

SPEAKER'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON WORKS OF ART

Note of the meeting held on Wednesday 22 February 2023 at 5.00pm in Committee Room 6 [INF07]

Members present: Dean Russell (Chair)
Simon Baynes
Patrick Grady
Sally-Ann Hart

Apologies: Barbara Keeley, Kim Johnson and Caroline Nokes

In attendance: Dr Katy Barrett, Deputy Chief Curator (remotely, on MS Teams)
Lord Faulkner of Worcester, Chair of the Lord Speaker's Panel on Works of Art
Emma Gormley, Curator
Melissa Hamnett, Chief Curator of Works of Art and Director of Heritage Collections
Sean Harris, Committee Secretariat
Lorcan O'Donoghue, Media Officer
Edward Potton, Secretary
Sileas Wood, Curator

1) Informal Notes

Matters arising

Collection tours

The Chair informed Members that the curators would be organising a series of tours of the Works of Art Collection in April, details of which would be sent round after the meeting.

The Committee **agreed** the informal note of the meeting on 14 December 2022.

2) Restoration and Renewal: progress update and restoration options

Marek Kubala (Client Team Head of Governance), Samantha Johnson, (Heritage Collections R&R Lead), Matt White, (Delivery Authority Programme Director), and James Young, (Client Team Chief of Staff, Restoration and Renewal Programme) gave a presentation on options being developed for the Programme and their implications for the Heritage Collections.

Decision

The Committee **noted** the presentation and **agreed** for a summary of its views to be sent to the Programme team after the meeting to inform the development of options and areas of focus for the Client Board.

2) Winnie Ewing portrait proposal

Emma Gormley, Curator, Works of Art, briefed the Committee on a request from Ian Blackford MP for the Committee to consider acquiring or commissioning an artwork to commemorate the 55th anniversary of the election of SNP politician Winnie Ewing.

Patrick Grady noted that Ewing had made a significant impact on UK politics as the Scottish National Party's first female MP and had the distinction of serving in the UK, Scottish and European parliaments. The representation of SNP politicians in the Works of Art Collection was lacking and acquiring a portrait of Ewing for the Collection aligned with the Committee's efforts to diversify representation.

Decision

The Committee **agreed** that a loan of an existing artwork depicting Winnie Ewing should be explored in the first instance with a further discussion at a future date on other acquisition options if this was not possible.

3) Millicent Garrett Fawcett portrait display proposals

Sileas Wood, Curator, Works of Art, briefed the Committee on options for the display of the recently acquired portrait of Millicent Garrett Fawcett by Annie Louisa Swynnerton (WOA 7739). These were the short-term display of the portrait in the No Lobby, followed by the Admission Order Office or the Committee Corridor in the longer term. In the No Lobby, the painting could be hung over the fireplace next to the painting by Churchill or on the opposite wall between the windows.

The following was discussed:

- The size of the portrait compared with the painting by Churchill. Ms Wood said that in size they were broadly similar though orientated differently.
- A Member suggested displaying the portrait above the fireplace and moving the Churchill painting to the opposite wall between the windows.
- The Chair and several Members expressed a preference for hanging the portrait between the windows opposite the fireplace so that it would be noticeable to anyone walking through the Lobby and in the longer term for it to be displayed on the Committee Corridor because of the opportunity this would allow for people to view the portrait.

Decision

The Committee **approved** the short-term display of the portrait and **agreed** for a full proposal to be brought for its display on the Committee Corridor in the longer term.

3) Speaker's State Coach

Melissa Hamnett, Chief Curator and Director of Heritage Collections, briefed the Committee on the history of the Speaker's State Coach, previous display and loan programmes, and

proposed future display options. It was proposed that the coach would be displayed in a protective glass case in Westminster Hall from May to September 2023 to mark the coronation. The Heritage Collections Team was working through the logistical challenges of the display as well as environmental controls and monitoring. The display also presented an opportunity to contextualise and interpret the coach and its history.

Decision

The Committee **noted** the updated plans for the Coach.

3) Inward loan renewals and returns

Sileas Wood, Curator, Works of Art, presented a list of 14 artworks on inward loan that were due to come to the end of their loan period.

Decision

The Committee **agreed** to renew the loan periods for the artworks set out in the paper.

4) Verbal updates

a) Women's History Month lecture 2023

Sileas Wood, Curator, briefed the Committee. The Women's History Month lecture on the subject of Millicent Garrett Fawcett would be held on Monday 27 March.

Decision

The Committee **noted** the update.

b) Heritage Vision and Strategy

Melissa Hamnett, Director of Heritage Collections and Chief Curator, briefed the Committee. The Heritage Vision and Strategy set out the guiding principles, which aligned with the strategic objects of the Committee and the Lords Panel, for a collective vision for the Heritage Collections and improved collaboration between those managing them. Activities within this would be aligned with existing policies and strategies to cement Parliament's approach to managing the Heritage Collections.

Decision

The Committee **noted** the update.

3) Any other business

Incidents affecting works of art

Melissa Hamnett, Director of Heritage Collections and Chief Curator, briefed the Committee. The Heritage Collections Team was dealing with an increasing number of challenges affecting works of art while the Palace awaited major restoration works.

The Committee **noted** the update.

Heritage Collections Monthly Highlights Report

The Committee **noted** the Heritage Collections Monthly Highlights Report for January.

7) Date and time of the next meeting

The Committee will next meet on Wednesday 22 March at 4.30pm.