

Board of the National Museum of Ireland

Minutes of Meeting of the Board on 12th September 2019
Kildare Room, National Museum of Ireland – Archaeology, Kildare Street

Present: Ms Catherine Heaney (Chair) Mr John Bowen
Ms Mary Crotty Mr Declan Nelson
Prof Ingrid Hook Professor Mary O’Dowd
Prof Kathleen James-Chakraborty Dr Andrew Power
Dr Linda King Ms Denise Moroney
Mr Paolo Viscardi Ms Judith McCarthy
Mr Ambrose Loughlin

Apologies: Ms Helen Shenton

In attendance: Ms Lynn Scarff (Director, NMI)
Ms Jade Dillon (Secretary to Board, NMI)

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

The Chair opened the meeting and conveyed apologies on behalf of Mr Nelson and Ms Kearns. The Chair conveyed further apologies on behalf of Prof James-Chakraborty and Ms Crotty who would be joining the meeting at a later time.

The Chair apologised on behalf of the Secretary to the Board for a discrepancy in the timing of the circulated agenda. The adoption of the agenda was proposed by Dr Power and seconded by Mr Viscardi.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 19th July 2019 and matters arising

The minutes of the meeting of the 19th July 2019 were approved subject to two amendments. The Secretary agreed to make these changes.

Filming Policy

An update was requested from the Director in relation to NMI Film Policy. The Director informed the Board that Ms Shenton and NMI’s Retail Manager, Ms Terri McInerney have been liaising to develop the policy.

Some discussions followed in relation to the filming at NMI.

Matters Arising - NMI – Budget Estimate 2020 Priorities

The Board noted the *Budget Estimate 2020 Priorities* document and the Director welcomed questions from the Board. **Two minor modification were proposed and the Director agreed to amend.**

Political Engagement

The Chair notified the Board that Deputy Micheál Martin, T.D. will be visiting NMI – Archaeology on the 26th September to meet with the Chair, the Director and the Head of Irish Antiquities, Ms Maeve Sikora.

The Board was informed that Minister Madigan has been invited to launch the re-opening of *The Irish Wars* Gallery and will hopefully be attending Culture Night 2019 at Collins Barracks on 20th September.

Ms Crotty joined the meeting.

3. Executive Report by the Chair and the Director

The Board noted the Executive Report from the Chair and the Director. A minor change in wording was proposed and the Secretary agreed to amend accordingly.

The Director updated the Board on the recruiting status for Manager/Keeper of NMI – Country Life. The Director informed the Board that recruitment priorities have been discussed with NMI staff via NMI's Project Engage project workshops.

Upcoming exhibitions

The Director discussed the *Henri Cartier-Bresson* photography exhibition and informed the Board that the exhibition will be launched by the President of Ireland, Mr Michael D. Higgins on the 20th November 2019. The Director informed the Board that the photographer's work will also be celebrated as part of another Dublin exhibition and that this has the potential to positively contribute to the overall impact of the NMI's exhibition.

It was agreed that a more in-depth overview of all programming in 2020 would be presented to the Board at the next meeting.

Wi-Fi

The Director updated the Board on the Wi-Fi installation progress which has been successfully installed in specific zones in Collins Barracks and will soon be tested and installed at all NMI sites. The Board agreed that Wi-Fi connections will be of invaluable benefit to both NMI staff and visitors.

Media Coverage*i) Natural History Museum*

Members of the Board discussed the recent radio interview between NHM's Keeper, Mr Nigel Monaghan and RTE's Mr Ryan Tubridy on the 27th August and commended Mr Monaghan on his passion in and flair for speaking about NMI's natural history collections.

ii) Kitchen Power: Electrification of Rural Ireland

The Board discussed the success of the *Kitchen Power* exhibition which was launched by the former President of Ireland, Ms Mary Robinson in July. The Board further discussed the extensive level of media coverage generated; a report of which was circulated at the meeting.

Publications

The Director informed the Board that a new book that explores the flags of 1916, has been recently published by NMI. The book was written by NMI's former Keeper of the Art and Industrial Division, Mr Michael Kenny. Copies of *Raising the Banners of War: The flags of 1916 and their historical significance* were presented to members of the Board.



4. Special Discussion Topic and Discussion: Presentation from the Director on Risk Framing in NMI

Prof James-Chakraborty joined the meeting.

The Director gave a presentation on Risk Framing in NMI. This was followed by an overarching discussion on different areas of Risk within NMI. The Director informed the Board that a Risk Management Policy document is currently being finalised and that Risk Management workshops have taken place over the last two months with a range of Operations and Collections and Learning staff. The Director further informed the Board that two Risk Registers are being developed; Operational and Collections. These Registers are currently being developed collaboratively via NMI's online project platform. The Directors noted that the risks relating to the sites and buildings need to be assessed collaboratively with the OPW.

5. Report to the Board from Committees

a) HR Committee

Legal Cases

The Director updated the Board on legal cases.

External Board Evaluation

The Board discussed the results of the external Board evaluation review. It was decided that all feedback would be shared with the Department of Culture Heritage and the Gaeltacht for the sake of transparency and to convey the Board's dedication to continual improvement and to sustained collaboration with the Department.

The Chair proposed that an end of term evaluation should be conducted in spring 2021.

b) Audit and Risk

Mr Loughlin thanked Dr Power for chairing the last Audit and Risk Committee meeting and presented an update to the Board.

Mr Loughlin reported the figures within the cashflow statement are running within budget. Mr Loughlin stated that a new forecasting strategy is due to be implemented following on from the recruitment of NMI's newly appointed Head of Finance and Procurement, Mr Mark Sherry. Mr Loughlin informed the Board that Mr Sherry will be implementing changes that will greatly improve the accessibility and user-friendliness of NMI's financial reporting platform, and particularly assist the Director and the new Head of Operations, when appointed.

c) GPAC Report

The Board noted the report from GPAC. Prof James-Chakraborty delivered an update to the Board. Prof James-Chakraborty informed the Board that the last GPAC meeting took place a few days after the flooding in Kildare Street and Collins Barracks and that NMI's Head of Collections and Learning gave a thorough report on the incident. Prof James-Chakraborty commended Dr Whitty for her management of the incident as deputy Director.

It was agreed that a note of gratitude from the Board should be sent to Dr Whitty and those who assisted her in the incident.

Prof James-Chakraborty thanked Mr Viscardi for his presentation to GPAC on the internationally-renowned Blashka glass models that are displayed in the Natural History Museum.

d) Development and Strategy

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

Flooding at Kildare Street and Collins Barracks

Mr Bowen reported that he and Dr Whitty attended a meeting with the Office of Public Works after the flooding incident in NMI – Archaeology and NMI – Decorative Arts and History. Mr Bowen informed the Board that health and safety checks were implemented at the two sites by the Office of Public Works.

Collections Resource Centre

Mr Bowen gave an update on the Collections Resource Centre Building.

e) Strategic Plan

The Director updated the Board on the Project Engage project. The Director informed the Board that the workshops have been well received by NMI staff so far.

The Director informed the Board that a Project Engage steering group has been established. **It is envisaged to have a Strategy Committee meeting before the next Board meeting.**

6. AOB

Prof O'Dowd complimented NMI's Design Department on their work on Michael Kenny's book *Raising the Banners of War: The flags of 1916 and their historical significance* and suggested that a note of acknowledgement should be sent from the Board.

7. Date and venue of next Board meeting

The next meeting of the Board will take place on Thursday 21st November 2019 at 10am in the Palatine Room, Collins Barracks, National Museum of Ireland – Decorative Arts and History.

End of meeting.