

## Board of the National Museum of Ireland

### Minutes of Meeting

Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2024, at 10am  
Japanese Room, Kildare Street and via videoconference  
(Approved on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2024)

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**Present:** Cathal O'Donoghue  
Ambrose Loughlin  
Helen Shenton  
Rowena Neville  
Suzanne Costello (remote)  
Barra O'Donnabhain  
Susan Rogers

Ciaran Byrne  
Beatrice Kelly  
Iseult Dunne  
John Bowen  
Geraldine Sheridan (remote)  
Claudia Kinmonth

**Apologies:** Marianne Doyle

**In attendance:** Lynn Scarff (Director)  
Aoife Hurley (Director of Operations)  
Dr Éimear O'Connor (Director of  
Collections & Access)

Jade Dillon (Secretary to the  
Board)

#### **1.0 Opening of meeting, apologies if any and adoption of the agenda**

1.1 The Chair of the Board opened the meeting and welcomed new Board members onto the Board. Apologies were conveyed for M. Doyle.

#### **1.2 Congratulations to New Chair of the Board**

On behalf of the Board, the Director warmly congratulated Prof Cathal O' Donoghue on his appointment to NMI's new Chair of the Board, by Minister Catherine Martin, T.D. Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sports and Media.

#### **1.3 New Board Members**

On behalf of the Board, the Chair welcomed Rowena Neville and Suzanne Costello to their first Board meeting. All Board members briefly introduced themselves.

#### **1.4 Adoption of agenda**

The agenda was formally adopted.

#### **2.0 Declaration of conflicts of interest, if any**

#### **3.0 Previous minutes**

3.1 The minutes were proposed by B. Kelly and B. O'Donnabhain.

#### **3.2 Matters arising**

Any matters arising to be dealt with under agenda.

#### **4.0 Chair of the Board and Director updates**

- 4.1 Secretary General for the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport & Media  
A formal note of congratulations was recorded for Feargal Ó Coigligh, recently appointed Secretary General at the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media. A note of sincere thanks was recorded for former Secretary General, Katherine Licken for her work with NMI, and the Board wished her well in her retirement.
- 4.2 Membership and chairing  
C. Byrne was formally appointed as the new Chair of the Governance Audit & Risk Committee.
- 4.3 Committee structures  
It was agreed that structure of Committee would remain as is for the next while to allow for a bedding down of procedures within each committee.
- 4.4 Succession planning  
The Board discussed the significance of implementing effective succession planning procedures, particularly in light of the significant portion of NMI staff nearing retirement age. It was unanimously agreed that the succession planning models must not hinge solely on the knowledge of any one staff member and that emphasis should be placed on ensuring seamless transitions and in enhancing NMI's capacity to attract new talent, through the implementation of effective policies and procedures.
- 4.5 Engagement with NCIs  
The Board agreed on the importance of enhancing collaboration among the Boards of the National Cultural Institutions, to foster relationships and to advocate for the societal relevance and values upheld by Ireland's cultural institutions. **The Chair and the Director agreed to discuss this further.**
- 5.0 Executive Report**
- 5.1 The Board noted the report and it was taken as read. The Director updated the Board on visitor numbers, exhibitions and programming, and upcoming large-scale events that are scheduled to take place at NMI – Collins Barracks.
- 5.2 Exhibition openings  
A note of congratulations was recorded for those involved in the design, planning, curation and delivery of two exhibitions that recently opened at NMI; Murmur of the Bees exhibition at NMI – Turlough Park and NMI's Artist-in-Residence *We Make Our Own Histories* exhibition. The Director highlighted that both exhibitions have received generous media coverage.
- 5.4 Collections security  
The Director updated the Board on collections security and procedures.
- 6.0 Business Plan update**  
The Board noted the business plan update. The Director informed the Board that each Committee has reviewed business plan priorities aligned to each Committee and that NMI is today seeking approval from the Board of the overarching business plan for 2024. The Director provided an overview of all projects outlined in the document.

Some discussions on the Business Plan followed and all feedback was noted for consideration by the Director. The Board acknowledged that the business plan

outlines strategic priorities only and is not reflective of the breadth of work undertaken or to be scheduled at NMI.

**The Business Plan for 2024 was formally approved by the Board.**

**7.0 Governance Audit & Risk Committee**

7.1 Financial Report, Corporate Risk Register and Governance Calendar  
**The Board reviewed and formally noted the documents.**

7.2 Human Resources update  
The Board was provided with an update on HR-related items, including recruitment and open positions at NMI.

7.3 Budget 2024  
The Board reviewed and formally noted the budget allocation letter for 2024. **It was agreed that a letter of acknowledgement and thanks would be forwarded by the Chair for the attention of the Minister for the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport & Media.**

The Committee discussed and reviewed the budget for 2024. The Executive outlined key exhibition programmes and the mechanisms of funding.

7.4 Code of Conduct and Schedule of Matters  
**The Code of Conduct was reviewed and formally approved by the Board. The Schedule of Matters was formally approved, with exception to the inclusion of the transfer of responsibilities from the Director to the Board as outlined in the new Historic and Archaeological Heritage and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023. The Secretary agreed to liaise with NMI's Corporate Affairs Manager to update the document.**

**8.0 Capital & Estates Committee**

8.1 The Board noted the Committee report. The Chair of the Committee updated the Board on NMI's capital programme in relation to all sites.

**9.0 General Public Advisory Committee**

9.1 The Board noted the GPAC report and the Chair of GPAC highlighted key updates. **It was agreed that the responsibilities of the Board outlined in the Historic and Archaeological Heritage and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023 would be summarised and circulated ahead of the next Board meeting.**

**10.0 A.O.B**

10.1 There were no A.O.Bs.

**11.0 Date of next meeting**

11.1 18<sup>th</sup> April 2024 at 10am online.

End of meeting.