

Minutes of the 191st Meeting of the RBG Kew Board of Trustees held on 9 December 2021 at Cambridge Cottage, Kew Gardens and MS Teams

Trustees:

Dame Amelia Fawcett	Trustee (Chair)
Professor Liam Dolan	Trustee (Queen's Trustee)
Catherine Dugmore	Trustee
Sarah Flannigan	Trustee
Chris Gilligan	Trustee
Ian Graham	Trustee
Krishnan Guru-Murthy	Trustee
Professor Sue Hartley	Trustee
Sir Paul Nurse	Trustee
David Richardson	Trustee
Jantiene Klein Roseboom van der Veer	Trustee

Executive Board

Richard Deverell	Director
Alex Antonelli	Director of Science
Richard Barley	Director of Horticulture and Learning
Sandra Botterell	Director of Marketing and Commercial Enterprise
Ian McKetty	Chief Information Officer
Meredith Pierce Hunter	Director of Foundation
Fern Stoner	Director of Resources

Secretariat

Rachel Pan	Head of Governance and Director's Office
Balwinder Allen	Board Secretary (Minutes)

1.	Non-Executive Session The Trustees and Director commenced the meeting in private session.
2.	<p>Chair's Welcome and Opening Remarks The Chair welcomed all attendees to the meeting and extended a special welcome to Ian Graham for his first official meeting as an RBG Kew Trustee.</p> <p>She noted that, sadly, it was the last meeting for Catherine Dugmore, Liam Dolan, and Sue Hartley as their terms of office would end on 28 February 2022. She thanked them for their invaluable and outstanding contributions to RBG Kew, noting that they would be greatly missed.</p> <p>An update on the new Trustees recruitment campaign was noted; it was hoped that the outcome of the appointments would be known in early 2022. A concern, from a corporate governance perspective, of eight new Trustees joining the Kew Board in a 12-month period was raised. The matter would be discussed with Defra, with a request that terms be staggered in future. AP1: BA/RP/RD</p> <p>It was noted that since the last meeting, Kew's participation at COP26 had been impressive, the result of hard work by many (to whom grateful thanks were conveyed). The event had exceeded expectations: the Carbon Garden exhibit had given Kew the opportunity to position itself as an international scientific organisation and engage on key issues relating to the Climate and Biodiversity crises. Many valuable conversations and meetings were held with corporates, philanthropists, UK government officials, international delegates, ministers and Heads of State etc. The team was working hard to convert these meetings into tangible deliverables and benefits.</p> <p>Apologies Apologies for absence were received from Judith Batchelar and Pippa Wicks.</p> <p>Declarations of Interest No declarations of interest were declared.</p>

<p>3.</p>	<p>Minutes of the meeting held on 7 October 2021 The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as a true and correct record.</p> <p>Actions Log The actions log was noted. <i>[Information redacted under s.36 of the Freedom of Information Act¹]</i></p> <p>Matters Arising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kew Policy Statement on Genetic Modification and Gene Editing <p>The updated policy statement had been discussed by the Science Advisory Committee. Following a brief discussion, Trustees approved the Kew Policy Statement on Genetic Modification and Gene Editing.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Director's Report The Director updated Trustees on his experience of COP26: new connections had been made and it was hoped there would be greater scope for engagement with Government.</p> <p>In discussion on COP26, the following comments were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kew's position and impact was broad-ranging; it was suggested that greater consideration be given to how Kew's science could inform Government policy in the UK and globally; additionally, it was important to consider how Kew could improve its traction with organisations where biodiversity was a major factor in their decision making (e.g., BEIS). It was noted that it was important to engage with civil servants, in addition to Ministers. - It was queried whether, following COP26, there were any plans to change Kew's medium-term strategy to enhance the relationship with the UN and other organisations. In response, it was noted that Kew would continue to build on the significant work being carried out by the team responsible for this area, and the team was focused on not losing momentum from the success of COP26. - The importance of understanding what Kew hoped to achieve from such events (e.g., developing and highlighting specific areas of science, raising Kew's profile, funding, potential scientific partnerships etc) was noted. It was recommended to create a list to help identify and clarify what Kew wanted to achieve, which could also help with fundraising. - It was remarked that 'international' links would help influence 'national' links, and consideration should be given to presenting at another high-profile event next year (via UN scientific committees). Linking with other analogous institutions (particularly an Egyptian institution for COP27) could also prove beneficial and provide joint ventures with symbolic significance. - Making connections with science research networks was recommended. <p>The Director conveyed his personal thanks to all those involved in COP26, and especially the Chair, for the hard work and commitment given during the very demanding two weeks.</p> <p>The following updates were also noted in discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Christmas at Kew and Glow Wild had been carried out to a very high standard and had almost sold out. The importance of making Christmas at Kew as sustainable as possible was reiterated. The Director of Marketing and Commercial Enterprise would give this matter further consideration. - The Family Kitchen/Shop was now open, and the project had been on-budget and on- time - The Zadok-Ben David Exhibition at the Shirley Sherwood Gallery had received very positive feedback and Trustees were encouraged to visit.
<p>5.</p>	<p>Finance Report The Director of Resources reported that Defra had confirmed £15m for digitisation and progressing the new collections storage <i>[New Herbarium]</i>. Since her report, Defra had also confirmed capital funding of £10m per annum for three years for critical infrastructure</p>

	<p>works (e.g., Estates and IT), which was deemed to be a pretty good outcome. Resource funding was still under review. Kew remained on target for 21/22 financial planning, with risks and opportunities noted.</p> <p>On a question of recruitment, Kew was progressing recruitment on budgeted posts; however, no new posts were being added. The importance of utilising capital funding within year was reiterated.</p> <p>The Chair congratulated the team for the skilful management of Kew's financial resources during a difficult and unpredictable year.</p>
6.	<p>Government Affairs (GA) update</p> <p>It was reported that the GA team were following up the postponed visits by the Secretary of State and reaching out to various ministers with an invitation to visit Kew/Wakehurst. Looking ahead to 2022, the significant opportunities for Kew included CBD COP15, the remainder of the UK presidency of COP26, UNEP@50 and Rio+30. <i>[Information redacted under s.36 of the Freedom of Information Act¹]</i></p> <p>In response to a question on what success would look like, it was noted that more work needed to be carried out on 'influencing policy', and priorities were to be agreed. It was agreed that a paper be submitted to a future Board meeting on what 'success would look like'. AP3: AA/MS</p> <p>The Trustees discussed the importance of the convening power of Kew. Having raised the profile of Kew, it was important to capitalise on momentum built, especially digitally. With increasing media coverage on protecting the environment/impact of climate change, and companies having to demonstrate their plans and green credentials, it was queried whether Kew scientists could be involved in giving credibility to such work. The Landscape Ecology programme at Wakehurst was cited as one such example where Kew was helping tackle climate change and biodiversity loss. The suggestion that Kew became a 'go-to' organisation, providing expert advice/solutions, was noted. Partnering with other analogous organisations for mutual benefit was also suggested.</p> <p>It was noted that Kew had been playing to its strengths where it had a distinctive voice; however, more was needed to put Kew on the map in Government and academic spheres. Work would continue to promote Kew's work and brand, not only across society but also across Government.</p> <p>Further visits to Kew (either virtually or in person) with Defra's senior staff were encouraged, especially in preparation for the next COP—to help determine priorities and ensure alignment between the two organisations. It would also help build Kew's potential and convening power.</p>
7.	<p>Kew Voice update</p> <p>The Chair reminded Trustees that the Kew Voice workshop with Trustees had been held at the Trustees' Strategy Day on 10 June 2021, where it was agreed there would a regular return to the item at Trustees' meetings.</p> <p>The Head of Communications presented a paper, noting that the concept of Kew's Voice was now better understood by people across senior leadership at Kew. Kew had had a great opportunity at COP26 to use its voice on topics such as reforestation for two weeks. There now were a clear set of principles used to evaluate requests from other organisations to add Kew as a signatory to letters or to make a comment in media interviews on topics that may be considered controversial (such as GM, EDI/HEI etc).</p> <p>Examples of where Kew had used or had the opportunity to use its voice were highlighted. Upcoming opportunities to leverage Kew's voice were also noted: - e.g., Green Planet on BBC (due to aired in January 2022), KIM 2022 Medal award and lecture in March 2022, COP15 (April 2022) and Food Forever festival at Kew (May to September 2022).</p>

	<p>It was noted that use of BBC Green Planet material is limited under the terms of the agreement meaning that no content from the series or digitally can be directly linked to ticket sales or income generation by RBG Kew i.e. we couldn't use their content in an email asking for funding. It may be possible to show some co-created content from the series in a private context and a planned Q&A with the series Director for Kew Members to be held at Kew could go ahead.</p> <p>Fundraising opportunities, especially in the US were noted. The small clips on Kew Gardens available on YouTube were considered very powerful. It was agreed that the three short films on Kew's work be shared with Trustees, for information. AP4: BA</p> <p>It was suggested that Kew's voice on horticultural science should have greater coverage and be celebrated more (RHS should not be the only commentator on horticultural science). The Director of Science was complimented on his recent media appearances and interviews.</p> <p>The importance of providing appropriate staff training and creating a list of 'top' presenters for media appearances on areas of expertise and Kew's core messaging was strongly recommended.</p>
8.	<p>'Extend our Reach' Strategy Focus</p> <p>The Director reminded Trustees that 'Extending our Reach' was the fourth strategic priority in Kew's Manifesto for Change and as a public body and charity it was important that Kew was for everyone. One such initiative had been the creation of the EDI Committee, and the Chair thanked Krishnan Guru-Murthy and Sarah Flannigan for agreeing to join this Committee. The Chair was the third member of the Committee, and a fourth Trustee would be sought from the new Trustees joining in 2022.</p> <p>8a. EDI Committee Terms of Reference (TOR)</p> <p>It was noted that the EDI Committee's TOR had been reviewed by the EDI Committee at their first meeting on 23 November 2021 and their recommendations incorporated in the version shared with Trustees. Following a brief discussion, Trustees approved the updated EDI Committee TOR and agreed that this should be a Committee of the Board.</p> <p>It was also agreed that consideration be given to whether the Science Advisory Committee should be a Committee of the Board. AP5: DAF/RD/RP/BA</p> <p>8b. History, Equality and Inclusion (HEI) at RBG Kew</p> <p>The Chair noted that a first draft of the HEI report had been shared with Trustees at their meeting in June 2021 where it was recommended that the full report be submitted to the EDI Committee for consideration. The Committee had now duly reviewed the report, and their recommendations incorporated in the version shared with Trustees. The Chair invited further feedback on the report.</p> <p>In discussion, the following points and recommendations were noted: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It was important to bear in mind it was a ground-up report written by staff. The authors of the report were to be congratulated—it was an extensive and important piece of work. - It was important to publish the report as soon as possible, in order to get moving with the recommendations. - It was recommended that, given the sensitivities on the subject matter, some of the language and tone needed to be reviewed and tightened. Kew was an academic institution and language was an important factor. - Defra's comments would be sought before publishing the report. - A point on 'research culture' and the recommendation to review what other organisations (such as BEIS, Russell Group, Wellcome) were doing to help sense check some of the points in the report was suggested. Additional points on 'research integrity' and 'open access', were also referenced. The importance of Kew keeping informed and up to date on such policies was noted

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The sensitivities around the word ‘decolonisation’ were also noted. - One big way for Kew to give back was training and knowledge transfer and consideration should be given to building this in going forward <p><i>[Information redacted under s.36 of the Freedom of Information Act¹]</i></p> <p>Following further discussion, it was agreed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>[Information redacted under s.36 of the Freedom of Information Act]</i> - Language suggestions on the document to be sought from Trustees within the next two weeks - <i>[Information redacted under s.36 of the Freedom of Information Act¹]</i> - The final HEI report be shared with Trustees early in 2022 for final approval. <p style="text-align: right;">AP6: MN/SD/Trustees/BA/RP</p> <p>Trustees conveyed their grateful thanks to the authors of the report for the excellent piece of work. Appreciation was also conveyed to the members of the EDI Committee for their input.</p> <p>8c. EDI Strategy update</p> <p>The EDI Strategy update paper was noted by Trustees. It was reported that significant progress continued to take place since the launch of the EDI Strategy in June 2020. It was anticipated that staff engagement and understanding of the importance of this work was one of the primary obstacles; this was part of a wider shift that needed to be made in the culture of Kew.</p> <p>The Chair thanked all those involved in this vital area of work for Kew.</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>New Learning Centre</p> <p>The vision for the new Learning Centre (LC) project at the White Peaks site was presented to Trustees. <i>[Information redacted under s.43(2) of the Freedom of Information Act²]</i> it was noted that the purpose of this agenda item was to keep Trustees informed on the direction, timeframes, and fundraising priorities. A full business case would return to Trustees in 2022.</p> <p>The vision for the LC project was for it to be an exemplar building for sustainability and learning and the gold standard for schools learning in the UK and globally. The LC would inspire school pupils of all Key Stages, influence further education and careers, and increase quality of science taught in schools. The project would also expand adult short courses and community engagement.</p> <p>The LC would be the first building in Kew whereby the core of its design would build in Kew’s net zero targets and climate positive vision from the outset. With an efficient design and low energy costs, it would also aim to include the following design and sustainability standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Passivhaus - BREEAM Outstanding - Whole - life net zero <p>The interior and exterior building design views, with designated areas and floor plans, were shared with Trustees. On costings, it was noted that 15% contingency had been built into the costs. An estimated 12-month building programme was anticipated.</p> <p>In the questions and answers that followed, the enthusiasm for the project was noted. Trustees sought assurances on the 15% contingency, especially noting supply chain issues and demands of high standards, like BREEAM. It was confirmed that Kew’s advisers were content that the amount of contingency was sufficient. On fundraising, it was reported that a list of potential donors was being prepared; naming rights issues were to be determined. The suggestion to approach <i>[Information redacted under s.36 of the Freedom of Information Act¹]</i> was noted, given their plant science focus; a couple of Trustees knew</p>

	<p>them well and would be happy to help. Such a project was also considered popular with philanthropists, and it was suggested that support for ‘running’ costs be sought from such donors. Laboratory spaces, especially for primary and secondary pupils, were explained.</p> <p>The suggestion for greater outreach, especially with local schools and the community, was noted. The technological aspects to help fulfil different learning styles, including international links, were highlighted; it was suggested that the team should “think Digital first” as build the LC. Other details (e.g., rainwater and grey water harvesting, plans for extended outdoor spaces, insulation types) were outlined. It was noted that consultation on the design of the building had been a collaborative process, including schoolteachers, community groups, access groups and internal consultation.</p> <p>The benefit of freeing up the first floor (where schools learning was currently utilised) above the Botanical restaurant (Museum No. 1) for alternative use was highlighted.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the presenters, noting that she was impressed how all the reports, presentations, etc., both brought the Kew Sustainability Strategy and Manifesto for Change alive and demonstrated the high ambition for RBG Kew.</p>
10.	<p>P&G Deep Dive</p> <p>The scale and scope of the relationship with P&G partnership was presented to Trustees. It was noted that the partnership delivered against 4 strategic priorities in the Manifesto for Change and delivered against the Science Strategy. The papers gave Trustees an in-depth update on performance to date and future programmes of work.</p> <p>The P&G partnership was considered unique and thought to be the envy of peer organisations. It provided several sources of income to Kew, including royalties. The different project ranges, including those in the pipeline, were highlighted. It was noted that the P&G partnership helped RBG Kew to deliver on the two aspects of science: Master Collaborative Agreement (MCA research) and authentication (i.e., quality of extracts). The risks, including scientific validity and brand reputation, were outlined.</p> <p>In the questions and answers that followed, the following points were noted: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>[Information redacted under s.36 of the Freedom of Information Act¹]</i> - The Chair thanked the Marketing & Commercial team and Professor Simmonds for their excellent presentation.
11.	<p>EVE update and Plan</p> <p>The Director explained the background of the EVE project to the new Trustees. The programme was big and ambitious, and would provide an integrated customer relationship database, transforming the relationship with Kew’s customers. Stage 1 of the project was nearing completion; however, problems had started to emerge, especially on costings with Stage 2. The following actions had been taken to help identify the problems: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A structured workshop with the Programme team had been held, to better understand what was and was not working, and identify improvements/actions - With the help of Sarah Flannigan, Trustee, advice was sought from independent experts, who had made recommendations - Consultation had taken place with relevant stakeholders <p>All the recommendations were being compiled to form a plan and to work out priorities. The Director invited feedback and advice from Trustees.</p> <p>In discussion, the following recommendations and points were noted: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It was worth going through the pain barrier to get the desired outcomes: the prize was worthwhile, and changes would be transformational - It was important to step away from what was not working - Resourcing was key, the project should be carried out with conviction and appropriate expertise. The importance of an experienced manager to oversee the project was vital - Breaking work into bite size chunks would help with delivery and progress

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Changing cultures would be challenging, it was important to bring people on board with the vision and benefits - External viewpoints were critical; it was important to have honest conversations on what had gone wrong and why. <p>It was reported that a meeting had been arranged with an external adviser to help progress matters. The Chair thanked Sarah Flannigan for her valuable input and for agreeing to sit on the Project Board. An update and revised costing plan would be given at the June Board meeting.</p>
12.	<p>Update on Science Capital Investments</p> <p>The Director took Trustees through each of the four major science capital projects and invited feedback on the recommendations outlined in the paper. The paper had been reviewed by the Finance and Resources Committee and their comments incorporated.</p> <p>Following discussion, the following points and agreements were noted:</p> <p>Collections Digitisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noting this was a high priority for Kew, the Board supported the recommendation to digitise the collections in full. They approved the funding approach outlined, including the application for a long-term loan from government. <p>Collections Lab</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was strong preference to build the new Collections Lab at Wakehurst; it was suggested that the cost of looking at alternative sites be determined <i>[Information redacted under s.36 of the Freedom of Information Act¹]</i> • Noting the worst-case scenario (i.e., committing to developing the project and then not proceeding), the Board approved progressing the project to planning (and in the absence of any clarity on support for the Science Quarter). • Confirmation would be sought from Defra on whether the location options evaluation would be a condition of funding. <i>[Information redacted under s.36 of the Freedom of Information Act¹]</i> <p>Science Quarter (SQ)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Given the importance of biodiversity (and the positive engagement at COP26), it was agreed that Kew should continue to maintain its ambition for SQ. • The Committee agreed that the project be paused for the time being, but that Kew continued to seek government support for the SQ and engagement with UKRI, whilst the project was paused. A suggestion of a meeting between the Chief Scientific Adviser, Defra, and Chief Executive, UKRI, was noted. It was believed that support for funding would follow a powerful vision. • The biodiversity institute idea would also be kept alive. <p>Science Engagement Centre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Trustees confirmed they supported this as a standalone project and agreed its inclusion in the fundraising campaign. The initial concept development work would start in 2022/23, led by the Director of Marketing and Commercial Enterprise and her term.
13.	<p>Science Case studies</p> <p>The paper on science case studies to illustrate science and conservation impact was noted by Trustees.</p> <p>The list was considered helpful and memorable, and it was agreed that items be regrouped under specific categories. It was recommended that the list be used as conversation pieces to help engage visitors and with the brand campaign work. It was also suggested that some of the examples be linked to publications, to illustrate the on-going work and range of science activities at RBG Kew.</p>
14.	<p>Donor Engagement:</p> <p><i>[Information redacted under s.36 of the Freedom of Information Act¹]</i></p>

15.	<p>Kew International Medal (KIM) The Trustees ratified the decision of the Panel to award the Kew International Medal for 2022 to Elizabeth Maruma Mrema.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Liam Dolan for his excellent contributions as panel member on KIM, and extended grateful thanks to: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sarah Flannigan for agreeing to take over as Chair (replacing Nick Baird) - Ian Graham (replacing Liam Dolan) and - Jantiene Klein Roseboom van der Veer (Panel member) <p>The suggestion by the Panel to develop a series of media events/outreach around the award ceremony and to create on-going interest beyond the ceremony, was noted.</p>
16.	<p>Updates from Committees The Trustees noted the synopsis updates from the following Committees/Boards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wakehurst Advisory • Visitor & Commercial Advisory and Kew Enterprises Board • Audit & Risk • Finance and Resources • Science Advisory • Equality, Diversity & Inclusion <p>A verbal update was given on the Foundation Council meeting held on 1 December 2021. The plans for the 'Giving Circle' for the upcoming Palm House restoration project were noted.</p>
17.	<p>AOB The draft agenda for 17 March 2022 meeting to be held at the Royal Society in Central London was noted by Trustees.</p> <p>The Chair also reiterated the huge and grateful thanks to the leaving Trustees and hoped that they would stay in touch.</p>
18.	<p>Dates of next meetings in 2021/22 The dates and times of future meetings were noted as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 17 March 2022 (Royal Society) • 28 April 2022 (Strategy Day) • 14 June 2022 (Wakehurst) • 6 October 2022 (Kew) • 8 December 2022 (Kew) <p>Meeting will commence at 10.00am unless otherwise advised.</p>

End notes

¹ 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.

² 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).