library’s disciplinary policy and other matters which had led to an employment tribunal hearing which decided that two members of staff had been unfairly dismissed.”

It was also noted that Avril Jones had not been present at the last meeting of the Board as she had been on a trip to China.

Action: Pedr ap Llwyd to amend the minute.

Section 2 ‘Live’ matters and matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting

2.1 Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales

Avril Jones presented the paper and the recommendations relating to the relocation of the Commission, its staff and its collection on the Library’s campus.

The Board agreed, in principle, to the recommendation that the Library’s management be authorised to agree on Heads of Terms, but on condition that:

- 2.1.1 the Board itself should give the final assent to the contract and the Heads of Terms.
- 2.1.2 that any ambiguous wording (e.g. “guesses”) be completely eliminated.
- 2.1.3 that the Library should not become responsible for any undefined costs.
- 2.1.4 that clauses be added to the effect that the Library would charge a fee for any conservation work carried out on the Commission’s collections.
- 2.1.5 that a clause be added to the effect that the Library would expect that the Commission would in all its actions operate in accordance with recognised professional standards.

It was agreed that the Library’s management could consult Members of the Board on this matter should they feel that this could facilitate the work.

Action: The Library’s management to set about reaching agreement on Heads of Terms and preparing a lease. The Board would agree on both these matters at its June meeting.

2.2 Matters relating to the fire

The lack of progress in this matter since the last meeting of the Board could be attributed to the lack of response from the Liquidator. The Library’s management were currently holding talks with the Government about the possibility of bringing a legal case and to what extent the Government would give this its practical support and shoulder any financial losses were the Library to fail in its efforts.

2.3 Risks involving the building

David Michael said he was currently in discussion with the Government about the building's condition: he said the Government was not unaware of the sums needed to deal with the maintenance work that had accumulated.

2.4 Appointment of Trustee

Pedr ap Llwyd said an invitation to join the Board had been issued to the candidate at the top of the reserve list following the 2014 recruitment campaign. Unfortunately, she was no longer in a position to undertake further responsibilities, as she had now taken on other commitments. Thus, there was no choice but to wait until a wider recruitment campaign was conducted to fill three vacancies on the Board of Trustees.

2.5 Governance Statement

Pedr ap Llwyd circulated the latest draft of the Statement to Members. The textual corrections that needed to be incorporated were noted.

Section 3 Strategic matters and main papers

3.1 Restructuring - progress report

Aled Gruffydd Jones presented the progress report he had prepared. In response to a comment from one Member the Chief Executive said that management were sensitive to the feelings of those members of staff who had been unsuccessful in their applications for voluntary redundancy.

The period of service of Dr Rhodri Clwyd Griffiths, Change Management Consultant, had come to an end, and Aled Gruffydd Jones thanked him for his work.

Action: The Executive Team to consider the cost and benefits of utilizing the consultant's services during the project.

3.2 Outreach report - Merthyr Tydfil 2013-2015

Members were very pleased to receive the report and noted its contents. It was agreed that this scheme could not be evaluated in financial terms alone, but Members agreed it would be useful to be informed of the total financial investment the Library had made in order to ensure the success of this important outreach project. In addition, it would be useful, eventually, to commission an evaluation of the project.

Action: Aled Gruffydd Jones to prepare a financial analysis.

3.3 Operational Plan

The Board noted the Operational Plan. This was the final version, which was submitted to the Deputy Minister by the end of March.

Section 4 Financial Matters

4.1 Budgetary report to 31/3/2015

David Michael presented the budgetary report he had prepared.

Considerable disquiet was voiced concerning the financial situation and the fact that the Library was now operating at the maximum limit of budgetary sustainability.

The Library had no capital fund and it was agreed to give this urgent attention: setting up such a fund could place the Library in a position to take advantage of opportunities that might follow the Government's future spending reviews.

During the discussion, considerable concern was once again expressed about the deteriorating condition of the building. Dr Susan Davies said there were trusts and funds available specifically for historic buildings and the fundraising function should investigate these further. The President suggested consideration could be given to a fundraising campaign linked to the needs of the building.

Action: David Michael to consider setting up a capital scheme.

4.2 Fundraising - Head of External Relations

A copy of the job description for the Head of External Relations had been circulated to Members in advance. There was a short discussion on the matter and it was agreed that the description needed to include clear achievement targets for the postholder and his/her department. Nor was the proper focus placed on marketing, branding and fundraising. The postholder needed to understand exactly what the expectations were for the post. In addition, it would be a good thing to mention the funds available for the new department's activities in the job description.

Management were asked to consider appointing specialists to assist the Library in identifying suitable candidates for the post.

Phil Cooper was appointed to serve on the selection panel.

Action: David Michael and Human Resources to adapt the job description. The Executive Team to consider appointing experts to assist in the identification of suitable candidates.

Section 5 Information Pack

5.1 Librarian's Business

Aled Gruffydd Jones was pleased to report that the Library had recently maintained a presence for a day in vacant shop premises on one of Aberystwyth's main streets where members of the public were given an opportunity to have historic items in their possession scanned digitally. It had been an extremely successful day.

He was also pleased to be able to report that the Welsh Government had awarded the Library a grant of £255,000 to lead the work of developing a Digital Library Service for Wales. This sponsorship would enable the Library to work in partnership with Wales's other libraries to provide free access to a wide range of online material, including family history resources, newspapers and general reference material. The partnership would also provide free online access to e-books and e-

periodicals.

5.2 President's Business

Sir Deian regretfully referred to the death of Professor Emeritus R. Geraint Gruffydd, a former Librarian of the National Library. He had been a person of note, with a substantial and far-reaching contribution and influence in several fields. The President expressed his sympathy with the Professor's wife and family.

Sir Deian announced his intention to stand down as President at the end of his first term of office in November 2015, for purely practical reasons. He felt that the distance between his home and the Library made it difficult for him to carry out his duties in the way he would have wished.

Section 6 AOB

None