## Minutes of the 194<sup>th</sup> RBG Kew Board of Trustees Meeting held on 6 October 2022 at *Cambridge Cottage, Kew*

Trustees:		
Dame Amelia Fawcett	Trustee (Chair)	
Professor Chris Gilligan	King's Trustee	
Steve Almond	Trustee	
Judith Batchelar	Trustee	
Sarah Flannigan	Trustee	
Professor Ian Graham	Trustee	
Krishnan Guru-Murthy	Trustee	
Sir Paul Nurse	Trustee	
Kate Priestman	Trustee	
David Richardson	Trustee	
John Scanlon	Trustee	
Jantiene Klein Roseboom van der Veer	Trustee	
Guests		
The Rt Hon Lord Benyon	Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Defra	
[Information redacted under s.40(2) of the		
Edward Barker	Director, Natural Landscapes, Trees and Environment,	
	Defra	
Executive Board		
Richard Deverell	Director	
Professor Alex Antonelli	Director of Science	
Richard Barley	Director of Gardens	
Sandra Botterell	Director of Marketing and Commercial Enterprise	
lan McKetty	Chief Information Officer	
Meredith Pierce Hunter	Director of Foundation	
Fern Stoner	Director of Resources	
Secretariat		
Balwinder Allen	Board Secretary (Minutes)	
Rachel Pan	Head of Governance and Director's Office	
Agenda Items		
Item No. 6		
Vicki Harrison-Neves	Head of Government Affairs	
[Information redacted under s.40(2) of the		
Monique Simmonds	Deputy Director of Science – Partnerships	
Elizabeth Gardner	Deputy Director of Science – Operations	
Item No. 7	Line di efi Distin Li Francisco e	
Sarah Ilieva	Head of Digital Experience	
Item No. 8	Freedom of lafe unection Act11	
[Information redacted under s.40(2) of the	Freedom of Information Act <sup>1</sup>	
Item No. 9	Freedom of Information Act11	
[Information redacted under s.40(2) of the Item No. 10	Freedom of information Act <sup>2</sup>	
Monique Simmonds	Deputy Director of Science Dertherebine	
Item No. 11	Deputy Director of Science – Partnerships	
Elizabeth Gardner	Deputy Director of Science – Operations	
	Deputy Director of Science - Operations	
Non-Executive Session: Trustees and D	)irector	
	executive session, during which the financial challenges	
	security session, during which the financial challenges	
were discussed.		
Standing Items		
Chair's Welcome		
The Chair welcomed all to the meeting, and extended a special welcome to Lord Benyon,		

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting, and extended a special welcome to Lord Benyon, Edward Barker and Jade Wade.

The Chair noted the following updates:

1.

The HEI report had been published on a new EDI webpage on kew.org on 3 October 2022. Grateful thanks were conveyed to all involved for their support and feedback

## REDACTED FOR PUBLICATION

	<ul> <li>Board Effectiveness Review: Egon Zehnder had been commissioned to carry out an external review of Board Effectiveness (pro bono) and would present their findings at the March 2023 Board meeting. They would attend the December Board meeting as observers</li> <li>A successful International Plant Health Conference had been held at Kew on 22 September 2022, with many VIPs and international delegates attending</li> <li>A successful Science away-day had been held at RHS Wisley, on 4 October 2022.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>The Chair reminded Trustees of the following diary dates:</li> <li>14 October 2022: deadline for the Kew International Medal (KIM) nominations. Trustees were encouraged to nominate outstanding individuals for the award. Special thanks were conveyed to Sarah Flannigan for Chairing the KIM award, and to Ian Graham and Jantiene Klein van der Veer, as panel members</li> <li>8 December 2022: a joint reception would be held with RBG Kew and Portland Gardens' Trustees at the end of the RBG Kew Board meeting</li> <li>Glow Wild and Christmas at Kew would open from mid-November to January, and Trustees were invited to attend both events.</li> </ul>
	The Chair congratulated Alex Antonelli on the publication of his book 'The Hidden Universe Adventures in Biodiversity'.
2.	<b>Apologies</b> An apology for absence was received from Pippa Wicks.
	Declarations of Interest Declarations of interest were noted from: - Dame Amelia Fawcett – Governor of Wellcome Trust - Jantiene Klein Roseboom van der Veer – Trustee, Foundation and Friends of RBG Kew
3.	There were no other declarations of interest. Minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2022
	The Minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2022 were agreed as a true and correct record. Actions Log The Actions Log was noted by Trustees. Pending actions would be carried forward.
	Matters Arising The Chair reported that Trustees approvals had been received via correspondence on the following items: - Annual Report and Accounts (ARA) 2021-22: The accounts had now been signed by the
	NAO and would be laid in Parliament on week commencing 12 October 2022.
	<ul> <li>Wakehurst Mansion Roof Investment case:         <ul> <li>a. £6m to be funded through Defra critical infrastructure capital over two years</li> <li>b. The appointment of specialist heritage contractors for the construction work and execution of the contract. The contract value was in line with the overall budget.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	- NCEA grant of £2.4m over three years for the project titled 'Soil monitoring to develop high-resolution mycorrhizal maps and enhance ecosystems metrics'; with delegated authority to the Director to sign the NCEA partnership agreement with Defra.
	<ul> <li>Admissions costs: an increase of an additional £1 on the standard admission rates at Kew Gardens across Adult and Concessions tickets (from £19.50 to £20.50). This was a short-term, one month trial to test for pricing sensitivity. Advance rates would remain the same (£15) for standard ticket. A paper on pricing would be an agenda item on the December 2022 Board agenda.</li> </ul>

4	Committee. The Trustees <u>ratified</u> the above approvals and costings.
4.	Director's Report
	Trustees noted the highly volatile economic climate. [Information redacted under s.36 of the Freedom of Information Act <sup>2</sup> ].
	Trustees also noted the following point in discussion: -
	- Consideration should be given to the success measure relating to the number of science
	publications, which it was felt should be more sophisticated
	- Science grants were performing well, and ahead of annual targets.
5.	Finance Report
	The financial challenges facing Kew, due to lower visitor numbers and increasing energy costs
	were highlighted. Consequently, some rapid decisions to cut budgets, bank savings and utilise
	budget contingency were being considered. The options and opportunities to grow income we
	also being reviewed. Taking these measures into account, the latest forecast showed a deficit £2.5m - £3m at year end. Defra had been approached to help provide c£2m additional
	resources funding in 2022/23 which would help protect reserves for 2023/24 and reduce the
	financial challenges in 2023/24.
	The financial picture for the next 3 years continued to look challenging, with high levels of
	inflation, energy costs, and the impact of the cost of living crisis on visitor income etc. A furthe
	update would be provided to Trustees at the December Board meeting.
	In discussion, it was noted that:
	- The Treehouse exhibition had been postponed due to above-budget costings.
	- Revenue opportunities and cost savings would continue to be explored, including
	pausing some activities. On the TV commercial, it was recommended to consider findi
	a sponsor for free air time, which could be a good way for a donation to be made to Ke
	(JB offered to follow up with SB outside the meeting), failing which it was suggested the the TV commercial be put on hold until there was greater clarity
	<ul> <li>The importance of targeting savings (i.e., not cutting across the board), whilst doubling</li> </ul>
	down on investments that were critical to income growth was stressed
	<ul> <li>The impact on visitor numbers and longevity of the problems were difficult to predict. I</li> </ul>
	was considered that the situation could last many years, and therefore it was importan
	to be realistic about how the financial challenges would be met, including use of
	reserves
	- The challenging economic climate would also impact Government departments and th
	budgets. The importance of aligning with Government and its agenda, by demonstration
	added value on government priorities and ambitions, was stressed
	- The importance of ensuring clarity on (a) procurement strategy on energy, and (b)
	business continuity planning for possible power outages, was noted. It was agreed to
	update Trustees on business continuity planning for power outages, as well as IT
	<ul> <li>business continuity plans, as a note in papers for the next Board meeting AP1: FS</li> <li>It was also <u>agreed</u> that an update on the financial forecast over the next couple of yea</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>It was also <u>agreed</u> that an update on the financial forecast over the next couple of yea be shared with Trustees at the next meeting AP2: FS</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>It was considered that rising cost of living was a fundamental factor in the reduction of</li> </ul>
	visitor numbers and associated secondary spend (although the weather and transport
	strikes have also impacted over the summer and autumn)
	- The situation would continue to be monitored closely
	- Trustees asked for more detail on the anticipated drawdown on reserves over the next
	few years and planning out to 2024.
6.	Strategic Focus: Influencing national and international policy & opinion:
	a. Government engagement narrative
	Lord Benyon (LB) gave an introduction, noting that he was delighted to continue working with
	Kew. His role now included an 'international' brief, following the recent changes in government

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	rmly welcomed the three new Trustees appointed earlier in the year and congratulated t
Direct	or on his tenth anniversary at Kew. He drew attention to the following points: -
-	The extremely successful visit to Wakehurst with the NFU would help progress 'green
	finance', especially the value of nature and biodiversity in relation to unlocking finance
	from the private sector
-	He welcomed Kew's alignment with aspects of the Government's 25-Year Environmen
-	
	Plan and the broader Government 'nature' agenda
-	Kew had done a great job in demonstrating how its five strategic priorities fitted with t
	Government's agenda and LB stressed Kew's help in the crisis of species decline, give
	that commitments are due soon. What Kew is for is very impressive and never more
	needed.
-	Referencing Kew's stand at COP26, he congratulated Kew, emphasising the importan
	of its soft power. The upcoming visit of the President of South Africa is a real
	achievement.
-	He also noted his support for Kew's partnership with Greensphere, enabling
	capitalisation of Kew's Science IP.
In rest	oonse to ways in which Kew could improve government engagement, LB recommended
	ng and active engagement across government, including with FCDO, Cabinet Office,
	iry, Select Committees and All-Party Groups. LB noted the Government's focus on trade
	owth and stressed the importance of emphasising the value of biodiversity, referencing
_	singupta Review produced for the Treasury (i.e., that a significant percentage of the globa
	my was based on nature and that growth depended upon sustainable economies). LB
	ed the importance of "being in the room" when important decisions are taken.
50055	
The Cł	nair thanked LB for his support and recommendations. She noted that the Government
	ement work was 'across Kew' and was a long-term investment with long-term value.
	vive engagement by Trustees was encouraged.
In disc	cussion, Trustees noted that: -
_	there were unique opportunities for RBG Kew: both as a public consumer-facing branc
	(national/international treasure) and best kept secret (amazing science/collections)
-	Kew and NHM were unique, both had public-facing responsibilities, significant footfalls
-	
	both could therefore help and support each other in their strategic objectives
-	Consideration should be given to expanding RBG Kew's support for biodiversity beyon
	conservation and into genetic resources, as this could lead to important future growth
	and opportunities
-	LB also suggested that Kew should not forget the domestic agenda, beyond just Defra
	and the devolved governments-partner with areas/regional mayors etc, particularly in
	the North.
-	Kew's soft power was important—when Kew speaks people listen.
	ferencing the genetic resource point, highlighted the importance of the MSB and noted t
benefi	ts of Kew working with NHM. It was considered that Kew had great credibility, both
nation	ally and internationally. The potential opportunities at COP15 were noted, and LB
sugge	sted Kew reach out to Lord Goldsmith in advance of the Conference.
	recommended to give greater emphasis to RBG Kew's work in the context of food secur
and ex	plaining Kew's role in how it could convene in these areas. Making more of the MSB wa
also si	uggested. LB noted that food security and water security were good stories about Kew's
	ant work.
-	
	Science policy priorities
	agreed that this agenda item would be deferred to a future meeting, which would give
time to	p reflect on the feedback from today and update the presentation accordingly.

c. Global Centre for Biodiversity and Climate (GCBC)

RBG Kew had been working closely with Defra to scope its role as Strategic Science Lead in the three-year £40m project funded through Overseas Development Assistance (ODA). The aim of	I
GCBC was to "to support the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity to tackle climate	
change and poverty".	

The details for RBG Kew not administering the whole project were explained. These included the significant 'administration' requirements where Kew did not have expertise, and therefore the focus would be on areas where Kew could add value (e.g., scientific oversight). It was thought that Kew's input would inevitably grow as the initiative developed.

In discussion, it was considered that being able to influence the scientific focus for GCBC would be an important aspect for Kew.

On a point of influence/impact, it was recommended to reach out to grant-awarding bodies who had expertise in such fields e.g., Heritage Lottery Fund and UKRI. It was also recommended to consider clearly defined targeted outcomes (e.g., genetic biodiversity, food security) to help focus on the research grants.

LB welcomed Kew's role in GCBC. Noting the upcoming CSR and the relook at the Integrated Review, LB noted the limited amount of ODA money that would be available to Defra. So, it would be important to show the impact ODA funding has, the wider value of soft power etc. It is essential that Kew/Defra make the pitch for funding now.

Grateful thanks were conveyed to Defra for giving RBG Kew the opportunity to be involved in GCBC; it aligned with Kew's strategy which underscored the value add to government.

## d. Government Affairs update

Trustees discussed Kew's presence at COP15, where at least one Trustee and the Chair would attend for part of the conference. Kew would also have a presence at the CITES COP19 in Panama (in late November 2022), where there would also be a side event hosted by RBG Kew.

7.	Digital Stra	tegy
	The Head of	of Digital Experience gave Trustees a presentation on the new digital strategy, noting
	that: -	
	a.	the digital strategy set out the roadmap to make RBG Kew digitally available to everyone by 2025
	b.	the strategy set out a clear direction of what RBG Kew wanted its online presence to achieve, and would help Kew capitalise on digital opportunities
	C.	Through the strategy and continued investment, digital could support the delivery of all of Kew's $5 + 1$ Manifesto priorities.
	-	earlier discussion on Kew's financial constraints, Trustees were asked how RBG Kew find investment to realise the strategy and invited feedback on their plans.
	organisatic constraints momentun	on, congratulations were conveyed for drafting the strategy, which looked across the on, which was key for such a strategy. It was recommended that within the financial s, it was important to work out the foundational elements needed to enable n/quick wins. In their feedback and recommendations on the strategy, Trustees it was important to: -
	- be	nuanced about the debate on "science versus visitors" and be clear on Kew's digital sence to balance these two aspects
	nav	nsider separate links to a science (more academic) website to make it easier to /igate around the website for different audiences (but both visitors and scientists ould be able to navigate from the Home Page)
	and	nsider content carefully, as this would help drive people engagement with RBG Kew d remember that everyone who works for Kew is a potential content provider ("digital content and people")

	<ul> <li>consider any possibilities of monetising digital content, recognising that the bar for successfully doing so is high</li> <li>review what peer organisations do for comparison purposes (including in different countries); also, consider content in different languages</li> <li>seek feedback to enable the strategy to be future proofed</li> <li>include greater mention of Wakehurst, especially interpretation work to enable engagement with different audiences</li> <li>be clear on tone and feel, and ensuring it was appropriate for different audiences, which may require different platforms, levels, audiences and channels (youth is a good example—need different language, flexibility etc)</li> <li>aligning with Government's levelling up agenda (e.g., interactive engagement with schools nationally), including tapping into the Department of Education (LB offered to speak with the Secretary of State, Kit Malthouse)</li> <li>consider sign-posting links from other organisations to enable contact with harder to reach communities</li> <li>consider bespoke smart virtual tours of the gardens/content, which likely would be particularly popular on phones (could be a national or global tour)</li> <li>consider reaching out to digital advisors to have a look at the strategy</li> <li>consider open access to some of Kew's books for greater engagement</li> </ul>
	It was noted that Kew had an excellent learning on-line platform called 'Endeavour' which was available to schools across the whole of the UK.
8.	Carbon Garden The Head of Garden Design gave Trustees a presentation on the plans for the Carbon Garden (CG) design. The design would include new paths and interpretation hubs that would cover four main themes: • What was carbon and where was it found • The link between carbon and climate change • Nature based solutions to mitigate climate change • What the public could do and what Kew was doing
	The planting would be colourful and diverse, and highlight Kew's scientific work, whilst also explaining to visitors the role of carbon in the world. The project would take approximately two years to complete.
	<ul> <li>Trustees expressed their enthusiasm for the concept and design of the CG, noting that it was important to: -</li> <li>be aware of the carbon footprint of the construction of the project</li> <li>ensure there was seasonality with the planting ("what would it look like in February?")</li> <li>be mindful of how it was positioned within other living collections and planting within in the gardens</li> </ul>
	The importance of also knowing how much carbon Kew and Wakehurst were sequestering and demonstrating that fossil fuels came from plants were noted.
	It was considered that the garden would provide great digital content, and it was recommended to film the entire process, including planning, which would make engaging viewing. It was noted that the project would be fully funded thorough philanthropy. It was stressed that Kew should be confident that the funds would be raised and commence planning for the garden as part of the Summer 2025 festival.
	Lunch break: Trustees stopped lunch at this stage, followed by a tour of Mexico Festival.
	Business Case: EVE Phase 1 Lessons Learned and Phase 2 Business Case The EVE business case was outlined for Trustees. It was noted that Phase 1 had faced challenges, and that significant time and effort had been put into ensuring that the learnings

	from Phase 1 had been applied to Phase 2. [Information redacted under s.36 of the Freedom of Information Act <sup>2</sup> ].
	On behalf of Trustees, the Chair thanked Sarah Flannigan for her invaluable help and support on EVE, her intervention had helped move the project forward.
	[Information redacted under s.36 of the Freedom of Information Act] As noted earlier, it was agreed that a table showing a landscape view on the impact on reserves, over a number of years, be shared with Trustees at the next meeting, as well as phased costings and benefits. (AP3:FS)
	[Information redacted under s.36 of the Freedom of Information Act <sup>2</sup> ]
	It was explained that 'Gateways' would, however, be built into the planning, whereby the programme could be paused if needed. These would have minimal impact on the project and finances. Some of the benefits would also be realised at these points which would provide additional comfort going forward. The benefits of EVE e.g., provide intelligence on visitor interactions, improving customer experience, growing visitor-related income, were highlighted. Following further discussion, Trustees <u>approved</u> the revised business case.
10.	<b>Greensphere Update</b> It was noted that an agreement with Greensphere had been signed in July 2022. Since that date, work had started on Phase 2 to scope and set up two spinout companies in the next two years [Information redacted under s.43 of the Freedom of Information Act <sup>3</sup> ]. Appropriate approvals from Defra on taking shareholdings in the spinouts were being sought and it was noted that Defra were supportive of 'growth-related' projects. The work by Bain Consulting (pro bono) to scope the value of the market and Kew's potential in that market was also noted.
	[Information redacted under s.43 of the Freedom of Information Act <sup>3</sup> ]
	Congratulations were conveyed to the Director for obtaining pro bono work by Bain Consultancy.
	Lord Benyon, supportive of the work by RBG Kew in this area, offered his help to expedite the approval process in Defra/Government, if needed.
	In discussion, it was confirmed that the work would start in the UK, rather than abroad. The IP would be identified through workshops. The opportunities for Kew scientists were highlighted. In response to a point that detail on the four areas of interest were lacking in the paper, it was noted that the Science Advisory Committee would look more closely at opportunities. The role of the Board to focus on the broader agreement, governance aspects, risk and strategy was noted.
	It was commented that there were two separate points for Trustees to consider going forward: a. If there was a significant commercial opportunity for RBG Kew b. If this was the best way to proceed with such an opportunity
	It was noted that the significant commercial opportunity for RBG Kew should be pursued with conviction. However, it was requested that 'go' and 'no go' criteria to proceed with opportunities with Greensphere should come back to the Board of Trustees for agreement.
	Lord Benyon left at this stage.
	It was commented that RBG Kew was a respected brand with significant potential for further commercial opportunities. Identifying a list of other possible partnerships was recommended. Following further discussion, Trustees <u>agreed</u> the proposed governance on Greensphere, as follows:
	<ul> <li>a. Establishing a Steering Group for overall governance – Chaired by Steve Almond</li> <li>b. Establishing a Working Group to develop and shape the proposed spin-out – Chaired by Sandra Botterell</li> </ul>

	c. 'Go' and 'no-go' criteria to proceed with Greensphere spinouts to come back to the
	Board of Trustees at the next Board meeting, or as soon as possible (AP4: RD/SB/SA)
	d. The report prepared by the consultants to be shared with Trustees when finalised (AP5:
	BA) Trustees were invited to give their feedback to the Director.
11.	New Herbarium update
	Trustees noted that until early 2022, it was expected that the new Herbarium would be at
	Wakehurst; however, Defra funding conditions and [Information redacted under s.36 of the
	Freedom of Information Act <sup>2</sup> ] had led to the exploration of other sites. External expertise was being sought to enable due diligence to be carried out on the two potential sites outlined in the
	paper.
	Trustees were invited to give their feedback on whether they were content with the site selection
	criteria in the paper and whether an "in principal" commitment on [Information redacted under
	s.36 of the Freedom of Information Act <sup>2</sup> ] at the Thames Valley Science Park should be explored.
	In discussion. Trustops agreed that the two entions were credible and gave their support to
	In discussion, Trustees agreed that the two options were credible and gave their support to exploring both further. [Information redacted under s.36 of the Freedom of Information Act <sup>2</sup> ] It
	was recommended that views be sought from international scientists on the preferred site.,
	including the importance (or not) of being near Heathrow/Gatwick etc.
	Trustees approved the New Herbarium Project Board's Terms of Reference. as set out in Annex
10	1 (page 126) of the board pack.
12.	Future of the Foundation Charity
	It was <u>agreed</u> that Trustees comments on the considerations being made by the Foundation Charity Board of Trustees would be sought via correspondence, noting that the ultimate decision
	was wholly in the hands of the Foundation Trustees. (AP6: RP/BA)
13.	Outreach Strategy
	The Outreach Strategy was reviewed by Trustees.
14.	Reserves Policy
	The updated Reserves Policy was approved, including the proposal to increase Kew's target
	general unrestricted levels by $\pm 0.25$ m to $\pm 7.75$ m by 2026. Given the financial challenge for the
45	current and coming year, the Reserves Policy would continue to be monitored closely.
15.	<b>Delegated Financial Authority Policy</b> Noting the prior approvals by the Executive Board and the Finance and Resources Committee,
	Trustees approved the uplifts in the levels of the delegated authority as set out in the new
	Delegated Financial Authority Policy. The proposed changes would streamline approvals whilst
	maintaining financial controls. The new policy would take effect in November 2023.
16.	Family Restaurant Lessons Learnt
	The paper on the Family Restaurant Lessons Learnt was noted by Trustees.
17.	Arb HQ – review against business case
	The Paper on 'Arb HQ – review against business case' was noted by Trustees.
18.	Updates from Committees
	The synopsis of the following Committees/Board meetings since the last meeting were noted by
	<ul> <li>Finance and Resources</li> </ul>
	Remuneration and Nominations
	Audit & Risk
	Visitor & Commercial and Kew Enterprises Board
	Science Advisory
1	Foundation Council
1	Wakehurst Advisory
1	It was noted that Dippa Wield's term of office was coming to and in December and consideration
1	It was noted that Pippa Wick's term of office was coming to end in December and consideration was being given to an extension/new Chair.
19	The draft agenda for 8 December 2022 meeting was noted by Trustees.
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20.	The dates of times of future meetings were noted as follows: -
	8 December 2022
	<ul> <li>23 March 2023</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>27 April 2023 – Strategy Day</li> </ul>
	• 22 June 2023
	• 12 October 2023
	• 7 December 2023
	Meetings commence at 10.00am unless otherwise advised.

<sup>1</sup> Section 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act provides that:

Information is exempt where either:

- 1. disclosure would contravene data protection principles, or
- 2. disclosure would contravene the right to object under the Data Protection Act, or
- 3. the information is exempt from the right of subject access under the Data Protection Act.

<sup>2</sup> Section 36 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 provides that: Information is exempt if its disclosure under this Act would be likely to have any of the following effects:

- 1. prejudice collective Cabinet responsibility;
- 2. inhibit the free and frank provision of advice and exchange of views for the purposes of deliberation; or
- 3. prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs.

<sup>3</sup> Section 43(2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 provides that:

Information is exempt if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including the public authority holding it).