

ECSITE-UK COMMITTEE MEETING

29 July 2004, The Observatory science centre, Herstmonceux, 14.00-15.30

Present: Tristram Besterman, Sally Hall, Colin Johnson (Chair, in John's absence), Melanie Quin (and Paul Jennings, by phone, for items 4 & 5)

1 Apologies and Thanks

Apologies received from Gail Bromley, John Durant, Roland Jackson, Stuart Monro, Sally Montgomery, Gillian Pearson (and, at the last minute, Linda Conlon, whose plane had developed a fault and been diverted to Manchester).

Committee members had met Rachel Simmons, admin manager, in the Discovery Park: thanks are minuted for her invaluable admin and membership services. Thanks were also to be expressed to Stephen Pizzey for hosting our meeting.

2 Minutes of meeting held on 11 March 2004

Tristram pronounced the Minutes a true record of the meeting, and they were approved.

3 Matters arising

Gift Aid: ECSITE-UK joined the national lobby on gift aid, led by Ken Robinson, chair of Attractions Forum (of which ECSITE-UK is a member). Following meetings with officials and with John Healey, MP, Economic Secretary, HM Treasury, a letter to the Treasury summarises discussions in four key points

- Additional giving as a percentage of the admission charge will be more equitable than a fixed sum (due to the wide range of charitable attractions with widely differing admission charges)
- The additional donation percentage must be set at 10% or below to give a good chance of worthwhile take up
- Clear rules will be needed about the operation of the new scheme and benefits that can be offered for this specific form of Gift Aid donation
- The success of the new scheme could be greatly assisted by a nationally recognisable logo and consistent message to potential donors.

VAT rating on tickets: University museums will now also get back the VAT they incur, bringing them in line with the national museums and local authority collections that are exempt from VAT. This means five university museums that charge an admission fee will now be able to reclaim VAT as well as 23 museums which are already free.

Press feature on SDCs: no opportunity has yet arisen for a feature article, however the sector was the subject of the 'education' double spread in the Daily Mail, 6 July, combining advertorial (copy submitted by SDCs, notably Intech), and advertisements for a number of leading centres.

4 Treasurer's report

Paul reported that, following conversation with John Gagg, he is satisfied the cash-flow statement is consistent with income/expenditure. There is adequate cash at the bank to meet foreseeable commitments. Fundraising effort must continue, and the Committee hopes this will continue to meet with success.

5 Advocacy

In **England**, Government has announced funding for five millennium centres: £2 million, spread over three financial years, 2003/04 to 2005/06. The funding comes 50:50 from OST and DfES. Officials are now considering ways in which longer-term funding might be made available, to established as well as millennium centres.

In **Scotland**, the Scottish Executive has announced a 2-year package of £7 million for four science centres (GSC, Sensation, Our Dynamic Earth, Satrosphere), drawing from existing budget lines. The apparent intention is now to identify a distinct SDC budget line, since the centres clearly meet the objectives of the S.E. This level of support, and the inclusion of the long-established Satrosphere, should give leverage in the rest of the UK. Paul would gladly help, and provide contacts to build on the Scottish experience.

In **Wales** and **Northern Ireland**, Colin (CEO Techniquest, and adviser to DCAL) reported the situation 'as was'. Resolution in Northern Ireland is increasingly urgent at W5's current position will quickly become untenable.

MQ reported the meetings with Lord Sainsbury, Keith O'Nions, Ian Gibson; the presentation to David King and the Chief Scientific Advisor's Committee (CSAC); and John's phone 'meetings' with Lord May and Lord Oxburgh; also the 3-way discussions between the BA/ ECSITE-UK/ NMSI. The key outcomes are considerable raising of the profile of the sector, and a genuine move towards coherence and potential collaboration nationally as evidenced in references to each other (ECSITE-UK <-> BA <-> RS <-> NMSI) in our submissions to Treasury in response to the Government's 'Science & Innovation' consultation, and in the joint submission made at the Treasury's specific invitation by the BA/ECSITE-UK/NMSI.

The submission to HM Treasury, and the Minute of our presentation to CSAC accompany these Minutes.

HM Treasury's 'Science & Innovation Investment Framework 2004–2014' was published July 12, alongside the Spending Review.

Research conducted for ECSITE-UK by Tim Caulton has just been reported. It contains 2003 visitor data and addresses issues of benchmarking, with recommendations to ECSITE-UK.

Actions:

Ctee members to read chapter 6 of 'Science & Innovation', and use the new buzz phrases

MQ to call Gary Kass (OST) to offer any help/clarification as they determine funding priorities following publication of spending review

MQ/JD to seek meeting with SETNET (Pam Bowen) to explore opportunities for joint action, building on existing synergy

MQ to copy the Visitor Research report to all Ctee members; and to exercise caution in acting on the advice – specifically PSA-2 applicable to museums will not be enforced from January 2005

The **Ctee** to discuss the report by email, and as an agenda item in October.

OST funding has been secured for core office operation to end March 2006.
Project funding from Copus will support 'Science in Collections' managed by Rosalind Mist and 'sciZmic science for Girlguiding UK' managed by Louise Webb.
An exhibition consortium bid was submitted to ReDiscover Round-3.

7 AGM, 8 September, Plymouth

The agenda is live at www.ecsite-uk.net/agm, to be announced 1 August in the e-newsletter.

Committee membership: two positions are open, one for museums (unfilled last year) and one for Wales (following Colin's retirement end August). MQ/JD have invited Peter Trevitt (new CEO, Techniquet) to stand for election, and have invited Lindsay Clark (NMSI) to nominate a senior member of Science Museum staff to stand for election.

Tristram and MQ have both met and been impressed by the new director of MSIM, Ian Griffin, and advise bearing him in mind as a future candidate.

Actions:

MQ/JD to push NMSI to name their nominee

Tristram to give thought to his replacement (September 2005) by someone able equally excellently to bridge the science museums/centres communities

The **Ctee** to consider the succession of Chair – preliminary discussion at the Ctee Mtg in October.

8 Disability Discrimination Act

In Linda's absence – this is her agenda item – this point to be added to the agenda for the October meeting.

9 The next generation of senior managers

Action:

MQ/JD to meet Chris Smith to explore opportunities for SDC staff to apply to the Clore Leadership fellows scheme, <http://www.cloreleadership.org/>

10 Any other business

Sally queried dates of the announcement of ReDiscover Round-3 grants and the deadline for Round-4 bids. These are posted (and updated) at www.wellcome.ac.uk/rediscover

11 Date and location of meetings through 2004/05

- *ECSITE-UK AGM, morning through lunch on 8 September, National Marine Aquarium, Plymouth*
- *Our Dynamic Earth, Edinburgh, 11.30-15.30 on 19 October: 3-LINE WHIP*

The meeting closed at 3.30pm, to allow

- Tristram, MQ and Stephen Pizzey to meet in advance of their visit to China (2-14 August) as part of the British Council science centre/museum delegation

- Sally to tour the Observatory science centre, on her first visit to Herstmonceux.