



Board of the National Museum of Ireland

Meeting Minutes

23rd April 2025 at 10am via videoconference

(Approved on: 19th June 2025)

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

Apologies: Iseult Dunne, John Bowen.

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).

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| 1.0 | Opening of meeting, apologies if any and adoption of agenda |
| 1.1 | The Chair opened the meeting and apologies were conveyed for J. Bowen and I. Dunne. G. Sheridan had conveyed her apologies in advance for joining the meeting at a later time. The agenda was formally adopted. |
| 2.0 | Private session |
| 2.1 | The Chair requested that the Executive and Board Secretary leave the meeting to facilitate a private session with the Board to discuss the board agenda, and special discussion topics for the remainder of the year [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] |

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| 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. The Board Secretary agreed to amend as required. Matters arising to be discussed under agenda items. |
| 5.0 | Executive Report |
| 5.1 | <p>The Director provided the following three key updates for discussion and noting at Board level:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. NMI Collections and Programme. 2. Public Affairs Engagement. 3. Advocacy for NMI and the care for the national collection. |
| 5.2a | <p><u>NMI Collections and Programme</u></p> <p>The Director informed the Board that planning for the <i>Words on the Wave</i> exhibition is on track. The President of Switzerland will officially launch the exhibition, with Tánaiste Simon Harris and Minister O'Donovan also attending.</p> <p>The Board queried whether access to the first-floor exhibition will be possible and the Director informed the Board that the Houses of the Oireachtas will kindly be providing lift access for the duration of the exhibition.</p> |
| 5.3a | <p><u>Public Affairs Engagement</u></p> <p>On 3rd April, the Minister for the Department of Arts, Culture, Communications, Media and Sport, Patrick O'Donovan visited NMI Kildare Street to view a brooch-pin that was recently discovered by archaeologists during excavation works at Adare bypass.</p> <p>It was noted that the Minister had shown genuine enthusiasm for the national collection and that his engagement was appreciated.</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED] On behalf of the Board, a note of</p> |

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| | appreciation was noted by the Secretary for the Minister's time, and to Assistant Keeper of Irish Antiquities Division, Maeve Sikora for her expert contributions during the visit. |
| 5.3b | <p><u>National Development Plan review</u></p> <p>The Board discussed the National Development Plan (NDP) review, emphasising the importance of NMI's involvement. The Director noted that the Council for the National Cultural Institutions had discussed the review with senior department officials. The Board agreed to send a letter of gratitude to Minister O'Donovan for his visit, and to highlight NMI's crucial input into the NDP review.</p> |
| 5.3c | <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>Geraldine Sheridan joined the meeting.</p> |
| 5.4a | <p><u>Advocacy for NMI and the care for the national collection</u></p> <p>A brief discussion followed on how the Board could best assist the Department [REDACTED]. The Director proposed a meeting in May to review budget projections and engage with the Department and DPER. The Board supported the Executive's ongoing efforts to expand NMI's stakeholder pool to enhance advocacy, highlight key risks, and ensure that high priority risks are being communicated effectively to government body officials.</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED] It was agreed that Minister for Finance would be invited to view <i>Words on the Wave</i> exhibition [REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> |
| 5.4b | <p><u>National Collections Chair Group</u></p> <p>The Chair meets with other NCI Chairs a few times a year and has established a smaller group to discuss common interests [REDACTED]</p> |

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| | <p>[REDACTED] that it will meet on an ad hoc basis a few times a year to focus on public affairs strategising.</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> |
| 6.0 | Special Discussion Topic: External Board Evaluation Report |
| 6.1 | <p>Due to timing constraints at the last Board meeting, where the External Board Evaluation consultant presented to the Board, the Board noted, further discussed and approved the Board Effectiveness report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [REDACTED] <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> |
| 6.2 | <u>Feedback</u> |

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| | <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</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>General Public Advisory Committee</u></p> <p>The Board approved the GPAC report and the GPAC Chair updated the Board on key items.</p> <p>The Board formally ratified the NMI's Library Collections Policy, with the motion proposed by B. Kelly and seconded by G. Sheridan.</p> <p>It was agreed that the Board would allocate time to NCRR updates at its next meeting on 19th June.</p> |
| 8.2 | <p><u>Governance Audit & Risk Committee</u></p> <p>The Board approved the GAR report and the GAR Chair updated the Board on key items.</p> <p>It was agreed that a short biography of the external board member candidate would be circulated to Board members after the meeting for approval.</p> <p>The report, financial pack were formally approved by the Board. The Risk Register was formally adopted with one amendment.</p> |
| 8.3 | <u>Communications & Development Committee</u> |

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| | <p>On behalf of the Board, the Chair thanked I. Dunne for her chairing of the C&D Committee, and thanked R. Neville for stepping into the role. The Board approved the C&D report, and the C&D Chair updated the Board on key items.</p> <p>It was agreed that a workshop with staff and board members would be scheduled soon to develop a philanthropy and sponsorship strategy for the next 18-24 months. It was agreed that those interested in attending should contact the Secretary.</p> |
| 8.4 | <p><u>Capital & Estates Committee</u></p> <p>The Board approved the report, and the Director and A. Hurley provided some key updates in the absence of J. Bowen. To ensure that the Committee remains quorate, C. Byrne has kindly accepted onto the Committee and the Chair thanked C. Byrne on behalf of the Board for stepping into the role.</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> |
| 9.0 | A.O.B |
| 9.1 | <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> |
| 9.2 | <p><u>Retirements of Dr Nessa O'Connor and Deirdre Power</u></p> <p>A note of sincere thanks was recorded for recently retired staff members, Assistant Keeper of Irish Antiquities Division, Dr Nessa O'Connor and Online Collections Project Manager, Deirdre Power. Both staff members' significant contributions to NMI were warmly acknowledged by the Board. It was agreed that letters of gratitude would be sent on behalf of the Board by the Board Secretary.</p> |
| 10.0 | Date of next meeting |

19th June 2025 at 10am (online).

End of meeting.

Approved by:

Date: 19th June 2025



Prof Cathal O Donoghue

Chair of the Board

APPROVED