



## Board of the National Museum of Ireland

### Meeting Minutes (Part 2)

17<sup>th</sup> July 2025 at 10:00am Boardroom, NMI – Country Life and via videoconference

*(Approved on: 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2025)*

**Present:** John Bowen (Acting Chair), Barra O Donnabhain, Rowena Neville (remote), Ciaran Byrne, Helen Shenton, Susan Rogers, Suzanne Costello, Barney Whelan, Kieran Dowdall (NMI staff appointee), Beatrice Kelly, Marianne Doyle, Claudia Kinmonth (RIA appointee), Geraldine Sheridan (RIA appointee).

**Apologies:** Cathal O Donoghue (Chair, RDS appointee), Iseult Dunne (excused).

**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).

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Opening of meeting, apologies if any and adoption of agenda</b>
1.1	The Acting Chair opened the meeting and welcomed all to the meeting.
1.2	<u>Apologies</u> Apologies were conveyed for the Chair of the Board due to business commitments abroad.
1.3	<u>Adoption of the agenda</u> The agenda was formally adopted.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Conflicts of interests, if any (perceived or otherwise)</b>
2.1	No conflicts of interest were raised.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Previous Minutes, matters arising</b>

3.1	<p>The minutes from June were approved by the Board and it was agreed that the final version of the minutes would be signed by J. R. Bowen as Acting Chair. Matters arising to be discussed under agenda items.</p>
4.0	<p><b>Executive Report</b></p>
4.1	<p>The Director updated the Board on a number of items, including the following:</p> <p><u>Response to DCC&amp;S draft statement of strategy</u></p> <p>As requested by the Department of Culture, Communications &amp; Sport, NMI submitted a response to the Department's draft Statement of Strategy. The Board conveyed their support to the Executive on areas of priority that NMI outlined in the response, including the following proposals for prioritisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a review of the National Cultural Institutions Act 1997</li> <li>• development of a cultural policy</li> <li>• continued capital investment programme and sustained advocacy of NCI capital programme, inclusive of staffing resources</li> <li>• Establishment for a formal learning programme in Ireland for some aspects of Collections Care including conservation and other executive leadership programmes specific to museums.</li> <li>• A more cohesive all-of-government approach to heritage.</li> </ul>
4.2	<p><u>Collections Care expertise</u></p> <p>The Board discussed the need for the establishment of a formal national learning programme in Ireland focused on the practical learnings of collections care, including conservation and museum-specific executive leadership. Drawing comparisons with international models, members highlighted the absence of such a programme as a barrier to developing expertise, promoting career pathways in museum and collection care, and addressing recruitment challenges for specialist roles.</p>
5.0	<p><b>Committee Reports</b></p>
5.1	<p><u>General Public Advisory Committee</u></p> <p>The Board approved the GPAC report and received an update from the GPAC Chair on key developments, including the NCRR project, the Collections Online initiative, and external committee membership.</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>

5.2	<p><u>Governance Audit &amp; Risk Committee</u></p> <p>The Board approved the GAR report, and the GAR Chair updated the Board on key finance, governance and risk items.</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>The Board formally approved the report, the Risk Register, the Financial Pack, the Oversight Agreement and Section 6 of the Performance Delivery Agreement and the GAR overview document for 2024.</p>
5.3	<p><u>Comfort Break</u></p> <p>The Board meeting was paused for a 10-minute break.</p>
5.4	<p><u>Communications &amp; Development Committee</u></p> <p>The Secretary explained that due to a technical issue, the committee's written report was delayed and will be circulated post-meeting. The Chair of C&amp;D gave a verbal update on retail, commercial plans, and community engagement surveying at Collins Barracks. The Board briefly discussed donations technology, and it was agreed that C&amp;D would review site-specific donation data at its next meeting for future presentation to the Board.</p>
5.5	<p><u>Capital &amp; Estates Committee</u></p> <p>The Board approved the report and received a brief update from the Committee Chair.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ It was noted that the joint GAR and C&amp;E Committee meeting has been postponed due to scheduling constraints and will be rescheduled to discuss all NMI's capital programmes.</li> </ul> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>
5.6	<p><u>Board Effectiveness Committee updates</u></p>

	The Board noted [REDACTED] proposed actions and the Director informed the Board that a more comprehensive update would be included at upcoming meetings.
6.0	A.O.B
6.1	[REDACTED]
7.0	<b>Private session</b>
7.1	The Executive, NMI's Staff Rep, Kieran Dowdall and the Board Secretary left the meeting to facilitate a private session with the Acting Chair and the Board to discuss the Director's recent mid-year appraisal, carried out by the Chair of the Board and H. Shenton.
8.0	<b>Date of next meeting</b>
8.1	2 <sup>nd</sup> October 2025.  <u>End of meeting.</u>

Approved by:

Date: 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2025



Prof Cathal O Donoghue

Chair of the Board