



Board of the National Museum of Ireland

Minutes of Meeting of the Board on Thursday 17th January 2019,
Learning Resource Room, National Museum of Ireland – Decorative Arts & History, Collins Barracks

Present:	Ms. Catherine Heaney (Chair) Mr. John Bowen Professor Ingrid Hook Professor Kathleen James-Chakraborty Dr Linda King Mr. Ambrose Loughlin	Ms. Judith McCarthy Ms. Denise Moroney Mr. Declan Nelson Professor Mary O’Dowd Ms Helen Shenton Ms. Virginia Teehan Mr Paolo Viscardi
Apologies:	Ms. Mary Crotty	Mr. Aidan Walsh Dr. Andrew Power
In attendance:	Ms Lynn Scarff (Director, NMI) Ms Jennifer Keane (Secretary to Board, NMI)	Ms Maria Kearns (Head of HR, NMI) Ms Rolly Read (Head of Collections and Learning, NMI)

1. Opening of the meeting, apologies, if any, adoption of the agenda, welcome to new Board members

The Chair opened the meeting and conveyed apologies from Ms Crotty, Dr Power and Mr Walsh.

The Board adopted the agenda.

On behalf of the Board, the Chair welcomed new Board members Dr Linda King and Ms Helen Shenton and staff representative to the Board Mr Paolo Viscardi to their first meeting.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 6 December 2018 and matters arising

The Board reviewed the minutes of the meeting of the 6th December 2018 and approved the minutes, subject to one amendment.

The minutes of the meeting of the 6 December 2018 were proposed by Ms Moroney, seconded by Mr Loughlin.

Matters Arising

The Board discussed:

- Corporate Governance training – It had been agreed at the last meeting that the corporate governance training will be offered to new Board members and any other Board members that wish to participate, the Secretary will organise the dates for training to take place.
- As mandated by the Board at the last meeting, the Chair wrote to the Ceann Comhairle regarding the Leinster House Steering group.
- As mandated by the Board at the last meeting, the Chair wrote to Minister Madigan with a vote of thanks from the Board for the 2019 funding allocation.
- Board mid-term review – Further to the discussion on the review at the last meeting, the

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Board agreed that the review has raised a number of interesting matters. The presentation on the review responses will be circulated to all Board members and shared with the Minister and senior officials at the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

- It was agreed that the Chair will send a letter to Cecil Keaveny on behalf of the whole Board, thanking him for his valuable service to the Audit and Risk Committee.

3. Executive Report from the Chair and the Director

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

World Café Day for All Staff – 18 February 2019

The Director requested permission from the Board to close the National Museum of Ireland to the public for one day, Monday 18th February in order for all staff to meet together and discuss the new Strategic Plan.

The Board approved the closure of the NMI sites for one day on 18th February 2019 to facilitate a World Café Day for all staff.

Joint Oireachtas Committee on 12 December 2018

The Director reported that she and Ms Maeve Sikora, Keeper of Irish Antiquities attended the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht on Wednesday 12 December to discuss ‘the development of the network of regional and local museums and related matters’ along with the Local Authority Museums Network, the Irish Museum’s Association and the Heritage Council. The Director reported that she had extended an invitation to all Committee members to visit the NMI and Senator Warfield is the first to accept the offer.

Inventory Project

The Director reported that there was very positive engagement in relation to the progress on the inventory and digitisation projects and she expects resolution on a pathway forward in the coming weeks.

The Director reported on the following upcoming exhibitions:

- **Centenary of the First Dáil – 17 January 2019**
The Lord Chancellor’s Mace from the NMI collections will go on a one-day loan to the Mansion House on Monday 21 January 2019.
- **Launch of *Jurassic Skies* exhibition – 21 January 2019**
This exhibition is the first tangible outcome of the Memorandum of Understanding with NMW and will be launched by the Director of National Museums Wales (NMW), David Anderson.
The Director reported that an annual programme for 2019 is being compiled, this will be supported by a strong marketing and communication plan.
- **St David’s Day reception - 21 February 2019**
The National Museum of Ireland, Kildare Street will host a reception in partnership with the Welsh government to mark St David’s Day and highlight cultural ties between the two nations.

Visitor numbers

The Director reported that visitor numbers for 2018 are down – 0.8% on the previous year, Collins Barracks is seeing a decline in visitor numbers and will be a priority over the next six months.



The Board expressed concern at the fall in visitor numbers and asked for a strategy and measures to be prioritised to ensure visitor numbers were boosted in 2019.

The Director stated that a working group to address visitor numbers has been formed and that the NMI is also focussing on a number of key events which will raise footfall for example Culture Night 2019 and will continue to provide reports on progress on this matter to the Development and Strategy and GPAC Committees.

Oversight Agreement

The Board discussed the Oversight Agreement for 2019.

It was agreed that the Oversight Agreement will be addressed by the Audit and Risk Committee:

- **The Executive will review each point of the Oversight Agreement and report to the Audit and Risk Committee**
- **The Performance Delivery Agreement will be circulated to the Board, once the Director has updated it**
- **The Executive will present the current procedure for the approval of Board and Director expense at the next Audit and Risk Committee meeting**

4. Report from Board Committees

a) Development and Strategy Committee

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

Mr Bowen reported that the Committee had considered a report on the physical risks aspects of the building by Mr Greg Kelly, Head of Facilities. Mr Bowen reported that the ongoing dialogue with the OPW is of a positive nature and the Committee will keep the Board updated on this matter.

Retail

Mr Bowen reported the positive news that as a result of all the hard work put by the Retail team, provisional figures show a profit. Now that the Retail team is adequately resourced and staffed, there has been a significant improvement in performance this year. Mr Bowen reported that the Committee will now move on to look at other forms of commercial development.

Collections Resource Centre (CRC)

It was agreed that the CRC is one of the most pressing issues for the Board at present.

Mr Bowen reported that OPW are engaged with the NMI to try to find a permanent solution to this problem and the level of engagement has raised since last meeting. The situation is evolving and updates will go to the Board as required.

It was agreed that a tour of the CRC for new Board members will be arranged for the next meeting.

Natural History Museum

Mr Bowen reported that the Committee is awaiting preliminary design back from OPW. The Board agreed that the question of the CRC has implications for decant of the Natural History Museum.

Vertical Access

Mr Bowen reported that the Oireachtas made a commitment to the NMI to provide assistance with vertical access and this contribution has now been made for this purpose.



b) Audit and Risk Committee

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

Financial Outturn report for 2018

Mr Loughlin reported that the financial outturn for 2018 is almost finalised and figures will feed into the Financial Statements for 2018. The provisional figures indicate a surplus.

It was agreed that an executive report on all items on loan and the associated borrowing institutions should be presented at the next meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee.

Budget for 2019

The Board discussed the draft budget for 2019.

Internal Financial Controls Audit

Mr Loughlin reported that the Internal Financial Controls audit will begin in early February 2019 and that the Audit and Risk Committee have requested that the audit particularly examines payments to and from the NMI in relation to potential internet fraud.

Risk

Mr Loughlin reported that the Risk Register has been updated and will be revised again once the new Strategic Plan is in place.

c) GPAC

Professor Kathleen James-Chakraborty delivered the report from the GPAC Committee.

Prof James-Chakraborty reported that the Committee had a very positive meeting with Decade of Centenaries Expert Advisory Group and invited the group to hold a meeting at Collins Barracks. The Advisory Group made a number of useful suggestions including: that the NMI should seek to establish a formal relationship with the National Museums Northern Ireland and that NMI should further develop collaboration with local authority museums in the border areas.

The Board agreed that in the context of the Decade of Centenaries, the NMI could be a space for discussion and the NMI wants to play a leadership role.

Prof James-Chakraborty reported that the Committee had heard an impressive presentation from the Education and Outreach department on Audience Research.

The Board noted the Museum Standards Programme report. The Board agreed that the drafts of Access and Loans policies, which are in progress, will need to be approved by the Board before the Museum can move forward on MSPI.

The Board agreed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with National Museum of Wales, subject to the inclusion of wording to reflect the role of the Board on the oversight of the agreement. **It was agreed that a similar MoU with National Museums Northern Ireland and National Museums Scotland should be sought.**

The Board discussed Beyond 2022 projects and the potential to link in with initiatives at the Department of Foreign Affairs.



It was agreed that Prof James-Chakraborty will write to John Concannon, Director General of Global Ireland, on behalf of the GPAC Committee and invite him to meet the Committee.

d) HR Committee

Ms Teehan delivered the report from the HR Committee meeting.

The Board approved the Disciplinary Code, the Dignity at Work policy and the Grievance procedure.

Ms Kearns reported that the Whistleblowing policy has been approved and will be submitted to the Management Committee at the next meeting for approval and then sent to the HR Committee.

Ms Kearns updated the Board on current legal cases.

The Board emphasised the need to ensure that all legal advice is received by the HR Committee in a timely manner.

The Board agreed that a review of HR cases will take place at the March meeting.

e) Strategic Plan Committee

The Chair presented the report from the Strategic Plan Committee. The Chair reported that the Committee had met via conference call on 10 January and sent all changes to the Director following the meeting.

The Board approved the Strategic Plan 2019-2022 subject to any final copy edits.

The Board agreed that the Strategic Plan should be sent to the Minister, senior officials and the OPW for comment.

The Board agreed that as it is a relatively short time since the formal launch of the Master Vision document the Strategic Plan should be launched via communication with key stakeholders and the Minister should be invited to a photocall to mark the launch of the Strategic Plan.

The Board agreed that it is crucial to have an operational plan for the full lifetime of the Strategic Plan, especially in relation to budgets going forward.

The Board approved the overarching operational plan including the Board's role.

The Board agreed that the Strategic Plan Committee will continue until operational plan is signed off.

The Board thanked the Director for all the work done on the Strategic Plan and the Director thanked the Board for their input at each stage of the process.

The Board discussed Mr Rolly Read's two year career break from the Head of Collections and Learning post. The Board wished Mr Read all the best for his new role.



5. **AOB**

Changes to the Committee membership

The Board noted the following appointments to the Committees:

Ms Aoife Clabby - Audit & Risk

Dr Linda King – Development and Strategy and GPAC

Mr Paolo Viscardi – GPAC and Development and Strategy

Ms Helen Shenton – GPAC

Director's Performance Review

The Board noted that the Director's six month performance review will take place in January. The Chair of the Board and the Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee will carry out the review and if Board members have any observations in advance of the review, the Chair would welcome those by early next week.

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

The next meeting of the Board will take place on **Thursday 14 March 2019 at 10am at the Collections Resource Centre at Swords.**