

## Collections Advisory Group

**Minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2022 at 2pm in Committee Room G [CAG01]**

**CAG Members Present:** Baroness Young of Hornsey (Chair)  
 Lord Faulkner of Worcester (LF)  
 Gagan Mohindra MP (GM)  
 Malavika Anderson (MA)  
 Molly Bretton (MB)  
 Cat Manson (CM)  
 Hannah Obee (HO)

**Apologies:** Alayo Akinkugbe  
 Gilane Tawadros

**In attendance:** [REDACTED] Heritage Collections [REDACTED]  
 [REDACTED] Parliamentary Archives, [REDACTED]  
 [REDACTED], Parliamentary Archives, [REDACTED]  
 [REDACTED] (secretary, [REDACTED])  
 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Visitor Services, [REDACTED]

### Acronyms

CAG	Collections Advisory Group	E&E	Education and Engagement
HSG	Heritage Strategy Group	D&I / I&D	Diversity and Inclusion / Inclusion and Diversity
CWG	Collections Working Group	VE	Visitor Experience
CAO	Cultural Associates Oxford		
PEG	Public Engagement Group		
ToR	Terms of Reference		

<b><u>Meeting Opened at 2pm</u></b>	<b>Actions</b>
Note: The meeting was preceded by a tour of the Parliamentary Archives and House of Lords Library for CAG members. A list of the objects seen by CAG members in the Archives is circulated with these minutes.	<b>[REDACTED] to circulate object list</b>
<b><u>Item 1: Chair's Intro</u></b>	
The Chair thanked the members of the new CAG for agreeing to be involved. She encouraged open and honest dialogue within the Group, and suggested members contact her or [REDACTED] if they have any questions about Parliament's processes or sensitivities.	
<b><u>Item 2: Introductions from Group members</u></b>	
The Chair asked each CAG member to introduce themselves and explain what they hoped to get out of their involvement with the Group.	
<b><u>Item 3: Context for the Group's work</u></b>	

[REDACTED] provided some information on the governance and decision-making routes for the work of the new CAG. In terms of governance, the CAG reports to the Heritage Strategy Group which represents the interests of the six Parliamentary Collections, as well as the living UNESCO heritage of the Building Fabric Conservation function (known as the Design Authority) and the Visitor Experience, Education and Engagement function, (known as Participation). She explained that in some instances recommendations made by the CAG to the HSG, may be possible to advance/approve locally (subject to resources), but that on other issues it may need to go through wider governance processes for sign off.

[REDACTED] also introduced the wider strategic context via the circulated report *Strategy and Vision Development: Parliamentary Heritage and Library Collections*. This was developed by HSG in collaboration with an external consultancy, Cultural Associates Oxford. The background of this report was the recognition that, while the six Collections and Participation might all have different business plans, they have common strategic goals and would like to develop a joined-up approach to inclusive interpretation. The report outlines the guiding principles, strategic vision and purpose towards which Parliament are driving. [REDACTED] noted that principles 2 (creating value), 4 (participation with Parliament), 5 (engagement and inclusion) and 6 (audience reach) should be upheld and enabled by the newly-formed CAG.

MA asked whether the vision outlined in the CAO document had been established, or whether it simply constituted a recommendation. [REDACTED] explained that HSG has begun a process of embedding the document internally. It has been signed off by relevant stakeholders including the Speaker’s Advisory Committee on Works of Art and the Lord Speaker’s Advisory Panel on Works of Art and is soon to go to the Management Boards in both Houses (March). The next step is to design and publish it as a formal report for internal and external viewing with the appropriate UK parliament branding. This is on track to be published by early April 2022. Behind this work, a communications plan is being developed for the report’s embedding and implementation.

[REDACTED] introduced the Collections Working Group. The purpose of the CWG is to identify issues, challenges, opportunities, shared goals and priorities, and to co-ordinate and develop shared approaches and strategies for inclusive engagement with Parliament’s Collections, its work and history. CWG will advise the CAG, flagging prevailing issues and challenges for consideration. The CWG’s membership comprises two members of staff each from the Archives, Heritage Collections team, House of Commons Library and House of Lords Library. [REDACTED] within the Commons Chamber and Participation Team) is also a member, as is a representative from Parliament’s Inclusion and Diversity teams. The CWG was established by the HSG in summer 2021, and so far its activities have included an audit and analysis of diversity and inclusion activities and initiatives across all the Parliamentary Collections and Participation. A spreadsheet has been created identifying three priority areas of focus (Interpretation, Audience Development, and Partnerships). **A paper on CWG’s identified priority areas will come to CAG’s next meeting.**

[REDACTED]  
to develop  
paper for  
next CAG  
on CWG  
priorities

**Item 4: Terms of Reference**

The Chair and [REDACTED] introduced the draft Terms of Reference which had been circulated. Following item 3 they draw attention to the graphical

representation of the relationship between the CAG, HSG and CWG. The Chair noted that the ToRs will act as a roadmap for the foreseeable future, which can be revised if necessary.

HO asked about the Public Engagement Group referred to in the ToRs.

[REDACTED] explained that this is an internal bicameral group bringing together those with a public engagement interface, including some of the Collections (not the two Libraries) as well as democratic engagement and the communications directors. The PEG is a senior level forum through which people can understand what public engagement activities are underway and issues that may need to be discussed.

**The draft Terms of Reference were agreed.**

### **Item 5: Visitor Experience paper: Audiences and Current Offering**

[REDACTED] introduced a paper providing an overview of the work of the Visitor Experience team within Participation. He provided information on the role of the VE team, the numbers of visitors Parliament receives, and the impact of Covid-19.

The Chair asked what visitors tend to think of our visitor provision. [REDACTED] said that the ability to stand in Parliamentary spaces is a strong feature of the feedback. LF asked about negative feedback. [REDACTED] explained that the restrictions on photography are sometimes raised (it is permitted only in Westminster Hall and St Stephen's Hall), as well as the lack of seating throughout the tour. He also noted we could be better at explaining the various Estate works taking place.

There was further discussion of the restrictions on photography, with members discussing if specific areas where photography is allowed could be increased. **Lord Faulkner suggested that he/Chair could try to escalate the photography issue.**

The Chair asked what visitors say about Parliament's artworks. [REDACTED] said that there is an element of surprise at the breadth and depth of the artworks, including furniture and décor.

The Chair asked if specialist tours are offered for people with an interest in specific histories. [REDACTED] explained that Parliament has core tours, but also some specialised tours of particular events and anniversaries. There are regular digital talks, presently on Women's History Month. PEG is trying to establish a Parliament-wide perspective on the various History Months, so that Parliament's offer is linked up. **The Chair noted that the CAG should look further at PEG's work, and offer expertise to aid their work if helpful.**

MB asked what information visitors receive in advance, and whether anything further is flagged following their visit. [REDACTED] explained that this depends on the route by which they arrange a tour. Those who book public tours receive an email explaining what's on, and afterwards a survey and an opportunity to sign up for updates. For *Inside UK Parliament* tours, these are arranged by UK residents through Members/Peers, and the Visitor Experience team then books the tour, meaning a more complex process is required to communicate information. MB

**Chair /**  
[REDACTED]

**Chair**  
/[REDACTED]

<p>suggested if digital talks are recorded, they could be made available to visitors before/after their tours.</p> <p>[REDACTED] noted that content development will be core to the CAG, with the need to address diversity-related challenges in interpretation and recognise different narratives for different audiences. [REDACTED] said the VE team has been thinking about ways this can be done more through the core offers, making more use of the Collections.</p> <p>GM asked about the ability of schools to participate in tours. [REDACTED] discussed education visits and noted that the ability of schools to engage with exhibitions depends somewhat on the time available for their visit. GM is keen that visiting school children are given the opportunity to develop soft skills in addition to learning about Parliament’s legislative activities, which might be developed through engaging with our artworks/collections. [REDACTED] said that colleagues from the Education and Engagement team could provide more information on their work. [REDACTED] <b>noted that Education and Engagement colleagues (from the Participation team) had sent through their strategic plan for the next meeting.</b></p> <p><b>The Chair suggested that members of the CAG could undertake the Line of Route (the visitor route through Parliament) to understand the public visitor experience.</b></p> <p><b>It was also suggested that CAG members could visit the Education Centre.</b></p>	<p>[REDACTED] <b>to send [REDACTED] the E&amp;E Strategic Plan</b></p> <p><b>Chair / [REDACTED]</b></p> <p><b>Chair / [REDACTED]</b></p>
<p><b><u>Item 6: Parliamentary Archives paper: Royal Gallery 1981 display</u></b></p>	
<p>[REDACTED] introduced a paper on a planned display in the Royal Gallery, curated by the Parliamentary Archives. It was originally intended to mark the 40th anniversary of the publication of the Scarman report in 1981 but was not put on in 2021 as had been planned. He explained that around 50 displays had been produced for that space since 2005, but this had been the most challenging. The background had been the murder of George Floyd and the further development of the Black Lives Matter movement.</p> <p>The Archives recognised that as a predominantly white team it would be difficult, and arguably not appropriate, to tell the story without external consultation. To provide external perspectives and advice, the Archives approached and contracted with Museumand, whose mission is to connect to communities across the UK to celebrate and commemorate Caribbean heritage. The Archives took advice from Museumand on the sensitivities around the subject matter, framing and language.</p> <p>The most difficult element proved to be the captions (distinct from the labels), which are third-party statements giving a separate, independent voice. Discussions were held with HSG, and the D&amp;I and communications teams, as well as with other senior stakeholders. It was decided to seek the CAG’s advice when progress stalled on incorporating feedback into the text. The Archives are interested in drawing on CAG members’ advice in handling similar projects. The Archives are principally concerned with tone and language, but there are other</p>	

<p>issues including the need to reframe the exhibition now that the anniversary has passed.</p> <p>HO noted that she had experience of a similar situation, which would be a useful point of comparison.</p> <p>The CAG will have a more substantive discussion on the 1981 display at its next meeting.</p>	
<p><b><u>Item 7: AOB</u></b></p>	
<p>[REDACTED] noted that she and [REDACTED] would be in touch with guidance on expenses claims and guidance on communication for CAG members.</p>	
<p><b>Meeting Closed at 3.39pm</b></p>	

**Summary of Decisions agreed:**

The draft Terms of Reference were agreed.

**Summary of Actions agreed:**

<p>[REDACTED] to develop paper for next CAG on CWG priorities.</p>	<p>[REDACTED]</p>
<p>LF suggested that he/Chair could try to escalate the photography issue.</p>	<p>Chair / [REDACTED]</p>
<p>The Chair noted that the CAG should look further at PEG's work, and offer expertise to aid their work if helpful.</p>	<p>Chair / [REDACTED]</p>
<p>[REDACTED] to send [REDACTED] the E&amp;E Strategic Plan.</p>	<p>[REDACTED]</p>
<p>The Chair suggested that members of the CAG could undertake the Line of Route (the visitor route through Parliament) to understand the public visitor experience.</p>	<p>Chair / [REDACTED]</p>
<p>It was also suggested that CAG members could visit the Education Centre.</p>	<p>Chair / [REDACTED]</p>