

Board of the National Museum of Ireland

Minutes of Meeting of the Board on Thursday 28th April 2022, at 10am
Via video-conference
(Approved on 29th June 2022)

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| Present: | Ms Catherine Heaney (Chair) Mr Ambrose Loughlin Dr Linda King Mr Paolo Viscardi Dr Susan Rogers Dr Barra O'Donnabhain Mr John Bowen | Ms Helen Shenton Dr Claudia Kinmonth Dr Andrew Power Prof Geraldine Sheridan Prof Cathal O'Donoghue |
| Apologies: | None | |
| In attendance: | Ms Lynn Scarff (Director, NMI) Dr Audrey Whitty (Deputy Director and Head of Collections & Learning, NMI) | Ms Aoife Hurley (Head of Operations, NMI) Ms Jade Dillon (Secretary to the Board, NMI) |

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| 1.0 | Opening of meeting, apologies if any and adoption of the agenda |
| 1.1 | The Chair opened the meeting and no apologies were conveyed. The agenda was formally adopted. |
| 1.2 | <u>Declan Nelson retirement</u> The Chair paid tribute to Mr Nelson's significant work that went above and beyond the role, particularly for his assistance with significant recruitment interviews. |
| 1.3 | <u>Mary Nelson</u> On behalf of the Board, the Chair conveyed her deepest condolences to Declan Nelson whose wife, Mary Nelson passed away suddenly after a short illness. |
| 1.4 | <u>Board recruitment</u> The Chair informed the Board that the recruitment booklet for the three Board vacancies are now being processed by the Public Appointments Service. It was agreed that the Secretary would upload the most up to date version of the booklet to <i>Decision Time</i> for members to note. |
| 1.5 | <u>Distribution of expertise on Board Subcommittees</u> It was agreed that the Chair would liaise directly with the Chairs of the Subcommittees this September to discuss the re-distribution of expertise on each of the Subcommittees. |
| 1.5 | <u>Nigel Monaghan, Keeper of Natural History</u> The Chair informed the Board that Nigel Monaghan, Keeper of Natural History will be retiring on 22 nd June 2022. The Chair spoke of Mr Monaghan's energy, commitment and great humour and on behalf of the Board, wished him the very best in his retirement. |
| 1.6 | <u>Aoife Clabby</u> The Chair informed the Board that Aoife Clabby, external member of Audit & Risk Committee has stepped down from the Subcommittee after five years. Sincere thanks was recorded for her time and commitment. |

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| 2.0 | Conflicts of interest |
| 2.1 | No conflicts of interest were recorded. |
| 3.0 | The minutes of and matters arising |
| 3.1 | The Chair thanked Mr Loughlin for chairing the last Board meeting. The minutes of 10 th February were proposed by Dr Power and seconded by Mr Bowen. There were no matters arising. |
| 4.0 | Executive Report |
| 4.1 | The Board noted the Executive report and the Chair welcomed the Director to provide some verbal updates. The Executive report was formally approved by the Board. |
| 4.2 | <u>Recruitment update</u> Oein De Bhairduin was appointed as the NMI's Traveller Culture Collections Development Officer and officially commenced his position on 14 th March. Three Curatorial Researchers for the 20 th Century History of Ireland Galleries project have been contracted. Interviews for the position of Ethnographer is currently being scheduled by the NMI's HR unit. |
| 4.3 | <u>Disability Awareness training</u> The Director informed the Board that NMI staff attended mandatory three-hour disability awareness training sessions. |
| 4.4 | <u>Decant of North Block</u> The Director provided an update on decants on the North Block and Block 10. |
| 4.5 | <u>Feedback</u> Congratulations were noted for the staff of the NMI for facilitating the St Patrick's festival. There was consensus that the high turnout demonstrated the opportunities for the Collins Barracks site in terms of public engagement. Other notes of support were conveyed to the wider NMI team for a number of public engagement events, including the <i>Narrating the Nation</i> conference. |
| 4.6 | <u>History of Ireland Galleries</u> It was agreed that a HOI presentation would be scheduled for the June Board meeting and that the papers in relation to this presentation will be circulated in advance. |
| 4.7 | <u>National Centre for Record & Remembrance</u> The Director provided an update on the NMI's role in the development of a museum and exhibition as part of the proposed National Centre for Research and Remembrance (Theme 7 of Government's Action Plan for Survivors and Former Residents of Mother and Baby and County Home Institutions). The Board formally welcomed this opportunity and conveyed its support for the plan. It was agreed that oversight of the NMI's role in the project would be overseen by the Board's General Public Advisory Committee (GPAC). It was agreed that non-GPAC Board members should contact the Secretary should they wish to be invited to GPAC meetings where the NCCR is a key agenda item. |
| 5.0 | Special discussion topic: Phase two of the Strategic Plan development |
| 5.1 | The Board noted the Director's presentation. The Director spoke to the importance of understanding and considering NMI's values in the context of wider cultural values, and examined some unhelpful polarity of perspectives on the value of arts and culture, such as quantitative versus qualitative KPIs. The Director spoke briefly on the foundational, 'house-keeping' nature of the current strategic plan and explained that the next strategic plan will be value-driven. The Director anticipated that the NMI is now primed to transition to a more qualitative, high-level strategy that embraces new ways of thinking. The Director posed some questions to the Board for their consideration, including 'what is the value of the work of the NMI, and how can outcomes be measured?' |
| 5.2 | <u>Feedback</u> |

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| | <p>Some discussions followed on the NMI's current values and top-tier areas of focus, as outlined in the 2019 Strategic Plan. The Board reflected on whether or not these values and areas of focus adequately align with the vision for the NMI. There was consensus that sustainability, internationalisation, greater engagement with research bodies and new ways of thinking in relation to the museum's goals are among the areas that should be considered in the upcoming strategic plan. The Board formally gave leave to the Executive to further examine and refine these areas for the next strategic plan, and to refer to these as key areas in upcoming strategic plan workshops.</p> |
| 6.0 | Board Subcommittee updates |
| 6a | <p><u>Audit & Risk Committee updates</u></p> <p>The Board reviewed and approved the following documents, upon the recommendations from the Audit & Risk Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Audit & Risk Committee report 2. Corporate Risk Register 3. Oversight Agreement 4. Child & Vulnerable Adult policy 5. Emergency Response plans for NMI sites 6. Collections Security audit report 7. Financial pack 8. Letter of Compliance 9. Internal controls audit report* <p>*Upon reviewing the internal controls audit report and considering the Audit & Risk Committee's approval of the report, the Board formally confirmed that it was satisfied on the basis of the Statement on compliance with Provision 1.8 of the 2016 Code in respect of ensuring effective systems of financial control.</p> |
| 6b | <p>General Public Advisory Committee</p> <p>The GPAC report was noted by the Board. Dr O'Donnabhain provided an overview of key discussion items, including the Dublin Excavations project, decolonisation and equality and diversity in museums.</p> <p>The importance of investment in the Dublin Excavations project was raised. The Director informed the Board that the plan would be noted within the 2023 budget estimates.</p> <p>The Conservation and Collections Care Strategy, Site Assessments and Collections Care policy guidelines were formally approved for forwarding to the Heritage Council for MSPi accreditation. The GPAC report was formally approved by the Board.</p> |
| 6c | <p>Capital & Estates Committee</p> <p>The Board noted the report. Mr Bowen provided an overview of the updates within the report. Mr Bowen informed the Board that high-level meetings on the Collections Resource Centre are ongoing and regular and he provided an overview of the potential site options. With regard to capital projects in general, the Board briefly discussed the challenges arising from inflation and the knock-on effects of inflation on budgets and the NMI's upcoming Strategic Plan.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Mr Bowen and agreed with his point to how inflation may impact the NMI's Strategic Plan 2023-2027. The Chair stressed that it is incumbent on the Board to consider these risks. It was agreed that risks involved in inflation and capital projects would be tabled for the June Board meeting. The Capital & Estates report was approved.</p> |
| 6d | Strategy & Engagement Committee |

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| | The Board noted the report. Dr King provided an overview of documents reviewed and topics discussed, including feedback on the most recent visitor experience report. Dr King informed the Board that Mr Derek Flynn will be presenting into the next Strategy & Engagement Committee meeting on wayfinding, branding and design at museums and welcomed all Board members to attend. The Strategy & Engagement Committee report was approved. |
| 7.0 | A.O.B |
| 7.1 | <u>Charities Regulator form</u> It was agreed that the Chair would sign the Charities Regulator form on behalf of the Board. |
| 7.2 | <u>Budget estimates</u> The Chair flagged the June Board meeting as an important meeting for the NMI in regards to the discussion on budget. The Chair encouraged all Board members to consider what needs to be advocated for. |
| 7.3 | <u>Reports</u> It was agreed that all reports would be taken as read at the next meeting. |
| 7.4 | <u>December meeting</u> It was agreed that the date of the December meeting would be brought forward by one week in December. |
| 8.0 | Date of next meeting The next Board meeting will take place on 29 th June 2022 at 10am. |

Signed by Chair of the Board:



Catherine Heaney