REDACTED Minutes of the NMRN Trustee Board held on 16 July 2025 in SH12 and via Teams

Present:

Sir Philip Jones	Chair
Mark Anderson (MA)	
Kath Biggs (KB)	(left at 15:10)
Andrew Burnett (ABu)	
Philip Dolling (PD)	
Sarah Humphrey (SH)	
Helen Jackson (HJ)	
Mary Montagu-Scott (MMS)	
Jon Pentreath (JP)	
Ged Salzano (GS)	
Mike Scott (MSc)	
Alison Start (AS)	(remote)
Tom Wright (TW)	

In Attendance

Matthew Sheldon (MSh)	Chief Executive Officer
Andrew Baines (ABa)	Executive Director: Museum Operations
Sarah Dennis (SD)	Executive Director: Finance and Resources
Helen Goodman (HG)	Assistant Head: Policy Secretariat, Navy Command
Richard Hatfield (RH)	Chair NMRN Operations (left from 12:12 to 12:54)
Helen McKenna Aspell (HMA)	Associate Executive Director: Fundraising and Partnerships (joined for agenda item 5.3 only)
Martin Quinn (MQ)	Chair HMS Caroline Preservation Company (left 12:12)
Nicky Tregear (NT)	Head of Governance and Assurance

1. Introductions, Apologies and Declaration of Interests

1.1. The Chair welcomed MQ to the meeting.

1.2. The Chair thanked the Executive for the detail, quality and standard of the reports presented. It was noted that significant strategic work had been completed and continued to progress. BH6 continued to be the focus for the Executive.

1.3. Apologies were received from Colin Evans, Millie Tomlin Davies, Ollie Turpin and Jock Fraser (represented by HG). There were no new declarations of interests.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

2.1. The minutes of the 23 April 2025 meeting were **approved** as a true and accurate record.

3. Matters Arising and Action Grid

3.1. On review of the action grid, the following was noted:

3.1.1. AP14 and AP15 Associate Executive Director: People to consider alternative reporting for mandatory training compliance and provide a narrative of the turnover within the reports. **Complete.**

3.2. The outstanding actions were either included within the agenda or not due for completion.

3.3. There were no further matters arising.

4. Strategy Business

4.1. **Vision and Branding**

4.1.1. **Vision:** MSh introduced the paper and highlighted that work had progressed on the NMRN vision following comments made at the April Board. The new vision was **agreed**.

4.1.2. **Branding**: MSh confirmed that stakeholder testing regarding the sites was complete. The museum branding was **agreed.**

4.1.3. MSh noted that Johnson Banks would be instructed to complete the branding work. Following Board discussion, the following was noted:

- Digital should remain the initial focus.
- This was an opportunity to modernise with the opening of the Royal Marines Experience.
- A clear plan, timescales and budget for the project was required.
- All sites and the digital footprint would be included within the planning.

4.1.4. The Board **approved** the allocation from free reserves to progress the branding refresh project.

4.2. **10 Year Financial Plan**

4.2.1. The Chair confirmed that the plan was for information and not for approval at this stage. The Chair noted the broad and inclusive nature of the work.

4.2.2. It was agreed that the plan would return for further discussion in October. Through discussion, the following was noted:

- The early progression of the plan was commended, was necessary and impressive.
- Other charitable funding sources should also be investigated and pursued.
- There was a concerning downward trend in visitor numbers and the reemergence of a challenging economic environment within the visitor sector. The importance of a new ticketing strategy was emphasised and MSh confirmed that a summer discount strategy had been implemented following discussions with NMRNO and PHDO. This short-term initiative aimed to inform the longer-term ticket pricing model.
- Increased footfall was anticipated to PHD following the opening of the Royal Marines Experience, however, the wider sector challenges continued.
- Sustainability (environmental and social) was inherent within in the 10-year financial plan, which was underpinned by the Finance Strategy (approved 29 October 2024) and through identification of potential invest-to-save opportunities

and site investments. AB confirmed that sustainability initiatives at PHD and FAAM were being actively progressed.

4.2.3. The Board **noted** the 10-year financial plan progress to date.

4.3. HMSVPCo Update – CONFIDENTIAL

4.3.1. The Chair extended thanks to RH and the Executive for the extensive work undertaken to date.

4.3.2. RH and MQ left the meeting at 12:12.

4.4. **Governance Change Update (including NMRNO)- CONFIDENTIAL**

4.4.1. The governance update report was noted by the Board.

4.5. NMRN Hartlepool Update

4.5.1. RH returned to the meeting at 12:54.

4.5.2. The update report was **noted.**

4.6. Corporate Plan Position

4.6.1. MSh apologised for not sharing the plan. It was noted, however, that the corporate plan allocated resources against the new strategic pillars and foundations and included key projects. An updated version would be shared when available.

5. Trustees Business

5.1. CEO Report

5.1.1. MSh noted that the key business had been discussed in the previous agenda items. It was highlighted that a successful Association of Independent Museums (AIM) conference had been held at PHD earlier in July and the three site partners worked collaboratively. There was a good attendance and feedback was positive. This was an opportunity to showcase NMRN assets well.

5.1.2. It was also reported that Cobham Hall had taken transfer of the Fairey archive following the award of a grant from The National Archives.

5.1.3. June also witnessed the annual Volunteer Awards, and this was a successful event enabling the teams to celebrate our volunteers and reward them for their dedication. The Board **noted** the update.

5.2. 2025/26 Current Financial Position

5.2.1. SD reported that the financial reports represented the position at the end of May 2025 and gave a verbal update on the position to the end of June.

5.2.2. It was noted that the IT team had completed the procurement for the capital elements of the cyber security project.

5.2.3. It was noted that a similar visitor trend was being seen across the sector, with most organisations experiencing pressure on family spending due to the rising cost of a day out. Weather conditions were also impacting performance.

5.3. In relation to the Revenue Forecast (Appendix C), SD confirmed that the Executive Team remained focused on improving delivery.

5.4. BH6 Project

5.4.1. It was acknowledged that BH6 was a strategically significant project, and this was reflected within the paper.

5.4.2. The Board **noted** the positive outcome of the CDEL bid which had increased secured funding.

5.4.3. The Board **noted** the increase in risk relating to the project cost and noted the mitigations of the Project Director.

5.4.4. The Board **noted** the increase in risk relating to match funding and approved the revised fundraising plan proposed.

5.4.5. The Board **noted** the ongoing discussion with NC.

5.4.6. The Board **noted** the next commitment of expenditure for the project would be the signing of the Stage 2 contract 1 August 2025 with recommendations received from the Executive.

5.4.7. The majority **approved** proceeding with the proposed plan, subject to the outstanding matters and recognised the risks involved.

5.5. Health and Safety Report

5.5.1. On review of the report, it was noted that there had been no significant health and safety incidents reported for Q1. The recent near miss at NMRNH was noted.

5.5.2. The updated Health and Safety policy was **approved.**

5.6. The People Summary report

5.6.1. SD noted that compliance rates for mandatory training had improved, with ongoing monitoring by the Executive Board. Overall, positive progress was being seen. The eNPS score was under review by the Executive Board to identify actions to drive improvement.

6. Governance – Feedback from Committees

6.1. NMRN Operations

6.1.1. RH noted that the majority of the points had been covered within earlier agenda items.

6.1.2. RH confirmed that proposals for the new ticketing structure were being developed alongside the implementation of the new ticketing system. The underlying principles were agreed at the NMRNO Board meeting, to be endorsed OOC. It was confirmed that a sensible and pragmatic approach had been taken.

6.2. CRLA Committee

6.2.1. ABu provided an overview of the meeting.

6.2.2. The cyber-attack continued to impact the collections team's work but this was being managed. The Collection Access Policy and disposals were **approved.**

6.2.3. The Repatriation Restitution Policy was **approved in principle** but the Board asked if the matter of compensation should be explicit.

6.3. Fundraising Committee

6.3.1. MMS provided an overview of the meeting and highlighted that the focus remained on securing support for BH6.

6.3.2. Work on the corporate pipeline continued, with particular progress being made around STEM-related funding.

6.4. Digital and Engagement Committee

6.4.1. TW noted that the branding work had been discussed in prior agenda items. Work had progressed on reviewing website performance. New digital reports had been introduced to support ongoing monitoring.

6.4.2. Work was progressing on segment-based navigation, with a focus currently on the 'affirmation' group.

6.5. Youth Advisory Group

6.5.1. AS provided an overview of the meeting and noted that the YAG TOR had been updated by them and required Board approval. The Chair asked for a review to be completed to ensure it was clear on who was being referred to for 'Board' and 'Committee'. Subject to this it was **approved in principle**.

6.5.2. AS noted that the members would be attending committees and to date their input had been supportive. The report the YAG completed following their site visits would be shared with the Digital and Engagement Committee.

6.6. Nomination and Remuneration Committee (The Executive and RH left the meeting)

6.6.1. Confidential discussion held.

7. Risk Register Review

7.1. The Board **noted** the risk register and the work undertaken to review the strategic risks.

8. Any Other Business

8.1. HG provided information relating to new senior appointments within the RN.

8.2. MA noted that the IT capital project was on track and progressing well.

8.3. NT noted that Staff Savvy and Workrite would be going live for Trustees next week. Blink, the new internal communications platform, would also be rolled out to all Trustees over the summer.

9. Date of Next Meeting

9.1. 22 October 2025

Signed: Chair of Date: