



MEETING TITLE	Minutes of the 82 nd meeting of the Blue Plaques Panel
DATE	6 October 2021 at 11am
LOCATION	Held via Zoom
ATTENDEES	Professor Ronald Hutton (Chair) Professor Richard Aldrich Mihir Bose Dr Simon Chaplin Emily Gee Alex Graham Andrew Graham-Dixon Dr Gus Casely-Hayford OBE Professor Claire Harman Dr Rebekah Higgitt Sir Tim Laurence – Board Chairman (part) Anna Eavis – Curatorial Director & Panel Secretary Jeremy Ashbee – Head Historic Properties Curator Michael Murray-Fennell – Head of PR Cathy Power – Blue Plaques Manager Rebecca Preston – Blue Plaques Historian Howard Spencer – Senior Historian, Blue Plaques Sarah Whines – PR Manager Kathryn Lanning – Governance Officer (minutes)

Item 1 – Apologies, announcements and declarations of interest

- 1.1 The Chairman welcomed Gus Casely-Hayford who had re-joined the Panel following a period working in the United States.
- 1.2 Apologies for absence were noted from Amy Lamé.
- 1.3 There were no declarations of interest.

Item 2 – Minutes of the meeting held on 2 June 2021

- 2.1 Agreed as a correct record.

Item 3 – Matters arising

- 3.1 There were no matters arising.

Item 4 – Secretary’s report (oral)

- 4.1 Anna Eavis advised that, since the last meeting, plaques had been installed to:
- Jean Muir, dressmaker and designer
 - Dr James Samuel Risien Russel, pioneering neurologist
 - Sir Kenneth Clark, historian and broadcaster
 - Jim Hanson, creator of The Muppets
 - Lady Diana Spencer, Later Princess of Wales
 - Ellen and William Craft, refugees from slavery and campaigners for its abolition
- 4.2 She thanked staff for their hard work in arranging these installations, in particular Sara Whines for achieving such good media coverage. She also thanked those Panel members who had been able to support the events. Each new plaque recipient would have a profile on the English Heritage website and links would be circulated to Panel members in due course. An English Heritage podcast on the Crafts had also been created by Howard Spencer and the plaque proposer.
- 4.3 Sir Tim Laurence, Board Chairman, had spoken at the blue plaque event for Lady Diana Spencer and commented that it had been a very well organised and happy occasion.
- 4.4 Following widespread media coverage, the online profile for Enid Blyton had been reviewed and amended to present a fuller picture of her life and career, whilst still referring to criticism by others of some of her views.
- 4.5 Howard Spencer had spoken at the Society of Antiquaries about the legacies of colonialism and the Empire in relation to the blue plaques scheme and agreed to share his speaking notes with Mihir Bose. He had also been involved in the production of a simple guide on how to nominate people for blue plaques, as part of the Shout out Loud project.
- 4.6 Anna Eavis also cautioned against deferring decisions on borderline nominations for 5 years as this could raise hopes. She suggested that, if Panel members felt someone was not yet eligible for a plaque, but that they may become so in time, they should recommend resubmission in no less than 10 years.

Item 5 – PR Update

- 5.1 The Panel noted the PR Update.

Item 6 – Blue Plaques Programme - Progress Report

- 6.1 The Panel noted the progress of the 2021 plaques programme and that the next unveiling, on 20 October, would be for Helena Normanton, barrister and advocate for women’s rights. Cathy Power asked Panel members to let her have any suggestions for who might be involved in the 2022 programme.

Item 7 – Criteria for the evaluation of Blue Plaque proposals

- 7.1 The Panel discussed whether the public perception of the blue plaque scheme was just that it recognised famous people or whether it was clear that it also recognised those who had made a significant contribution in their field. Anna Eavis agreed that staff would review

the criteria but did not anticipate needing to make any changes. She felt it would be sensible to consider how to better publicise the full scope of the scheme.

Item 8 – Preliminary considerations

- 8.1 Under its terms of reference, the Blue Plaques Panel advises English Heritage on the erection of Blue Plaques. The Panel considered 24 preliminary reports as follows:

Jack Lindsay (1900-1990)

The Panel's decision was not to shortlist.

Thomas Anstey Guthrie (1856-1934) and Leonard George Guthrie (1858-1918)

The Panel's decision was not to shortlist.

Penelope Fitzgerald (1916-2000)

The Panel's decision was not to shortlist.

Ercole James Parlanti (1871-1955)

The Panel's decision was not to shortlist.

Sir Joseph Swan (1828-1914)

The Panel's decision was to shortlist.

Marc Bolan (1947-1977)

The Panel's decision was to shortlist. Several members indicated a preference for the plaque to be installed at the Stoke Newington address.

Odette Sansom (1912-1995)

The Panel's decision was to shortlist.

Philip Harben (1906-1970)

The Panel's decision was not to shortlist.

Jennifer Vyvyan (1925-1974)

The Panel's decision was not to shortlist.

Fortunino Matania (1988-1963)

The Panel's decision was not to shortlist.

Max Waechter (1837-1924)

The Panel's decision was not to shortlist.

Anna Kavan (1901-1968)

The Panel's decision was not to shortlist.

Nigel Balchin (1908-1970)

The Panel's decision was not to shortlist.

Noreen Jean (Jill) Craigie (1911-1999)

The Panel's decision was to shortlist.

Noreen Jean (1911-1999)

The Panel's decision was not to shortlist.

Donald Woods (1933-2001)

The Panel's decision was not to shortlist.

Rev Joseph Williamson (1895-1988)

The Panel's decision was not to shortlist.

Quentin Crisp (1908-1999)

The Panel agreed to defer consideration of this nomination to the next meeting.

Ethel Mannin (1900-1984)

The Panel's decision was not to shortlist.

Ida Smedley Maclean (1877-1944)

The Panel's decision was not to shortlist.

Rajani Palme Dutt (1896-1974) and Salme Pekkala-Dutt (1888-1964)

The Panel's decision was not to shortlist.

George Him (1900-1982)

The Panel's decision was not to shortlist.

Yevonde Middleton (1893-1975)

The Panel's decision was not to shortlist.

Carel Weight (1908-1997)

The Panel's decision was not to shortlist.

Fred Astaire (1899-1987)

The Panel's decision was to shortlist.

Item 9 – Shortlist of recommendations awaiting final report

9.1 Noted

Item 10 – Final reports

10.1 *This item is included in a protected appendix to these minutes as it contains information that is potentially protected from public access.*

Item 11 – Any other business

11.1 The Chairman advised that, regrettably, this was the last Panel meeting for Rebekah Higgitt. He thanked her for her longstanding contribution and dedication to the work of the Panel.

11.2 The next Panel meeting would be held on Wednesday 9 February (11:00 – 13:00).