

Empire, Slavery & Scotland's Museums
Steering Group Meeting

Wednesday, 10 February 10am

INTRODUCTION AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Chair Sir Geoff Palmer (GP) welcomed Steering Group members and MGS/Project Staff to the meeting. The meeting was attended by:

Steering Group members-

- Abeer Eladany (AE), Curatorial Assistant, University of Aberdeen
- Catriona Davidson (CD), Curator, Glencoe Folk Museum
- Churnjeet Mahn (CM), Reader (English), Strathclyde University
- Elena Trimarchi (ET), Learning Manager, David Livingstone Trust
- Jatin Haria (JH), Executive Director, Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights
- Lewis Hou (LH), Founder, Science Ceilidh; Member, The Anti-Racist Educator
- Silence Chihuri (SC), CEO, Fair Justice System for Scotland Group
- Steph Scholten (SS), Trustee, Museums Galleries Scotland; Member, EthCom, ICOM's Ethics Committee; Director, The Hunterian at Glasgow University
- Zandra Yeaman (ZY), Curator of Discomfort, The Hunterian at Glasgow University;

and MGS/Project Staff:

- Sheila Asante (SA), ESSM Project Manager, Museums Galleries Scotland
- Devon McHugh (DM), Senior Partnerships Manager, Museums Galleries Scotland
- Duncan Dornan (DD), Head of Museums, Glasgow Life
- Lucy Casot (LC), CEO, Museums Galleries Scotland
- Miles Greenwood (MG), Curator, Legacies of Empire, Glasgow Life
- Rosie King (RK), Communications Officer, Museums Galleries Scotland
- Gillian Shaw (GSh), Executive Assistant, Museums Galleries Scotland.

GP gave a special welcome to CD who had recently joined the Steering Group and to ET who was attending her first meeting of the Steering Group.

Apologies for absence were noted from Lisa Williams, Founder, Edinburgh Caribbean Association; Honorary Fellow, Edinburgh University

Regarding conflicts of interest GP reported that Foysol Choudhury was temporarily standing down from the Steering Group to enable him to take part in the forthcoming Scottish Parliamentary elections and that a replacement representative from ELREC was being sought. GP noted a potential organisational conflict of interest from CRER that JH had made him aware of and which could be considered on an ongoing basis as appropriate.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

CALL FOR EVIDENCE

The Steering Group recognised the need for an evidence based approach. They noted the findings and SA reported that 50% of all Local Authority areas in Scotland were represented in the responses received and that the approximate 10% response rate was reasonable, especially in the context of the ongoing pandemic.

Steering Group members discussed the potential challenge the work could present for regimental museums and SA reported that the National Museum had talked about their army museum and that another regimental museum had responded.

The Steering Group noted that some museums had questioned the survey's relevance to them which pointed to a lack of understanding as to the scope of the work and it was agreed therefore that the project should ensure the relevance of the work was made clear. Steering Group members discussed other examples of institutions that were looking across their work in reflecting the legacies of slavery and empire experience. The need for a degree of quality control was noted given the interpretation of success could be subjective. It was agreed that respondents needed to be free to share failures and talk about negative experiences.

SA explained how the second phase of consultation would allow for participants to share experience – good and bad - openly and transparently.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Amendments to the Terms of Reference were noted including the need to be explicit around the question of remuneration for Steering Group and Advisory Panel Members in that remuneration was available for loss of earnings and out of pocket expenses only. GP and LC agreed to confirm numbers required for a quorum before the next meeting.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

In view of the requirement to ensure that *people in Scotland are aware of the role Scotland played* in the context of empire, slavery and colonialism, the Steering Group suggested that the report should state the percentage of people in Scotland who visited museums and that this could be taken from the 2020 Household Survey.

SA reported that she was in contact with the Scottish Human Rights Commission around the Human Rights approach being taken by the project. The Steering Group confirmed they agreed with the Human Rights approach.

Steering Group members noted that the findings of the project would be of interest to wider society – e.g. the education sector.

TIMELINE AND BUDGET

Steering Group members were concerned that the timescale (ie finishing in November 2021) was too short for the ambitions and scope of the work required. It was thought that such a short timescale could compromise its success and welcomed the Project Team's proposal to seek an extension from the Scottish Government. LC reported that MGS was meeting with the Scottish Government the following week and would seek additional time to enable the ambitions of the project to be realised.

There was discussion around the process for recruiting advisors and sub-groups and the tendering process for consultant(s). It was noted that advisors would be recruited with specific expertise in different areas and that they, along with subject sub-groups, would define questions for the consultation for approval by the Steering Group. It was noted that Steering Group members could be involved in identifying expertise, participating in sub-groups and acting as advisors where appropriate. In addition, it was agreed that members of the Steering Group would be invited to 'take ownership' of specific sub-groups and that the Steering Group would work with MGS on the public consultation tender document and that a member would be on the selection panel for tendering for consultants.

Once consultation was ready to go live, it was agreed that Steering Group members would work with MGS in approaching their community contacts, and that Steering Group members would participate in the consultation where applicable.

The Steering Group were concerned to note that each sub-group was due to meet up to four times given the tight timescales. It was also agreed that participants needed to be aware of the possibility of remuneration for loss of earnings to ensure there were no barriers to participating.

DM presented the budget for the project and it was noted that this would need to be expanded if the request to extend the timescale was successful.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING

In his summing up, GP noted that:

- Steering Group members would be consulted and invited to join sub-groups when appropriate;
- The timescale was a concern and additional time should be sought from the Scottish Government at a meeting next week, and MGS would report back to the Steering Group on this;
- An additional Steering Group meeting should be scheduled before 23 March;

SA indicated that she would organise to with Steering Group members to meet to her 1:1.

RK invited Steering Group members to make SA aware of any learning resources that could be useful to the sector with SA so that MGS could promote them through Connect and the ESSM webpage.

The next meeting was scheduled to take place on Tuesday 23 March at 10am.