

BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE ROYAL ARMOURIES
MINUTES OF THE 237th MEETING
HELD AT THE ROYAL ARMOURIES MUSEUM, LEEDS
ON THURSDAY 25 JUNE 2026

Present:

Mr John Procter (JP) – Chairman
Mr Neil Grant (NG)
Mr Andrew Latchmore (AL)
Lt. Gen. Sir Edward Smyth-Osbourne (ESO)
Mr Jonathan Sands (JS)
Mrs Barbara Woroncow (BW)
Professor Steven Gunn (SG)
Mr Paul Kirkman (PK)
Mr Paul Mancey (PM)
Mrs Monica Turner (MT)
General Sir Gordon Messenger (GM)

In Attendance:

Mr Nat Edwards (NE)
Mr Rod Taylor (RT)
Mr Malcolm Duncan (MD)
Ms Florence Symington (FS)
Ms Kate Jeeves (KJ)
Mrs Kathryn Sibson - minutes

1. Trustee's Closed Session

The Trustees held a closed session after which the Executive Board members were invited to join the meeting.

2. Conflicts of Interest

No conflicts of interest were declared.

3. Apologies

Apologies were received from Laura Bell.

4. Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the last meeting were approved as a true and accurate record.

5. Action Log

The Board of Trustees discussed the actions from the last meeting by exception and agreed the following could be closed:

- References to minutes of last meeting: 145, 147, 148, 149, 150.

140 / 146 – People Deep Dive

Deep dive delayed due to resource constraints in HR Team and other priorities. This will be picked up when staffing appointments have been made.

It was suggested that the dates for deep dive sessions in 2027 should be arranged by the next Trustee Board meeting.

Action: Exec. Board Ref. 151

Tower Library Move

A lot of progress has been made and a joint RA / HRP working group has been established. HRP will create a shared reading room and will make good the space that RA's library and archives will move to.

A bigger space review exercise is on-going, but it is too early to have any conclusions about that.

6. STRATEGIC ISSUES

6.1 Quarterly Overview and BSC

Trustees were appraised of the headlines for Q1 2026/27:

- The private view for the Genghis Khan exhibition went well. The exhibition opens to the public on 26 June 2026, and the price point is very competitive. An interesting public programme will run alongside.
- **Redacted under Section 43.**
- Leeds is now a minority Labour-led authority, following the recent local elections. Cllr Lewis, Leader of LCC, is now the portfolio holder for key regeneration projects, including the Waterfront Project.
- Resource planning and mobilising work around capital projects is now taking place, as well as looking at the public programme to see how to build on the exhibitions being held.
- Visitor numbers have been sustained but RA is still seeing a continuation of the flattening of the visitor curve. This is being monitored.
- Social media engagement remains high, and this is being driven by the strategy that has been set out.

It was noted that there is an increasing amount of bot activity with the website. The specifics and the methodology for dealing with this can be shared with Trustees, although it is not believed to be a cyber threat issue.

Action: FS Ref. 152

6.2 This information has been redacted under Section 22 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000

Redacted under Section 22.

7. Chairmans Report

Trustee Recruitment

Interviews were held for the three vacancies this year, and the Minister was provided information as to who were appointable to make a decision. The Minister selected Rebecca Cooke, Judith Donovan and Helen Williams to become RA Trustees.

Other appointable candidates will be held on a reserve list.

The DCMS Public Appointments Team has also been consulted on the recruitment process for RA's next Chair. The Team have said that ministers will not be advised about a campaign until the autumn.

JP attended the recent DCMS Chair's and CEO's meeting. *Redacted under Section 35.*

8. COMMITTEE UPDATES

8.1 Audit Committee

The report about the meeting held on 4 June 2026 was noted.

8.2 Finance & Capital Development Committee

The report about the meeting held on 4 June 2026 was noted.

8.3 Masterplan Committee

Redacted under Section 36.

8.4 Collections, Research & Learning Committee

The report about the meeting held on 18 June 2026 was noted.

8.5 RATE Board

Trustees noted the priorities for the forthcoming July 2026 RATE Board meeting, and transition plans for the RATE Chair due to JS's imminent end of tenure.

9. GOVERNANCE

9.1 Forecast 2026/27

2025/26

Redacted under Sections 36 and 43.

2026/27

Redacted under Sections 36 and 43.

Redacted under Sections 36 and 43.

Redacted under Sections 36 and 43.

PBIF

Redacted under Sections 36 and 43.

Redacted under Sections 36 and 43.

Redacted under Sections 36 and 43.

9.2 Limited Delegation of Approval for Waterfront Project Services

Redacted under Section 36. In order to keep the project on track, a number of appointments need to be lined up for when this funding becomes available.

A procurement approach has been identified, and appointments have been put into minimum viable packages to guarantee success and quality. Four procurement packages will require Board of Trustee approval, and in order to keep pace, Trustees were asked to approve an element of delegated authority to JP for the appointment packages.

Redacted under Section 22. A number of procurement frameworks have been identified that will provide the best range of people / companies RA would want to work with.

It was acknowledged that some of the timescales for the procurement process to conclude are short, for the architect as an example, but pre-market engagement is already underway to try and ensure a pacy process.

Redacted under Sections 36 and 43.

It was suggested that RIBA could be approached about the next generation of architects who might be interested in working on this project. There is confidence that when the tender goes live, it will attract a good selection of choices.

The Board of Trustees approved the limited delegation to the Chair to approve recommended procurement, within the scope set out.

9.3 Events Programme

The events programme was noted.

9.4 Forward Agenda Plan

The forward agenda plan was noted.

10. Any Other Business

Redacted under Section 35

Redacted under Section 35.

Redacted under Section 35.

Redacted under Section 35.

Summer VAT Reduction

There are limited implications for RA relating to the summer VAT reduction scheme. Children's meals in the café is the only area affected as children are not being charged for entry to the Genghis Khan exhibition.

The next meeting will be a combination Strategy Day and formal Trustee Board meeting to be held on Thursday 24 September 2026 at the Tower of London.