

# museum

National Museum of Ireland  
Ard-Mhúsaem na hÉireann

## Board of the National Museum of Ireland

Minutes of Meeting of the Board on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2021, at  
10am  
Via video-conference

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<b>Present:</b>	Ms Catherine Heaney (Chair) Ms Helen Shenton Dr Linda King Mr Paolo Viscardi Dr Susan Rogers Dr Barra O'Donnabhain Mr John Bowen	Mr Ambrose Loughlin Mr Declan Nelson Dr Andrew Power Prof Geraldine Sheridan Prof Cathal O'Donoghue Dr Claudia Kinmonth
<b>Apologies:</b>	None	
<b>In attendance:</b>	Ms Lynn Scarff (Director, NMI) Dr Audrey Whitty (Acting Deputy Director and Head of Collections & Learning, NMI)	Ms Aoife Hurley (Head of Operations, NMI) Ms Jade Dillon (Secretary to the Board, NMI)

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<b>1.</b>	<b>Opening of meeting, apologies if any and adoption of the agenda</b>
	The Chair opened the meeting. No apologies were conveyed however it was noted that Ms Shenton would need to step out during the meeting, as would Dr Power. Prof O'Donoghue would be late to the meeting due to a previous commitment.
<b>2.</b>	<b>The minutes of 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021 and matters arising</b>
a)	The minutes of 30 <sup>th</sup> September 2021 were approved.
b)	<u>Engagement with Joint Oireachtas Committee</u> The Chair informed the Board that following the Oireachtas hearing on 28 <sup>th</sup> September 2021, an information pack was sent to the Joint Oireachtas Committee for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media. The pack included a list of Board priorities for 2022 and a note of thanks to the Committee for their engagement at this meeting on the impacts of Covid-19 on the museums sector. <b>The Secretary agreed to circulate the pack prior to the next Board meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2022.</b>
c)	<u>Public appointments to the NMI Board</u> The Director notified the Board that the Board recruitment booklet is currently being reviewed by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport & Media and that no estimated publication date has been communicated.
<b>3.</b>	<b>Executive Report</b>
a)	<u>Extension of current Strategic Plan</u> The Chair informed the Board that due to the pandemic, the NMI's current strategic plan is behind by a few months. The Board agreed that, given that the strategic plan expires mid-2022, an extension until the end of 2022 is warranted and that this decision should be brought to the attention of the Minister.

b)	<p><u>National Monuments and Archaeological Heritage Bill</u> The Director informed the Board that the new <i>National Monuments and Archaeological Heritage</i> Bill is to be referred to the Joint Oireachtas Committee for Housing, Local Government and Heritage for pre-legislative scrutiny before the end of this year, and that the NMI have been working closely with colleagues in National Monuments Service on the General Scheme to prepare for this.</p>
c)	<p><u>Official opening of the Irish Consulate in Wales</u> The Chair and Director attended the official opening of the Irish Consulate in Wales as well as a special lunch in the National Museum of Wales in Cardiff to mark the inaugural Ireland Wales forum with Minister Simon Coveney and First Minister Mark Drakeford. This was also an opportunity to formally sign the next phase of the NMI's Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with National Museum of Wales (NMW).</p>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Special Discussion topic: Business Plans: Overview of 2021 and draft for 2022</b>
a)	<p>The Director provided an overview of the Business Plan 2021 and the NMI's key achievements during this period, including the decant of NMI-Natural History and key upgrades of ICT infrastructure. The Board noted the Business Plan draft for 2022 and the Director provided a brief overview of key areas of focus for the coming year. <b>It was agreed that a draft business plan for 2022 would be circulated to each of the Board's Subcommittees for review and that the final draft would be brought to the attention of the Board at the 10<sup>th</sup> February 2022 meeting.</b></p>
b)	<p><u>Project scoping</u> The Director highlighted that project scoping will be a key area of improvement for 2022. The Director explained that although there has been an increase in strategic projects across all NMI's sites, NMI's resources and capacity has largely remained the same. The Board discussed the importance of having the necessary internal resources secured, particularly for large-scale projects such as capital developments, and advised the Executive that recruitment options and mechanisms to enable staff to upskill for career progression should continue to be explored in further detail by the Executive and HR.</p>
<b>5a.</b>	<b>GPAC report</b>
5a1.	The Board noted the report, the GPAC work programme for 2022 and the Committee's Terms of Reference.
5a2.	<p><u>GPAC membership</u> Dr O'Donnabhain notified the Board that Prof Dáibhí Ó Cróinín has expressed his interest in extending his position as one of GPAC's external Board members, by a further two years. <b>The Board formally approved the extension and a note of gratitude to Prof Ó Cróinín was recorded by the Secretary. Dr Kinmonth and Prof Sheridan were formally approved as members of GPAC.</b></p>
5a3.	<p><u>The Inclusive museum</u> Some discussions followed on one of GPAC's work programme priorities, that of the inclusive museum model. Dr O'Donnabhain put forward that the main challenge for the NMI is to continue moving beyond aspirations to generate real change for both external communities and stakeholders and within the museum.</p>
<b>5b.</b>	<b>Audit &amp; Risk Committee report</b>
5b1.	Mr Loughlin notified the Board that a schedule of governance training for both Board and external Board members will be drawn up by the Secretary for 2022.
5b2.	Prof O'Donoghue was formally approved by the Board as a member of the ARC.
5b3.	The Board approved the ARC work programme for 2022, the Committee's Terms of Reference, the NMI's Corporate Governance Manual and Code of Conduct, the financial report and the Risk Register.
<b>5c.</b>	<b>Strategy and Engagement Committee report</b>
5c1.	<u>Strategic planning</u>

	Dr King told the Board that the Director will be providing an overview of the current strategic plan, along with an outline of the process at the Committee's next meeting.
5c2.	<u>Membership</u> Prof Sheridan and Prof O'Donoghue were formally approved by the Board as members of the Strategy & Engagement Committee.
5c3.	<u>Visitor Experience Survey</u> The visitor research survey report, produced by Martha Fanning Research was noted. The Board briefly discussed the results outlined in the visitor research survey report and it was proposed that, given the study was undertaken during the pandemic when footfall was impacted a similar survey could be carried out within the next Strategic Plan timeline.
5c4.	Terms of Reference and Work Programme Dr King informed the Board that the Committee's work programme for 2022 and its Terms of Reference are due to be revised slightly and that both documents would be brought to the attention of the Board at its next meeting.
<b>5d.</b>	<b>Capital &amp; Estates Committee</b>
5d1.	<u>Collections Resource Centre</u> Mr Bowen informed the Board of a note resolution on the Collections Resource Centre that was adopted by the Capital & Estates Committee at its last meeting. The Chair of the Capital & Estates Committee highlighted that great strides have been made on bringing this issue to the attention of relevant stakeholders and that the issue has been formally acknowledged by those concerned. Nonetheless, the Board agreed with the following note resolution as a record of the Board's responsibility to ensure the protection and preservation of the collection:
5d2.	<u>Note resolution formally adopted by the Board</u> <i>The Board (of the National Museum of Ireland) recognises the grave risks – in terms of its legislative functions - it faces upon the expiry of the lease of the Collections Resource Centre in 2030 in the absence of it being provided with sufficient and suitable alternative storage facilities.</i>  <i>It resolves to highlight this risk, and instructs the Executive to continue liaising with the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport &amp; Media to achieve comprehensive oversight and project planning infrastructure to ensure that a solution is found in the interest of the national collection, and the public for whom the NMI aims to hold and make available our collections to.</i>
5d3.	<u>Timeline</u> It was stressed that although the 2030 deadline may seem far away, the length of time it will take to decant the collection in its entirety is already here. <b>The Board formally passed a resolution as proposed by the Capital &amp; Estates Committee.</b>
<b>5e.</b>	All Committee Work Programmes and Terms of References (with exception to the Strategy & Engagement Committee) were approved by the Board.
<b>6.</b>	<b>A.O.B</b>
6a	<u>External Board Evaluation</u> The Board noted the Code of Practice Governance of State Bodies Board self-evaluation form. The Chair requested that members complete the forms by 7 <sup>th</sup> January 2022. <b>Ms Dillon agreed to follow up with an email on the Board review arrangements.</b>
<b>7.</b>	<b>Date of next meeting:</b> 10 <sup>th</sup> February 2022.
<b>8.</b>	<b>Closed session</b>