

Collections Advisory Group

Minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2023 at 11.00am in Room M, Portcullis House, and via Microsoft Teams [CAG06]

CAG Members Present: Alayo Akinkugbe (AA) (virtual)
Malavika Anderson (MA) (virtual)
Molly Bretton (MB) (virtual)
Cat Manson (CM) (in person)
Hannah Obee (HO) (virtual)
Baroness Young of Hornsey (Chair) (in person)

Apologies: Lord Faulkner of Worcester
Gagan Mohindra MP
Gilane Tawadros

In attendance: [REDACTED] Heritage Collections [REDACTED] (in person)
[REDACTED], Parliamentary Archives, [REDACTED] (in person)
[REDACTED] (secretary) (in person)
[REDACTED] (in person) (item 4)

Acronyms

CAG	Collections Advisory Group		
CWG	Collections Working Group		
HSG	Heritage Strategy Group		
HVSR	Heritage Vision and Strategy Report		
DEWG	Displays and Engagement Working Group		

Meeting Opened at approx 11.00am	Actions
Note: Items 3 and 4 were taken in reverse order for scheduling reasons. The order in the minutes reflects the order on the agenda.	
<u>Item 1: Minutes of previous meeting and outstanding actions</u> The minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2022 were agreed.	
<u>Item 2: Collections Advisory Group annual reflection</u> [REDACTED] presented a paper providing a reflection on the work and achievements of CAG since its formation on 1 March 2022. It provides a synopsis of what the CAG was set up to do, what it has achieved/adviced on to date, and how this could guide future priorities. The CAG annual reflection would feed into a similar piece of work for the Collections Working Group. [REDACTED] suggested that this inaugural year has been about understanding the “as-is” situation and the prevailing challenges (exemplified through pieces such as the 1981 display), before CAG can consider activities to build on this. She also emphasised the value of getting to a point where CAG members have a better understanding on Parliament’s complex governance arrangements. BY emphasised that CAG has achieved a lot, and established credibility in a short space of time.	

[REDACTED] raised the refocussed Displays and Engagement Working Group. He noted that various work would need to be done before a strategic plan for displays and engagement: this would include auditing various teams' existing plans for the next year, and getting a sense of how their engagement might develop in future. There would also be a role for training, as colleagues in some teams have less experience of delivering displays. CM invited consideration of a manageable, visual way to deliver this training, so that someone with an idea for a display can translate this into action.

CM referred to the Holocaust Remembrance Day display in the Portcullis House atrium, and said it would be helpful to build a more programmatic understanding of such activities occurring around (and beyond) the Estate. [REDACTED] agreed, saying that DEWG could provide at least a commonality of process for those delivering engagement activities. One of the biggest challenges is the absence of a process for content sign-off. For example, the Holocaust Remembrance Day display had been delivered by the (Commons) Speaker's Office, which does not fall under the Collections remit. It is nevertheless represented on DEWG, meaning that (for example) an activity delivered by the Speaker's Office could be linked up with relevant activity planned by the Collections.

There was some further discussion of engagement with the Speaker's Office and the Lord Speaker's Office. BY suggested that a meeting with the Lord Speaker, with Lord Faulkner in attendance, would be helpful. CM would be interested to know what object from the Collections the Lord Speaker would showcase.

BY suggested that it would be valuable for CAG to link up with the various other groups being discussed. She suggested a half-day workshop, although stressing that it would need to have clear utility and not be done "for the sake of it". MA said that such a session would have value in making issues seem less purely "theoretical". [REDACTED] said that a session bringing together CAG and CWG could help to "de-myth" CAG, and encourage CWG members to ask CAG for support on particular challenges. [REDACTED] suggested that workshops should be structured around CAG's identified priorities

[REDACTED] has seen the greatest benefit from CAG where there is a mixture of the tangible and the discursive: diving down into a particular piece of work, and then pulling back to see how the process could be refined. It will be important to continue to take these opportunities over the coming year. [REDACTED] also identified a risk that there will be longer gaps between meetings this year, as the group moves to a quarterly pattern. It will be important to maintain focus, with a sense of an overarching objective to report on.

[REDACTED] asked all CAG members to come to the next meeting with their steer on what the strategic priorities for 2023-24 should be. The CWG annual reflection, as well as the minutes of this meeting, should inform this consideration.

Item 3: Update on communications

Following the discussion in the November meeting, [REDACTED] provided a further update on plans to communicate the CAG's work internally and externally.

The sensitive objects framework is due to be considered by the Commons and Lords Commissions (the highest decision-making bodies in each House) in March. Until this happens, it is considered that the CAG's work should not be promoted internally or externally. [REDACTED] had worked with the communications team to put forward a rough plan.

Following the Commission meetings, a press release would set out the purpose and membership of CAG, and would be shared via the arts/heritage and Westminster press. This would reference the sensitive objects framework, but would make clear that this is not a CAG product – Parliament is responsible for the sensitive objects framework. A CAG member would pen an editorial for the House magazine, and a Q&A would be developed for use across internal comms, media and public engagement. An interview with a CAG member would potentially be provided to an external publication.

[REDACTED] reported that the comms team stress the need for the internal and external pieces to be very close together. The internal piece would include posts on the Intranet, updates in internal newsletters, in-person briefings with relevant teams, "lunch and learn" sessions and potentially digital products. [REDACTED] suggested that particular CAG members could act as spokespersons for internal and external comms (with full briefing). This might mean BY as chair, Gagan Mohindra and/or Lord Faulkner, and one of the "external members".

CM is happy to help in developing a comms plan, and to provide some pointers of an internal comms package. She questioned whether the story should be the CAG itself, or an opportunity to raise the profiles of the Collections. She would be very careful about a Guardian article concerning the CAG itself, but there could be an opportunity for BY to use an article to explain why the Collections are important. CM said that, as part of this plan, there may also be scope to highlight a particular exhibition or piece of online content. [REDACTED] said that there is one recent acquisition which would potentially be a good fit.

BY agreed that the focus should be the Collections, while pointing to those (including the CAG) who work on different aspects. MA and MB also agreed that the Collections should be the focus.

CM said that a series of FAQs for CAG members would be useful, as would an outline comms plan for the full group.

[REDACTED] **will share the current comms plan with CM, in confidence.**

[REDACTED]

Item 4: Audience segmentation work

[REDACTED] joined to discuss the Participation team's work with The Audiences Agency, on a segmentation piece for Parliament's audiences. The piece presents 11 audience segments, from "warmer" to "cooler" levels of engagement. [REDACTED] explained that CAG should consider whether the Collections can learn from this work, and/or shape further stages of it.

Overview of the segmentation work

The exercise had two main aims: to reach more audiences and engage with a more accurate reflection of the UK-wide audience; and to develop a shared language for audiences. Prior to this work, audience engagement targets were based around the

House of Commons Library's disengaged audiences paper. The Audience Agency helped to capture the nuance that Parliament is both a political body and a heritage body; most people do not think of Parliament as a building that they can visit (and also do not see a distinction between Parliament and the Government).

Insights into the audiences were intended to capture whether they are interested in Parliament's business or heritage, what barriers they might face to engagement (real or imagined), how they could be engaged, and what they might want to get out of an activity. There were also demographic considerations, although these were more secondary. The exercise was intended to be politically neutral, so audiences were asked if they voted, but not how they voted.

HO pointed out that 11 is a large number for an audience segmentation exercise. She asked if the Audience Agency had recommended which segments we would most be able to engage with. [REDACTED] agreed that 11 is a lot, but it was intended to capture the entire population. However, the three "warmer" segments would be expected to be engaged anyway, and the two "coolest" ones present a challenge, so in reality the focus is on the six segments in the middle (4 to 9).

[REDACTED] explained how these segments, once identified, might now be used. Activities (such as marketing) might be targeted at a specific segment or segments. For example, a "day out" could be offered to people particularly interested in history or a subject like the Coronation, potentially linking up with other relevant sites. As another example, people particularly interested in parliamentary procedure could be connected to an activity delivered in the Parliamentary Archives. Alternatively, one might take an existing activity, ask questions to ascertain what audience it has reached (this would require some channel for this communication to take place), and decide if action is needed.

[REDACTED] also noted that the segmentation piece has provided a lot of useful general insights beyond opportunities for specific targeting. One insight was that people see local politics as very distinct from Westminster politics. They might view Parliament as distant, but will be more likely to be engaged if Parliament delivers an activity with a local partner. Additionally, less engaged groups were broadly found to feel intimidated by Parliament, and did not know what to expect from trying to visit the building; this might suggest that publicity for displays should include imagery of people physically visiting Parliament to dispel this impression. [REDACTED] also noted that not everyone is likely to be attracted by pictures of historic buildings and objects, and there may be scope to change this perception of Parliament.

AA asked if the purpose of the exercise was to diversify the audience, or to increase numbers. [REDACTED] said that it was to make our audiences more representative of the UK population, and find out why we do not reach certain pockets. CM asked what success would look like – for example, would it mean more people visiting the building, and/or making people feel that Parliament is relevant to them? She asked what goals and metrics Participation would use to gauge success. [REDACTED] said that this was still under consideration, but that delivery plans, KPIs and metrics would be formalised by the middle of March.

BY asked if the segmentation work had been shared with other colleagues. JR said it had received a very good response, having been shared with teams such as the Petitions Committee and communications colleagues.

BY asked if there were any international examples of participation/education programmes trying to improve engagement. [REDACTED] said that a session had been run (alongside colleagues from the Petitions Committee and the Scottish Parliament) with the International Parliament Engagement Network (IPEN). It appeared as if little similar work is being done elsewhere.

Understanding the Collections' audiences

[REDACTED] asked how the segmentation might be affected by the fact that the Heritage Collections did not input into the process. [REDACTED] clarified that they had been involved in the working group which informed the initial tender, but the subsequent restructure meant that the Heritage Collections moved away from the Participation team. [REDACTED] wondered if the Public Engagement Group might have a role in bringing together understanding of the segmentation piece. *[Secretary's note: Prior to the creation of the Chamber and Participation Team, the "Heritage Collections" – which do not include the Libraries and Archives – had sat within a separate Participation Team. The involvement of some Collections in the initial tendering process therefore reflected the then organisational structure.]*

There was discussion of whether, and how, a similar exercise could be done for the Collections' audiences. CM would like to see how Participation uses these segments, and then assess what CAG can extrapolate for the Collections. [REDACTED] noted that Participation would be piloting use of these segments in 2023-24, so the CAG could monitor this and learn from the pilot as it proceeds.

MA noted that there is sometimes a gap between understanding segmentation work and then delivering an actual programme. It would be necessary to work with those who will be responsible for delivering activities, to ensure that this leads to really transformative programming and not simply a marketing exercise. HO agreed that work should not be simply about the language used, but also the methods of engagement. MA asked if Collections colleagues had the tools to be able to translate the segmentation analysis into actual programming change. [REDACTED] replied that help and guidance would be needed in order to understand how to relate to the specific segments presented.

BY suggested that the segmentation piece could also feed into the proposed workshop session. [REDACTED] suggested that workshops should be structured around CAG's identified priorities, so an "audiences" workshop would be a natural fit to discuss this work. HO said that her experience had shown that bringing in different teams allowed learning to be a lot wider. CM said that it would be good for colleagues working on outreach to also consider what might benefit the Collections.

Next steps

[REDACTED] considered that there were two possibilities for next steps. The first is that Participation takes this work and considers how the Collections might fit into their plans for the next year. The second is that the Collections take forward their own work, fitting partially into the Participation work and covering the gap.

BY said that we should take time to think about how the Collections could contribute to engaging the middle and cooler audience segments. We should also consider what would be the aims of any separate piece of research commissioned

<p>for the Collections. CM also suggested considering examples of good practice in the heritage sector, and [REDACTED] said she sits on the committee of the Visitor Studies Group which might help with this.</p> <p>BY queried whether CAG has a budget to commission research. [REDACTED] clarified that CAG does not have a budget, but work might fall under HSG's strategy work.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Item 5: AOB</u></p> <p>[REDACTED] reported to the group that following [REDACTED] change of role the CWG had agreed that [REDACTED] from the Heritage Collections team would replace [REDACTED] as a CWG co-chair.</p>	
<p><u>Meeting Closed at approx 1.00pm</u></p>	

Summary of Decisions agreed:

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2022 were agreed.

Summary of Actions agreed:

<p>[REDACTED] will share the current comms plan with CM, in confidence.</p>	<p>[REDACTED]</p>
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