



Board of the National Museum of Ireland

Minutes of Meeting of the Board on Thursday 15th March at 10am,
Board Room at the Collections Resource Centre, Swords.

Present:	Ms. Catherine Heaney (Chair) Mr. John Bowen Ms. Mary Crotty Professor Ingrid Hook Professor Kathleen James-Chakraborty Mr. Ambrose Loughlin	Ms. Judith McCarthy Ms. Denise Moroney Mr. Declan Nelson Professor Mary O'Dowd Ms. Virginia Teehan
Apologies:	Dr. Andrew Power	Mr. Aidan Walsh
In attendance:	Ms Jennifer Keane (Secretary to Board, NMI) Mr Ragnall Ó Floinn (Director, NMI)	Ms Maria Kearns (Head of HR, NMI) Mr Rolly Read (Head of Collections and Learning, NMI)

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

The Chair opened the meeting and conveyed apologies from Dr Power and Mr Walsh.

The Board welcomed back the Director following his period of sick leave.

The Board welcomed Ms Maria Kearns, the new Head of HR to the meeting and wished her well in her new role.

The Board noted with sadness the passing of Ms Joan Duff, the former Chair of the Caretaker Board. The Board noted Ms Duff's substantial contribution to Ireland's cultural institutions.

The Board adopted the agenda.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 18 January 2018 and matters arising

The minutes of the meeting of 18 January were approved.

Matters Arising

Board members

The Board noted that Professor Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh had resigned from the Board the previous month. The Board extended their gratitude to Professor Ó Tuathaigh for his wisdom and service to the Board and sent him their best wishes.

The Board discussed the recruitment process for the two new ordinary members and the staff member on the Board.

It was agreed that the Chairs of the committees will send any requirements for the new Board members to the Secretary and the Secretary will convey these to the Department.



Gender Policy

The Director reported that Gender Policy had been discussed at the last meeting of the CNCI group. Ms Kearns agreed to work on this policy and report to the HR Committee about this work at the next meeting.

3. Executive Report from the Chair and the Director

The Board noted the executive report from the Chair and the Director.

Natural History Museum

The Board noted that some necessary maintenance works were carried out on the Natural History Museum following Storm Emma in early March. The Board were happy to note that the first floor of the Natural History Museum will re-open in time for Easter.

Albert Bender Exhibition at Collins Barracks

The Director reported that there had been some water ingress to the Albert Bender exhibition at Collins Barracks connected to works on the building by the OPW. The Board noted that procedures for risk assessment in advance of such works are now being reviewed by the Executive.

Project 2040

The Chair reported that on Friday 16 February, the government's capital development plan Project Ireland 2040 was launched. The cultural institutions are included on the national development plan for the first time. €15 million has been allocated for the renovation and development of the Natural History Museum. The Plan also makes reference to the overall cost of the Museum's masterplan of €212 million. The Chair and the Director wrote to the Minister welcoming the Government's commitment to invest in our cultural infrastructure.

The Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht's own capital development plan was due to be launched on Thursday 1 March, this was postponed due to bad weather and a new date for this event has not yet been decided.

World Café Day for staff on Wednesday 31 January 2018

The Chair of the Board reported on the presentation she made to staff on the Board's Master Vision Statement on 31 January 2018.

Launch of the European Year of Cultural Heritage at Kildare Street

The Board noted that the launch of the European Year of Cultural Heritage took place at the National Museum of Ireland – Archaeology, Kildare Street on Monday 29 January at 11 am. This was the first time that Minister Madigan visited the Museum. The Chair of the GPAC committee welcomed the Minister to the event.

Launch of the CAUTION: Fragile exhibition

The Board noted that Róisín De Buitléar's exhibition entitled *Caution! Fragile: Tradition in Transition* was launched on 8 March 2018 by Philip Grant, Director of International Security Policy, Department of Foreign Affairs. The launch involved a musical performance by Liam Ó Maonlaí and Peter O'Toole using glass instruments created by Róisín. **The Board agreed that after the next Board meeting at Collins Barracks the whole Board will visit this exhibition.**

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Events in Clarke Square at Collins Barracks

The Director reported that the Executive met with the OPW to discuss issues around holding events for the public at Clarke Square in Collins Barracks. The Director reported that the Museum has had two expressions of interest about events in 2019. The Board agreed that Clarke Square has great potential as a venue for public events and that this should be progressed if possible.

Shop at the Natural History Museum

The Director reported that sanction for retail staff was received from the Department for several Retail posts and as a result the shop at the Natural History Museum should be open by Easter. The Board welcomed this news.

4. **Report from Board Committees**

a) Development and Strategy Committee

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

Mr Bowen reported that the Master Vision document has been finalised and is ready to be launched by the Minister. **The Board agreed that it is vital that this document be launched as soon as possible. The Secretary will continue to liaise with the Minister's office to establish a suitable date for this launch.**

Mr Bowen reported that the Executive had been tasked with assessing the spatial requirements for the storage of the Museum's collections, for now and the long term. Jura Consultants developed a proposal for this work as an extension of the Masterplan process. The proposal was considered by the committee at its meeting on the 9 March resulting in its unanimous agreement to recommend to the Board the acceptance of said proposal. Mr Bowen stated that the report from Jura should be finalised by mid-April.

The Board agreed to accept the proposal by Jura.

Retail

Mr Bowen reported that Ms Crotty and Ms Moroney have been meeting regularly with Ms McInerney to discuss Retail and that a small sub-committee on Retail is being formed. Mr Bowen and Ms Crotty reported that they had met with Ms Jennifer Kennedy, former Head of Retail at Diageo/Guinness Storehouse (now an independent retail consultant), with a view to inviting Ms Kennedy to participate in the work of Development and Strategy Committee. **Ms Crotty and Ms Moroney will set up a meeting with Ms McInerney and Ms Kennedy and provide an update at the next meeting.**

b) Audit and Risk Committee

Mr Ambrose Loughlin presented an update to the Board from the Audit and Risk Committee.

Profile Interview with Revenue: Mr Loughlin reported that it is likely that the Museum will make a disclosure to Revenue regarding an incorrect VAT rate that was charged since 2014. The VAT issue has now been rectified and the correct rate is being applied.

Transfer to the new Financial Shared Service Centre in January 2019

Mr Loughlin reported that the committee discussed a recent unsuccessful competition to secure a resource that would be shared with the State Labs to manage the transition to the new FSSC and that the Committee had recommended that the Museum progress as quickly as possible to secure as resource as the transition to the new system is imminent.

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External Audit on Financial Statements 2017

Mr Loughlin reported that the C&AG have stated that the external audit on the Financial Statements for 2017 cannot commence until 5 July 2018. The Committee agreed that this date is too late and will contact the C&AG to see if an earlier date can be secured.

Oversight Agreement for 2018

The Board noted that the Business Plan for 2018 has not yet been circulated. The Board agreed that the Business Plan should be presented at the beginning of the year.

Mr Loughlin will send comments on the Oversight Agreement to the Secretary. The Board gave the Chair of the Board leave to sign the Oversight Agreement on behalf of the Board, once the comments have been added.

c) GPAC

The Board noted the report from GPAC which had been circulated in advance of the meeting. Professor James-Chakraborty delivered the report from the GPAC Committee.

Professor James-Chakraborty reported to the Board that the Committee have concerns about the timing of the proposed new Discovery Zone at the Natural History Museum given that extensive renovation works are likely to commence in the next year. The Executive agreed that this should be given further consideration.

The Committee members expressed concern about the lead in time for the proposed History of Ireland galleries and stressed that this matter needs to be progressed as soon as possible.

Professor James-Chakraborty reported that the next meeting of the GPAC Committee will be held in the Conservation Department at Collins Barracks.

d) HR Committee

Ms Teehan presented the update from the HR Committee.

The Board discussed the issue of the monitoring of parliamentary questions and media coverage in the Museum. The Director agreed to follow up on how best this process should be managed in the Museum.

The Board discussed with Ms Kearns the need to update policies within the Museum. It was agreed that Ms Kearns will work on updating the policies and provide a report to the Board on this matter at the next meeting.

The Board discussed transition planning. The Director's last day will be Friday 11 May 2018.

5. Date and venue of next meeting

The next meeting of the Board will take place on **Thursday 10 May 2018 at 10am at the Palatine Room at Collins Barracks.**