

## Collections Advisory Group

Minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2022 at 2pm in the Archbishops Room, Millbank House, and via Microsoft Teams [CAG04]

**CAG Members Present:** Alayo Akinkugbe (AA) (in person)  
Molly Bretton (MB) (virtual)  
Lord Faulkner of Worcester (LF) (virtual)  
Cat Manson (CM) (virtual)  
Hannah Obee (HO) (virtual)  
Baroness Young of Hornsey (Chair) (in person)

**Apologies:** Malavika Anderson  
[REDACTED]  
Gagan Mohindra MP  
Gilane Tawadros

**In attendance:**  
[REDACTED]  
Heritage Collections [REDACTED] (in person)  
[REDACTED]  
Parliamentary Archives, [REDACTED]  
(in person)  
[REDACTED]  
(secretary) (in person)  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

### Acronyms

CAG	Collections Advisory Group		
CWG	Collections Working Group		
HSG	Heritage Strategy Group		
VE	Visitor Experience		
E&E	Education and Engagement		

<b>Meeting Opened at 2pm</b>	<b>Actions</b>
<p><b><u>Item 1: Minutes of previous meeting and outstanding actions</u></b></p> <p>[REDACTED] updated on the action to feed back the CAG's position on a cross-cutting audience development group. The Visitor Experience and Education &amp; Engagement teams are currently reviewing their content, as are the Heritage Collections, meaning there is an opportunity to bring this work together. This could be reflected in the reformation of the Exhibition and Events Group but [REDACTED] will also feed back to HSG the proposal from CAG to consider a cross-cutting audience development group.</p> <p>[REDACTED] also updated on the heritage vision document. It has been considered by the Lords Management Board, and will come before the Commons Executive</p>	<p>[REDACTED]</p>

<p>Board in w/c 18 July. [REDACTED] <b>will share a version of the vision document endorsed by both Boards in September.</b> The vision is for a bicameral strategy across the Collections, and the CAG will be able to add value in the areas where there is a coalescing of purpose.</p> <p>The South Asian Heritage Month collaboration between ParliREACH and the Archives was discussed. BY thought it was a shame that the general public would not have an opportunity to engage with this, and learn about the diversity of staff in Parliament. She suggested that we engage with all the Workplace Equality Networks to explore what else can be done. [REDACTED] <b>will speak with [REDACTED] about opportunities with the WENs.</b></p> <p><b>The minutes of the meeting held on 7 June 2022 were agreed.</b></p>	<p>[REDACTED]</p>
<p><b><u>Item 2: Engagement outputs of Parliament's Collections</u></b></p> <p>The spreadsheet and covering paper providing an overview of engagement outputs across Parliament's Collections were discussed. [REDACTED] explained that CAG members had wanted to look at existing activities and identify opportunities that those within Parliament might be missing. She invited members to consider whether there are quick wins to be found in the engagement outputs, that could also be drawn across to the VE and E&amp;E teams.</p> <p>[REDACTED] pointed out that, while the paper focusses on whether engagement outputs are aimed primarily at Members or the public, it did not consider engagement aimed at staff.</p> <p>CM was interested in the balance between reactive and proactive work. From her experience, a busy team is always liable to fall into reactive work with little time to plan its priorities. There is also a point about communications – is engagement planned with enough time to identify the most important things that each stakeholder and audience should know?</p> <p>MB asked about the nature and frequency of working between the Visitor Experience and Education &amp; Engagement teams. [REDACTED] explained that the Participation function includes VE, E&amp;E, and a strategy development team. They are joined up in their outputs, through the core lens of making the democratic process more accessible to all. The strategy development team works to understand the audiences for Participation's outputs; data is collected by VE on visitor tickets, and by E&amp;E on school groups. However, [REDACTED] said the missed opportunity is how to bring this together with what the Collections are doing, and join up the use of data. She suggested having a baseline engagement offer, which is consistent across all our teams, with the ability to layer on top of that specific offers for specific audiences (e.g. people who might be particularly interested in Pugin furnishings).</p> <p>[REDACTED] suggested that Participation are not necessarily focussed on the Collections as collections – their priority is to use the Collections if they support a narrative which Participation wishes to deliver. He noted that the recent restructure, by which Participation was joined with the Chamber-supporting teams, signalled to him that Participation would in future be more focussed on parliamentary functions. [REDACTED] agreed that this had focussed Participation's work on what happens in Parliament, but thought there are opportunities to</p>	

explore where Participation and the Collections might have joint engagement deliverables. At the moment, it can feel like a one-way street, so [REDACTED] is keen to explore how the Collections and Participation can support one another in their engagement aims.

BY asked if Collections and Participation colleagues are ever in the same room to work on a common tasks – this would be a valuable exploratory exercise, to see if there are misconceptions between teams which impede collaboration.

[REDACTED] explained that the Events and Exhibitions group does try to do this, with the most successful piece to combine these functions having been the Voice and Vote project in 2018.<sup>1</sup> [REDACTED] said this group’s work does not represent a strategically joined-up content piece; rather, it focusses on things like anniversaries, where different teams are already working on the same thing. [REDACTED] added we need to be programming thematically from the start, with a core programme and the ability to layer on top of this content representing different stakeholder identities.

[REDACTED] pointed out that we already have an existing arterial system in the form of Participation’s outreach teams, but we are not using these to promote the Collections. Collections content pushed via the outreach teams would need to be either tailored to the constituency, or linked to an outreach activity that is already taking place (such as the Learn with the Lords programme). [REDACTED] said that one of the difficulties is that we are not consistent in the narratives we offer – something like a content generation team might be useful in developing a core content offering.

CM posed the challenge of selecting five objects from each of the Collections that tell the history of the democratic process. This would allow a much tighter proposition to be presented to Participation colleagues, even if there was room for challenge that the right objects had been selected. BY said that artworks in the Collections can support the telling of a narrative about the democratic process. For example, the juxtaposition of a historic painting of the House of Lords, with a more modern photograph, would illustrate the evolution of that body across centuries. [REDACTED] also raised the Magna Carta baron sculptures in the House of Lords as telling a part of the history of the democratic process.

LF said that there needs to be an effort to educate Members of both Houses, to ensure that they are providing accurate information to visitors. He also raised the issue of printed material for visitors; since in-person visiting had resumed, the booklet he had once been able to give guests appeared to no longer be available.

**[REDACTED] will find out who is responsible for producing printed material for visitors, and revert to LF.**

MB asked if there is an induction process for MPs, in which they are introduced to the building and spaces. She suggested ensuring that every staff member and stakeholder is aware of a few key objects. On top of this, those involved in audience engagement should have an understanding of object-based learning, and how looking, listening and touching can ensure that every visitor takes away key learnings about these objects. BY suggested that MPs could be told about objects of historical relevance to their constituency, which they could point out to constituents on tours.

[REDACTED]

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.parliament.uk/get-involved/vote-100/voice-and-vote/>

<p>CM explained that, at Christie’s, there had been a standard product for use by staff conducting tours, setting out key landing points within the buildings. This was maintained centrally and kept updated. MB said this would not have to be overly prescriptive – the purpose is to ensure that people think about how to use objects to tell the narratives they want to tell. [REDACTED] suggested that Members could be given core, impartial factual content about the history of Parliament, with the freedom to layer other content on top of this, which might be a more attractive offer.</p> <p>There was also discussion of communication between the Lords and Commons. BY thought there was potential for briefings produced by both Houses’ Libraries to be more widely shared within and without Parliament, to make it easier for people to engage with the democratic process.</p> <p>Ahead of the visit to the Education Centre, BY was interested to understand the geographic and demographic breakdown of their visitors. She wanted to know how proactive the E&amp;E team are in encouraging visits from underrepresented areas. AA pointed out that schools from further afield can claim for up to 75% of their travel costs to Westminster.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Item 3: AOB</u></b></p> <p>BY raised the idea of having a year-end review of the CAG’s work. [REDACTED] said it would be useful to produce a paper capturing the CAG’s discussion points, to surface the benefits of the CAG to various stakeholder groups and ascertain attitudes to developing these opportunities.</p> <p>[REDACTED] provided a brief update on plans to communicate about the CAG’s work. Discussions had taken place with communications colleagues about how to phase communications about the CAG and the sensitive objects framework. Coupled with the fact that the House does not tend to put out communications just before or during recesses, it was therefore more likely that we will communicate publicly about the CAG in the autumn. [REDACTED] also recognised that individual CAG members might be approached as a result of that, so it will be necessary for [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] to provide material that will support members with messaging. [REDACTED] <b>will follow up with CM on communications.</b></p>	[REDACTED]
<p><b><u>Meeting Closed at 3.30pm</u></b></p>	

**Summary of Decisions agreed:**

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 June 2022 were agreed.

**Summary of Actions agreed:**

<p>[REDACTED] will share a version of the vision document endorsed by both Boards in September.</p>	<p>[REDACTED]</p>
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[REDACTED] will speak with [REDACTED] about opportunities with the WENs.	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] will find out who is responsible for producing printed material for visitors, and revert to LF.	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] will follow up with CM on communications.	[REDACTED]

### Annex to formal minutes: visit to Education Centre

<p>Following the meeting, BY, AA, [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] received a tour of the Education Centre from E&amp;E colleagues [REDACTED], and [REDACTED], [REDACTED], from the Archives also attended to discuss work with E&amp;E.</p> <p>[REDACTED], and [REDACTED], introduced a display case with facsimiles Acts of Parliament from the present reign, to mark the Platinum Jubilee. [REDACTED], explained that this is a pilot of using this space in the Education Centre to highlight material from the Archives.</p> <p>There was some discussion of the Learn with the Lords programme. [REDACTED], <b>will follow up with [REDACTED], to put BY in touch with the relevant people on Learn with the Lords.</b></p> <p>CAG members were shown a video about the history of Parliament, in an immersive space. [REDACTED], pointed out that the video refers to various things that are held in the Collections, but does not engage with this materiality. [REDACTED], suggested that additional videos could be created highlighting the Collections material; [REDACTED], said that these videos could still tell the same narrative. [REDACTED], said he would take away the point about highlighting the Collections.</p> <p>There was also discussion of making video resources available online. [REDACTED], <b>will follow up with [REDACTED], to get links to online resources.</b></p> <p>There was also discussion of using the Education Centre during the school holidays, and/or for groups such as SEN pupils and children in care. [REDACTED], said that there are opportunities over the school holidays to do more, but there are practical considerations around staffing. She also explained that planning permission places some limitations on the flexibility of the Education Centre. [REDACTED], <b>will follow up with [REDACTED], on the Education Centre's permitted uses.</b></p>	<p>[REDACTED],</p> <p>[REDACTED],</p> <p>[REDACTED],</p>
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### Actions from visit to Education Centre

[REDACTED], will follow up with [REDACTED], to put BY in touch with the relevant people on Learn with the Lords.	[REDACTED],
[REDACTED], will follow up with [REDACTED], to get links to online resources.	[REDACTED],

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[REDACTED], will follow up with [REDACTED], on the Education Centre's permitted uses.	[REDACTED],
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