

**CONFIRMED MINUTES
MEETING OF BOARD**

**Tuesday 5 November 2024
Training Room, Cultra Manor**

Members Present:

Gordon Milligan – Chair
Keith Charlton
Ryan Cornett
Charlotte Jess
William McMullan
Sally Montgomery
Peter Osborne
Shane Quinn
Therese Rafferty
Fiona Ryan
Mark Walker
Robert Whan

National Museums NI Attendance:

Kathryn Thomson, Chief Executive (CEO)
Colin Catney, Chief Operating Officer (COO)
William Blair, Director of Collections (DC)
Aaron Ward, Director of Public Engagement (DPE)
Michelle Ashmore, Secretariat

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Apologies

The Chair formally welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted no apologies were received.

1.2 Conflicts of Interest

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

1.3 Approval of Minutes from Last Meeting

Members approved the Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 10 September 2024.

1.4 Matters Arising from Previous Meeting

The Chief Executive (CEO) advised that actions from meeting held on 10 September 2024 were on agenda. Actions from the meeting held on 30 January 2024 are work in progress and will continue to be reported on matters arising until complete.

2. CHAIR & CHIEF EXECUTIVE BUSINESS

2.1 Chair & Trustee Business

There were no specific updates.

2.2 Business Planning Diary

The Chair advised the schedule included proposed dates for 2025 for Board and Committee Meetings.

Members agreed the schedule.

2.3 Board Self-Assessment

The Chair advised members that the Board Self-Assessment was an important piece of work individually and as a group. The feedback from the self-assessment formed the basis for the reflection and discussion which was facilitated by Pauline Poots, EY. An Action Plan will be developed as a result of this.

The Chair thanked Pauline for facilitating the discussion.

2.4 Chair Executive Report

The CEO provided a verbal update from the Chief Executive report with the below highlights:

- **Reawakening the Ulster Folk Museum** – PEACE Plus application was unsuccessful and we will seek feedback. We are now considering a phased approach of the OBC. Discussions will take place with DfC and an update will be brought back to the Board in due course.
- **Ulster American Folk Park** – In September the UK government pressed a pause on the MSW Growth Deal pending their budget announcement. As a result the Heads of Terms did not proceed for signing in October as planned. We have since received confirmation that the project will go ahead with Heads of Terms due to be signed tomorrow.
- **Budget 2024-25** – The independent financial review by Deloitte is nearing completion and a final report is expected week beginning 11th November 2024 and this will be added to the December Board meeting.

Members noted the report.

3. PERFORMANCE REVIEW

Not applicable – scheduled for Quarterly Meetings Only (March, June, September & December)

4. STRATEGY

4.1 Corporate Strategy 2025-30

The CEO advised a draft of the new Corporate Strategy 2025-2030 has been prepared for public consultation and is presented to the Board for approval in principle. The CEO advised the final version will come back to Board in March 2025 for approval.

Members approved in principle as the basis for public consultation.

4.2 Commercial Task & Finish Group – update

The Task & Finish Group had one initial overview meeting on 7th October and a series of subsequent meetings have been arranged to delve into more detail.

Keith Charlton thanked Board members who had attended the initial overview meeting where they agreed the workstreams and meetings dates. KC advised that a meeting was scheduled to take place today to discuss admissions. The next feedback will be provided to Board in January 2025.

5. GOVERNANCE

5.1 Bi-Annual Assurance Statement

The CEO advised that the Bi-Annual Assurance Statement has been recommended by ARAC for approval.

Members approved the Bi-Annual Assurance Statement.

5.2 Report To Those Charged With Governance

The CEO advised NIAO have provided their draft Report To Those Charged With Governance (RTTCWG) to ARAC. An unqualified audit opinion was received on the financial statements, with no proposed adjustments to the accounts.

There were two medium priority findings and two low priority findings which the management of National Museums NI have accepted. Two have been implemented with immediate effect and two are more resource dependent, therefore management will seek to progress and resolve within the indicative target dates identified in the report.

The final RTTCWG will be presented to the December Board meeting.

Board members noted the report.

5.3 Verbal Update from ARAC

The Chair of ARAC provided a verbal update of the Committee meeting held on 24 September 2024 and highlighted the following:

- Committee TOR reviewed and approved;
- Committee meet on 18 October 2024 to discuss results of self-assessment based on NIAO ARAC effectiveness tool. Actions arising have been shared with the Chairman.

- Committee approved the draft annual report and accounts for 2023/24 for recommendation to the Board at the AGM; and,
- The Bi-Annual Assurance Statement was recommended to the Board for approval.

Board members noted the update.

5.4 Loans, Acquisitions, Disposals

The DC recommended the following disposal:

- Disposal of the holotype of *Mesoproctus rowlandi* Dunlop 1998, through transfer to the Museu de Paleontologia Plácido Cidade Nuvens in Brazil.

Members approved the disposal as presented.

The Board approved the loans as presented.

5. FOIs

The Board noted the FOI report.

6. Any Other Business

7. Date of Next Meeting

The Chair thanked Members and attendees, drew their attention to the date of the next meeting – 17 December 2024 – and closed the meeting at 1.12pm.

Signed:

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Date:

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17/12/24