

## Board of the National Museum of Ireland

Minutes of Meeting of the Board on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2019,  
Board Room, National Museum of Ireland – Country Life, Castlebar

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<b>Present:</b>	Ms Catherine Heaney (Chair) Ms Mary Crotty Professor Ingrid Hook Professor Kathleen James-Chakraborty Dr Linda King Mr Paolo Viscardi	Mr John Bowen Mr Declan Nelson Professor Mary O’Dowd Dr Andrew Power Ms Judith McCarthy Mr Ambrose Loughlin (VC)
<b>Apologies:</b>	Ms Denise Moroney Ms Helen Shenton	
<b>In attendance:</b>	Ms Lynn Scarff (Director, NMI) Ms Jade Dillon (Secretary to Board, NMI)	Ms Maria Kearns (Head of HR, NMI) (Item 4a only) Dr Audrey Whitty (Head of Collections & Learning, NMI) (Item 2.3 only)

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### Board Meeting: Part 1

#### 1.1 Opening of the meeting, apologies if any, adoption of the agenda 1.1

The Chair opened the meeting and gave apologies for Ms Moroney and Ms Shenton and informed the Committee that the first part of the meeting would be centred on the Budget Estimates 2020. The Chair informed the Board that Mr Loughlin would be participating in Part 1 and Part 2 of the meeting via conference call. Ms Dillon circulated the Board Papers for the first part of the meeting.

#### 1.2 Review of Budget 2020

The Director gave an overview of the Budget 2020 estimates that were outlined in the circulated Board Papers. The Director notified the Board that the current Brexit negotiations are likely to have repercussions on next year’s NMI budget. The Director notified the Board that the estimates outlined in the Budget 2020 document were produced in line with the Department’s National Cultural Framework Policy, *Culture 2025* and the NMI’s *Strategic Plan 2019-2022*.

The Director stressed that drastic improvements are required in order to meet the museum standards that are outlined in the Museum Standards Programme for Ireland (MSPI), such as the need for environmental monitoring upgrades. Serious concerns were raised by the Board in relation to the lack of financial provisions available for the NMI’s Collection Resource Centre and the high-risk structural repairs required immediately for the Natural History Museum. It was agreed that these concerns would be emphasized to the Department via the Budget 2020 submission.

The members of the Board discussed the layout of the Budget 2020 document. **It was agreed that re-drafting of the Budget 2020 and a re-write of the introduction was required. It was agreed that the Board would**

**review the re-drafted document prior to finalising the document for submission to the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.**

End of Board meeting: Part 1

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## **Board Meeting: Part 2**

### **2.1 Opening of the meeting, minutes of the meeting of 16<sup>th</sup> May and matters arising, adoption of the agenda 2.1**

The Chair opened the second part of the Board meeting. The minutes of the meeting of 16<sup>th</sup> May 2019 were approved with the exception of one amendment.

The Chair made an adoption to the agenda to include the Director's Probation Review. Adoption was approved by Dr King and seconded by Ms Crotty.

### **2.2 Executive Report by the Chair and the Director**

The Chair and the Director gave an overview of the Executive Report handout to the Board.

- *Staff Updates:*

The Chair, on behalf of the Board wished Mr Tony Candon well in his retirement and thanked him for his significant contribution to the Museum as Manager/Keeper of The National Museum of Ireland – Country Life.

**The Board agreed that the inclusion of staff biographies is a good addition for Board meetings. It was agreed that an organisation chart of NMI staff should be circulated at future meetings.**

- *External Board Review:*

Members of the Board confirmed that they had been contacted by the appointed external consultant, Ms Mary Hanson, in relation to a performance evaluation on the NMI Board. The Director informed the Board that, on advice of the Chair of the Board, Ms Hanson is to liaise with Secretary General Katherine Licken to seek her input into the external evaluation.

- *Rainbow Revolution and Pride event at Collins Barracks:*

The Chair highlighted to the Board that one of the most notable events of the museum was the Rainbow Revolution launch which successfully reflected the NMI's current ambitions around contemporary collecting and social collaboration. The Chair thanked the Director and NMI staff for the initiative on developing the exhibition and its outreach.



### **2.3 Special Discussion Topic: 2020 Collections & Learning Vision by Dr Audrey Whitty**

The Chair welcomed Dr Audrey Whitty to the meeting and congratulated Dr Whitty on her new role as the NMI's Head of Collections and Learning.

Dr Whitty gave an overview to the Board of her duties in terms of her new role within the NMI and her vision and plans for the future. Dr Whitty emphasised that a key aspect of her role is to ensure that the NMI meets the standards outlined in the Museum Standards Programme Ireland requirements and that the NMI MSPI draft submission would be reviewed by the General Public Advisory Committee in September 2019.

Dr Whitty informed the Board that matrix models are being utilised for exhibition proposals and exhibition-related templates are being developed in an effort to streamline processes. Dr Whitty expressed her concerns for low staffing within the Collections and Learning department.

A discussion followed on the inclusion of design within the collection. It was agreed that an update on acquisition and collecting policies would be provided to GPAC.

The Chair thanked Dr Whitty for her thorough presentation and noted her clear ambition and energy. The Director also thanked Dr Whitty for her partnership.

Dr Whitty left the meeting.

### **2.4 Report to the Board from Committees**

#### **a) HR Committee Report**

The Board welcomed Ms Kearns to the meeting.

The Chair reviewed the summary of the Equality survey results. The Chair invited Ms Kearns to elaborate on the HR Committee report. Ms Kearns summarised the report. Ms Kearns informed the Board that training is continuous and that 67% percent of all staff have received training as of January 2019. Ms Kearns informed the Board that an online Diversity and Equality training course is currently being developed to cater for people who cannot attend the course on site.

The Director and the Head of HR updated the Board on legal cases.

#### **b) Development and Strategy Committee Report**

Mr Bowen summarised the Development and Strategy report that was circulated to the Board. Mr Bowen reported that strong concerns were unanimously expressed by the Development and Strategy Committee in relation to the lack of timely progress on the provision of an alternative location for the Collection Resource Centre. These concerns were further expressed by members of the Board.

It was proposed the Chair would write to relevant parties and convene a meeting on the CRC post-19<sup>th</sup> September 2019 when clarity would be available on the continuity of the lease.

The Director notified the Board that the OPW had not yet provided the NMI with a thorough report on the options available in relation to the Collections Resource Centre. The Director agreed to forward the report to the Board once received.

### c) **Audit and Risk Committee Report**

On behalf of Mr Loughlin, Dr Power summarised the Audit and Risk Committee report to the Board.

- *Garda vetting:*

Ms Kearns updated the Board on the recently updated Garda Vetting procedures that were recently introduced nationwide by the National Garda Vetting Bureau for all organisations.

**The Board agreed that deliberations between the National Garda Vetting Bureau and the DCHG should be brought to the Audit and Risk Committee members and that any updates should be relayed to the Board.**

### d) **GPAC Report**

Professor James-Chakraborty gave an overview of the report from GPAC.

### e) **Strategic Plan Update**

The Director updated the Board on Project Engage and informed the Board that meetings have been arranged to update all staff on the new project.

## 2.5 **Proposed Dates for the Board meetings 2019/ 2020**

Board Meetings (all museum sites)

12th September 2019, Kildare Room, Kildare Street, 10am-1pm (confirmed)  
 21st November 2019, Palatine Room, Collins Barracks, 10am-1pm  
 23rd January 2020, Collections Resource Centre, Swords, 10am-1pm  
 26th March 2020, Kildare Room, Kildare Street, 10am-1pm  
 21st May 2020, Palatine Room, Collins Barracks, 10am-1pm  
 23rd July 2020, Turlough Park, all day - Café Rua (for dinner)

## 3.0 **Director's Probation Review**

The Executive left the meeting for a closed Board session on the Director's Probation review.

The Board agreed with the decision of the Chair and Chair of Audit and Risk Committee (who reported on undertaking the Director Probation review in May) that the Director's probationary period was satisfactory. The Board noted that the Director had been balancing the work of a number of management positions since her

appointment, and the completion of recruitment to these senior positions should result in a rebalancing of workload. There was a vote of thanks in appreciation of the Director's work and commitment to date.

End of meeting.