

## **BARBICAN CENTRE BOARD**

**Wednesday, 20 May 2020**

Minutes of the meeting of the Barbican Centre Board held at Virtual Public Meeting.

The meeting can be viewed at: <https://youtu.be/I5Nbc2EovmA> on Wednesday, 20 May 2020 at 10.30 am

### **Present**

#### **Members:**

Deputy Tom Sleight (Chair)	Emma Kane (Ex-Officio Member)
Deputy Dr Giles Shilson (Deputy Chairman)	Vivienne Littlechild
Stephen Bediako	Wendy Mead
Russ Carr	Lucy Musgrave
Simon Duckworth	Judith Pleasance
Alderman David Graves	The Rt Hon. the Lord Mayor,
Gerard Grech	Alderman William Russell
Deputy Tom Hoffman	Jenny Waldman
Deputy Wendy Hyde	

#### **Officers:**

Sir Nicholas Kenyon	-	Managing Director, The Barbican Centre
Jonathon Poyner	-	Director of Operations & Buildings, Barbican Centre
Sandeep Dwesar	-	Chief Operating & Financial Officer, Barbican Centre
Natasha Harris	-	Director of Development, Barbican Centre
Leonora Thomson	-	Interim Artistic Director, Barbican Centre
Sean Gregory	-	Director of Innovation & Engagement, Barbican Centre
Jenny Mollica	-	Director of Creative Learning, Barbican Centre
Niki Cornwell	-	Head of Finance and Business Administration, Barbican Centre
Joanne Hunneybell	-	Senior Project Manager, City Surveyors
Ola Obadara	-	Projects Director, City Surveyors
Andrew Buckingham	-	Communications Team, Town Clerk's Department
Leanne Murphy	-	Town Clerk's Department

### **1. APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies received from Members.

The Chairman advised Members that Graham Packham stepped down as Chair of the Culture Heritage & Libraries Committee and had been subsequently replaced by the new Chair, Wendy Hyde, as the representative for this Committee. The Chairman thanked Graham for his input during his tenure on the Board.

### **2. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

There were no declarations.

### 3. **MINUTES**

The public minutes and summary of the Board meeting held on 22 January 2020 were approved as a correct record subject to one typo. Members were reminded that the Board's last meeting on 25 March was a non-public inquorate meeting and the meeting note did not require approval.

The Chairman advised Members that his term as Chairman had come to an end. Members were advised that due to the current pandemic restrictions, April Court had been unable to go ahead to reconstitute its Committees for the year and there would be no 2020 elections for the Chairman. Subsequently, the current Deputy Chair would become Acting Chair until the elections could take place. The Chairman thanked Members for their support during his tenure which had been a privilege and was sad to pass the baton on under the current circumstances. Members and Officers thanked the Chairman for his great support and leadership over the years.

The new Chair thanked the outgoing Chairman who was a privilege to work with. The Chair advised that these were difficult circumstances and the Barbican Centre had big challenges to overcome in the next few years.

#### Vote of Thanks to the Outgoing Chairman

Alderman Graves paid tribute to Giles Shilson, the past Chairman.

#### **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:**

That the Members of this Board take great pleasure in expressing to:

#### **DR GILES ROBERT EVELYN SHILSON, DEPUTY**

their sincere gratitude and appreciation for the dedication he has shown in all aspects of work of this Board, and the exemplary manner in which he has presided over proceedings during the last three years as Chairman of the Barbican Centre Board.

HIS detailed knowledge of, and involvement in, the work of the Centre - together with his committed enthusiasm for the arts - have been of great value to the Board. During a time of increasing funding pressures for the arts, his keen financial acumen and eye for detail has been invaluable in balancing the artistic activities of the Centre with the transformation of the Barbican into a more commercially-minded organisation, generating significant income to ensure that the Centre can flourish as a world-class multi-arts centre in a new funding environment. As a member of the Barbican Centre Trust he has constantly supported the fundraising activities of the Centre, and his attendance at many artistic and fund-raising events has been deeply appreciated by all, and he has supported the establishment of the new post of Director of Development for the Centre.

HIS work with cultural partners, both within and beyond the City Corporation, has helped the Barbican's management team in all its work. He has been very

active in the work of the Board and has shown great leadership in steering the Board through a period of change. His engagement with others has also been invaluable in the ongoing work around developing the Centre for Music project which would transform the Barbican for the future and be a substantial legacy. Giles has chaired the Barbican Board's meetings with warmth, skill and efficiency, and Board Members would wish to thank him for involving them so fully in both decision making and information sharing.

SEVERAL important pieces of new strategic thinking have been developed in his time as Chairman, notably a newly revised Strategic Plan, strategies for each of the art forms and for Creative Learning across the Barbican and Guildhall School. A new International Strategy and an Arts and Learning Civic Strategy have been created and approved. Capital projects that have been approved and executed include those around fire, health and safety, and the refurbishment of level 4, with others currently in train.

THROUGHOUT his term of office, Giles has managed the Board's deliberations with a fair and firm hand to ensure that the Board executed its duties in a competent manner. It is only a matter of regret to all that the end of his tenure as Chairman takes place during the enforced closure of the Centre as a result of Covid-19, and the Board looks forward to expressing their thanks personally to him in the future.

FINALLY, in congratulating their former Chairman upon a most successful term of office, his colleagues on the Board wish to convey their thanks to him for his extremely dedicated service to the Barbican Centre during his tenure, and to his wife Dorothy for her constant support and attendance at the Centre. It is hoped with continued good health and happiness he can continue to serve the Barbican Centre and the wider City Corporation for many years to come.

#### 4. **MANAGEMENT REPORT BY THE CENTRE'S DIRECTORS**

Members received a report of the Managing Director providing updates from the Barbican Directors on their respective areas. The following comments were made:

- The Managing Director stated that the Covid-19 pandemic was the biggest issue that the Barbican Centre had ever experienced. The Centre officially closed on 17 March 2020 leading to a total loss of income and cancelled events. The Managing Director highlighted the impressive ongoing commitment be undertaken to keep the Barbican safe ready for when it can reopen. The recent Government guidance included step 3 which would allow re-opening but no timeline of when that would be.
- Members welcomed Leonora Thomson back to the Barbican in the new role Interim Artistic Director.
- Members were advised that issuing refunds had been a main focus since the lockdown.

- Within Creative Learning, two responses to the lockdown had been developed. The first was a local response and the team were working with Culture Mile and the London Borough of Islington to help families without internet (one in ten families). The other was a digital response including work with the National Youth Orchestra and young sessions.
- With regards to Innovation and Engagement, Members were advised that digital/technology was the key focus. Good business processes and digital outputs had been developed and technology and innovation were the next area focus with some Members already inputting and pushing this workstream.

Despite the Joint Barbican/Guildhall School Away Day being unprecedentedly cut short, work was pressing ahead on the Creative Alliance framework, particularly with regard to connecting both organisational civic strategies.

- The Director of Operations and Buildings thanked staff, Members, Officers and local residents for their ongoing support as the Projects Team continued with plans to develop the Barbican as a destination for the future. It was confirmed the building was safe and staff continued to ensure the Centre remained compliant even whilst closed. The team were currently preparing for the reopening of the Barbican which would be in a phased approach and PPI advice had been sought from the City Corporation.
- The Business Events team continue to work with clients to move booked dates or transfer business in the future. A stream of enquires had also been received for events in autumn.
- Members were advised that an online Barbican retail offer should be available from June.
- It was noted that the catering offer at the Barbican had been particularly hard hit and Officers were working with contractors to help them open as soon as possible.
- BIE were also struggling to deal with the complexity of exhibitions worldwide. It was noted that the Head of BIE (Neil McConnon) had left the Barbican in mid-May which was a big loss.
- Members were advised that whilst applications were continuing, the pandemic had caused a significant impact on arts funding and scenario planning had begun. Corporate support and donors had been impacted but were remaining loyal and a virtual programme was in development to keep everyone connected.

RESOLVED – That Members endorse Management’s approach to the future reopening of the Centre.

5. **BARBICAN ART GALLERY CHILLER REPLACEMENT**

The Board considered a Gateway 2 report of the Managing Director regarding Barbican Art Gallery Chiller Replacement, noting the non-public appendix at Item 10.

Members were advised that the current unit was at the end of its life, was already failing and required replacement to reduce risk to the gallery and maintain the conditions for the artwork. The new unit would not be reliant on a district system, would be better for the carbon footprints and reduce risk and costs. Members were supportive of the new unit.

RESOLVED - That Members:

- Approve a budget of £14,000 to reach Gateway 3/4 (staff costs, consultant fees and surveys);
- Note the estimated cost range of £300,000 (excluding risk);
- Approve a costed risk provision of £4,000 to be drawn down via delegation to Chief Officer.

6. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE BOARD**

There were no questions.

7. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**

Thanks to the Director of Creative Learning

The Chair gave thanks on behalf of the Board to Jenny Mollica as this was her last meeting. The following speech was given:

*Jenny joined the Barbican in December 2008 as an Education Officer and following the creation of the Creative Learning department she worked as a Theatre and Cross-Arts Producer. She has been one of the most important people in working out the whole agenda of our creative learning department with the Guildhall School, and we are much in her debt for her continual commitment to that Alliance, and to developing the strategy and purpose of the Creative Learning department - as can be seen in today's Board report for information.*

*As Head of Creative Learning from 2016 and then Director from 2018, she has contributed much to the overall direction and strategy of the Barbican in this time. The Board would like to thank her and send her all our good wishes as she moves to her new role as Director of the Baylis Programme at English National Opera.*

Members thanked Jenny for her significant impact developing creative learning at the Barbican and wished her all the best in her new role.

## External Membership

The Chair stated that the Board's external members were hugely important in bringing a range of expertise and skills to the Board. The Chair felt that now, more than ever, was an important time to ensure the Board had the right skills sets and would be having discussions with the Directors. Members were encouraged to make recommendations to the Chair regarding skills and individuals.

### 8. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

RESOLVED – That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

Item No.  
9-14

Paragraph No.  
3

### 9. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

The non-public minutes of the Board meeting held on 22 January 2020 were approved as a correct record.

### 10. **NON-PUBLIC APPENDICES: BARBICAN ART GALLERY CHILLER REPLACEMENT**

RESOLVED, that the non-public appendix to Item 5 (Gateway 2 Barbican Art Gallery Chiller Replacement) be noted.

### 11. **COVID-19 UPDATE**

The Board considered a report of the Chief Operating and Financial Officer providing Members with an update on the current situation for the Centre as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

### 12. **BARBICAN EXHIBITION HALLS - ENABLING WORKS**

Members considered a Gateway 3/4 report of the City Surveyor regarding Barbican Exhibition Halls – Enabling Works.

### 13. **NON-PUBLIC QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE BOARD**

There were no questions.

### 14. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**

There were no urgent items.

**The meeting ended at 12.03 pm**

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Chairman

**Contact Officer: Leanne Murphy**  
**tel. no.: 020 7332 3008**  
**[leanne.murphy@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:leanne.murphy@cityoflondon.gov.uk)**