

NATIONAL ARMY MUSEUM COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the NAM Council at 14.30 – 17.00hrs on Tuesday 16th July 2024 in the Boardroom at the NAM Chelsea

Present

Lieutenant General Sir Simon Mayall (Chair), Lieutenant General Sir George Norton (Deputy Chair), Mr Tim Cooke, Mrs Judith Donovan, Mr Neil Johnson, Mr Paul Davies, Mr Chris Finney GC, Prof Ali Ansari, Lord Roberts of Belgravia, Mr Paul Schreier, Mrs Sabine Vandenbroucke.

In Attendance

Brigadier Justin Maciejewski (Director, National Army Museum), Mr Mike O'Connor (Deputy Director, National Army Museum) Ms Lizzy Sutherland (Clerk to Council, NAM (Minutes), Mr Mike Robbins (Army Chief Accountant), Mr Chris Horner (Chair, Members Advisory Group), Mr Jeremy Fowler (Army Heritage Branch).

Item 1. Council Administration

Item 1.1 Chairman's Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and remarked how great it was to see Council at the soft launch of Chelsea Heritage Quarter 15th July 2024.

Item 1.2 Register of Members' Interests

The Register was made available in accordance with Charity Commission advice and no amendments were made.

Item 1.3 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from HRH the Duke of Kent, Prof Helen Parr and Ms Sue Mackenzie.

Item 1.4 Minutes of the Previous Meeting & Matters Arising

The minutes were approved as a true record.

The Chairman's Reception was confirmed for Wednesday 25th September 2024.

Item 2. Director's Update

The Director shared his dashboard slide with Council. Broadly the Museum was in good shape. Footfall has grown 7% over the last 12 months. Revitalising the Archive Team has made a real difference particularly to academics and researchers. Digital footfall continues to grow broadly speaking. Membership is going through a major reset this year, and numbers have gone up. Collections are in the process of changing over to a new Collections Management System (CMS) to allow much more of the collection to be put online. Work is progressing cleaning data prior to transfer to the new system.

Volunteers are growing back and it's a much younger cohort. Staff turnover is down, and we hope to return to the historic average of 18%. The new Head of Development is in place.

A modest brand refresh was completed.

All permanent galleries will be refreshed by September. Foe to Friend and Shakespeare temporary exhibitions will be demounted in September, prior to these areas being reconfigured before the Victorian Art exhibition is installed next year.

National Army Research Institute (NARI), our research institute with the Army is moving slowly but we are still trying to build a joint research entity for IRO status.

On the research side our fifth Research Fellow has started at Kings College London and will be looking at WWII service records which should be an interesting project, jointly funded by one of our Patrons and NAM.

Partnerships continue to grow with regimental work. The training programme is going on apace with more courses than ever before.

Item 3. Updates from Committees

3.1 Development Committee

The Chair gave Council an overview of activities. There has been a huge ramp up in research activity and scholarly outputs in the past 3 years and it is now a core part of our strategy. Recently launched were 'Stories from the Archives', in April we hosted talks with Kohima Trust; in October we are co-hosting ICOM; Dr Alan Jeffreys has a new publication; our first Fellow Dr Nicole Hartwell is working on Monographs; Dr Eamon O'Keeffe finishes his Fellowship in 2025 and is working on some content for the American War of Independence ahead of their 250th anniversary.

3.2 NAMTL Board/Enterprise Committee

The Chairman of NAMTL briefed Council on performance.

3.3 Performance, Audit and Risk Assessment Committee

The Chair of PA&RA briefed Council on ongoing National Audit Office Audit. Fees were also discussed and costs Queried by Council.

3.4 Collections

The new Collections Development Policy was being produced; it gives greater clarity in what we are seeking to do. The Waterloo Uncovered temporary exhibition has been deferred due to funding shortages. It will be replaced with "80 years of Soldier Magazine".

3.5 People & Remunerations Committee

This Committee now meets twice a year to cover all the Human Resources issues. The aim is to support HR & People Policy at the Museum and will be reviewed again next year. There were concerns raised from the staff engagement surveys. The response rate is currently 50-60%. Members advised incentivising it for better uptake as the response rate should be 70-80% and to check those teams where there was low response.

Item 4. Finance Summaries to 31st March 2024

The Deputy Director updated Council on finances which were presented to PA&RA recently. The first quarter was looking relatively healthy.

Item 5. Health & Safety Report

The Deputy Director confirmed that NAM remains a safe institution.

Item 6. Any Other Business

6.1 Council Training

The 12th of November 2024 will be the next Council meeting by Zoom to approve the statutory accounts.

The Director asked for suggestions for the following training day. Members thought a session from the Sponsor and a look ahead at the new government might be useful.

6.2 Performance Appraisal

Questions had been produced and the Chairman will call members individually in the autumn to have an informal discussion on performance.

Mr Mike Robbins will appraise the Chairman and review how the board is performing overall.

6.3 Committee Meeting Cadence 2025

The Clerk will circulate Council and Committee dates for 2025 by the end of the month.

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