



Board of the National Museum of Ireland

Meeting Minutes

19th June 2025 at 10:30am via videoconference

(Approved on: 17th July 2025)

Present: Cathal O Donoghue (Chair, RDS appointee), Barra O Donnabhain, Rowena Neville, Ciaran Byrne, Helen Shenton, Susan Rogers, Suzanne Costello, Barney Whelan, Kieran Dowdall (NMI appointee), Beatrice Kelly, John Bowen, Marianne Doyle, Geraldine Sheridan (RIA appointee), Claudia Kinmonth (RIA appointee).

Apologies: Iseult Dunne (excused).

In attendance: Lynn Scarff (NMI Director), Aoife Hurley (NMI Director of Operations), Éimear O'Connor (NMI Director of Collections & Access), Jade Dillon (NMI Board Secretary and EA to Director).

1.0 <u>Opening of meeting, apologies if any and adoption of agenda</u>	
1.1	The Chair opened the meeting.
1.2	<u>Paul Nolan</u> The Chair opened the meeting by sharing the sad news of the unexpected passing of Capital & Estates Committee external board member, Paul Nolan. The Board expressed its deep shock and sorrow at the significant loss, both personally and to the work of the Capital & Estates Committee. Mr. Nolan's valuable contributions were warmly acknowledged, and a unanimous vote of sympathy was recorded in honour of the late Paul Nolan, and the Board Secretary informed the Board that she had been in touch with his family to express NMI's condolences.
1.3	<u>Adoption of the agenda</u> Given time constraints at the last Board meeting, it was agreed that the special focus discussion topic for this Board meeting would be updated to

	focusing on the National Centre for Record & Remembrance and that the Strategic Plan mid-point evaluation would be scheduled for the July in-person Board meeting.
1.4	<u>Apologies</u> There were no apologies.
2.0	Private session
2.1	The Board had a private session to discuss the board agenda, and the Director's upcoming mid-year appraisal. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
3.0	Conflicts of interests, if any (perceived or otherwise)
3.1	No conflicts of interest were raised.
4.0	Previous Minutes, matters arising
4.1	The minutes were approved by the Board with exception to minor amendments. Matters arising to be discussed under agenda items.
5.0	Executive Report
5.1	<u>Launch of Words on the Wave: Ireland & St Gallen in Early Medieval Europe</u> The Words on the Wave was successfully launched at NMI – Kildare Street by the President of the Swiss Confederation, Minister Patrick O'Donovan and was attended by the President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins and Mrs Sabina Higgins. The Board noted a letter from the Tánaiste, Simon Harris, acknowledging the importance of the exhibition in highlighting the role of culture in strengthening international relations. The Board congratulated NMI in its successful delivery of the exhibition and discussions followed on the importance of culture and the arts in bringing communities and nations closer together. The Board were in agreement that the exhibition serves as a key example of how investment impacts cultural output and the opportunities that multi annual consistent investment would bring to the Museum and other cultural institutions.
5.2	<u>MSPI</u> Work is ongoing at NMI in preparation for MSPI maintenance for NMI – Collins Barracks, Country Life and the Collections Resource Centre. The

	<p>Board conveyed their support for all involved in the application and acknowledged the ongoing progress made at NMI since NMI's receipt of MSPI accreditation in 2021. The Board briefly discussed benchmarking, monitoring and evaluation and there was a suggestion that it would be worthwhile to evaluate how much progress has been made since then, and in what areas.</p>
5.3	<p><u>Communications with parent department</u></p> <p>The Director provided an update on discussions at NMI's Q2 meeting with the Department of Culture, Communications & Sport.</p>
5.4	<p><u>Climate Action Plan post 2030 and Sustainability</u></p> <p>The Board acknowledged the amount of work being carried out at NMI in mitigating the impacts of climate change, particularly in the areas of energy conservation. The Board and Executive acknowledged the potential of NMI in leading the way in public sector climate action and agreed to include sustainability on the Board agenda going forward as a key strategic item.</p>
5.5	<p><u>Board Committee Chair Updates</u></p> <p>The Chair briefly updated the Board on committee chair meeting discussions including succession planning and sustainability.</p>
6.0	<p>National Centre for Record & Remembrance</p>
6.1	<p>The Director provided a special focus overview on NCRR project progress, including an update on key engagement sessions with survivors and affected people.</p> <p>The Director clarified the project's governance structure and the Board formally noted the following: NMI is not the contracting authority for the NCRR project; all project costs are managed by the government and the Office of Public Works. Additionally, NMI is not responsible for the capital delivery of the project. NMI is a member of the steering committee which ensures it can feed in on the potential exhibition and collection needs of the space during the development phase.</p> <p>The Chair and the Director thanked members of the Board's NCRR Working Group in supporting the Executive.</p>

7.0	Comfort break
7.1	The meeting was paused for a five-minute comfort break.
8.0	Committee Reports
8.1	<p><u>Governance Audit & Risk Committee</u> The Board approved the GAR report and the GAR Chair updated the Board on key items, including a summary of May's finance pack.</p> <p>The Board formally adopted the final version of the Financial Statements 2024 and the Letter of Representation for signing for the attention of the Comptroller & Auditor General.</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>The Board formally approved the report, the Risk Register, the Financial Statements, the Letter of Representation and the Financial Pack.</p> <p>C. Byrne left the meeting.</p>
8.2	<p><u>General Public Advisory Committee</u> The Board approved the GPAC report and the GPAC Chair updated the Board on key items, including collections online project, NMI's research strategy and MSPI.</p> <p>The updated De-accession and Disposal policy was formally approved by the Board.</p>
8.3	<p><u>Communications & Development Committee</u> The Board noted and approved the C&D report, and the C&D Chair updated the Board on a recent workshop that focused on further developing NMI's fundraising and philanthropy strategy. The workshop was attended by a number of board members and members of NMI's management committee.</p>

8.4	<p><u>Capital & Estates Committee</u></p> <p>The Board approved the report, and the Committee Chair briefly updated the Board on committee discussions. J. R. Bowen's second board term will be coming to a close in July 2026 and it has been agreed that succession planning will be a standing agenda item for the committee between now and then.</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>
9.0	A.O.B
9.1	There were no AOBs.
10.0	Date of next meeting
10.1	<p>16th and 17th July 2025.</p> <p><u>End of meeting.</u></p>

Approved by:

Date: 17th July 2025



Prof Cathal O'Donoghue

Chair of the Board