



TRINITY HOUSE

Minutes of Trinity House Lighthouse Board

25 March 2026 – Royal Yacht Squadron, Isle of Wight

Present:

Mr Lance Batchelor (Chair) (LB)
Rear Admiral Iain Lower CB (Deputy Master/ Chief Executive) (ILo)
Captain Andy Holt (Director of Operations) (AH)
Captain Des Donworth (Director of Navigational Requirements & Policy) (DD)
Mr Garrett Copeland (NED) (GC)
Mr Alan Moore (NED) (AM)
Mr Curtis Juman (NED) (CJ)

Present (non-voting):

Mr Michael Barnett (Interim Director of Business Services) (MB)
Mrs Michelle Major-Butler (Director of People & Culture) (MMB)
Mr Damien Oliver (Director of Major Projects) (DO)

In attendance:

Mr Thomas Arculus (Head of Legal and Estates / Board Secretary) (TA)
Mr James Cook (Chief Financial Officer designate) (Observer) (JC)
Mr Kevin Dace (Head of IT) (KD) by Webex item 2.6
Mr Gavin Race (IT Cyber & Infrastructure Manager) (GR) by Webex item 2.6
Ms Mary Sunderland (DDaT Mobilisation Lead) (MS) by Webex item 2.6

1. ADMINISTRATION

1.1 Welcome by Chair

LB expressed his thanks to the Royal Yacht Squadron for hosting the meeting. He welcomed JC as the Chief Financial Officer designate.

1.2 Apologies

None.

1.3 Declarations of Interest

CJ declared an interest in relation to items on the agenda (items 1.5 and 3.4) relating to Trinitas Services Ltd. of which he is the Chair.

1.4 Minutes of Lighthouse Board – 28 January 2026

Approved.

1.5 Log of Actions/Matters Arising

With regard to Action no. 3 which relates to the TSL cottages – ILo reported that he had mentioned to the DfT and the LAC and TH was considering options for the TSL cottage estate. The Corporate Board is awaiting legal advice on necessary arrangements.

AM requested a strategic decision on the future of cottage holdings on TH GLA business.

CJ explained that there are two phases to this project. The current challenge is to wind-up the leases and hand back the cottages back to GLA. Then the next phase will be to strategically decide the organisation's approach to the cottage estate.

[TA: Conduct TSL Cottages options analysis and report to Board.]

2. PERFORMANCE AND STRATEGY

2.1 Chief Executive's Report & Risk Review

Presented by ILo, mentioning specifically geopolitical events and contingency planning relating to possible shocks in the supply chain, increased costs and inflation.

ILo has been in discussions with MCA's CEO to discuss TH's place in the national resilience network. This subject will also be discussed by the Chief Executives' Committee on 30-31 March.

Results of the staff engagement survey have been shared around the business. An action plan is being developed.

The Corporate Risk Register is maturing and continues to become a more useful document.

The preferred bidder for the TH-NLB Aviation Services contract has been agreed, following a thorough process led by NLB. DfT approvals will now be sought. From a finance perspective, the figures will be analysed against corporate plan assumptions. Current timelines suggest that there should be no break in service provision between the end of the current contract and the commencement of the new.

ILo has engaged with the new LAC Chair and with the Chair of Chamber of Shipping, particularly in relation to the new ships.

The Board discussed planning work in the Operations Directorate to preserve and transfer knowledge as people retire and leave.

The Executive is keen to recruit more people internally and bring people through the system through effective proactive succession planning.

One member of the SMT has recently resigned to pursue other opportunities, another has retired. MMB is working to make succession planning more effective so that people do see that there are opportunities within the business which they can aspire to.

CJ recommended a piece of work to identify key roles which it would be very difficult to replace. AM supported this and suggested planning work to be done on future leadership skills within the organisation. MB highlighted that there are a number of areas that MMB is addressing and some priorities will need to be set.

[MMB: In relation to strategic workforce planning: identify issues to address, desired outcomes and recommend next steps. Report to Board.]

2.1.1 Corporate Risk Register Report and Dashboard

The Board noted the corporate risk register and discussed making prioritisation clearer.

A discussion followed about the presentation of risk associated with the building of new ships, noting that the ship build project was identified as a risk in its own right but was shown as mitigating various other risks. The Board considered that delivery of new vessels should be an individual risk in its own right.

[MB/JC: Add the risk relating to Futures Afloat to the Corporate Risk Register.]

2.2 Health and Safety Report and Appendices

DO presented the report and mentioned that a report of a stop work incident on THV PATRICIA had just been received at the time of writing the report and therefore so was only covered in high level detail.

The report included a full report on the Swansea Buoy Yard Buoy Lifting ‘Pick and Carry’ incident.

The Executive has resolved to focus on behavioural safety. With a renewed focus on prevention of incidents. Alongside this, work will continue to improve reporting, investigation and feedback.

H&S Bulletins and Safety Flashes are being reinstated to make people across the organisation aware of the work which is being done. This is intended to promote the need to report, and the agency people have to stop work if they don’t feel safe.

A discussion followed about the Fair Safety Culture.

2.2.1 Health and Safety Committee meeting 12th March Report

Discussed above.

2.3 Swansea Depot Buoy Lifting ‘Pick and Carry’ Incident

Discussed above.

An Extraordinary H&S Committee will be held to discuss the Swansea incident.

2.4 2026/27 Strategy Implementation Plan

The Executive and Senior Management teams have been producing the 2026/27 Strategy Implementation Plan.

2.5 IALA KPIs (Statutory)

The Board reviewed the performance of Trinity House against the requirements of IALA Recommendation R0130 on the Categorisation and Availability Objectives for Short Range Aids to Navigation for the period to February 2026.

Performance is currently tracking below the IALA availability objectives in Category 1 Directional Light with one failure at Hurst Point in June 2023 (now rectified), and two failures (March and September 2023) with the Eddystone Sector Light and three failures in January and June 2025 (all rectified). Failures also occurred at Start Point (one failure in August 2024) and at Bull Point (two failures in September and November 2023). In all cases these have now been rectified. As IALA Availability Objectives are measured over a continuous three-year period, the failures recorded in 2023 will fall outside of the reporting data as 2026 progresses.

2.6 Business Services Directorate

2.6.1 Business Services Directorate update

The Board noted the predicted underspend. This is due to a mixture of factors within TH's control and other factors beyond its control, such as delays in delivery of new cars due to a cyber incident at the car maker's plant. MB explained that he has introduced a new budgeting and forecasting process designed to address underspend issues. A concerted effort is being made to reduce underspend.

However, recent world events, particularly rising inflation may result in increased costs for some items next year. Due to the Iran war MGO prices have increased markedly in recent weeks and are well above Corporate Plan assumptions which will impact on figures next financial year. MB also highlighted that there is a correlation between world events, shipping and light dues income, which will eventually impact on GLF reserves.

AM observed that the reporting of figures might mask the deferral of work which might create issues in future. He would like to see reporting against delivery of the work programme and visibility of deferred work. The risk of persistently deferring work is that eventually the backlog becomes very expensive to address. The key question is whether we are delivering non-discretionary spending at the rate that we should?

[Action: AH: Confirm that continuing annual underspending is not resulting in a bow-wave of maintenance backlog across the organisation.]

2.6.2 DfT Sanction Letter 2026-27

The Board noted the receipt of the Sanction Letter from the Minister confirming sanction of £65.4m for Trinity House and £1.8m for GRAD.

2.6.3 Digital, Data and Transformation (DDaT) Programme

Joined remotely by MS, KD & GR.

MB explained ongoing work on the DDaT Programme with particular focus on direction of travel funding beyond the envelope of the current Corporate Plan.

MS has been looking at main workflows across the organisation. In most cases she has found that jobs are made more difficult than they could be because systems are not joined up. There is a heavy reliance on Excel which is knitting different systems together. She has found however that TH does have good IT systems and programmes, and knowledgeable people – so the essential ingredients are there to make improvements for the better.

KD spoke about the need to make sure the capacity is there to act on recommendations, not just in the IT Team but in the individual business units.

GR believes DDaT could be transformational for TH. It is exciting what this could lead to.

The Board discussed the timeline of the project, which is 5 years, and the fact that a lot can change in that time. The approach therefore recognises the need for flexibility due to changing technology and circumstances. Also, the fact that Excel is so prevalent indicates that a lot of people are invested in current processes. It is important to consider what will be the impact on humans if machines are going to do more of this work.

For this reason, the DDaT project is planning various horizons so as not to change things too rapidly and to win hearts and minds and to bring people along. The ‘People’ element of the programme is paramount. It is about getting the right tools and skills to enable staff to do their jobs well. A detailed communication and engagement plan will be developed. There is also a need to develop leadership at all levels to facilitate the programme.

The Board is clear that the benefit of the programme is to get great tools for great people.

A discussion followed on the reasonableness and likelihood of the assumptions behind the benefits realisation prediction over 10 years.

In recognition of KD’s imminent departure from the organisation, the Board thanked him for his dedicated and exemplary service since he joined in 1991 and wished him well for the future.

2.7 Navigational Requirements

2.7.1 Navigational Requirements Report

The SV ALIUNDE wreck has been the subject of much work recently between TH and MCA (SOSREP). The owner remains liable for wreck removal.

A wreck removal notice is in place for the end of April, but should the owner default TH will be directed instead.

If directed to remove the wreck a competitive procurement process will be run and TH will seek to recover costs.

Hydrographic surveys following MV BALTIC KLIPPER container losses are 80% complete with no contacts of interest found. The remaining 20% is in shallower water and requires a longer period of good weather for small USV operations. Surveys for the containers from the MV LOMBOK STRAIT have commenced. Any containers found would fall under the definition of ‘wreck’ and may require marking.

DD advised the Board that ILV GRANUAILLE had recently been used by TH Examiners to conduct viewing trials of the Skerries Lighthouse, this is a good example of inter-GLA cooperation.

The commercial vessel VOS GLORY was chartered to complete East Coast rig inspections with TH Inspectors of Seamarks embarked. Overall, the operation was assessed as efficient, successful and continually important.

A review of the Tri-GLA Risk Response Criteria is underway with Anatec being used to provide analysis.

The GRAD team is adopting an *Agile* way of working.

GRAD is working on Position, Navigation and Timing with Cabinet Office.

2.8 Operations Directorate

2.8.1 Operations Directorate Report

AH has met on site with the operators of Land’s End Aerodrome to discuss a long-term new site for TH’s Forward Operating Base. A project group has been formed to work on the proposed solution.

AH also reported on recruitment within the Operations Directorate.

Recently, winter storm damage has been the main focus for the Field Ops teams.

THV PATRICIA’s dry docking has been delayed by three weeks for various reasons.

The Eng/Ops team is working on 11 separate improvement initiatives currently, including 3D modelling and electronic document sign-off.

2.8.2 ‘Vessel Safe to Operate’ Report

AH presented his response to specific questions relating to safety associated with operating aging vessels asked by the Board at the last meeting.

The Board discussed the report focussing on aspects of risk and assurance and mitigation noting that co-ordinated fleet management had been audited recently.

[Action: AH: Lead a deep dive risk review at ARAC into Marine Operations resilience]

The non-executive directors probed into the Executive team’s philosophy on dealing with problems aboard ship. Historically there has been a running repairs approach but recently this has moved to root cause analysis and repair.

The Board welcomed the report and GC requested a further conversation with AH to discuss specific concerns.

[Action: AH to discuss ‘Vessel Safe to Operate’ report with GC to answer further concerns.]

2.8.3 Impact on TH Supply Chain due to Geopolitical Risks

This topic had become particularly pertinent following the turbulence in the Persian Gulf and the closure of the Strait of Hormuz. The Board discussed these issues at Items 2.1 and 2.6.1. The subject was due to be discussed further by the GLA Chief Executives’ Committee on 30-31 March with a view to holding a high-level inter-GLA Resilience meeting in early April.

2.9 People and Culture Directorate

2.9.1 People and Culture Update Report and Dashboard (inc. update on 2025/26 Pay Business Case)

Arrangements will be made to implement the pay business case with back-pay in the April pay-roll if accepted by the unions in time for the pay-roll cut-off.

The Cascade system is now live and has been received well. Pay-roll is now on Cascade.

2.9.2 Employee Survey Results and Overall Results Appendix

MMB reported on the results of the Employee Engagement Survey.

The themes are broadly similar to last year.

There is now a pressing need for the leadership team to take visible action.

2.10 Futures Afloat

2.10.1 Futures Afloat Update Report and Appendices

The field of tender is now down to 3 bidders. All of which are credible.

Engagement with bidders continues to facilitate Best and Final Offers (BAFO) on 21 April. There will then be a 90-day validity period during which TH will review BAFOs and seek approvals from Government.

DO reminded the Board of the evaluation process to be followed once BAFOs have been received.

[Action: TA to arrange Extraordinary LHB when required to approve BAFO evaluation recommendations.]

3 GOVERNANCE

3.1 ARAC meeting 12th March Report

CJ presented a summary report and draft minutes of the proceedings of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee on 12 March.

Draft minutes – Noted

3.2 Update on NED Recruitment

LB reported on the recent Nominations and Governance Committee meeting which had discussed the recruitment of a successor for AM when his second and final term of office will end on 30 November.

3.3 Update on ALB Review

The Board received an update report on progress with the DfT-led Arm's-Length Body review and reviewed draft terms of reference and draft meeting agendas for the proposed new Sponsorship Board and reformed Joint Strategic Board.

This topic would be discussed in detail at the Chief Executives' Committee meeting the following week.

3.4 TSL Cottages

Discussed above (item 1.5).

3.5 Engagement Matrix

Noted.

4. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

4.1 Cranston Inquiry Report and its Potential Implications for TH

The Cranston Inquiry looked into the handling of the response to events of 24 November 2021, when at least 27 people lost their lives attempting to cross the English Channel in small boats.

The Board noted that the implications of the Cranston Inquiry for Trinity House could affect governance, accountability, funding oversight, and policy alignment within the context of Trinity House's '*Lighting the Way to 2035*' strategy.

4.2 CFO Nomination Resolution to Note

The Board formally noted its out of committee resolution made on 17th March to:

- (1) approve the nomination by the Nominations and Governance Committee of James Cook to be the Chief Financial Officer of the GLA and;
- (2) recommend the Corporate Board to endorse the nomination of James Cook as an Associate Member of the Corporation and Member of the Lighthouse Board for subsequent submission to the Court for approval.

5 Dates of Forthcoming Meetings

- JSB - 7 May (6 May tri-GLA pre-JSB meeting)
- Health & Safety Committee - 30 April, Harwich
- Court - 12 May
- DfT/TH Sponsorship Board - TBC-May
- LHB Meeting - 2 June
- ARAC - 17 June

Record of Decisions

- 2.2 Noted investigation report of Swansea Buoy Yard Pick and Carry H&S incident.
- 2.6.2 Noted Ministerial Sanction Letter 2026-31.
- 2.6.3 Noted DDaT Programme ongoing work and direction of travel.
- 2.9.2 Noted Employee Survey Results.
- 4.1 Noted Summary of Cranston Inquiry Report and potential impacts on TH.
- 4.2 Endorsed Out of Committee resolution to approve CFO nomination and recommend to Court for appointment, via Corporate Board.
- 2.8.2 Noted update report on 'Vessel Safe to Operate' questions.
- 2.8.3 Noted update on potential impact on TH's supply chain for geopolitical risks.
- 2.10.1 Noted update on Futures Afloat.
- 3.3 Noted update on ALB review.

Log of Actions

- 1.5 TA: Conduct TSL Cottages options analysis and report to Board.

2.1 MMB: In relation to strategic workforce planning: identify issues to address, desired outcomes and recommend next steps. Report to Board.

2.1.1 MB: Add the risk relating to Futures Afloat to the Corporate Risk Register.

2.6.1 AH: Confirm that continuing annual underspending is not resulting in a bow-wave of maintenance backlog across the organisation.

2.8.2 AH: Lead a deep dive risk review at ARAC into Marine Operations resilience.

2.8.2 AH to discuss ‘Vessel Safe to Operate’ report with GC to answer further concerns.

2.10.1 TA: Arrange Extraordinary LHB when required to approve BAFO evaluation recommendations.

Glossary of abbreviations

ALB – Arm’s-Length Body

ARAC – Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

BAFO – Best and Final Offers

CEC – Chief Executives’ Committee

DDaT – Digital, Data and Transformation Programme

DfT – Department for Transport

FA – Fleet Review

GLA – General Lighthouse Authority

GRAD – GLA Research and Development

IALA – International Organization for Marine Aids to Navigation

JSB – Joint Strategic Board

LAC – Lights Advisory Committee

LD - Light Dues

LHB - Lighthouse Board

MCA – Maritime and Coastguard Agency

MGO – Marine Gas Oil

NLB – Northern Lighthouse Board

SMT – Senior Management Team

SOSREP – Secretary of State’s Representative for Maritime Salvage and Intervention

TH – Trinity House

TSL – Trinitas Cottages Ltd.