

# **MINUTES OF THE Alexandra Palace and Park Board HELD ON Thursday, 12th March, 2026, 19:00 – 21:00.**

## **PRESENT:**

**Councillors: Sean O'Donovan (Vice-Chair), Emine Ibrahim (Chair) and Nick Da Costa, Jason Beazley (Co-Optee) and Duncan Neill (Co-Optee).**

### **91. FILMING AT MEETINGS**

The Chair referred to the notice of the filming at meetings and this information was noted.

### **92. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies of absence were received by Nigel Wilmott.

### **93. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

There were none.

### **94. QUESTIONS, DEPUTATIONS OR PETITIONS**

There were none.

### **95. URGENT BUSINESS**

There were none.

### **96. MINUTES**

The unrestricted minutes of the Alexandra Park and Palace Charitable Trust Board held on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2025 were approved as an accurate record of the proceedings.

The minutes of the Alexandra Park and Palace Advisory Committee held on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2025 were noted.

The minutes of the Alexandra Park and Palace Consultative Committee held on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2025 were noted.

### **97. CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT**

The report summarised progress during FY 2025/26 in alignment with the Trust's vision to create a sustainable future for the Park and Palace. It outlined key

achievements, delivery milestones, and challenges since the previous report, highlighting continued progress across all strategic priorities.

Members noted that Alexandra Park and Palace received national recognition at Prime Minister's Questions on 11 February 2026. The Prime Minister highlighted the importance of the People's Palace as an iconic cultural venue of national significance, following a question from the local MP. This was recognised as a significant moment for the Trust, reinforcing its charitable model whereby income from events directly funded the long-term care and preservation of the estate for public benefit.

It was noted that the organisation continued to operate as a major civic and cultural asset set within 196 acres of parkland. The site welcomed over 4 million visitors annually and generated substantial economic impact for London, including the local borough. This achievement was shared with staff, providing an opportunity to recognise their contribution and reinforce organisational pride and purpose.

Members noted that delivery across the commercial and cultural programme remained strong, with a varied and high-quality programme of concerts, theatre, exhibitions, and sporting events. High-profile residencies and performances contributed to strong audience engagement and national profile. Theatre programming continued to perform well through touring productions, residencies.

Key highlights included major performances in the Great Hall and successful productions in the Theatre, alongside the well-attended return of the Fresh Art Fair. Ancillary offers such as the Ice Rink, food and beverage outlets, and the recently opened Boating Lake Café contributed positively to the visitor experience and revenue generation.

The Summit rooftop experience launched successfully in February 2026, attracting strong demand and extensive media coverage. Alexandra Palace was also shortlisted as a finalist for Venue of the Year at the Music Week Awards 2026.

Progress was made in responding to climate challenges. Listed Building Consent was secured for secondary glazing improvements, supporting energy efficiency. A planning application for solar photovoltaic panels at the Boathouse was submitted, with projections indicating future energy generation to support resilience objectives.

Members noted that conservation-led repairs continued across the estate, including masonry works in East Court. These works addressed historic damage and adhered to best-practice conservation methods, ensuring the long-term sustainability of the heritage assets.

Routine maintenance and seasonal works were undertaken across the Park, including waste clearance, graffiti removal, and winter safety measures. Tree safety works were extensive, addressing issues caused by disease, pests, and weather-related stress. Repairs to infrastructure, including footpaths and drainage systems, were completed.

Volunteer involvement increased, supporting horticultural and conservation activity. External works, including Thames Water investigations and planned improvements to signage, were noted as contributing to overall site management.

Good progress was reported in archive management, including completion of a records survey and ongoing cataloguing work. Plans were developed to improve storage, accessibility, and compliance with retention standards. Planning commenced for the 90th anniversary of BBC television at the Palace, involving partnerships with major cultural and academic institutions. Public engagement continued through exhibitions, tours, and workshops, providing access to heritage and learning opportunities for a wide range of audiences.

Community engagement activity remained strong. Youth programmes, including the Young Creative Network, supported skills development in creative industries. Initiatives for older residents, such as Café Palais and upcoming AP Sounds programming, promoted inclusion and wellbeing. Educational programmes continued to support schools through curriculum-linked learning. Volunteering remained a key feature, with opportunities across multiple areas and additional training provided to volunteers.

Members noted continued progress in strengthening organisational resilience. A new donor campaign and regular giving programme were launched, alongside wider fundraising and stakeholder engagement activity in preparation for a new strategic plan. IT infrastructure improvements and cybersecurity measures were ongoing.

Progress continued on key capital projects, including the proposed redevelopment of the Panorama Room, which entered the design and pre-construction phase. Plans aimed to enhance capacity while respecting the historic fabric of the building. Further developments included the Security Room reconfiguration and ongoing planning for the Creative Campus project. Smaller-scale improvements, such as enhancements to the Boating Lake Café, were completed.

Strategic discussions with heritage organisations progressed, focusing on embedding skills development and training into conservation activity. These initiatives aimed to support sector-wide skills preservation and create learning opportunities linked to restoration works.

The organisation continued to implement its People Strategy, focusing on recruitment, engagement, development, and retention. Staff engagement levels improved, as reflected in survey results and external recognition, including employer rankings. Feedback from staff was incorporated into ongoing workforce planning and development.

**RESOLVED:**

The contents of the report were noted.

**98. FINANCE REPORT**

Members noted that the Trust had continued to face significant sector-wide challenges, including economic uncertainty, rising operational costs, and labour market pressures. These factors had made it increasingly difficult to maintain a balanced budget while also growing income streams and investing in conservation

and restoration.

It was highlighted that the organisation remained vulnerable to external shocks, including geopolitical instability affecting utilities and supply chains, as well as climate change impacts leading to adverse weather, event cancellations, reduced visitor numbers, and lower on-site spend. Increasing competition across events, hospitality, theatre, and leisure, alongside rising customer expectations around sustainability and digital delivery, was also noted.

Strategic Framework:

Members noted that financial and operational planning continued to be guided by the Trust's established strategic framework. This included its Vision to create a sustainable future, its statutory Mission to repair and maintain the site for public benefit, and its Purpose to enrich lives through experiences. The organisation's ten strategic goals and core values were reaffirmed as underpinning all activity and decision-making.

Operational Business Plan 2026/27:

It was reported that the Three-Year Operational Business Plan had been updated ahead of 2026/27, maintaining a focus on financial sustainability, collaborative delivery of strategic projects, embedding organisational standards, and strengthening internal culture and engagement.

Key performance indicators had been established, including financial sustainability, revenue growth, staff metrics, and visitor satisfaction measures.

Financial Performance and Budget Position  
Members noted that the Trust had moved toward financial stability, with the 2025/26 forecast indicating a small surplus after loan repayments, following several years of deficit.

The proposed 2026/27 budget achieved a balanced position, with increased income driven by restoration levy, gift aid, and new revenue streams. It was noted that approximately 70% of income was now self-generated, with the remainder provided through grant funding.

Financial Pressures:

Ongoing financial challenges were highlighted, including substantial increases in business rates, general inflationary pressures affecting wages and construction costs, and impacts on subsidiary profit margins and gift aid contributions.

Mitigation Strategies:

Members noted that a range of mitigation measures had been implemented. These included proposed increases in car parking charges, enhanced fundraising activity (including a Patron Scheme and donation initiatives), review of insurance arrangements, and maximisation of new commercial opportunities such as the Summit attraction and Boating Lake Café. Operational efficiencies were also pursued through cost reviews, revised operating models, and process improvements linked to new systems.

#### Strategic Investment:

Despite financial pressures, the Trust had continued to prioritise investment in key areas, including workforce development, digital and IT infrastructure, and essential repairs and maintenance of the estate.

#### Reserves Position:

It was noted that the Trust currently held no reserves, despite a policy requirement to maintain six months of operating costs. Members acknowledged the need to generate sustained surpluses over the medium term to achieve financial resilience and compliance with governance standards.

#### Restoration Levy:

Members noted that the Restoration Levy continued to provide a key source of funding for maintenance and conservation works. The levy had been increased in January 2026, supporting essential investment in the historic estate.

#### Budget Assumptions (2026/27):

It was reported that income was projected to increase overall, driven by higher gift aid, restoration levy income, parking revenue, and new attractions. Modest increases were also assumed across leases and donations. Expenditure was projected to rise due to inflation, increased staffing costs, and strategic investments, partially offset by efficiencies in some areas. The overall budget position remained broadly balanced after loan repayments.

#### Risk Management:

Members noted key risks, including potential income shortfalls, cost overruns, external economic pressures, regulatory changes, and dependency on key supplier contracts. The Trust committed to ongoing monitoring and reporting of risks.

#### Car Parking Charges:

Members were asked to consider a proposed 10% increase in car parking charges to support income generation and maintain financial sustainability. The revised tariff structure aimed to remain competitive, improve fairness, and discourage long-term parking. It was noted that the increase would generate additional income but carried potential risks, including negative stakeholder perception and customer resistance.

#### RESOLVED:

- Approved the APPCT (Trust) Unrestricted Budget for 2026/27
- Approved the increase in car park charges

## **99. STRATEGIC PLAN REPORT**

#### Strategic Plan Development:

Members noted that over the past year the Trust team had been developing a 10-year Strategic Plan, bringing together Park and Palace priorities into a single, unified document. The purpose of the Plan had been to articulate the Charity's long-term ambition and to set out the potential for a step-change in its impact locally and nationally. It was noted that the primary audience for the Plan included key stakeholders, funders, government bodies, and donors.

#### Background and Development Process:

Members noted that the development of the Strategic Plan had involved extensive engagement and research. This had included consultation with key stakeholders such as Haringey Council, the GLA, Historic England, and funding bodies; strategic mapping of relevant policy areas; and a detailed market research exercise exploring visitor needs and aspirations. The process had also drawn on updates to the Conservation Management Plan, findings from previous engagement work and surveys, and analysis of existing plans, including the Creative Learning Plan and Clean Energy Masterplan. An updated Impact Study Framework had also been developed to strengthen the evidence base.

#### Purpose and Scope of the Plan:

It was reported that the Strategic Plan set out how the Trust would deliver a significant step-change in impact between 2025 and 2035. The Plan would guide fundraising, conservation activity, operational improvements, partnership development, audience growth, and long-term financial sustainability.

#### External Support:

Members noted that external consultancy support had been commissioned from Alex Homfray Cultural Destinations to help shape and guide the process, bringing relevant sector experience.

#### Board Engagement and Feedback:

It was reported that an initial draft of the Strategic Plan had been presented to the Board in November 2025. Trustees had broadly supported the direction of travel and provided feedback for further development. Key points raised included the need to clarify the positioning of the document, strengthen the articulation of the BBC Wing's future and heritage significance, and provide clearer phasing between early (first five years) and longer-term priorities.

#### Revisions Following Feedback:

Members noted that Trustee feedback had been incorporated and further updates had been presented at the December Strategy Day. These included confirmation of the document as an overarching Strategic Plan, a refined structure built around six strategic objectives, and improved integration of BBC heritage within the Creative Campus vision.

Additional evidence from market research and impact analysis had been included, alongside supporting technical appendices for internal and partner use.

#### Next Steps:

Members noted that, following finalisation and design of the Strategic Plan, a stakeholder communication and engagement plan would be implemented. This would

include tailored communication approaches for key audiences, including residents, community groups, tenants, staff, government bodies, and funders.

RESOLVED:

Noted the principles of the Strategic plan and delegated authority to the Chief Executive and Chair to finalise the Strategic Plan and publish the final version as and when designed.

## **100. POLICY UPDATES**

Members noted that the Trust was required to maintain a clear and robust process for identifying, escalating, and reporting serious incidents in line with Charity Commission requirements. The policy had been reviewed and updated to reflect current guidance, including expectations relating to safeguarding, financial crime, governance, reputational risks, and partner-related incidents.

Members noted that a serious incident had been defined as any actual or suspected event posing significant risk to people, property, finances, operations, or the organisation's reputation. This included safeguarding issues, fraud and financial irregularities, data breaches, governance failures, criminal matters involving senior personnel, and incidents affecting partners.

It was reported that all staff, volunteers, and contractors were required to report concerns internally in line with existing procedures and must not contact the Charity Commission directly. Any incidents not covered by existing policies were required to be reported to the Finance Director or CEO within 24 hours.

Members noted that clear escalation procedures were in place. Where incidents involved senior officers, escalation to the Chair or Trustee Lead was required. Potential serious incidents were to be assessed promptly and escalated within 24 hours where appropriate. A formal record of all incidents and decisions on reportability was maintained.

It was noted that Trustees retained overall responsibility for ensuring that serious incidents were reported promptly. Reports were required to include factual details, impact assessments, actions taken, notification of relevant authorities, communication considerations, and any governance or procedural issues. Where information was incomplete, initial reports could be submitted with updates provided as investigations progressed.

Members noted that, following the reporting of an incident, the Trust would implement appropriate follow-up actions. These included communications planning, seeking external advice where necessary, conducting internal reviews, strengthening controls, and sharing lessons learned with Trustees.

It was reported that the Charity Commission could request further information and, in serious cases, take regulatory action. Ongoing monitoring arrangements were in place to ensure compliance.

Members noted that the policy would be reviewed every two years, or sooner if required by updates to Charity Commission guidance.

Key risks were identified, including failure to report incidents, reputational damage, regulatory action, and staff uncertainty. Mitigation measures included clear procedures, defined reporting lines, training, prompt escalation, and transparent communication.

Members noted that the policy strengthened governance and compliance, supported consistent operational practice, ensured adherence to regulatory requirements, and reinforced the Trust's commitment to transparency and safeguarding.

RESOLVED:

- Approved the revised Serious Incident Reporting Policy (Version 1.2).
- Noted the delegation arrangements for operational submission of Serious Incident Reports.
- Noted plans for staff and trustee training to support consistent implementation

**101. ANY OTHER UNRESTRICTED BUSINESS THE CHAIR CONSIDERS TO BE URGENT**

There were none.

**102. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS**

Items 12-19 were subject of a motion to exclude the press and public from the meeting as they contain exempt information as defined in Section 100a of the Local Government Act 1972; Para 1 – information relating to any individual, Para 2 – Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual, Para 3 - information relating to the business or financial affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information), and Para 5 – Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.

**103. EXEMPT MINUTES**

The Committee considered the exempt information.

**104. EXEMPT CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT**

The Committee considered the exempt information.

**105. EXEMPT FINANCE REPORT**

The Committee considered the exempt information.

**106. EXEMPT FINANCIAL REGULATIONS REPORT**

The Committee considered the exempt information.

**107. EXEMPT FRRAC CHAIR'S REPORT (VERBAL UPDATE)**

The Committee considered the exempt information.

**108. EXEMPT APTL CHAIR'S REPORT (VERBAL UPDATE)**

The Committee considered the exempt information.

**109. ANY OTHER EXEMPT BUSINESS THE CHAIR CONSIDERS TO BE URGENT**

The Committee considered the exempt information.

CHAIR: Councillor Emine Ibrahim

Signed by Chair .....

Date .....