

Board of the National Museum of Ireland

Minutes of Meeting of the Board on Thursday 16th March at 9am,
National Museum of Ireland – Archaeology, Kildare Street

Present:

Ms. Catherine Heaney (Chair)	Ms. Denise Moroney
Mr. John Bowen	Mr. Declan Nelson
Professor Ingrid Hook	Professor Mary O'Dowd
Ms. Mary Crotty	Ms. Lynn Scarff
Professor Kathleen James-Chakraborty	Dr. Andrew Power
Mr. Ambrose Loughlin	Ms. Virginia Teehan
Ms. Judith McCarthy	Mr. Aidan Walsh
	Ms. Karen Wilson

Apologies: Professor Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh

In attendance: Mr Ragnall Ó Floinn (Director, NMI)
Ms Jennifer O'Mahony (Secretary to Board, NMI)
Mr Seamus Lynam (Head of Operations, NMI)
Ms Aoife McBride (Head of Corporate Affairs, NMI) (Item 6 only)

(Item 6 only)

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Items 1 & 2 had been taken on the evening of Wednesday 15th March. The Board reconvened the meeting on Thursday 16th March at 9am.

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

The Chair reconvened the meeting. The Secretary conveyed apologies from Professor Géaróid Ó Tuathaigh. The Chair proposed that Item 6 be taken in advance of Item 5, and the Board agreed.

4. Minutes of the meeting of 19th January 2017 and matters arising

The minutes of the meeting of the 19th January 2017 were proposed by Ms Mary Crotty and seconded by Prof. Kathleen James-Chakraborty subject to one addition, it was agreed that under Item 6 d. Report from the GPAC Committee the following text should be added:

'The GPAC committee recommended to the Board that the National Museum of Ireland should apply for accreditation through the Heritage Council's Museums Standards Programme for Ireland.'

The Board accepted this recommendation and agreed that the Museum should proceed with engagement in the Museum Standards Programme.'

The Secretary agreed to make this change.



Matters Arising

The Board decided that the minutes of each meeting should record decisions only and a draft of these minutes should be circulated to the Board within one week of the meeting. The Board resolved that minutes of each meeting should be published on the internet within six months of the meeting taking place.

6. Key Discussion Item: HR at the Museum

The Executive presented the report on HR issues at the Museum which had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

The Chair invited [REDACTED] to join the meeting.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] and [REDACTED] left the meeting. *

The Executive left the meeting while the Board discussed the report and the presentation and were re-called to hear the Board's decisions.

The Chair of the Director Review and Transition committee provided the Board with an update on the Committee's activities [originally to be taken on the agenda under Item 6 d.].

Having considered a report on human resources matters - prepared by the Museum's Executive at the Board's request - the Board agreed the following measures:

- **The Museum will strive to achieve excellence in HR practices, procedures and implementation;**
- **Following the successful procurement of a suitable internal audit service, an immediate audit of all HR processes and procedures in the Museum will be carried out by the internal auditors, and the outcome of the audit will be considered by the Board at the next meeting;**
- **The Board noted that over a number of years, the HR function at the Museum did not operate in a consistent manner due to lack of staffing and changes in the responsibility for managing this area. With the support of the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, the Board will seek sufficient resources to implement an effective HR function at the Museum that will be sustainable and robust for the long-term;**
- **Further to the implementation of the latter two actions, there will be awareness-raising and implementation of the full range of HR policies and procedures;**

* Redacted due to commercial sensitivity or data protection.



- **The Board has made it mandatory – with immediate effect – that all staff and Board members of the Museum are Garda vetted as per the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016. This vetting will be carried out as soon as possible;**
- **Mechanisms will be introduced to develop and support staff in reaching their fullest potential, through the mechanism of the Museum’s Masterplan. This will be an early objective for delivery once the Masterplan has been accepted by the Board. The support of the Department will be required to enable this objective;**
- **The Board may seek advice on HR or legal matters, when necessary. Additional Departmental resources will be required to enable the Board secure such services and cover potential financial outcomes, as may be advised to the Board;**
- **A sub-committee of the Board was appointed to oversee the implementation of the measures outlined above. The members of this committee are:**
 - **Ms Catherine Heaney (Chair)**
 - **Mr Ambrose Loughlin**
 - **Professor Kathleen James-Chakraborty**
 - **Ms Lynn Scarff**
 - **Ms Virginia Teehan**

Ms McBride left the meeting.

5. Executive Report by the Chair and the Director

The Chair invited the Director to update the Board on executive matters.

a) Update on finance, budgets and the Business Plan for 2017

Following the recommendation of the Audit and Risk Committee, the Board approved the budgets for 2017.

b) Update on the Collections Resource Centre at Swords

The Chair invited Mr Lynam to provide an update on the Collections Resource Centre at Swords. Mr Lynam stated that the Museum is continuing to liaise with the OPW and had requested an update on the matter for the Board meeting but since Minister Canney’s letter to the Chair of 19th January 2017, no update has been received from the OPW.

The Board agreed that if no update is forthcoming from the OPW by the end of the month, the Chair should write to the Minister on the matter.

c) Strategic Plan Review 2014-2017

The Board discussed the Strategic Plan Review. The Board enquired about the status of the Féile na Tuaithe festival at the National Museum of Ireland - Country Life. The Director reported that in 2017, the Museum of Country Life will not be staging Féile na Tuaithe.



The Director acknowledged the great success of the event and noted that it is vital to undertake a full review of the event to ensure that it is serving the Museum in the best way possible.

The Board agreed that it is important to review the event.

d) Museum by-laws

The Director reported that the section of the NCI Act 1997 which refers to bye-laws at the Museum has not been enacted and therefore the document discussed at the last meeting is classed as a code of conduct and thus no Board decision is required.

e) Creative Ireland and Cruinniú na Casca

The Board discussed Creative Ireland and agreed that the Museum should aim to play a major role in the programme.

The Board suggested that a committee of Museum staff should be formed to engage with the Creative Ireland programme.

The Board agreed that it would be useful to have a meeting between relevant members of the Board and relevant members of staff to discuss options around Creative Ireland and to decide how to engage with the programme.

The Board discussed the *Cruinniú na Casca* festival which will take place on Easter Monday (17 April 2017). The Director stated that it is very difficult to open the Museum on Mondays due to staffing issues.

The Board agreed that it is important for the Museum to take part in the festival and recommended that the Museum could participate in an outreach capacity.

6. Report to the Board from the Committees

a) *Ceramics Room Committee*

The Board noted the written report from the committee which had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

The Chair reported that she has stepped down as Chair of the Ceramics Room Committee and it was agreed at the last committee meeting that Mr Bowen will take on the role as Chair of the committee. **The Board agreed to the change.**

Mr Bowen reported that planning permission was lodged on 16 March 2017. He had reviewed the submission and noted the absence of a reference to the lift and that he will raise this point at the next meeting of the Ceramics Room Steering Group at Leinster House.

It was noted that planning permission was originally due to be submitted at the end of January. The Board continues to have concerns regarding the overall timeframe of the Seanad project and the impact that a delay will have on the Museum regaining possession of the relevant rooms. **The Board agreed that the situation should be reviewed once the OPW has confirmed the timeframe following the outcome of the planning permission process.**



b) Audit & Risk Committee update

The Chair of the Audit and Risk committee briefed the Board.

1) Internal Financial Controls Audit for 2015

The committee approved the final report on Internal Financial Controls at its last meeting on 3 March 2017.

2) Tender for Internal Audit

Mr Loughlin reported that he and Mr Lynam had met with the Office of Government Procurement earlier this week to assess the tenders for the internal audit contract which is due to begin shortly.

The committee will notify the Board once the internal auditor has been confirmed.

3) Corporate Governance Manual

The Chair of the Audit and Risk committee reported that the committee had reviewed and approved the Museum's Corporate Governance Manual and invited Board members to submit any queries or comments on the manual to the Secretary.

c) GPAC Committee

The Board noted the written report from the committee which had been circulated in advance. The Chair of the GPAC committee updated the Board on a proposed project to conserve a portion of a wall from Damascus in the Museum's collections. It seems that the wall may be one of the earliest and most significant examples of this type. The Director reported that the Museum has just had news that two of the other walls of the room are located in the National Gallery Victoria in Australia. The Chair of the committee reported that the committee is keen to pursue funding for the conservation of the wall.

The Board agreed that the GPAC committee should work with the Executive on the Museum's submission to Creative Ireland, with plans in place regarding the Museum's contribution by the time of the Committee's next meeting on 24 April.

d) Director Review and Transition Committee

[Taken under Item 4 above]

7. Date and venue of next meeting

The Board noted that Minister Heather Humphreys has agreed to attend the next meeting of the Board on **Thursday 18th May 2017 at 10am at the Collections Resource Centre at Swords, Co, Dublin.**

The Board agreed that a brief report (1-2 pages) on the activities of the Board should be prepared for the Minister in advance of the May meeting. A draft of this report will be circulated to all Board members prior to it being sent to the Minister.