

Board of the National Museum of Ireland

Minutes of Meeting

Thursday the 20th of February 2025, at 11:00am
Palatine Room Collins Barracks, hybrid option available
(Approved 24th April 2025)

Present: Cathal O'Donoghue, Rowena Neville, Marianne Doyle, Susan Rogers, Suzanne Costello, Barra O Donnabhain, Beatrice Kelly, John Bowen, Claudia Kinmonth, Geraldine Sheridan

Apologies: Ambrose Loughlin, Ciaran Byrne, Helen Shenton, Iseult Dunne

In attendance: Lynn Scarff (Director), Aoife Hurley (Director of Operations), Dr Éimear O'Connor (Director of Collections & Access), Gráinne O'Donnell (Corporate Affairs Executive Officer), [REDACTED]

1.0 Opening of meeting, apologies if any and adoption of the agenda	
1.1	John Bowen acted as chair to commence the meeting pending the delayed arrival of the Chair. Apologies were conveyed for Ciaran Byrne, Helen Shenton, and Iseult Dunne. Thanks were conveyed to Gráinne O'Donnell for minuting as Board Secretary, in Jade Dillon's absence. The agenda was formally adopted.
2.0 Declaration of conflicts of interest (potential, perceived or otherwise), if any	
2.1	NA
3.0 Previous minutes	
3.1	The Chair joined at the meeting 11:07am. The minutes were proposed by John Bowen with minor amendments.
3.2	<p>Matters arising</p> <p>A number of matters arising to be dealt with under agenda. Following additional updates were provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chair formally welcomed the new board members to the NMI Board.• The two new members introduced themselves to the Board.• The Chair and the Director acknowledged Ambrose Loughlin resignation. The Chair thanked Ambrose's significant contribution and expertise throughout his term as a member of the Board and the GAR committee. <p>Action: Letter from the board as an acknowledgement of his service to the NMI.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board evaluation update – Chair thanked each member for participation. It was noted that report on Irish Antiquities Division licensing function submitted to the Department and awaiting feedback.
4.0	Chair of the Board and Director updates
4.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chair gave an update of recent engagements with Chairs of other NCIs and interest in pursuing a collective approach to strategic communications for the sector overall. Further updates will follow upcoming meetings.
5.0	Executive Report
5.1	<p>The Board noted the report and business plan 2025, and the Director updated the Board on a number of areas, including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key Programme highlights of past few months. Winter lights and Harry Clarke received significant coverage and interest. President Higgins attended the Harry Clarke exhibition on a personal visit and met with the Chair and Director as well as spending time with curatorial team. Harry Clarke Christmas bauble hugely successful, retail transactions in Collins Barracks increased significantly due to the sales of the Harry Clarke bauble. Bruce Barclay commenced as Head of Estates and will meet the Board soon. EXPO Osaka 2025 – Museum is part of Team Ireland, delivering on curatorial element and the exhibition design and build including contracting of the associated exhibition design and build teams. Launch weekend is week of 7th April and Director will travel to Osaka. National Centre for Record and Remembrance, planning has been submitted awaiting final outcomes. MSPI programme – Reviews on policies and procedures are being carried out, particular focus on health and safety of collections including chemical treatment and radioactive artefacts and treatment. 2025 Programme launch successful - featuring on RTÉ news. Discussion on visitor numbers and upcoming research and audience surveys specifically around Collins Barracks site. <p>Action: The business plan for 2025 was formally noted by the Board.</p>
5.2	<p>Pensions Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Director gave an overview of status of public sector pay increases on pensions for October '24 and upcoming March payments. Recent engagements with Dept and NSSO in relation to overall pensions allocations and future risks associated with pension costs was discussed. Notes, NMI not only NCI experiencing this issue and will be aligning with its peer institutions in seeking a resolution. <p>Action: Continue to engage with the Dept on the issue of pensions and pension payments and any associated risks.</p>
6.0	Board Evaluation update

9.5	<i>Capital & Estates Committee updates</i>
9.5a	Capital & Estates Committee report taken as read.
10.0	A.O.B
10.1	<p>Action: Potential topics for future board meetings for input into agenda.</p> <p>Action: Relook at dates of committee meeting dates.</p>
11.0	Date of next meeting
11.1	24 th April 2025 at 10am.