

CONFIRMED MINUTES
MEETING OF BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Friday 25 September 2020
Microsoft Teams – Video Conference

Trustees Present:

Mr Miceal McCoy – Chairman
Professor Garth Earls – Vice Chairman
Dr Riann Coulter
Ms Deirdre Devlin
Mr William Duddy
Professor Karen Fleming
Mrs Hazel Francey
Mrs Daphne Harshaw
Miss Charlotte Jess
Dr Rosemary Kelly
Dr Leon Litvack
Mr Alan McFarland
Dr George McIlroy
Mrs Catherine Molloy
Dr Robert Whan

In Attendance

Kathryn Thomson, Chief Executive (CEO)
William Blair, Director of Collections (DC)
Colin Catney, Chief Operating Officer (COO)
Tzvetelina Bogoina, Capital Programme Director (CPD) (SIB)
Michelle Ashmore, Secretariat
Jourdan Crilly, Assistant Secretariat

Dr Robert Whan joined the meeting at 10.34am.

Dr Leon Litvack joined the meeting at 11.14am and left at 12.57pm.

Tzvetelina Bogoina (CPD) (SIB) joined the meeting at 11.15am to present item number 8.1 and left following this presentation at 12.20pm.

There was a comfort break at 11.36am returning at 11.41am.

1. Welcome & Apologies

The Chairman formally welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Chairman advised that the meeting is being held virtually:

- Members to mute microphones unless speaking

- If anyone leaves the meeting they must advise Chairman of this to enable it to be recorded in the minutes.

No apologies were received.

2. Conflicts of Interest

The Chairman ascertained that there were no conflicts of interest in relation to the business as set out on the agenda.

The following members made declarations of interest.

Mr Alan McFarland is a member of Scotch-Irish Trust Board.

Dr Rosemary Kelly is a member of Royal Ulster Academy of Arts Board.

Professor Garth Earls declared his daughter has been accepted for Royal Ulster Academy of Arts Exhibition.

Mrs Hazel Francey is a member of the Equality Commission.

3. Approval of Minutes

3.1 Minutes of Meeting held on 19 June 2020

Trustees approved the Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 19 June 2020.

Proposed by: Mrs Francey

Seconded by: Mrs Molloy

4. Matters Arising

4.1 Update on Actions from previous meeting

The CEO advised the Trustees on the summary of actions from the meeting on Friday 19 June 2020 which had all been completed.

5. Business of Chairman

5.1 Business Planning Diary

The Board reviewed and agreed the schedule of proposed dates of Board Meetings to the end of 2021 – start time to be confirmed.

5.2 Broad Work Plan

The Board noted the reviewed work plan updated to September 2021.

5.3 Advocacy Engagements

The Chairman reminded the board this it was agreed in August 2019 that Advocacy would be standing item to allow Trustees to update on any recent engagements.

The Board did not have any advocacy engagements or stakeholder conversations to report at this time.

5.4 Board Self-Assessment Action Plan

The Board reviewed and approved the Self-Assessment Action Plans.

5.5 Board Resolution

The CEO advised the Board that a Deed of Termination had been enacted to bring to an end the current contract for the provision of catering at the Ulster Museum and the Cultra sites.

In lieu of appointing a new contractor, the Conference Centre Liquor Licence associated with the site is to be transferred to National Museums NI. An application is being submitted to the Courts and must be accompanied by a Board Resolution. The Board approved the Resolution for both of the sites.

Proposed by: Dr Kelly

Seconded by: Mrs Francey

The Chairman noted that the new Trustees had received two induction workshops so far - one from the Executive Team and one from the Department. The new Trustees commended the Executive Team on the comprehensive session and overview of the work, challenges and opportunities facing the organisation. While welcoming the engagement with the Permanent Secretary and her overview from the Departments perspective, the Chairman noted his disappointment that the workshop had been limited in covering the roles, responsibilities, governance requirements and expectations of Arms Length Bodies. The Trustees concurred and the Chairman advised he would raise this with the Department.

6. Loans & Disposals

6.1 Loans approved by GP&F

Trustees noted the loans approved by the GP&F Committee on behalf of the Board at its meeting on 28th August 2020.

6.2 Disposals for Approval by the Board of Trustees

Trustees approved the disposals as presented and the Chairman will sign the schedule on behalf of the Board after COVID 19.

Proposed by: Dr Kelly

Seconded by: Ms Devlin

7. Business of Chief Executive

7.1 Chief Executive's Report

The Chief Executive reviewed the above report in discussion with Trustees, commenting specifically on:

- The successful reopening of the Ulster Museum on 30th July, the Ulster Folk Park and Ulster American Folk Park on 13th August and The Ulster Transport Museum on 20th

August, following significant work by teams across the organisation. The primary priority was ensuring the health and safety of both colleagues and visitors.

- Visitor feedback has been monitored on an ongoing basis both through the ALVA Benchmarking Study and Tourism NI ReviewPro (online review sources). Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. Additional hand sanitisers with a lighter product have been installed following feedback and Discover Art will be reopened from October.
- Following the termination of the contract for the provision of catering services at the Ulster Museum and Cultra, Loaf Catering have been engaged to provide a limited service at the Ulster Museum café and Ballycultra Tearooms while a full tender exercise is completed.
- The launch of the Access for All initiative, to coincide with the reopening of the museums to provide a central structure to our organisational approach to addressing access, inclusion and diversity.
- The Education Authority has strongly advised against school trips which has led to redevelopment of the schools programme. 'Museum on the Move' will allow primary school teachers and pupils to examine real artefacts on loan boxes from the museum from the comfort of the classroom while engaging with our Education Team in live workshops delivered by video link.
- Due to the closure of museums and the restrictions on travel there have been a number of adaptations to the exhibition programme.
- Programme planning is currently underway with considerations for what is feasible at both Halloween and Christmas taking into consideration all of the current restrictions and guidance
- The CEO advised we received our grant aid letter which awarded us £9.8m and non-recurring allocation of £1.6m, total £11.4m. This is the same grant in aid as received for 2019/20. The impact of Covid-19 is that the majority of the self-generated income of £3m will not be achieved. The reopening scenario supported by the Department was on the basis of a forecast deficit of £1.2m. Formal allocation of this is still awaited.

A number of Trustees had visited the museums since reopening and noted the excellent experiences delivered by the teams. Trustees asked that thanks be passed on the teams at the museums.

8. Strategic Priorities

8.1 National Museums NI Investment Programme

The Capital Programme Director joined the meeting to provide an overview presentation to the Board on the ambitions within the capital investment programme and provide an update on the significant developments to date and overview of the next steps.

The Board also received the completed UM Masterplan Final Report and the UAFP Strategic Development Framework.

The Board noted the reports and updated presentation.

8.2 Texaco Children's Art Exhibition

The Director of Collections presented an options paper on the ongoing hosting of the Texaco Children's Art exhibition at the Ulster Museum. In light of previous discussions around hosting of the BP Portrait Award exhibition, and in the context of increased awareness of issues relating to ethical sponsorship within the cultural sector, the Board of Trustees were asked to consider the future of the Texaco Children's Art exhibition from three options identified.

A majority of the Board agreed to continue with the annual hosting of the exhibition with the partnership between the organisations to be formalised in an agreement, clarifying roles and responsibilities and setting out timelines for regular evaluation and review. Dr Coulter asked that it be recorded that she did not support this option and that her preference was that after this year the relationship be terminated.

Proposed by: Dr Litvack

Seconded by: Dr Kelly

9. Board of Trustees' Committees

9.1 Audit & Risk Assurance Committee

9.1.1 Adoption of Minutes of [ARAC] Meeting held on 5 June 2020

Trustees adopted the minutes of the ARAC meeting of 5 June 2020.

Proposed by: Dr Coulter

Seconded by: Dr Kelly

9.1.2 Verbal update of Meeting held on 11 & 24 September 2020

The Chairman of ARAC updated on meetings held on 11 & 24 September and highlighted the following:

- The internal audit contract has been awarded to RSM who had met with the Chair and Vice-Chair of ARAC and the Chairman of the Board
- Annual Report and Accounts for 2019-20 and the Report To Those Charged With Governance (RTTCWG) had been considered by ARAC
- An internal review on Capital Management had been received with a limited assurance rating. Action was underway to address the issues raised

Trustees noted the report of the meeting held on the 11 & 24 September 2020.

Papers arising from ARAC meeting on 11 September 2020:

9.1.3 Corporate Risk Register

The Board approved the Corporate Risk Register.

9.1.4 Risk Management Framework

The Board approved the Risk Management Framework

9.1.5 Bi Annual Assurance Statement

National Museums NI is required to provide an Assurance Statement to the Department bi-annually. The completion of the BiAAS is informed by completion of an internal version by each Directorate. The BiAAS covers the period to the end of September 2020.

Proposed by: Mrs Harshaw

Seconded by: Dr McIlroy

9.2 General Purposes & Finance Committee

9.2.1 Adoption of Minutes of GP&F Meeting held on 22 May 2020

Trustees adopted the minutes of the GP&F meeting of 22 May 2020.

Proposed by: Professor Fleming

Seconded by: Mr McFarland

9.2.2 Unconfirmed Minutes of Meeting held on 28 August 2020

The Board noted the unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on 28 August 2020.

Papers arising from GP&F meeting held on 28 August 2020:

9.2.3 Performance Reports:

a) Financial Performance

The Board noted the Financial Performance Report.

b) Business Plan Performance Report

The Board noted the Business Plan Performance Report.

9.2.4 For approval:

a) Picture Charging Library Policy

The Picture Library Charging Policy was approved by the General Purpose and Finance Committee at its meeting on 28 August 2020.

b) Operations Review

This report was reviewed by General Purpose and Finance Committee on 28 August 2020 and is recommended to the Board for approval.

The Board approved the policy and operations review proposals.

Proposed by: Dr Kelly

Seconded by: Ms Devlin

10. FOIs

The Board noted there were no FOI request.

11. Any Other Business

None noted

13. Date of Next Meeting

The Chairman advised Trustees that the next meeting of the Board would take place on Friday 11 December 2020.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 13:07

Signed:

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Date:

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Copies: DfC, Trustees, File, Website

Actions

5.5	Chairman to sign Board Resolution for UM & UFTM	Chairman
7	Thanks to be passed on the teams at the museums on the excellent experiences being delivered at the museums	CEO

8.2	Formal agreement to be established for Texaco Children's Art	DC
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