



Board of the National Museum of Ireland

Minutes of Meeting of the Board on Thursday 10th May at 10am,
Ante Room, National Museum of Ireland, Collins Barracks.

Present:	Ms. Catherine Heaney (Chair) Mr. John Bowen Ms. Mary Crotty Professor Kathleen James-Chakraborty (present for Items 5 & 6 only) Ms. Judith McCarthy	Ms. Denise Moroney Mr. Declan Nelson Professor Mary O'Dowd Ms. Virginia Teehan
Apologies:	Professor Ingrid Hook Dr. Andrew Power	Mr. Ambrose Loughlin Mr. Aidan Walsh
In attendance:	Ms Jennifer Keane (Secretary to Board, NMI) Mr Ragnall Ó Floinn (Director, NMI)	Ms Maria Kearns (Head of HR, NMI) Mr Rolly Read (Head of Collections and Learning, NMI)

1. Opening of the meeting, apologies, if any, adoption of the agenda

The Chair opened the meeting and conveyed apologies from Professor Hook, Mr Loughlin, Dr Power and Mr Walsh.

The Board adopted the agenda.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 15 March 2018 and matters arising

The minutes of the meeting of 15 March 2018 were proposed by Ms Teehan and seconded by Ms Crotty.

Matters Arising

Board members

The Board discussed the ongoing recruitment of the two new ordinary Board members and the staff representative on the Board.

The Chair asked the Secretary to notify the Board once the two ordinary Board member positions are advertised by the State Boards and the Secretary agreed to this.

3. Executive Report from the Chair and the Director

The Board noted the executive report from the Chair and the Director.

The Board approved the Business Plan for 2018.



The Director reported that he is continuing to meet the incoming Director, Ms Lynn Scarff on a weekly basis to discuss transition planning.

Creative Ireland

The Director reported that the NMI submitted the Creative Ireland Alignment Plan to the Department over six months ago but as yet, the final plans have not been published and the NMI is awaiting an update from the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DCHG) on this matter.

Natural History Museum Risk Assessment

The Director reported that in the absence of Mr Kelly, Head of Facilities, a fire risk assessment rather than a full risk assessment of the Natural History Museum was carried out. Mr Kelly is now back at work and is following up on this.

Sanctioned Posts

The Director reported that sanction has been received from the DCHG for an additional 13 posts in Collections and Learning.

The Board agreed that this was very welcome news.

Events at Collins Barracks

The Director reported that the Executive is continuing to meet with the OPW to discuss issues around holding events for the public at Clarke Square in Collins Barracks. The Director reported that the NMI has had two expressions of interest about events in 2019. The Director stated that during the course of these discussions, the OPW have decided to develop agreements for each of the four NMI sites.

The Board agreed that the development of agreements between the NMI and the OPW is an important step and should be progressed as soon as possible.

Visitor Numbers

The Board and the Director discussed the decrease in visitor numbers at the NMI. The visitor numbers at Turlough Park, however, are very good, the Director reported that the National Treasures television programme and associated exhibition have been well received and visitor numbers to the Museum galleries in the week ending Sunday 29 April increased by over 100%. The exhibition continues to be promoted by RTÉ across all its television and radio stations and online platforms until 11 May 2018.

The Board agreed that visitor numbers should be monitored over the coming months and steps should be taken to improve these where possible and this should be a priority for the incoming Director.

The Board extended thanks to Mr Candon and staff at Turlough Park and across the NMI who worked on the National Treasures project.

Launch of Stones, Slabs and Seascapes – George Victor du Noyer’s Images of Ireland

The Director reported that an exhibition of watercolours and drawings by the Irish geologist and artist George Victor du Noyer (1817- 1869) will open at Collins Barracks on Tuesday, 5 June, 2018. The exhibition features drawings from the NMI’s collections along with those from other institutions, including the RSAI and RIA.



Acquisition: Charles II silver dressing service

The Director thanked Mr Bowen for his advice on the recent acquisition of a rare Charles II Irish silver six part dressing service with the mark of John Segar, Dublin 1685, through Christie's auction house, New York on 20 April 2018. The Director reported that the new acquisition is currently in transit to the NMI.

The Board agreed that this dressing service is an important addition to the Museum's collection.

Consolidated Pay

The Director reported that the staff union balloted their members last week on the Consolidated Pay Agreement and the agreement was accepted. This agreement allows for staff to be rostered across seven days but no decision on seven day opening for the NMI has been reached yet. From 1 July, the NMI will open one hour earlier on Sundays, at 1pm. Under the terms of this agreement, the Science and Art Attendant job title has changed to Visitor Security Officer. The Director thanked all staff who were involved in developing the agreement.

The Board agreed that the acceptance of this agreement is a welcome development.

Head of Operations role

The Board discussed the Head of Operations role, which is being examined as part of the transition planning process.

The Board agreed that this matter should be a priority for the incoming Director.

Workshop on Corporate Governance

The Board discussed a letter that the Chair received from Mr Ó Coigligh, Assistant Secretary at DCHG regarding corporate governance training that DCHG is arranging for the boards of cultural institutions in the coming months.

The Board agreed to respond to the DCHG outlining the training in corporate governance that the Board undertook in November 2016 and suggested that a workshop on governance with representatives of the DCHG, the Board and the Executive might be of particular use.

4. **Report from Board Committees**

a) Development and Strategy Committee

Mr Bowen delivered the report from the Development and Strategy Committee.

Collections Requirements report: Mr Bowen reported that assessment of the spatial requirements for the storage of the NMI's collections, for now and the long term has been completed. Mr Bowen reported that the National Monuments Service have been consulted with throughout the process. Mr Bowen stated that the report was considered and approved by the Development and Strategy Committee at the last meeting on the 8 May and the Committee would like to recommend it to the Board for approval. Mr Bowen acknowledged the work of Mr Read, Head of Collections and Learning and Ms Finlay, Registrar, in ensuring that the assessment was carried out quickly and well.

The Board approved the report carried out by Mr Spence for Jura Consultants and thanked Mr Bowen and the Committee for their work on this. It was agreed that the next step is to establish a small working group of representatives of the Development and Strategy Committee, the Director and the Executive to drive the project forward.

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Retail: Mr Bowen reported that Ms Crotty has been chairing a sub-committee specifically tasked with Retail and invited her to provide the report from this sub-group. Ms Crotty reported that Ms Jennifer Kennedy, former Head of Retail at Diageo/Guinness Storehouse (now an independent retail consultant) has been co-opted as an external member to the Retail sub-committee. Ms Crotty reported that the approach taken to the refurbishment of the retail space at the Natural History (open since March) seems to be successful so far.

The Board agreed that Ms Kennedy's advice and experience will be very valuable and to the Committee and approved her external membership of the Development and Strategy Committee.

Capital Projects: The Director reported that a proposal has been drawn up to apply to the DCHG for additional capital funding to install Wifi at each of the sites.

It was agreed that this proposal should be brought to the next meeting of the Development and Strategy Committee.

Vertical Access: Mr Bowen updated the Board on plans for vertical access to Kildare Street that are being developed as part of the ongoing works to the Leinster House complex. Mr Bowen described the three lift solution and stated that the proposed arrangement is being developed to accommodate any changes that might arise from the Masterplan works.

Mr Bowen reported that the next meeting of the Ceramics Room Steering Group will take place at Leinster House on 23 May.

It was agreed that Professor Hook will represent the NMI at the meeting as Mr Bowen is not available to attend.

Masterplan: The Chair reported on the Masterplan, as it relates to the remit of the Development and Strategy Committee. Today, Minister Josepha Madigan will launch the Master Vision Statement in the Palatine Room at Collins Barracks. The Government's announcement of €85m in capital funding for the NMI over a ten-year period 2018- 2027 will enable the NMI to address the redevelopment of the Natural History Museum (between 2018 and 2022) and the Museum of Archaeology (in 2023-2027), as these two sites are most in need capital investment. The third five-year strategic plan, covering the period 2028-2032 will concentrate on Collins Barracks and the Museum of Country Life in Castlebar.

The Chair reported that the Masterplan Steering Group met on Friday 4 May. The Executive will work with the OPW to prepare the business case for the redevelopment of the Natural History Museum.

It was agreed that the Executive will develop a detailed business case document for the refurbishment Natural History Museum.

b) Audit and Risk Committee

Mr Nelson presented an update to the Board from the Audit and Risk Committee.

Internal Audit Report from Mazars: The Board discussed the internal audit report from Mazars that had been circulated to the Board. Mr Nelson reported that some issues were highlighted by the report:

- **Procurement:** Mr Nelson noted that this issue was also highlighted in the 2016 internal audit report. Mr Nelson stated that the Audit and Risk Committee have recommended that a procurement register be established. The Director reported that the NMI has taken steps to address this and a new procurement register will be put in place until the new Financial Shared Services System goes live in early 2019.



- **Risk Register:** Mr Nelson reported that the audit process highlighted that the Risk Register needs to be updated. The Director reported that this work is now being done as a matter of priority and the updated Risk Register will be presented to the Audit and Risk Committee at the next meeting.

Profile Interview with Revenue: Mr Nelson reported that the NMI has made a voluntary disclosure to Revenue regarding an incorrect VAT rate that was charged since 2014. The VAT issue has now been rectified and the correct rate is being applied.

External Member: Mr Nelson reported that the Audit and Risk Committee has agreed to co-opt Mr Michael O’Sullivan as an external member of the committee.

The Board approved this.

Financial Statements 2017

The Board discussed the draft Financial Statements for 2017 and suggested some amendments to page 3. **The Secretary agreed to make these changes.**

c) GPAC

The Board noted the report from GPAC which had been circulated in advance of the meeting. Professor James-Chakraborty delivered the report from the GPAC Committee.

Professor James-Chakraborty reported that the Committee heard a presentation on the work of the Conservation Department by the Head of Conservation, Dr Karena Morton and taken a tour of the Conservation Department to meet with staff and see projects that they are working on. The Board heard that the Conservation Department has lost three permanent staff in the last three years, none of whom have been replaced. The Board expressed concern about this and agreed that it highlights the importance of the development of a staffing plan by the executive.

Memorandum of Understanding with the National Museum of Wales: The Director reported that the National Museums Wales are due to revert back to the NMI with an updated version of the memorandum of understanding and another meeting will take place in September 2018 to finalise this agreement.

Recruitment of Board members: Professor James-Chakraborty reported that the Committee had discussed the recruitment of the two new Board members. At present, the Committee does not have representation from Connaught, which is required by the National Cultural Institutions Act 1997. At their last meeting, the Committee discussed the possibility of co-opting someone from that province onto the committee.

d) HR Committee

Ms Teehan presented the update from the HR Committee and stated that the Committee met twice since the last Board meeting.

Transition Plan: The Board discussed the Transition Plan. The Board agreed that the plan needs more input from the Director and Ms Scarff and an updated transition plan will be circulated in advance of the next Board meeting on 10 July.



5. **AOB**

The Board extended sincere thanks to the Director, Mr Ragnall Ó Floinn, for all his work at the NMI and warmly wished him a very happy retirement.

6. **Date and venue of next meeting**

The next meeting of the Board will take place on **Tuesday 10 July 2018 at 10am at the Board Room at Turlough Park.**