

National Portrait Gallery

722nd MEETING

Minutes of the Meeting of the Trustees held at the National Portrait Gallery on
Thursday 17 November 2005

Present:

- Professor David Cannadine (Chairman)
- Ms Zeinab Badawi
- Mr Nicholas Blake
- Professor Robert Boucher
- The Marchioness of Douro
- Ms Amelia Fawcett
- Ms Flora Fraser
- Professor Ludmilla Jordanova
- Sir Christopher Ondaatje
- Mr Tom Phillips
- Professor Sara Selwood
- Miss Alexandra Shulman
- Sir John Weston

In attendance:

- Mr Sandy Nairne
- Mr Jacob Simon

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from the Rt Hon Baroness Amos and Sir Nicholas Grimshaw.

2. Trustees

The Chairman welcomed Nicholas Blake to his first meeting as a trustee. The dates for Trustee meetings in 2006 were confirmed.

3. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2005 were approved.

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Director's Report

The Director reported that staff turnover was slightly above the national average, in part due to the recruitment of younger Front of House staff who bring motivation to the job but who are not expected to stay indefinitely; more generally, as a small organisation we offer limited career progression so that the promotion of staff to other organisations should be viewed very positively. Robert Boucher referred to his experience that a two-year training programme leading to a certificate could aid retention. The Director hoped that the newly formed sectoral skills body would prove useful in consolidating a common system of accreditation. He reported that it was about to be announced that Kathleen Soriano, Head of Exhibitions and Collections Management, would be taking up the appointment of Director at Compton Verney.

The Director also reported on the 150th anniversary. All tickets for the Gala had been sold. We were hoping to finalise arrangements with *The Sunday Times/The Times* as anniversary media partners. Herbert Smith had agreed to become anniversary sponsor and Credit Suisse sponsor for the exhibition, *Searching for Shakespeare*. The Director reported that the Gallery Trustees of the Portrait Fund had met that morning and that the draft Trust Deed would be circulated to Trustees for comments. It would be sent to DCMS and we would seek assurance from them on certain points. Amelia Fawcett complimented the Communications and Development Director and her team on their success in obtaining corporate and exhibition sponsors in a difficult economic climate.

In response to questions, the Director said that the Wolfson Foundation had supported the Gallery in building projects, that the Chandos portrait of Shakespeare would not be conserved before the exhibition and that we had not suffered as badly as some other national museums following the events of 7 July.

6. Portraits on Offer

The Chief Curator reported that the Gallery had purchased portraits at the Roy Davids sale of Ted Hughes and Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning with Chairman's approval. Additional support for the acquisition of the drawing of Hughes had now been offered by the vendor. Roy Davids had now offered the Gallery an example of the photograph of John Clare in old age, which was unsigned and therefore at a much lower price; the Trustees agreed that this offer was worth pursuing in principle.

In addition to the items on the Trustees agenda, curators reported on the acquisition with Chairman's approval of Herbert Ponting's photograph, *Captain Scott's Birthday Dinner*, 1911, at Sotheby's 15 November 2005 for £7,800, and on the upcoming sale at auction of a statuette of Sir Winston Churchill by Ivor Roberts-Jones. The Director reported that he had been able to negotiate a significant reduction in the asking price for the portrait of Sir David Hare. He also reported that Sir David and Lady Scholey had offered support for a commissioned portrait; the Trustees expressed gratitude for this offer. The Trustees expressed enthusiasm for the prospective acquisition of the portrait of John Donne and made suggestions concerning a prospective fundraising campaign.

- THE TRUSTEES agreed to the acquisition of the portraits on the appended list. The acquisition of the portrait of Sir David Hare was conditional on funding and that of John Donne conditional on agreeing the value and on funding

7. Commissions

The Director explained the Annual Commissions arrangements for selecting a limited number of figures who have made or are making a significant contribution to British life and culture at the highest level. There was some discussion as to whether some of the individuals so chosen should have popular appeal. The Chairman put forward some names to test out support. Following the deliberations at the July Trustees meeting, there was a lively discussion particularly concerning figures from military and scientific life.

- THE TRUSTEES agreed to proceed with a commissioned portrait of Johnson Beharry.

The Update on Annual Commissions and Photograph Commissions was noted. A short list of proposed sitters for the Health Sector commission would be circulated to Trustees.

8. Finance and Planning

Barbara Jotham presented the Financial Report to 31 October 2005 which the Trustees welcomed.

- THE TRUSTEES approved the designation for the Portrait Fund of £580,000, the latest income received from the Viscountess Eccles bequest

On the Business Plan 2006-9, the Director noted that the context for the coming financial year was broadly positive. He highlighted the key priorities and investment and resource needs. The Trustees noted progress towards the new Business Plan and the very initial budget projection.

- THE TRUSTEES approved the priorities that will guide the next stage of planning

9. DCMS Funding Agreement

The Director outlined the key Funding Agreement targets. The agreement was in draft; any changes of substance would be reported at the next Trustees meeting.

- THE TRUSTEES authorised the Chair of Trustees and Director to sign on their behalf the final version of the 2005-8 Funding Agreement

10. Audit and Compliance Committee

Sir John Weston, Chairman of the Audit and Compliance Committee, reported on the recent review of the Risk Management Register, noting that the Committee was satisfied that risks were being kept under regular review. He drew attention to the economic environment which was likely to get more difficult, to funding levels where the Committee had increased the risk score to Red A, and to other external risks where he drew attention to public concerns on avian flu. The Committee had also discussed issues arising from revising the reserves policy such that various additional sources of funding would be consolidated in the Investment and Contingency Fund. The Committee will look at a proposed policy at their February meeting for approval by the Trustees in March.

11. National Programmes

Kathleen Soriano reported on National Programmes. There was increasing competition among national museums in working across the country. The Director reported that there were capacity issues for the Gallery but the possibility of a further partnership with a regional hub, likely to be the South West, was being investigated. Our wish to stabilise funding for National Programmes was not helped by the reluctance of the government to commit forward funding. Robert Boucher reported that Sheffield was very pleased with the results of cooperation with the Gallery. He drew attention to the Regional Development Agency as a potential source of funding. Further discussion highlighted the importance of responding to what local museums and galleries wished to achieve, the role that interns have in making connections between national and local collections and the potential of the Portrait Portal as a way of drawing together the nation's portrait collections. The Trustees welcomed the report and wished Kathleen Soriano well in her new appointment, thanking her for her great contribution to the work of the Gallery.

12. Matters for Report

Reports on Communications and Development, Building and Resources, Learning and Access and Loan requests were noted. Alexandra Shulman suggested trying Motorola as a sponsor for the Photographic Portrait Prize.

13. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

Appended list of portraits on offer, 17 November 2005

MATHILDE BLIND

Purchase approved

EMMANUEL LEVY

Gift accepted

RICHARD ARTHUR WOLHEIM

Purchase approved

ROBERT WILLIAM VICTOR GITTINGS

Gift accepted

LADY OTTOLINE MORRELL

Previously purchased and now accepted

JOANNE KATHLEEN ('J.K.') ROWLING

Purchase approved

SIR DAVID SCHOLEY

Commission approved

SIR DAVID HARE

Purchase approved subject to funding

SIR MICHAEL HOWARD

Commission approved

JOHN DONNE

Purchase approved subject to agreement on price and funding