

The Westminster Foundation for Democracy Limited

Company number: 2693163

Minutes of Meeting of Board of Governors of Westminster Foundation for Democracy, on 14 September 2023

Meeting IN-PERSON (PORTCULLIS HOUSE) AND VIA ZOOM: 9:30-11.30am.

Present: Richard Graham MP
Sue English (Vice Chair)
Mark Babington
Yasmin Qureshi MP
Rt Hon Dame Maria Miller MP
Liz Saville Roberts MP
Milica Delevic
Anne McLaughlin MP
Femi Otukoya
Anthony Smith (ex-officio, CEO)

In attendance: Julie Elliott MP (Board Designate)
Chris Lane (Company Secretary)
Michael Nevin (Regional Director, AFRICA)
Clare Scott (Board Secretary)

Welcome and Apologies

The meeting was opened by Vice Chair, Sue English as the Chair Richard Graham MP had been delayed.

It was noted that that there were apologies for absence submitted by Thomas Hughes.

The meeting was quorate.

Declarations of interest

None were raised.

Minutes and matters arising

The Board approved the minutes of the June 2023 Board meeting. All actions noted as complete.

ACTION – Errors reported by the Board as being present in the Draft ARA to be rectified before submission. **Complete.**

ACTION – WFD to liaise with the Chairs office to schedule the meeting with FCDO ministers for the next available date. **Complete**

ACTION - The Board to be updated at future meetings on how the preparations for the new spending review are progressing. **Complete**

Chair's opening comments

The Chair welcomed new Board member Anne McLaughlin MP to her first meeting and thanked Julie Elliott for attending though her appointment has not been officially confirmed.

The Chair also thanked Sue English and Thomas Hughes for the support they have provided the Board during their time spent as Governors.

The Chair encouraged all Board members to visit the WFD Garden of Democracy exhibition that was being held in Portcullis House and to help raise its awareness among their colleagues who may be visiting.

1. CEO's Report

The Board accepted the CEO report (Doc_2) as presented. The CEO provided an overview on the main points of the report, sections highlighted included:

- Meeting with Lord Ahmed – The Board were informed that the meeting with Lord Ahmed had taken place over the summer. The meeting focussed on four main areas: FCDO Open societies and Human rights strategy, Elections, Information integrity and the new centre of Expertise. The meeting also touched briefly on the preparation for the spending review and the WFD exhibition that is currently on display at Portcullis House.
- White paper on International Development – The Board were informed that WFD is to respond to the governments call for evidence to support preparation if a new white paper on International Development. The CEO informed the Board that WFD's submission aims to make three points as outlined in his report.

2. Quarterly Progress Report

The Board accepted Management's Quarterly Progress Report (Doc_3) covering the Q1 FY2023/24 period and endorsed the latest version of the Corporate Risk Register, as presented.

The Board briefly discussed the Finance report received and the draw down on the reserves that had been taken to the ARC.

The Director of Operations updated the board on the public body review. The Board were informed that a Lead reviewer had been appointed and the review was due to start on 13th September. Currently no terms of reference have been shared so it is not known what involvement will be required from the Board. The Board briefly discussed the review and what it entailed and raised if the CEO or Director of operations were aware if there were any areas of concern. The Board were informed that a self-assessment tool had been completed prior to the review and no specific areas of concern were highlighted.

3. Report of the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee

Mark Babington advised that the Audit and Risk Assurance committee (ARC) had met in September and focussed its time and attention on:

- Reserves – As outlined in the Quarterly progress report update the ARC discussed the recent draws on the reserves.
- Cyber security – The ARC discussed the current risk associated with insecure systems and the cost associated with implementing the recommendations of the Governments Security centres Cyber Gap Analysis.

4. Regional Programme Focus - AFRICA

Michael Nevin joined the meeting and provided an update on the AFRICA region with focus on how the declining satisfaction with how democracy is viewed is impacting the region and how the WFD programmes that are fully funded via GIA are working to influence Youth satisfaction.

The Chair thanked Michael for his report and the Board held a discussion regarding how future funding could be secured by altering WFDs ways of working (i.e., consortiums).

5. In-depth review: Strategic Engagement

The CEO provided a brief overview to the Board of the engagement events that had been planned by the Communications team with special mentions to the Garden of Democracy exhibition currently being held in Portcullis House, which all Board members were urged to visit and the Annual Lecture that is planned for October.

6. Any other business

The Board discussed the Committee/Lead Governor nominations. The Board members agreed the following appointments:

Programme Lead – With Sue English and Thomas Hughes' terms ending in October, Milica Delevic was put forward to take on this position with agreement of the board. It was agreed that CEO, Anthony Smith would arrange to meet with Milica to discuss what the role entailed.

ACTION – The CEO to meet with Milica Delevic to discuss to role of Programme Lead.

ARC – With Brendan O'Hara MP stepping down as a Board member, it was agreed that Anne McLaughlin MP would join the ARC.

People – Rt Hon Dame Maria Miller agreed to continue in her position as the People committee's chair.

There being no other business to discuss, the Board noted that the next formal Board meeting would be held 23 Nov 2023.