

Board of the National Museum of Ireland

Minutes of Meeting

Thursday 21st November 2024 at 11am via video-conferencing

Present:	Cathal O'Donoghue (Chair) Ambrose Loughlin Rowena Neville Marianne Doyle Susan Rogers Suzanne Costello John Bowen	Ciaran Byrne Geraldine Sheridan Beatrice Kelly Claudia Kinmonth Barra O'Donnabhain Helen Shenton
Apologies:	Iseult Dunne	
In attendance:	Lynn Scarff (Director) Éimear O'Connor (Director of Collections & Access) Aoife Hurley (Director of Operations)	Gráinne O'Donnell (Corporate Affairs Executive Officer, minute- taking)

1.0	Opening of meeting, apologies if any and adoption of the agenda
1.1	The Chair of the Board opened the meeting, and apologies were conveyed for I. Dunne. The agenda was formally adopted.
2.0	Declaration of conflicts of interest (potential, perceived or otherwise), if any
2.1	None.
3.0	Previous minutes
3.1	The minutes of 3 rd October 2024 were formally approved. There were no matters arising.
4.0	Updates from Chair and Director
4.1	<p><u>Budget and advocating for the importance of National Cultural Institutions</u> The Chair and Director provided an overview of the budget allocation for 2025. There was consensus that greater collective engagement was required among the NCIs ahead of Budget 2026.</p> <p>Discussions followed regarding the importance of a) maintaining collaboration with key stakeholders to enhance the museum's visibility, b) further developing and refining public affairs strategies to advocate for the essential role of national cultural institutions (NCIs) and c) continuing efforts to raise public awareness and increase engagement with NMI. It was agreed that gaining a clearer understanding of how other European cultural institutions approach these efforts would be useful.</p>

4.2	<p><u>Acquisitions</u> The Director updated the Board on upcoming acquisitions.</p>
4.3	<p><u>Board Appointments</u> With thanks to the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport & Media, the Chair informed the Board of the official appointments of Board Member, Barney Whelan and Staff Representative Board Member, Kieran Dowdall who were both appointed on 19th November 2024 by Minister Catherine Martin, T.D.</p>
5.0	Executive Updates
5.1	<p>The Director updated the Board on a number of areas, including a special focus on Business Plan projects. It was noted that overall, all projects identified in the Strategic Plan are underway, and that, on average, projects are approximately three to five months behind on original estimation of deliverables.</p> <p>The Director explained that, primarily, delays are due to limited resources in staffing, budgets and stakeholder capacity.</p>
5.2	<p><u>National Centre for Record & Remembrance (NCRR)</u> The Director gave an update on the NCRR project and key activities. It was stressed by the Board that the successful execution of this project will require substantial resources and capacity from the NMI.</p>
6.0	Special Discussion Topic: Strategic Plan Overview and plans for evaluation in 2025
6.1	<p>The Board noted the Strategic Plan review document. In the context of business planning for 2025, the Board took this opportunity to reflect on learnings and challenges to date, and to consider proposed next steps in planning for evaluation.</p> <p><u>Discussions on progress</u> The Director highlighted several key deliverables that have been met so far within the current Strategic Plan, including the recruitment of Inclusive Histories Curators, the beginning of NMI's research audit and the development of a new research strategy [REDACTED]</p> <p><u>Challenges</u> The Board discussed several challenges to the delivery of the strategic plan, including the ongoing lack of additional staff resources. There was discussion on the need for clearer articulation of new KPIs that better align with the strategic vision, as well as concerns on the overreliance on annual government budget allocation and key stakeholders for the successful delivery of projects outlined in the current strategic plan.</p>
6.2	<p><u>Evaluation</u> [REDACTED] The Director proposed that a review could be carried out to examine how the strategy is being implemented across NMI's teams, including an evaluation stage that focused on its impact both on daily operations, where there has been success and what have been key factors to enable, support and deliver.</p> <p>It was proposed that this review could include feedback from departments on successes and challenges, as well as stakeholder views on how NMI is currently aligning with its vision.</p>

	NMI teams are looking at 2025 business plans. These will come back to the Board in September.
6.3	<p>Feedback</p> <p>The Board discussed a number of elements that could be considered within an evaluation of strategic plan progress, including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The impact to strategic goals due to NMI's reliance on a number of stakeholders for capital developments, maintenance and upgrades, • Focus on the need to nurture the team and enable the management team in an upcoming busy year, • Increased support of staff through celebration of work achieved. Developing our capacity to measure the impact of what the NMI are doing and how it is supported through the teams, • Further development of philanthropic strategies and building new partnerships. <p>H. Shenton left the meeting at 12:30pm.</p>
7.0	Comfort Break
7.1	The Board meeting was paused for a five-minute comfort break.
8.0	Committee Reports
8.0a	<p>The Board noted and formally approved all reports without amendments.</p> <p>J. Bowen left the meeting at 12:30pm.</p>
8.0b	<p>Joint Committee to be established for Capital Projects</p> <p>The Chair of the Governance Audit & Risk Committee informed the Board that a Joint Committee comprising of members from both the Governance Audit & Risk Committee and the Capital & Estates Committee will be established and that meetings will take place as required over the next 12-18 months to focus on overlapping areas related to capital projects.</p> <p>It was agreed that the governance and operational arrangements guidelines for capital projects would be included in a pack and be discussed in the context of risk management and mitigation by this joint committee.</p>
8.1	Governance Audit & Risk Committee
8.1a	<p>The Board noted the report, and the Chair of the Committee updated the Board on a number of items. [REDACTED]</p> <p>The Terms of Reference for the Governance Audit & Risk Committee were agreed by the Board.</p> <p>The financial pack was formally signed off by the Board.</p>
8.2	General Public Advisory Committee
8.2a	The Board formally noted the committee meeting report and the Chair of GPAC summarised the key discussions that had taken place.

8.2b	<p>Review of Licensing Function</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>The Chair of GPAC provided an overview of the licensing function of NMI, outlined the statutory role of the NMI, and highlighted the risks associated with NMI's current lack of capacity in carrying out the statutory licensing function, [REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>It was agreed that the Corporate Risk Register would be updated in this regard and that engagement would continue with the DTCAGS&M.</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>
8.2c	<p><u>Publications policy and Collections and information documentation policy</u></p> <p>The Board formally approved both policies.</p> <p>C. Byrne left the meeting at 12:55pm.</p>
8.3	Capital & Estates Committee
8.3a	<p>The Board noted the committee report and the Chair of the Capital & Estates Committee provided some key updates.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Committee received an overview of the Kildare Street Capital project. This included details on the grant provided by the Department, the necessary hiring processes, the development of an overall project strategy, and the scheduled workshops. • The Committee was updated on the progress of the Natural History Capital project. Information about the new Internal Steering Group was shared, along with programme plans, [REDACTED] • The Committee discussed the Op/ Gov guidelines for the NH Capital refurbishment project [REDACTED]
8.4	Communications & Development Committee
8.4a	<p>No major updates, R. Neville standing in for I. Dunne.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [REDACTED] he Committee agreed that a more specifically tailored philanthropic approach for 2025 specifically is needed, complete with a clear strategy and achievable targets. • [REDACTED] • It was agreed that the Executive would engage with Board members who have expertise in philanthropy to finalise this item for the 2025 Business

	<p>Plan. This is to happen after February Board meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Committee recommended waiting until the Dead Zoo Lab opening before engagement in fundraising pitches as this would allow for enhanced stakeholder engagement. • The Director agreed to link in with R. Neville on the audience engagement strategy. • The Committee received an overview of the Public Programme review, detailing ongoing focus on audience engagement strategies focused on the Dublin 7 and 8 communities. An analysis of visitor demographics in relation to the 2025 programs and events was included. [REDACTED]
9.0	A.O.B
9.1	<p><u>Code of Conduct for the Board</u> The Code of Conduct for the Board was formally approved by the Board.</p>
10.0	Date of next meeting
10.1	<p>13th February 2025.</p> <p><u>End of meeting.</u></p>

Approved by:	Date: 20 th February 2025
	
Prof Cathal O Donoghue	
Chair of the Board	