

MEETING TITLE	Minutes of the English Heritage Trust Board Meeting	
DATE	26th March 2026	
LOCATION	Deal, Kent and by Teams	
PRESENT	Tony Hales, CBE, Chair Tony Cates Paul Farmer CBE (items 1 - 8) Dale Haddon The Hon Sebastian James Peter Liney	Sir Jonathan Marsden Dr Chris Michaels – by Teams Beverley Tew CMG (items 1 - 8) Sue Wilkinson OBE The Rev'd Canon Professor William Whyte
ATTENDING	Senior Leadership Team: Geoff Parkin, interim CEO Ruth Blazye: Income, Growth & Marketing Director Addison Devlin, interim CFO Andrea Haug – People & Culture Director – by Teams Kate Logan – Operations, Experience & Engagement Director Dr Matt Thompson –Conservation, Curatorial & Learning Director	External Observer: Claudia Kenyatta, Co-CEO of Historic England Lloyd Fleming, Arts Council England – By Teams (items 1- 4) Other: Sarah O’Grady, interim Head of Governance (minutes)
APOLOGIES	Tanvi Gokhale, Trustee	

Please note that (ARC) in the Minutes denotes an item which has previously been scrutinised by the Audit and Risk Committee.

1. Announcements, apologies and declarations of Interest

1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and in particular, new Trustees Beverley Tew and Dale Haddon. He thanked Chris Michaels for carrying out the role of Acting Chair. Noting that this was his first Board meeting as Chair, he had no further reflections to add to those which he had made over dinner the previous evening. He thanked those who had arranged and hosted the Board visits to Dover Castle and Richborough Roman Fort the previous day, for the overnight hosts and for the up-coming visit to Walmer Castle and to all Staff and Volunteers at the Sites who had made the visits so informative and enjoyable.

1.2 Apologies were as noted above. There were no new declarations of interest.

2 Minutes of the meeting on 3rd December 2025

The Board approved the draft Minutes.

3 CEO's update including strategy, governance and funding; Directorate headlines and current projects update.

The Report was taken as read.

The Departmental Directors gave key updates in their areas of responsibility.

Matt Thompson, Conservation, Curatorial and Learning Director

Objects were being loaned including a Gainsborough painting to the Frick Collection. There is the potential to capitalise on other such loans.

Kate Logan, Operations, Experience and Engagement Director

KL reported that there had been a lot of work to ensure that Sites were ready for the new season due to start the coming weekend. A lot of events have been planned for the summer e.g. a Lego Build. Current challenges included the collapse of a wall at Tintagel which is owned by the neighbouring landowner.

KL has developed a property acquisition strategy with criteria to be used if opportunities arise.

Ruth Blazye, Income, Marketing & Growth Director

RB reported that the key work has been on developing a strategy for the new financial year, details of which were in the Papers. There was strong trading and membership acquisition over Christmas.

Andrea Haug, Director of People & Culture

AH confirmed that she is leaving EHT in the summer to join another organisation. An interim will be recruited.

Major projects update: Kate Logan, Operations, Experience & Engagement Director

The Report was taken as read.

Action: RB to set up a workshop for Trustees regarding the operation and use of the new CRM.

Action: KL to send TH a summary brief regarding the major projects.

After discussion, the Board **NOTED** the Reports.

4 CFO Report, including 2025/26 year-end forecast and 2026/27 Budget (ARC): Addison Devlin, interim CFO

The Papers were taken as read. AD highlighted key points including that the 2025/26 Budget had aimed for a break-even position. A small surplus was now being forecast due to cost savings and delaying some projects. A modest income growth was projected in 2026/27 due to factors such as there being 2 Easters in the financial year.

Pay Award: Andrea Haug, Director of People & Culture

The Paper was taken as read. After discussion, the Board:

- **NOTED** the CFO's Report
- **APPROVED** the Budget for 2026/27 including the approach to the Pay Award for 2026/27.

Post meeting note:

In April, the 2026/27 Budget position improved from that agreed by the Board from an unrestricted deficit of £0.3m to an unrestricted surplus of £0.2m. This was due revisions to Estates expenditure,

and the application of restricted funding to that expenditure. None of the principles in the Budget changed.

5 Annual Investment Programme (ARC): Kate Logan, Operations, Experience and Engagement Director

The Paper was taken as read. KL highlighted key points including that for the first time, the Central Investment Programme was fully consolidated across the organisation. It was developed against the background of the impact of income pressures and funding deferrals and included conservation, site and technology investment, and the implications for asset condition, safety, income and the forward investment pipeline. Delivery in 2026/27 would focus on fully funded and in-flight projects, with significant rephasing into later years.

After discussion, the Board:

APPROVED:

- The 2026/27 Central Investment Programme, with in-year flexibility should additional funding become available.
- ARC's recommendation to use unrestricted reserves to address critical statutory and safety liabilities at Osborne House (roof modillions) and Witley Court (dam).

NOTED:

- That delivery in 2026/27 will focus on fully funded and in-flight projects, with significant rephasing into 2027/28 and beyond, and that unfunded priorities continue to present risks to asset condition, safety, income and the forward investment pipeline.
- Progress in securing third-party funding following the Board's March 2025 instruction, and that limited match-funding capacity constrains the ability to fully realise these opportunities.

6 Update from Board Committees

6.1 Nominations Committee: Tony Hales, Chair

TH reported that it had been agreed that there will be another process to find a Trustee with conservation skills, with an amended brief. There is also a need to bring in digital marketing skills. Whilst an external Board review was due to take place in 2026, in view of the changes on the Board this would be postponed.

6.2 Audit & Risk Committee: Tony Cates, Chair

TC reported that key items were scrutinising the draft Budget and the Internal Audit Plan for the coming year and the Internal Audit Report regarding cyber risks. He welcomed BT to the Committee.

6.3 Remuneration Committee: Peter Liney, Chair

PL reported that the remit and membership of the Committee needs to be discussed. He welcomed DH to the Committee. The performance of the new Pensions Provider is to be reviewed.

TH reported that the membership of all Committees is to be reviewed and the Trading Company should be used more to drive commercial income, with Trustees and external members.

The Board **NOTED** the Reports.

7 Income, Growth & Marketing: high-level strategy for 2026/27 including design principles for QI Reshaping: Ruth Blazye, Income, Growth and Marketing Director

The Paper was taken as read. It was not discussed due to constraints of time.

8 Conservation Sustainable Index: Conservation, Curatorial & Learning Director

The Paper was taken as read. MT highlighted that the proposed new Index would reflect the complexity of the National Heritage Collection, differentiating between the needs of different types of property and being a more effective way of reporting on the condition of the National Heritage Collection and prioritising spend. Historic England had been involved in its development. It was also proposed that a new EHT Conservation Committee be created. This would be Trustee-led and report to the Board.

After discussion, the Board **APPROVED** the Index and the creation of a Conservation Board sub-Committee.

9 Update on the Norman Programme: Matt Thompson, Conservation, Curatorial & Learning Director

The paper was taken as read.

The Board **NOTED** the Report.

10 Closed session

The Board held a Trustee-only discussion.

CONSENT ITEMS

11 Modern Slavery Transparency Statement 2025-26 (ARC)

By consent, the Board:

- **NOTED** the Report
- **APPROVED** the Statement

12 Transfer of the freehold of Temple Church, Bristol, from the Diocese of Bristol to HBMCE

By consent, the Board **APPROVED** that Historic England be asked to acquire the freehold.

13 Information items

The Board **NOTED** the following Information Papers:

- 13.1 Local Management Agreements Report
- 13.2 Reports on the use of the Chair's Approval Procedure
- 13.3 AI Policy
- 13.4 Approved Committee Minutes:
 - Nominations Committee 20th November 2025
 - ARC 25th November 2025.