



- IN CONFIDENCE: FOR COMMITTEE USE ONLY -

NOTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12 FEBRUARY 2019 AT 4.00PM IN COMMITTEE ROOM 21, PALACE OF WESTMINSTER (INF 11)

Members present: Alison McGovern (Chair)
Mr David Lammy
Victoria Prentis
Antoinette Sandbach
Hywel Williams

Apologies: Nic Dakin, Mr Jonathan Djanogly

In attendance: Melanie Unwin, Curator of Works of Art (Acting)
Sileas Wood, Assistant Curator
Maev Mac Coille, Media Officer

1) Informal Note [INF 10]

The Committee **agreed** the informal notes of the meeting on 8 January 2019.

Matters arising

Committee membership

The Chair welcomed Chris Bryant, Victoria Prentis and Antoinette Sandbach, following their appointment to the Committee.

Pankhurst Memorial in Victoria Tower Gardens

Melanie Unwin, Curator (Acting), reported that the memorial to Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst in Victoria Tower Gardens had been upgraded from Grade-II to Grade-II* listed status by the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, following an application to Historic England made at the request of the Committee.

The Chair noted that there had once been a tradition where Members laid wreaths at the memorial on Emmeline Pankhurst's birthday. It was agreed that the curators would seek further information on this and prepare a note for consideration by the Committee.

Meeting Arrangements

The Committee **agreed** to a new meeting time of Wednesdays at 5pm.

2) Financial Statement [WOA 47]

Melanie Unwin, Curator (Acting), briefed the Committee.



- IN CONFIDENCE: FOR COMMITTEE USE ONLY -

Ms Unwin reported that the Committee had spent £47,300 of its budget for the current financial year with a further commitment of £12,500 for the First Waves artist residency, leaving £5,244 in its remaining budget. The £10,000 which had been allocated for the programme of portrait commissions had not been spent and would be included in the budget for the new financial year.

Decision

The Committee **noted** the financial statement.

3) Bust of Olaudah Equiano [WOA 48]

Sileas Wood, Assistant Curator, and Christy Symington, artist, briefed the Committee.

The Committee had considered the potential acquisition of a bust of noted abolitionist Olaudah Equiano at its meeting in October 2018 and requested that the artist, Christy Symington, be invited to a future meeting to discuss her work to help inform the decision. The bust was on display during the meeting.

The following points were discussed:

- it was noted that, as a key figure in the abolitionist movement and with the 200th anniversary of the abolition of slavery in the British Empire approaching in 2034, it was important to increase representation in the Collection of influencers such as Equiano;
- possible locations for the display of the bust were considered, and it was noted that the bust would need to be displayed at eye level and in a way that would allow a 360-degree view because of details on the reverse;
- it was noted that there were nine editions of the bust, one of which had been acquired by the International Slavery Museum in Liverpool for a lower price than was offered to the Committee.

The sculptor of the bust, Christy Symington, was then invited into the room to discuss her work with the Committee.

Decision

The Committee **agreed** in principle to purchase the bust, subject to the curators negotiating further on the asking price.

4) Response to the Gender-Sensitive Parliament Audit 2018 [WOA 49]

Melanie Unwin, Curator (Acting), and David Clark, Head of Education and Engagement, briefed the Committee.

Mr Clark updated the Committee on the work and recommendations of the Gender-Sensitive Parliament Audit conducted in November 2018.



- IN CONFIDENCE: FOR COMMITTEE USE ONLY -

Ms Unwin invited the Committee's views on what information to include in the formal response on the Audit to Commissions of both Houses.

The following points were discussed:

- the importance of increasing the diversity of the Collection by including more representations of women, BAME and other minority groups to reflect a diverse and inclusive Parliament;
- the Chair noted that the Curator's Office was currently short-staffed and would require additional resources if the curators were to maximise the opportunities presented by Restoration and Renewal.

Decision

The Committee **noted** the findings of the Gender-Sensitive Parliament Audit and commented on the response to the Commissions of both Houses.

5) Gift of a portrait said to be of Keir Hardie by George Houston [WOA 50]

Sileas Wood, Assistant Curator, briefed the Committee.

Ms Wood reported that the Committee had received an offer of the gift of a portrait, said to be of the parliamentarian Keir Hardie by George Houston, but despite research undertaken by the curators, the identity of the sitter could not be confirmed. The portrait met the current acquisition policy if it could be confirmed as Keir Hardie.

The Chair cautioned against accepting the portrait when the identity of the sitter could not be confirmed, though several Members supported its acquisition.

Decision

The Committee **requested** that the curators undertake further research on the identification of the sitter in the portrait.

6) Plaque for Knife Edge Two Piece by Henry Moore [WOA 45]

Melanie Unwin, Curator (Acting), briefed the Committee.

Ms Unwin proposed a revised wording and design for a replacement plaque for WOA S715, Knife Edge Two Piece by Henry Moore.

Decision

The Committee **agreed** to the proposed wording and design of the plaque.



- IN CONFIDENCE: FOR COMMITTEE USE ONLY -

7) Updates, acquisitions, loans and moves

a) Loan application request – portrait of Lord Carrington

Sileas Wood, Assistant Curator, briefed the Committee.

In advance of a Margaret Thatcher display, scheduled for May 2019, on the first floor of Portcullis House, the Committee considered a request from the House of Lords for the loan of the portrait of Lord Carrington by Andrew Tift, with the offer of a reciprocal loan of the portrait of Baroness Shirley Williams for the duration of the display.

Decision

The Committee **agreed** to request a loan of the portrait of Lord Carrington from the House of Lords, and to offer the portrait of Baroness Williams in exchange.

b) Potential acquisition of two artworks currently on loan

Melanie Unwin, Curator (Acting), briefed the Committee.

At its meeting in January the Committee had requested that the curators undertake further research on two artworks on inward loan that had been offered for purchase:

- portrait of Henry St John, 1st Viscount Bolingbroke, by Charles D'Agar
- portrait of William Petty-Fitzmaurice (2nd Earl of Shelburne) by Thomas Gainsborough.

The portraits had been valued by Philip Mould & Company, although work undertaken by the curators suggested that the valuation for the second portrait seemed high when compared with similar works by the same artist. Both sitters were among those on the Hinchingsbrooke List and therefore fell within the acquisition policy.

It was noted that there were funds still available from the Committee's budget for the current financial year a case could also be submitted for additional funding, should the Committee wish to purchase the portraits.

Decision

The Committee **agreed** that the curators undertake further negotiations to acquire the portraits.

c) Changes to the first floor Portcullis House display [WOA 52]

Sileas Wood, Assistant Curator, briefed the Committee.

Ms Wood reported that the 209 Women exhibition would end on 15 February and the contemporary portrait collection would be redisplayed on the first floor of Portcullis House on 22 February. As the Curator's office was temporarily understaffed, the new display would not include additional interpretive content until Summer 2019. Displaced portraits that had



- IN CONFIDENCE: FOR COMMITTEE USE ONLY -

been part of the original display would be relocated to other buildings on the Parliamentary Estate.

The potential acquisition of some or all of the photographs from the 209 Women exhibition would be considered at a future meeting.

Decision

The Committee **noted** the update.

d) First Waves event update

Sileas Wood, Assistant Curator, briefed the Committee.

Ms Wood provided an update on the First Waves exhibition event held in Westminster Hall on 15 January, when guests, partners and participants of the project were invited to Parliament. Representatives from each of the partner institutions spoke at the event, and the day was positively received by attendees.

The Chair thanked Mr David Lammy MP for representing the Committee at the event and congratulated the curatorial team for their work.

Decision

The Committee **noted** the update.

e) Commonwealth Parliamentary Association display

Sileas Wood, Assistant Curator, briefed the Committee.

The Committee had agreed at its meeting in November 2018 to a display by the CPA on the Glass Wall in Portcullis House. The CPA had since written to inform the Committee that the focus of the exhibition had changed since the original proposal.

Decision

The Committee **noted** the update.

8) Any Other Business

Acquisitions Policy

A Member requested that the Committee revisit the acquisitions policy in relation to the inclusion of prominent backbenchers. Ms Unwin suggested that it be brought to the Committee after Easter.

9) Date and time of next meeting

The Committee will next meet on **Wednesday 13 March at 5.00pm.**