

National Museums NI
Annual Report and Accounts
For the year ended 31 March 2026

Laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly

Under Article 10 (2) (c) and 11 of the Museums and Galleries (Northern Ireland) Order 1998

By the Department for Communities

On

6 October 2026

All enquiries related to this publication should be sent to us at National Museums NI, 153 Bangor Road, Cultra, Holywood, Co. Down, BT18 0EU or email: info@nationalmuseumsni.org.

CONTENTS

1. CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD	3
1.1 Chief Executive's Introduction	4
2. TRUSTEES' PERFORMANCE REPORT	5
2.1 Purpose, Objectives & Activities	5
2.2 Structure, Governance & Management	8
2.3 Performance Summary	11
2.4 Performance Analysis	12
2.5 Annual Review	22
2.6 Financial Review	28
2.7 Plans for Future Periods	29
3. ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT	31
3.1 Governance Statement	31
3.2 Remuneration and Staff Report	40
3.3 Sustainability Report	52
3.4 Statement of Trustees' & Chief Executive's Responsibilities	54
3.5 Assembly Accountability & Audit Report	55
3.6 The Certificate and Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General	56
4. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS	
4.1 Statement of Financial Activities	61
4.2 Balance Sheet	62
4.3 Cash Flow Statement	63
4.4 Notes to the Accounts	64

1. CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

It is my pleasure to introduce this report which highlights the impact National Museums NI has delivered during the 2025–26 financial year. As we enter the second year of our five-year Corporate Strategy, we continue to build momentum and remain focused on delivering meaningful outcomes for the people of Northern Ireland.

Our strategy is carefully aligned with the ambitions set out in the Northern Ireland Executive's Programme for Government and the key priorities of the Department for Communities. At the same time, our work contributes more broadly across government – supporting outcomes in education, health, the economy and the environment.

As a group of museums, our role extends far beyond caring for and showcasing our collections. We are proud of the social and economic impact we create – enriching lives, supporting communities and contributing to the wider region. This impact lies at the very heart of our purpose.

This year has also demonstrated the resilience of our organisation. It has been an exciting period of progress and opportunity, particularly in relation to major investment. The Reawakening the Ulster Folk Museum project has made a substantial move forward with the announcement in January of £50million funding provided by the Department for Communities and the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

The Journey Ahead project at Ulster American Folk Park has reached a significant milestone, with funding secured from the Department for Communities to unlock £20 million through the Mid South West Region Growth Deal.

These achievements are a strong testament to the confidence placed in National Museums NI to deliver transformational projects.

None of this work would be possible without the dedication and creativity of our people and volunteers, the guidance of my fellow Trustees, and the continued support of our partners and stakeholders. Collaboration remains central to everything we achieve.

This report captures just some of the many accomplishments across the year, reflecting the energy, ambition and commitment that define National Museums NI.

On behalf of the Board, I extend our sincere thanks to all who have contributed to the success of 2025–26.



Gordon Milligan, OBE
Chairman

1.1 Chief Executive's Introduction

I'm delighted to present this Annual Report and Accounts. It captures a year in which we have delivered exceptionally strong performance and meaningful impact across all areas of our organisation. Throughout 2025-26, our museums and collections have continued to demonstrate their power to connect people with stories that shape identity, belonging and understanding.

A standout moment was Ashes to Fashion - our first major fashion exhibition in almost 25 years. This deeply moving and visually compelling exhibition not only celebrated five centuries of fashion, but also told a powerful story of resilience, charting the recovery of a collection so tragically damaged during the Troubles. It is a reminder of how heritage can endure, rebuild and inspire.

We also marked 30 years of the Centre for Environmental Data and Recording (CEDaR), whose work remains critical in informing environmental policy, research and public awareness. This milestone highlighted the importance of long-standing partnerships and the collective effort required to better understand and protect our natural world.

Collaboration has been central to much of what we have achieved this year. From reinterpreting the Hand & Pen Orange Hall at the Ulster Folk Museum, in partnership with the Museum of Orange Heritage, to working with Spórtlann na hÉireann and their GaelStair project on the inspiring story of Belfast's first urban Gaeltacht, we have continued to explore identity and cultural expression with sensitivity and ambition. These partnerships not only broaden engagement but also ensure our work remains relevant and inclusive.

Improving access to our collections remains our core priority. The launch of the Harland & Wolff Ship Plans Archive, accessible to the public for the first time, represents a significant step forward. Funding from the Archives Revealed grant programme has unlocked the potential of this vast repository of maritime history and industrial heritage. Now housed in the new Cultra Collections Store, this extraordinary archive offers new opportunities for research, learning and discovery.

We entered 2026 with a significant milestone: confirmation of the funding package for the Reawakening project at the Ulster Folk Museum. This transformational investment represents a powerful vote of confidence in National Museums NI and in the vital role that culture and heritage play in society. At its heart, Reawakening is about opening up our collections - making them more visible, more accessible, and more meaningful to more people. It will enable us to expand opportunities for learning, participation and community involvement on a much greater scale.

As we look ahead, we do so with confidence and ambition. None of what we achieve is done in isolation – collaboration and partnership are fundamental to our success. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the Minister and the Department for Communities for their continued support and belief in our work.

My gratitude also goes to all our funders, partners, volunteers and to everyone who engaged with our museums this year. Finally, I want to recognise the extraordinary commitment of all of my colleagues. Their creativity, dedication and passion are the driving force behind everything we accomplish.



Kathryn Thomson
Chief Executive

2. TRUSTEES' PERFORMANCE REPORT

2.1 Purpose, Objectives & Activities

The Museums and Galleries (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 (the "Order") established a Board of Trustees for National Museums NI and provided that all property, rights and liabilities of the Trustees of the Ulster Museum and the Trustees of the Ulster Folk & Transport Museum would transfer to this Board. It repealed previous legislation affecting the Ulster Museum and the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum. The Trustees of the Ulster Museum and the Trustees of the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum were thereby abolished. National Museums NI assumed responsibility for the Ulster American Folk Park from October 1998.

A subsidiary company, National Museums Northern Ireland Enterprises Limited, was incorporated in 2008 for the purposes of carrying on non-primary purpose trading activity ancillary to the core objectives and activities of the parent charity. The company is currently non-trading.

The Order requires the Trustees to:

- care for, preserve and add to the collections;
- ensure that the collections are available to the public through exhibitions, effective interpretation and availability for research and study; and
- promote the awareness, appreciation and understanding of:
 - art, history and science;
 - the way of life and traditions of people; and
 - the migration and settlement of people;with particular reference to the heritage of Northern Ireland.

In setting the objectives and planning the activities for the year, the Trustees have given careful consideration to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's guidance on public benefit to ensure that the activities have helped to achieve the charity's purposes and provide a benefit to the beneficiaries.

The requirements of the Order meet the following charitable purposes as defined by the Charities Commission:

- The advancement of the arts, culture, heritage and science; and
- The advancement of education.

National Museums NI: Who We Are

National Museums and Galleries of Northern Ireland has adopted the operating name of National Museums NI. This operating name has been adopted and used throughout the Annual Report and Accounts.

National Museums NI comprises four museums and serves as a custodian of the National Collection of 1.4 million objects which are multidisciplinary, diverse and span all time periods, referencing Northern Ireland within, and to, the wider world.

Ulster Museum

The Ulster Museum is Northern Ireland's treasure house of the past and the present – home to rich collections of art, history and natural sciences. It is a vibrant place where friends and family enjoy knowledge and stories drawn from local and global culture. It is a place of awe and wonder, but also a safe and trusted space which allows diverse voices to be heard and difficult questions to be explored.

Ulster Folk Museum

The Ulster Folk Museum is an open-air museum – rolling hills of countryside and a bustling town filled with authentic period buildings, meticulously transported from their original settings. The Museum reveals how we have shaped our natural environment over time creating a cultural landscape rich in traditions and diversity. Its commitment to preserving and interpreting our way of life from the early 1900s connects us with values, skills and customs that would otherwise be lost.

Ulster Transport Museum

The Ulster Transport Museum tells the story of transport and social change in this part of the world since the birth of the modern era. It is the journey of tenacious, local people finding more efficient ways to travel and to transport the essentials of daily life. It is a place to discover that story and offer inspiration for the designers, engineers and adventurers of the future.

Ulster American Folk Park

Embark on an epic journey across the centuries, and the vast Atlantic Ocean, as you recreate the story of Irish emigration. The Ulster American Folk Park is a place that preserves the importance of Ulster people's contribution to establishing modern North America and tells compelling stories of Irish emigration. It seeks to alter people's perceptions about emigration through personal stories of discovery.

Our Role and Purpose

National Museums NI's role is to work with the public to explore and share compelling stories about real objects and collections in unique settings that enable all of us to gain new knowledge and understanding.

We are passionate about playing a vital role at the heart of our community, making a difference to the lives of many individuals as well as contributing to the development of a vibrant society. The collections are at the centre of everything we do, and we are committed to working in partnership with people, local communities and organisations that share our aspirations. We want to ensure that the widest possible audience has access to our national collections.

We operate for the public and national benefit, not just for this generation but for future generations and for all visitors to Northern Ireland. We facilitate a better understanding of our collective heritage and foster dialogue, curiosity and self-reflection.

Our Vision

Celebrate who we are: telling the stories of our past, challenging our present and shaping our future.

Our Mission

- Develop, manage and care for our collections to benefit current and future generations.
- Make our collections accessible to the widest possible audiences.
- Play a leading role in the economic and social wellbeing and future of this place.
- Build an organisation where people feel valued.

Our Values

- Striving for excellence – being the best we can be in everything we do; delivering excellent customer service internally and externally; and sharing our expertise.
- Being authentic – being true to our collections; having integrity in everything we do; and creating unique experiences.
- Working together – promoting teamwork; building mutually beneficial partnerships; and being receptive to others and their ideas.
- Showing respect – valuing everyone; supporting diversity; and respecting the collections.
- Being courageous – being ambitious in programming; embracing change; being brave and creative in the stories we tell; and empowering our people.

Our Journey

In recent years, spurred by our passion for our museums and collections, National Museums NI has embarked on an ambitious programme of transformation to ensure that we achieve the maximum public benefit through everything we do.

Through our transformative agenda we are actively rethinking the role of museums in our society. We want to connect people to their interests and ambitions in a deeper way. But we also recognise that societal norms are changing in terms of lifestyle, identity, the climate emergency and the economy; and that this requires us to change too.

We believe that our museums can set an example in adapting to change, encouraging debate, promoting reconciliation and supporting diversity and sustainability. We need to be able to react as well as reflect.

Public Benefit Statement

Everything we do as an organisation is measured against the benefits we aspire to bring to the users of our museums. The direct public benefit of National Museums NI is that people, individually and collectively, better understand the art, history, science and culture of Northern Ireland and its significance and relevance in wider national and global contexts. This is evidenced through the data we hold in relation to:

- visitor numbers and usage of our sites;
- the demographic profile of visitors;
- digital engagements;
- details of engagement and programmes with diverse community groups;
- specific learning programmes for formal learners, lifelong learners and communities;
- the diversity and scale of our exhibitions and public programming;
- evaluations, feedback and customer satisfaction rating of our programmes, events and exhibitions;
- membership;
- the extent of public access to our stores; and
- partnerships with academic and higher education institutions.

Beneficiaries include the people of Northern Ireland and people from outside the area who visit the museums, as well as online users of nationalmuseumsni.org

2.2 Structure, Governance & Management

As a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) accountable to the Northern Ireland Assembly through the Department for Communities (DfC), National Museums NI has a public duty to meet the highest standards of corporate governance.

Under Article 10(2) of The Museums and Galleries (Northern Ireland) Order 1998, the organisation is required to prepare a statement of accounts for each financial year in the form and on the basis determined by DfC with the approval of the Department of Finance. The financial statements for National Museums NI are required to be audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General for Northern Ireland.

Under Article 11 of The Museums and Galleries (Northern Ireland) Order 1998, the Board is required to prepare an Annual Report for DfC and lay this before the Northern Ireland Assembly.

The Annual Report and Accounts have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in Note 1 to the accounts, and complies with the Charities SORP (FRS 102), certain aspects of HM Treasury Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) in relation to the Annual Report and the disclosure requirements issued by the Department of Finance.

National Museums NI is governed by a Board of up to 15 Members who are appointed by the DfC Minister.

Appointment to the Board is by open competition with Members appointed for a term of up to five years. Members can additionally serve subsequent terms of up to a maximum of eight years subject to the approval of the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland (CPANI).

There is currently one sub-committee of the Board, the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

Following appointment, all Members attend public accountability training to support the discharge of their responsibilities for corporate governance and accountability.

Board of Trustees

During the year the following individuals served on the Board:

Mr Gordon Milligan (Chairman)
Miss Charlotte Jess (Vice Chair)
Dr Robert Whan
Mr William McMullan
Mr Keith Charlton
Mr Mark Walker
Mr Ryan Cornett
Dr Sally Montgomery OBE
Ms Therese Rafferty
Ms Fiona Ryan*
Mr Peter Osborne
Mr Shane Quinn

** Resigned on 16 April 2026*

Responsibility and delegated authority for the management of National Museums NI rests with the Executive Team, under the leadership of the Chief Executive, who is appointed by the Board of Trustees.

During the year the members of the Executive Team comprised:

- Chief Executive and Accounting Officer: Kathryn Thomson
- Director of Collections: William Blair
- Chief Operating Officer: Colin Catney
- Director of Public Engagement: Aaron Ward

Reference and Administrative Details

Name

The charity is registered under the name National Museums and Galleries of Northern Ireland. The charity has adopted the operating name National Museums NI.

Charity Number

NIC103729

Principal Address

National Museums NI, Cultra, Holywood, Co Down, Northern Ireland, BT18 0EU.

Bankers

Danske Bank Limited
Donegal Square West
Belfast
BT1 6JS

External Auditors

Northern Ireland Audit Office
106 University Street
Belfast
BT7 1EU

Internal Auditors

Ernst & Young LLP
22 Bedford Street
Belfast
BT2 7DT

Solicitors

Cleaver Fulton Rankin
50 Bedford Street
Belfast
BT2 7FW

2.3 Performance Summary

Key Performance Indicators – Overview

The following section provides a headline overview of our Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), as set out in our 2025/26 business plan, and is followed by a narrative round up of achievements in the year under each theme.

KPI	What is being measured	Target 2025/26	Actual 2025/26	Actual 2024/25
1. Physical Engagements	Total onsite visitors, school visitors, corporate visitors, volunteers & outreach engagement	715,000	714,548	736,534
2. Digital / Online Engagements	Engagement with our website and social media channels	New KPI - Set Baseline	582,201	N/A
3. Collections Access	Public access to collections that are not on display	New KPI - Set Baseline	139,381	N/A
4. Audience Impact	Measuring Impact Outcomes through Act, Learn, Enjoy	New KPI - Set Baseline	94	N/A
5. Net Promoter Score	Customer loyalty, satisfaction & advocacy	> ALVA Benchmark (+72)	+74	+78
6. Carbon Emissions	Total Scope 1 & Scope 2 emissions – Tonnes CO2 Equivalent	1,600 tCO ₂ e	1,782 tCO ₂ e	1,611 tCO ₂ e
7. Volunteering	Volunteer hours	22,000 hours	24,673 hours	22,302 hours
	Volunteer Experience - Net Promoter Score	+75	+69.9	+75.8
8. Self-Generated Income	Total admissions, grants, commercial income, donations, memberships, donated assets	£4.3m	£4.4m	£4.36m
9. Staff Engagement	Internal health of the organisation	77.0%	72.7%	74.0%

2.4 Performance Analysis

This annual Performance Report charts quarterly progress against our 2025/26 Business Plan.

The plan was developed by National Museums NI Senior Management, approved by the Board of Trustees in March 2025, and then approved by the Minister for Communities on 12 August 2025.

The KPIs were established in direct support of the stated aims within the Corporate Strategy for 2025–30.

We have set out below an evaluation of our performance during 2025/26 as follows:

Driving Engagement & Access (KPIs 1 to 3)

Method of Engagement	Total 2025/26
1. On-site Visitors (Physical Engagements)	730,155
2. Digital & Online Engagements	582,201
3. Accessing Collections and Expertise	139,381
Total	1,451,737

1. Physical Engagements

In 2025/26, National Museums NI set a target of 715,000 physical visitations, deliberately positioned below the previous year's outturn of 736,534, which had been significantly boosted by the exceptional success of the Lavery and Caravaggio exhibitions at the Ulster Museum.

As anticipated, performance during the year reflects a transition from this unusually high comparator to a more typical and sustainable baseline.

Visitor numbers in the early part of the year were lower than the prior year's exceptional levels but remained broadly consistent with longer-term trends, particularly at the Ulster Museum, indicating stable underlying demand. Across the paid-entry museums, the organisation continues to recognise that reversing longer-term declines will require sustained investment and transformation. In the short term, the strategic focus has been on stabilisation, with Quarter 1 performance broadly reflecting this approach despite external pressures.

Quarter 2, typically the peak visitor period, presented a more challenging operating environment, particularly across the paid-entry sites where visitor numbers were below target. This reflected a combination of external factors, including the ongoing cost-of-living challenges and variable weather conditions. Against this backdrop, performance at the Ulster Museum remained strong, with 269,938 visitors recorded across the first half of the year, exceeding target and demonstrating the continued strength of its free-entry offer.

Programming and exhibitions remained central to driving engagement throughout the year. A substantial programme of events across all sites, ranging from large-scale festivals and heritage events to innovative late-night and themed programming. This continued to sustain core audiences while attracting new visitors. In response to the challenging summer period, targeted initiatives such as the 'Explore More' cross-site promotion successfully encouraged repeat visits, generating over 2,200 redemptions by mid-year and demonstrating the value of data-led, audience-focused approaches.

Performance strengthened significantly in Quarter 3, driven by focused seasonal programming and targeted marketing campaigns. Halloween and Christmas activity at the Ulster Folk Museum and Ulster American Folk Park delivered particularly strong results, with campaigns generating substantial increases in ticket sales and translating into year-on-year visitor growth at both sites during key

seasonal periods. This demonstrated the effectiveness of combining compelling programming with targeted promotion to drive attendance at paid-entry attractions.

Momentum was sustained into Quarter 4, with 148,008 onsite visitors recorded during the period and a further 2,325 in-person engagements delivered through volunteering, corporate and outreach activity. The Ulster Museum continued to perform strongly, supported by the successful launch of *Ashes to Fashion*, which attracted significant interest and drew a high proportion of visitors specifically to the exhibition. Seasonal events also contributed positively, with St Patrick's Day programming at both the Ulster Folk Museum and Ulster American Folk Park delivering strong attendance and year-on-year growth, supported by favourable weather conditions.

Educational engagement remained a core component of onsite visitation and wider impact. While school visits declined in the early part of the year due to external factors such as transport costs, performance strengthened over the second half of the year. Overall, 54,329 learners engaged with education programmes across 2025/26, representing a 15.4% increase on the previous year, with consistently high satisfaction levels (achieving a Net Promoter Score of +85.7 from our teacher surveys). Both onsite activity and outreach delivery, including Museum on the Move, played an important role in extending reach and supporting access.

Overall, onsite visitor performance in 2025/26 reflects a year of adjustment, challenge and targeted recovery. While attendance moderated compared to an exceptionally strong prior year, the organisation demonstrated resilience in a difficult external environment and an ability to respond effectively through programming, partnerships and targeted marketing. Strong performance in the second half of the year, particularly across seasonal events and campaigns, provides a positive trajectory for future growth.

2. Digital & Online Engagements

In 2025/26, National Museums NI introduced a new KPI to capture the growing importance of digital and online engagement as a core component of audience reach and impact. This measure moves beyond traditional metrics such as reach, instead focusing on active engagement across digital platforms, including website usage, social media interaction and YouTube content consumption.

This approach reflects the evolving ways in which audiences interact with museums and cultural content, recognising digital channels as a key means of broadening access to collections, knowledge and programming, particularly for those unable to visit in person. It also aligns with wider sectoral practice, where meaningful interaction is increasingly prioritised over passive reach metrics. As this is the first year of reporting against this KPI, 2025/26 has been used to establish a baseline for performance, supported by ongoing benchmarking across the sector.

Digital engagement in Quarter 1 totalled 130,302, providing a strong baseline and demonstrating consistent audience appetite for digital content. Performance in Quarter 2 reflected a shift toward a more targeted and quality-driven approach, with engagement driven particularly by collections-focused content. While overall output became more selective, engagement efficiency improved, with 24,312 active engagements recorded, and September highlighting the effectiveness of fewer, more impactful and narrative-led outputs.

Quarter 3 represented a significant step change in scale and impact. Digital activity reached 522,102, generating 57,554 active engagements from around 100 pieces of content. Performance was driven by strong alignment between digital content and seasonal programming, with campaigns such as 'Ghost Stories' demonstrating the effectiveness of innovative, collections-based storytelling. This campaign delivered standout results, including a reach of 35,098 active engagements and significant audience growth, with over 8,000 new Instagram followers at the Ulster Folk Museum. This illustrates the potential of digital platforms not only to engage existing audiences but to substantially expand reach and build new audiences.

Strong performance continued into Quarter 4, demonstrating how digital storytelling can convert museum moments into measurable audience growth. Targeted and organic content linked to exhibitions and cultural moments delivered consistently high engagement. Campaigns such as St Brigid's Day and content around installations such as the Elisabeth Frink sculptures successfully drove both engagement and follower growth, while new video content using oral history recordings extended audience reach. Major digital activity linked to *Ashes to Fashion*, *Templeton 200*, *Online Art Exchange* and *Heritage Skills* collectively achieved over 100,000 engagements during the quarter, reinforcing the value of aligning digital delivery closely with exhibitions and programme activity.

Overall, National Museums NI delivered 582,201 digital and online engagements in 2025/26. As the first year of measurement, this represents a strong baseline and demonstrates a clear trajectory of growth and increasing maturity in digital capability. Performance over the year highlights a shift toward higher-quality, collections-led storytelling, increasingly effective use of campaigns and channels, and a growing ability to translate programming and collections into compelling digital content.

Digital engagement is now established as a key growth area, complementing onsite visitation and significantly extending the organisation's reach and impact. The progress made during the year provides a strong foundation for further development, with clear opportunities to build on this momentum through continued investment in content, platforms and audience insight.

3. Accessing Collections and Expertise

In 2025/26, National Museums NI introduced a new KPI to track engagement with its collections and expertise, supporting its statutory obligation to provide public access to the national collections. This measure captures a broad range of interactions, including research visits, public enquiries, loans, specialist advice and opportunities for audiences to experience collections not on general display.

This KPI reflects the organisation's role not only as a visitor attraction, but as a custodian of nationally significant collections and a provider of knowledge, expertise and access. It provides a more comprehensive understanding of impact by recognising the depth and diversity of interactions beyond traditional visitor metrics.

As with digital engagement, 2025/26 has been used to establish a baseline for performance, with total engagements of 139,381 recorded across the year. This demonstrates strong and sustained demand for access to collections and specialist expertise from a wide range of users, including researchers, students, community groups and professional partners.

In the early part of the year, access was delivered through a variety of established channels. These included digital engagement with collections, enabling audiences to explore objects not currently on display, alongside library visits, behind-the-scenes tours, talks and the public enquiry service. Together, these pathways illustrate the multiple ways in which audiences can connect with collections, both physically and remotely.

Performance in Quarter 2 demonstrated continued progress in expanding access and deepening engagement. Public tours at the Transport and Industry Museum Store welcomed over 400 visitors, while the award of an *'Archives Revealed'* grant will support increased access to the internationally significant Harland & Wolff Archive. Digital collections content also performed strongly, with objects not on display significantly outperforming those on display (17,483 engagements compared to 4,503), highlighting a clear audience appetite for discovery-led and behind-the-scenes access.

Quarter 3 built on this momentum through a combination of partnership activity and expanded digital delivery. The organisation welcomed members of the Worshipful Company of Broderers to the Cultra Collections Store, highlighting progress on externally funded work to improve access to the whitework collection and demonstrating the value of partnership in extending access. Digital activity continued

to grow, with collections-focused content generating over 41,000 active engagements, supported by continued use of online platforms to provide access to stored collections and specialist knowledge.

Quarter 4 further reinforced the importance of programming and exhibitions as key mechanisms for enabling access to collections. The launch of two major exhibitions—Ashes to Fashion at the Ulster Museum and Under the Hawthorn Tree at the Ulster American Folk Park—both drawing entirely on National Museums NI collections, demonstrated the organisation's ability to bring stored collections into public view at scale. These exhibitions highlight the central role of collections in driving engagement and underscore the importance of continued investment in interpretation and display.

In parallel, the launch of the Archives Revealed project also marked the formal activation of the Cultra Collections Store as a public-facing space, with a clear commitment to increasing access through research visits, tours and future programming. This represents a significant step forward in opening up stored collections and enhancing their accessibility for both specialist and general audiences.

Overall, performance in 2025/26 demonstrates National Museums NI's strength in facilitating meaningful access to collections and expertise, supported by a combination of physical access, digital delivery, programming and partnerships. As a newly established KPI, this provides a strong baseline and highlights clear opportunities for growth, particularly in expanding access to stored collections and further integrating collections into public programming.

Collections access is now established as a core pillar of the organisation's engagement model, complementing onsite and digital activity and reinforcing the organisation's role as a custodian of, and gateway to, Northern Ireland's national collections.

Other KPIs (4 to 9)

4. Audience Impact

In 2025/26, National Museums NI introduced a new KPI to measure Audience Impact, based on the Generic Learning Outcomes (GLOs) framework. This represents an important step forward in assessing performance, moving beyond measures of reach and volume to provide a quantitative assessment of the outcomes and value experienced by audiences.

This KPI captures the extent to which engagement with National Museums NI contributes to learning, enjoyment and inspiration, aligning with the organisation's strategic objective to deliver meaningful cultural, educational and social impact.

As this is a newly established measure, 2025/26 has been used to develop an initial evidence base, with results indicating strong and consistent performance across the year. Measurement has been undertaken through the Act, Learn and Enjoy framework, which provides a structured approach to capturing audience outcomes.

Performance across all four quarters demonstrates a consistently high level of positive audience impact. In Quarter 1, 93% of surveyed visitors reported a positive impact, increasing to 94% in Quarter 2, with this level maintained through Quarter 3 and Quarter 4. This sustained performance indicates that the organisation is delivering high-quality, meaningful experiences for its audiences across a broad range of activity.

It is recognised, however, that this remains an emerging metric, and results should be interpreted with appropriate caution. As the dataset is still developing, it is too early to draw firm conclusions or assess longer-term trends. Ongoing data collection will enable more robust analysis in future, including deeper insight into how impact varies across sites, programmes and audience groups.

Audience impact is delivered through a combination of onsite experiences, exhibitions, events, education programmes and digital engagement, each contributing to audience outcomes in different ways. The consistently strong results recorded to date reflect the effectiveness of the organisation's programming, interpretation and engagement with collections, as well as its continued focus on delivering high-quality visitor experiences.

As National Museums NI plans for the 2026/27 KPI framework, a full review of this measure will be undertaken to assess how it can be further refined and embedded within performance reporting. This will ensure that the KPI continues to provide meaningful insight and supports informed decision-making in relation to future programming, investment and audience development.

Overall, results for 2025/26 provide strong assurance that National Museums NI is delivering consistently high levels of audience impact, and establish a solid foundation for the continued development of this important measure.

5. Net Promoter Score (NPS)

In 2025/26, National Museums NI continued to monitor Net Promoter Score (NPS) as a key measure of visitor satisfaction and advocacy, reflecting the likelihood of audiences to recommend their experience to others. As a widely used metric across service industries, NPS provides a clear and meaningful indicator of overall audience sentiment.

Performance is benchmarked against the Association of Leading Visitor Attractions (ALVA) average, ensuring that results are assessed within a relevant sectoral context. The organisational target is to meet or exceed this benchmark, providing an externally validated measure of performance.

Performance across the year demonstrates consistent outperformance against the sector benchmark. In Quarter 1, National Museums NI achieved an NPS of 79, significantly exceeding the ALVA benchmark of 73. This strong performance was sustained through subsequent quarters, with scores of 76 in Quarter 2, 75 in Quarter 3, and 74 in Quarter 4, each remaining above the ALVA benchmark of 72.

While performance has shown a gradual moderation over the course of the year, the organisation has consistently remained ahead of the sector average, indicating that overall visitor satisfaction and advocacy levels remain strong. This sustained outperformance is particularly notable given the varying programme mix and external factors impacting visitor behaviour throughout the year.

These results reflect the organisation's continued focus on delivering high-quality, engaging and memorable visitor experiences, supported by strong exhibitions, programming and customer service. NPS provides an important measure of the end-to-end visitor journey, capturing how effectively these elements combine to meet audience expectations.

As with all satisfaction metrics, NPS can be influenced by factors such as seasonality, programme variation and external conditions. The observed reduction from 79 to 74 across the year will therefore be carefully monitored in 2026/27, to determine whether this represents normal variation or an emerging trend requiring further investigation.

Overall, performance in 2025/26 demonstrates that National Museums NI is delivering consistently high levels of visitor satisfaction and advocacy, with audiences valuing their experience and continuing to recommend it to others. This provides strong assurance of the quality of the organisation's offer, while also highlighting the importance of ongoing monitoring and continuous improvement.

6. Carbon Emissions

In 2025/26, National Museums NI continued to monitor and manage its carbon emissions, building on its Baseline Carbon Footprint Assessment established in 2018/19. Emissions are tracked across Scope 1 (direct emissions) and Scope 2 (electricity consumption), providing a structured framework for measuring environmental impact and progress over time.

The organisation's target is to reduce carbon emissions year-on-year, supporting wider public sector sustainability objectives and its commitment to responsible environmental stewardship. Performance in the previous year saw this target successfully exceeded, creating a strong comparator for 2025/26.

Throughout the year, a focus was placed on strengthening data collection, governance and organisational capability. As a specified public sector body, National Museums NI fulfilled its statutory requirement to submit an Adaptation Report to DAERA at the end of March, demonstrating compliance with climate risk reporting requirements and contributing to the wider evidence base on climate risk across the Northern Ireland public sector.

Early activity in the year also focused on developing a pipeline of longer-term emissions reduction initiatives. In Quarter 1, procurement commenced for a Solar Photovoltaic (PV) feasibility study, with external consultants appointed to assess the most viable opportunities for renewable energy generation across the estate. This work has the potential to inform future investment and deliver significant emissions savings over time.

Organisational capacity was further strengthened through the appointment of a dedicated Energy Officer in January on a fixed-term basis. This role supports the work of the Energy Monitoring Group, with a particular focus on improving energy efficiency, reducing consumption and embedding a more data-driven approach to emissions management.

Full-year performance indicates that total emissions were 1,782 tCO₂e against a target of 1,600 tCO₂e, representing a variance above target. This reflects an overall increase in utility consumption of 15.54% compared to the previous year, with natural gas consumption rising by 35.4% as the primary driver. This increase was largely attributable to the operation of fully operational plant at both the OSS and Ulster Folk Museum sites, representing a return to full functionality rather than a deterioration in efficiency.

The management of carbon emissions within a museum context presents particular challenges, given the requirement to maintain stable environmental conditions to protect nationally significant collections. As such, energy consumption must be carefully balanced against the need to ensure appropriate standards of collections care.

Overall, performance in 2025/26 reflects a year of increased operational demand alongside strengthened governance, capability and planning for future emissions reduction. While emissions have exceeded the annual target in the short term, the actions taken during the year, including enhanced reporting, dedicated resource and planned investment in renewable energy, provide a strong foundation for achieving longer-term reductions.

The position will be closely monitored in 2026/27, alongside the outcomes of the Solar PV feasibility study and the ongoing work of the Energy Monitoring Group, to ensure continued progress toward a more sustainable, lower-carbon operating model.

7. Volunteering

In 2025/26, National Museums NI continued to monitor volunteer engagement and satisfaction using the Net Promoter Score (NPS) methodology, recognising the important contribution that volunteers make to service delivery, visitor experience and community connections.

NPS provides a measure of volunteer advocacy and satisfaction, indicating the likelihood of volunteers to recommend their experience and continue their involvement with the organisation. Targets for the year were informed by prior year performance, with a focus on both maintaining satisfaction levels and increasing engagement.

Performance in Quarter 1 demonstrated a strong and stable position, with the NPS score meeting the target at 76. Supporting indicators further reinforced this positive position, including an increase in the sample size of respondents, growth in the number of long-serving volunteers, and a rise in advocacy, with 93% of volunteers indicating they would volunteer again, up from 87% in the previous year. These measures highlight a committed and engaged volunteer base.

In Quarter 2, the organisation set a target of achieving a 3-point increase in NPS (to 75); however, this was not met, with a score of 69.9 recorded for the period. This followed a particularly strong increase in the previous year, which had been supported by additional resource through the Jobstart scheme, and therefore reflects, in part, a normalisation of performance. Despite this, operational delivery remained strong, with volunteer contribution exceeding expectations. A quarterly target of 5,500 hours was surpassed with 5,578 hours delivered, supporting the annual target of 22,000 hours.

Performance strengthened in Quarter 3, reflecting the seasonal increase associated with high-profile programming and events. Volunteers contributed 6,739 hours, representing an increase of approximately 20% compared to the same period in the previous year, demonstrating both the commitment of the volunteer base and their importance in supporting peak operational activity.

Momentum continued into Quarter 4, supported by the full embedding of the Volunteer Coordinator role, with positive impacts already evident in volunteer engagement and experience. Overall, the organisation exceeded its annual target of 22,000 volunteer hours, achieving a total of 24,673 hours for the year. This represents a strong level of contribution and reflects both increased engagement and effective coordination of the volunteer programme.

Quarter 4 also saw continued investment in volunteer development and engagement. The organisation hosted its second Start of Season training event, attended by 62 volunteers, supporting skills development and programme readiness. In addition, a large-scale volunteer action day was delivered to mark International Day of Forests, with 60 volunteers planting 1,000 trees in partnership with The Woodland Trust and TCV, contributing directly to the organisation's Ecological Management Plan and wider environmental objectives.

Overall, performance in 2025/26 demonstrates a resilient, growing and highly engaged volunteer base, with strong levels of participation and improving engagement supported by targeted investment in coordination and development. While satisfaction scores showed some variability during the year, these are balanced by high levels of advocacy, retention and increasing contribution.

Volunteering continues to represent a core component of National Museums NI's engagement and delivery model, supporting both operational activity and wider organisational objectives, including community engagement and environmental sustainability. The programme provides a strong foundation for future growth, with clear opportunities to further enhance the volunteer experience and build on the positive momentum achieved during the year.

8. Self-Generated Income

See below reconciliation of the income KPI to the Statement of Financial Activity (SoFA).

Income Source	£m
Total reported income per SoFA	31.8
Less Grant in Aid (Capital & Revenue)	(24.5)
Less Donated Gifts in Kind	<u>(3.1)</u>
Total Non Grant in Aid Income	<u>4.2</u>
Museums & Galleries Exhibition Tax Relief	0.2
Total Self Generated Income	<u>4.4</u>

The target for Self-Generated Income in 2025/26 was £4.3m, with overall performance achieving this target across the year. Income is monitored across two primary categories: Primary Purpose & Charitable Income and Trading Income, providing a clear distinction between income generated in support of the organisation's core mission and that derived from commercial activity.

(i) Primary Purpose & Charitable Income (£3.9m actual vs £3.9m target)

This category comprises income streams closely aligned to the organisation's core purpose, including third-party grants, admissions, memberships, retail income, donations and Gift Aid, picture library sales, Museums & Galleries Exhibition Tax Relief and other miscellaneous income.

Performance for the year was in line with target, reflecting stable delivery across core income streams despite a challenging operating environment and the presence of stretching targets in key areas.

(ii) Ancillary Income (£0.5m actual vs £0.4m target)

This category comprises catering franchise income and space hire, representing the organisation's commercial trading activity.

Performance exceeded target, with £0.5m achieved against a target of £0.4m, demonstrating strong delivery across commercial income streams and the effectiveness of initiatives to maximise income from the estate and visitor offer.

Overall Income & Trading Performance

Performance in the early part of the year was encouraging, with strong commercial delivery in Quarter 1 supporting progress toward annual targets. Retail and catering performed particularly well, driven by successful Easter programming, resulting in high levels of customer conversion and improved spend per head of visitor. Admissions income was supported by a more strategic pricing approach, including measured price increases and tiered event pricing, underpinning delivery of ambitious targets.

Quarter 2 built on this momentum, with the embedding of new systems delivering clear performance benefits. The introduction of the Digitickets system supported admissions income, particularly through improved Gift Aid on Entry, increasing customer opt-in and overall yield. The rollout of the Artifax system enhanced the conversion and management of space hire activity, while targeted initiatives such as the 'Explore More' promotion generating incremental income.

Strong individual events, including *Ulster Museum Late* and *Cultra Hill Climb*, demonstrated the effectiveness of linking programming with commercial opportunities. A renewed focus on donations, supported by staff engagement and increased use of cashless devices, also contributed to improved performance.

Performance strengthened further in Quarter 3, driven by peak seasonal trading and Christmas activity. Admissions income improved following strong Christmas performance, supported by effective event pricing, while donations and Gift Aid remained on budget. Commercial performance was particularly strong, with space hire reaching 99% of its full-year target by Quarter 3, driven by high uptake of corporate Christmas packages. Retail performance also remained robust, with sales exceeding £910k, placing the organisation on track to approach £1m in annual retail income.

Performance was sustained into Quarter 4, concluding the year with overall income targets achieved. Admissions income reached £1.37m (83% of a £1.66m target), reflecting the continued impact of ambitious target-setting, but supported by strong event performance, including St Patrick's Day, which generated £25k net admissions income alongside additional secondary spend.

Commercial income streams continued to perform strongly, with venue hire achieving £252k (103% of target), and retail delivering £1m in total sales (96% of target), with standout success from new product lines and exhibitions such as *Ashes to Fashion*, which exceeded retail targets within the first six weeks of trading. Donations performance was also strong, achieving £119k against a target of £123k, while Gift Aid exceeded target at £61k.

Overall, performance in 2025/26 demonstrates a strong and resilient self-generated income position, with overall targets achieved through a combination of stable core income and strong commercial overperformance. While some income streams, particularly admissions and retail, operated against stretching targets and were slightly below full delivery, this was offset by exceptional performance in space hire, catering and targeted commercial initiatives.

The year highlights the importance of diversified income streams, effective pricing strategies, investment in systems and alignment between programming and commercial activity. These factors have enabled the organisation to maintain financial resilience in a challenging environment and provide a strong platform for further income growth in future years.

9. Staff Engagement

In 2025/26, National Museums NI continued to monitor staff engagement through its annual *Pulse Survey*, which captures employee feedback across nine key questions relating to the organisation, line management and team environment. This provides a structured measure of how colleagues experience the organisation and supports the development of a positive and effective workplace culture.

Staff engagement is a key indicator of organisational health, reflecting levels of motivation, commitment and connection among employees. The organisation continues to place importance on listening to staff feedback and using survey insights to inform improvement and support decision-making.

The Pulse Survey for 2025/26 was completed in October and saw a significant increase in participation, with 56% of colleagues taking part, representing a 13 percentage point increase on the previous year. This improvement enhances the robustness of the dataset and provides a more representative view of staff experience across the organisation.

The composite engagement score for the year was 72.7%, broadly consistent with the previous year's score of 73.9%. This indicates a stable level of engagement, maintaining the progress achieved in recent years. Over a longer-term period, the organisation has seen a positive upward trajectory in

engagement, with scores increasing from 67 to a peak of 77, demonstrating sustained improvement in organisational culture.

While the current result represents a modest moderation from peak performance, engagement levels remain strong relative to the original baseline. As with all engagement measures, results can be influenced by factors such as operational pressures, organisational change and wider external conditions, and these will be considered in further analysis.

Alongside survey measurement, a range of initiatives were delivered during the year to support employee engagement, communication and organisational alignment. Notably, the Staff Conference “*Connecting People with Purpose*”, held in September at the Ulster Transport Museum, brought together approximately 300 colleagues. The event reinforced organisational priorities and strategic direction, featuring external speakers and partner panels aligned to the organisation’s Corporate Strategy impact areas, and was introduced by the Minister, highlighting the wider public value of the organisation’s work.

In Quarter 4, following the survey results, team-level action plans were developed across the organisation and presented at Senior Management Team level, ensuring a coordinated and accountable approach to addressing feedback. In addition, an extended internal briefing programme was delivered across all sites, engaging colleagues from a wide range of departments, including operations, curatorial and audience development, with a particular focus on organisational priorities such as environmental sustainability. This programme will continue into 2026/27, supporting ongoing communication, engagement and alignment across the workforce.

These actions demonstrate a clear commitment to closing the feedback loop, ensuring that staff input leads to tangible organisational responses and continuous improvement.

Asset Management Strategy

In addition and in support of the Business Plan and Corporate Strategy, and recognising the significant estate we manage, there is an Asset Management Strategy and Delivery Plan 2022-27 in place.

Our museums are Here for Good - we must ensure they are protected for future generations, and we must continue therefore to work towards investing in them to address our maintenance funding gap, improve our storage estate, continue on our journey of transformative capital investment while working towards achieving net zero carbon emissions.

It is important to note, that whilst this strategy is progressive in both tone and ambition, National Museums NI is ever mindful that it has been entrusted with the responsibility of protecting, preserving and promoting a number of unique land and property assets. For this reason, all actions arising from the strategy must ensure the unique beauty and ecological value of the estate is preserved and enhanced, and where appropriate presented as an asset that can improve and support the customer experience.

2.5 Annual Review

We're on a mission to amplify the impact of our museums and collections.

Our Corporate Strategy 2025-2030 is focussing on the difference we can make in helping to understand and deal with the challenges we face in society today, as we shape a better future together.

We will make our greatest impact in four key areas:

- Identity
- Peacebuilding
- Environment
- Innovation

In delivering actions against these priorities, we will be:

A dynamic forum for open-minded and innovative discussion.

A confident voice for equality, reconciliation and sustainability.

A powerful catalyst for positive change in society.

The Year in Summary

714,548 visitors.

582,201 engagements with our website and social media channels.

24,673 volunteer hours from 300 volunteers.

Collections Online reached 48,390 published records this year, significantly expanding public access to our collections.

35,692 children and young people participated in education visits across our museums.

139,381 people had access to collections not on display through stores visit, collections research, the library, and specific online collections content.

756 people participated in our Community Wellbeing Programme at Ulster Folk Museum aimed at hard-to-reach audiences and breaking down barriers to participation.

Identity

Creating spaces where cultures are visible and respected

- Working in partnership with the Museum of Orange Heritage we were able to reinterpret the original Hand & Pen Orange Hall exhibit building at the Ulster Folk Museum.
- Embodying the 'Reawakening' spirit of fresh thinking and new connections, a new event at the Ulster Folk Museum celebrated the customs and traditions of the Midsummer Solstice or Oíche Tine Cnámh. This was delivered in partnership with An Droichead.
- Bridges to China was a partnership project with the Chinese Welfare Association and Queen's University Belfast. The Chinese community researched, shared their expertise and understanding and creatively responded to Chinese objects in the collection. The project fostered community partnerships for further collaboration and community engagement.
- Objects from the collection were taken to Sandy Row Orange Hall in September for a special 'Ulster Day' community event.
- In the 1960s a group of pioneering young couples in Belfast took the bold decision to establish Ireland's first urban Gaeltacht at Shaws Road. Their determination, creativity and community spirit laid the foundations for a revival of the Irish language that continues to this day. 'How Do You Create a Community? The Inspiring Story of Belfast's First Urban Gaeltacht', an exhibition developed in partnership with Spórtlann na hÉireann's GaelStair project, explores one of the most remarkable linguistic and cultural revivals in modern European history.

Peacebuilding

Encouraging conversations and explorations that support lasting peace

- In August we acquired a number of objects for the Troubles collection. These included gifted banners of the Hunger Strike Commemorative parade, which took place in West Belfast, from the National Graves Association Belfast. Tom Hartley also donated contemporary artworks by Shan Andrews. The artworks feature a range of imagery and motifs relating to both contemporary issues and culture in West Belfast and material relating to community experiences during The Troubles.
- The Conflict and Legacy Interpretive Network is a collaboration between National Museums NI, the Museum of Free Derry/Bloody Sunday Trust and Healing Through Remembering. A new display in the Troubles and Beyond gallery at the Ulster Museum was marked a new phase of development with funding from The National Lottery Heritage Fund to continue its peacebuilding work.
- In June, the Ulster Museum marked a significant moment in post-conflict storytelling with the debut of Akihiko Okamura: The Memories of Others in Belfast - a powerful showcase that reflected on the conflict through the lens of photography. This exhibition completed a compelling trio of Troubles-related exhibitions which ran side by side and also included The Troubles and Beyond exhibition as well as the final display from Belfast Archive Project which spotlighted local photography legends Bill Kirk, Frankie Quinn and James Bell, exploring the stories behind pivotal moments in Northern Ireland's past. These three exhibitions on show for visitors at the one time, highlighted the importance of museums in post-conflict Northern Ireland.

"I was profoundly moved by this exhibition. I have never been brought to tears in a museum before today. Thank you for the work you do."

Visitor to Troubles and Beyond exhibition, Ulster Museum

Environment

Using our collections and spaces to promote environmental action

- Power Plants aims to empower people to take action for biodiversity and heritage through creativity, participation, and storytelling. A co-production strand of Power Plants was tested through Reimagining the Garden, a collaborative community engagement programme delivered in partnership with National Museums NI, The Conservation Volunteers, CEDaR and the Nerve Centre. Running June to September 2025, the programme revitalised the historic Walled Garden at the Ulster Transport Museum through conservation volunteering, creative learning, and public participation.

117 volunteers participated across 9 volunteer sessions, transforming the garden through habitat creation, path clearing, and biodiversity monitoring.

Strong outcomes across environmental impact, youth development and community wellbeing, with 94–100% of participants reporting positive learning and wellbeing gains

Source: Power Plants Development Stage Evaluations

- We marked the 30th anniversary of the Centre for Environmental Data and Recording (CEDaR), celebrating its long-standing role in advancing environmental monitoring and public engagement across Northern Ireland. The anniversary conference brought together researchers, environmental professionals and volunteers to celebrate CEDaR's many achievements over three decades. A key theme of the day was "Museums as Catalysts for Environmental Action" highlighting how CEDaR's important work aligns with our Corporate Strategy which positions museums as active contributors to sustainability and environmental awareness.

"CEDaR's 30-year contribution has shown the value of long-term commitment and collaboration in understanding how our environment is changing. Funded through Carrier Bag Levy, CEDaR is vital in helping to tackle the challenges before us, bringing partners together to ensure science is informing environmental priorities across Northern Ireland."

Andrew Muir MLA, Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), November 2025

- Launch of a new Co-Farm offers new opportunities for active learning and volunteering at the Ulster Folk Museum – a partnership with Holywood Transition Towns.

255 volunteer engagements with our Co-Farm during 2025-26.

Innovation

Equipping a new generation with skills, confidence and creativity

- Ashes to Fashion, our first major fashion exhibition featuring our own costume and textiles collection in almost a quarter of a century, opened in February. This is a collection with a remarkable story. In 1976, during the height of the Troubles, it was devastated by a fire at Malone House caused by two firebombs, which resulted in the permanent loss of around 10,000 objects. The exhibition explores the impact of this loss, the 50-year recovery process that followed, and the wider significance of fashion as a record of identity, cultural credibility and innovation.

97% exhibition helped visitors appreciate importance of preserving collections for future generations

- The Harland & Wolff Ship Plans Archive was made accessible to the public for the first time. Now housed in the new Cultra Collections Store located at the Ulster Folk Museum, the archive encompasses a variety of ship plans detailing the construction of ships that were built by the Belfast-based shipyard for over a century. With funding from the Archives Revealed grant programme, a major project to catalogue the vast repository entitled 'From Drawing Board to Slipway' is underway.

"From Drawing Board to Slipway will unlock the hidden histories of Belfast's heritage in shipbuilding. The public will have an unprecedented opportunity to experience incredible stories of design innovation from this vast repository of maritime history and a shipbuilding goliath who designed and built some of the world's largest, most luxurious, and most iconic ships..."

Siobhan McLaughlin, Project Archivist, National Museums NI

- Art of the Possible exhibition opened at the Ulster Museum marking ten years of collecting international applied art created by some of the most important artists working in glass, ceramics, silver, metalwork, jewellery and wood today. This exhibition highlights the Ulster Museum's place as one of the leading centres for applied art in the UK and Ireland and seeks to inspire learning and creativity
- Mini Wonders – Early Years Innovation in Museums, a new innovative research and development programme that aims to explore how museum spaces can support child and family development, was launched at Ulster Museum following a successful pilot programme. Mini Wonders is engaging a wider range of families to use and visit museums more often and support early child development by enhancing parent-child interactions and support parents with their children's social-emotional development.

Mini Wonders are: 375 engagements with 26 family units from participating Sure Start groups (from September 2025 to June 2026)

"Just being with other parents in a safe place and with our children to spend nice time together doing crafts... it's such a lifeline. It's such a lifesaver... We could talk to other parents, when you can learn things or just like be reminded of things. It's just great, and that's what we kind of need."

Caregiver participant of Mini Wonders at Ulster Museum

Source: Mini Wonders Cohort 3 Research Insights August 2025, Nesta

- Our growing volunteering programme continues to make a profound difference - not only enriching the visitor experience but also fostering connection, wellbeing, and a sense of shared purpose among those who give their time so generously.

85% of our volunteers agree that volunteering with National Museums NI has a positive impact on their wellbeing.

A highlight this year was our volunteer action day to mark National Day of Forest. This was delivered in partnership with The Conservation Volunteers and Woodland Trust. 1,000 native species trees were planted in a single morning by 60 volunteers.

Collections

National Museums NI has a continuing responsibility to develop, preserve and enhance the national collection. This work is underpinned by our statutory duties and the standards required to maintain Museum Accreditation. Our focus remains on ensuring the collection reflects the diverse stories of Northern Ireland, and its connections to the wider world, and is accessible and meaningful for both present and future generations.

Identity

This Hakka card game, 客家牌 is a card game that is played predominantly by today's Hakka Chinese. They learnt how to play the game from elderly Hakka neighbours in Belfast who regularly play it together. The owner of the card game was a participant in the Bridges to China project with the Chinese Welfare Association, Avila Media and Queen's University Belfast.

Peacebuilding

Belfast's now-iconic black taxis began operating due to the collapse of the city's public transportation provision in certain parts of Belfast following frequent attacks on buses. The solution was the introduction of black taxi cabs by the local communities in north and west Belfast. The taxis operated in the same way as a bus, collecting multiple individuals all sharing the one vehicle while the driver dropped them off at their respective destinations. For decades, the taxis were a means of transportation around a divided city in conflict.

Environment

A single specimen of the invasive Asian hornet (*Vespa velutina*) that was recently collected for the first time in Northern Ireland, following the discovery of a nest in October 2025. This is a concern as Asian hornets' prey upon our native invertebrates. The acquisition of this specimen demonstrates the importance of Natural Sciences collections for recording and tracking environmental change over time.

Innovation

The collection of patchwork bedcovers at Ulster Folk Museum is recognised as one of the most significant in the British Isles, with examples of national and international significance. It includes several late 1800s bedcovers pieced in the mosaic or template method; the geometric fabric pieces meticulously stitched over papers.

A special thank you to our funders and donors for their vital support: Department for Communities, Art Fund, Acceptance in Lieu and all the individuals who have helped to enrich our collections through their thoughtfulness and generosity.

Collections Care

The Flying Figures

Elisabeth Frink's much-loved Flying Figures - also known as the Airborne Men - were installed on the outside of the Ulster Museum building, marking their first appearance since being gifted by Ulster Bank in 2023.

First unveiled in 1964, the striking aluminium sculptures were commissioned for Ulster Bank's new bank building on Shaftesbury Square, Belfast by architects Houston & Beaumont and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, quickly becoming an iconic landmark in the city.

Removing the sculptures from public view allowed extensive documentation, technical analysis and cleaning work to take place improving our ability to care for them into the future.

Their installation on the Ulster Museum has given people the chance to reconnect with one of the city's most-loved artworks, whilst strengthening our commitment to preserving and showcasing exceptional artworks that hold cultural and historical significance.

Murals

A comprehensive programme of assessment, research and conservation has significantly advanced the safeguarding of 46 large-scale Loyalist and Republican murals this year. Detailed condition assessments informed the relocation of 39 murals to an adapted storage space, while a purpose-built treatment tent was constructed to enable the safe, controlled drying of seven priority murals, creating the conditions necessary for successful conservation treatment.

Alongside the technical conservation programme, engagement with community stakeholders ensured treatment plans reflected stakeholder requirements and supported future loan opportunities, helping to secure both the physical preservation and public accessibility of this important collection.

Library & Archives

During the year we launched a 'Browse Our Archives' online search function – making around 22,000 books and 270 archival collections digitally accessible for the first time. The Ulster Folklife (1955-2015) was a flagship publication of the Ulster Folk Museum used in its development over six decades. Ulster Folklife captured the leading research of the museum's curators and captured their knowledge of our collections. This journal collection, around 6,600 pages over 58 issues, was also digitised and is now searchable on our website.

Throughout the year, Library & Archives colleagues promoted and showcased our collections through a programme of outreach activities, including public tours and community talks.

Thank you message

Looking back on the past year, we are deeply thankful for the many people and organisations who support and inspire our work.

We thank all our funding partners, particularly the Department for Communities as our principal supporter. We also recognise the invaluable contributions of our stakeholders, partners, Trustees, staff, members and volunteers.

To our visitors - thank you for your curiosity and for bringing life to our museums as inclusive places for everyone to enjoy.

Thank you.

2.6 Financial Review

Financial Objective

National Museums NI's financial objective is to achieve a sustainable financial position at year end.

Going Concern

The Board is satisfied that the organisation is a going concern on the basis that it has a reasonable expectation that it will continue in operation for the foreseeable future. The financial statements are therefore prepared on a going concern basis.

Financial Results

In the financial year to 31 March 2026, National Museums NI reported net income before tax of £2.2m (2024/25: reported net expenditure before tax £2.1m).

The total income for the year was £31.8m, an increase of £6.3m from 2024/25 (£25.5m). This includes £2.7m of capital funding.

Total expenditure was £29.6m compared to £27.6m in the prior year.

Depreciation and amortisation of £4.8m was charged in the 2025/26 year (2024/25: £4.6m), an increase resulting from an increased asset base.

The organisation retains significant reliance on Grant in Aid for its principal source of funding, largely from recurrent grants. In 2025/26, the Department for Communities provided 77% of the total income through allocated recurrent and capital grants (2024/25: 75%).

Reserves

National Museums NI has accumulated reserves of £108.8m (2024/25: £104.4m). The policy on reserves is included in Note 1, Accounting Policies, to the accounts. Restricted reserves total £28.8m (2024/25: £25.4m) and unrestricted reserves total £80.0m (2024/25: £79.0m). Included in unrestricted reserves are revaluation reserves totalling £52.9m (2024/25: £51.5m) which have accumulated through revaluations on land and buildings.

Within unrestricted reserves, National Museums NI has two designated funds, the Board reserve and the Board Capital reserve with funds totalling £1.7m (2024/25: £1.7m). The funds have been designated for purposes that are for the public benefit and related to either the advancement of education, the advancement of the arts, culture, heritage or science or a combination of both. The reserves total after taking out designated and restricted reserves was £78.3m (2024/25: £77.3m). The organisation had cash balances totalling £4.0m (2024/25: £2.2m).

Liquidity & Credit Risk

In 2025/26, £24.5m (77%) of National Museums NI gross income derived from funding received from the Department for Communities (2024/25: 75%).

The remaining non-Departmental operating expenditure was financed from self-generated income, which tends to be more seasonal in nature compared to Grant in Aid. National Museums NI is therefore exposed to some liquidity risk.

National Museums NI has credit policies and procedures in place and currently does not extend material credit facilities. National Museums NI is not therefore exposed to any material credit risk.

Payment Performance

The Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998, which came into force on 1 November 1998, requires organisations, in the absence of agreement to the contrary, to make payments to suppliers within 30 days of either the provision of goods and services or the date on which the invoice was received. The target set by the Treasury for payment to suppliers within 30 days is 95%.

During the accounting period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026, National Museums NI paid 99% of its invoices within 30 days (2024/25: 95%). The organisation incurred no interest charges in respect of late payment for this period.

The Northern Ireland Executive is committed to paying suppliers as quickly as possible, within 10 working days. During the accounting period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026, National Museums NI paid 80% of its invoices within 10 days (75% in 2024/25).

The improvement in prompt payment performance is on account of the revision and enhancement of procedures following the implementation of a new Finance System.

Land and Buildings

Land and buildings were subject to a full valuation by Land and Property Services (LPS) on 31 March 2026.

National Museums NI's estate as at 31 March 2026 consists of land and buildings valued at £74.1m (2024/25: £74.7m).

Financial

Net assets at 31 March 2026 were £108.8m (2025/26: £104.4m).

2.7 Plans for Future Periods

The Corporate Strategy (2025-30) was developed during 2024/25 and was launched in April 2025.

It sets out a desire to reframe how we want people to think about museums and also lays down a new vision for museums in which they are dynamic institutions in the service of society.

The strategy is focused on four key impact areas, that directly support the missions laid out within the Northern Ireland Executive's Programme for Government (2024-2027). These four impact areas are as follows:

1. Identity: Championing diversity & respect
2. Peacebuilding: Facilitating understanding & reconciliation
3. Environment: Addressing the climate emergency
4. Innovation: Supporting sustainable economic growth

In delivering actions against these priorities, our museums will be a dynamic forum for open-minded and innovative discussion, a confident voice for equality, reconciliation and sustainability, and a powerful catalyst for positive change in society.

Our new Corporate Strategy officially received Ministerial support and approval on 15 April 2025.



G Milligan
Chairman of the Board of Trustees
Date: 22 September 2026



K Thomson
Chief Executive
Date: 22 September 2026

3 ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

The purpose of the accountability section of the annual report is to meet key accountability requirements to the Assembly. The requirements of the Accountability Report are based on the matters required to be dealt with in a Directors' Report, as set out in Chapter 5 of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 and Schedule 7 of SI 2008 No 410 and in a Remuneration Report, as set out in Chapter 6 of the Companies Act 2006 and SI 2013 No. 1981. The requirements of the Companies Act are adapted for the public sector.

3.1 Governance Statement for the Year Ended 31 March 2026

Governance Framework

National Museums NI is a Non-Departmental Public Body established under the Museums and Galleries (NI) Order 1998 and sponsored by the Department for Communities (DfC).

National Museums NI is governed by a Board of up to 15 Members and sub-committees that report to the Board. Members are appointed by the Minister. The Board has ultimate responsibility for directing the affairs of National Museums NI and for fulfilling the functions set out in the Museums and Galleries (NI) Order 1998.

The Accounting Officer is designated by DfC's Accounting Officer and has responsibility for the day-to-day management of National Museums NI and is supported and challenged by the Board.

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a satisfactory level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives; it can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an on-going process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of National Museums NI's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and their impact should they be realised and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically. The system of internal control has been in place in National Museums NI for the year ended 31 March 2026 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and accounts and accords with Department of Finance (DoF) guidance.

The governance framework also includes a number of additional elements that contribute to the effective governance of the organisation. These comprise:

- Board Standing Orders;
- Board Operating Framework;
- Terms of Reference for Committees;
- Partnership Agreement between DfC and National Museums NI;
- The Corporate Strategy 2025-30 and Business Plan 2025/26;
- The Performance Excellence Framework;
- The Risk Management Framework;
- The Procurement Policy & Guidance
- The Data Protection Policy;
- Raising Concerns (Whistleblowing) Policy; and
- Anti-Fraud Policy and Fraud Response Plan.

Compliance with Corporate Governance Code

National Museums NI, in so far as it is relevant for a Non-Departmental Public Body, complies with the Corporate Governance Code.

Process for Identifying and Managing Conflicts of Interests

National Museums NI has a 'Managing Conflicts of Interest and Representation on Outside Bodies Policy'. The purpose of the policy document is to set out the principles for minimising and managing potential conflicts of interest and, in so doing, provide protection to National Museums NI and its staff from reputational damage and other liabilities. Board Members and employees of National Museums NI are required to disclose areas of actual, potential or perceived conflict with the interests of National Museums NI. There are codes of conduct for both employees and Board Members which require adherence to the Seven Principles of Public Life as defined by the Committee of Standards in Public Life.

A Register of Interests is maintained for Board members and the Executive Team and is available for inspection at the principal address and on the National Museums NI website nationalmuseumsni.org. Appropriate action is taken in line with the policy where any conflicts or perceived conflict arise.

Related party transactions are disclosed in note 22 of the financial accounts.

Review of Effectiveness

Accounting Officer

As Accounting Officer, I have responsibility for maintaining a sound system of internal governance that supports the achievement of the aims and objectives of the National Museums NI. I also have responsibility for the propriety and regularity of the public finances allocated to National Museums NI and for safeguarding public funds and assets, in accordance with the responsibilities assigned. As Accounting Officer, I have responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness of the system of internal control. My review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control is informed by the work of the Internal Auditors; the managers within National Museums NI who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework; and comments made by the External Auditors in their management letter and other reports. I have been advised on the implications of the result of my review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control by the Board and the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, and plan to address weaknesses and ensure continuous improvement of the system is in place.

In my role as Accounting Officer, I function with the support of the Board of the National Museums NI ("the Board"). This includes highlighting to the Board specific business risks and, where appropriate, the measures that could be employed to manage these risks.

At meetings of the Board the following standing agenda items are addressed (either directly or through reporting from the sub-committee(s)):

- Minutes of Previous Meeting;
- Strategic Priorities;
- Chief Executive Update;
- Progress Against Budget;
- Progress against business and corporate plan and risks in achieving stated objectives; and
- Risk Management.

The Board operates as a collegiate forum under the leadership of the Chair. It ensures that the appropriate strategic planning processes are in place and that there is effective operational management of their implementation. Day-to-day operational matters are my responsibility and that of senior colleagues. Each Board Member participates in the high-level corporate decision-making process; contributes to the operation of corporate governance arrangements within the organisation; and supports me in my roles of Chief Executive and Accounting Officer.

As Chief Executive, I am responsible for agreeing the agenda for Board meetings with the Chair and ensuring the Chair and Board Members are provided with timely information to support full discussion and decision-making at each meeting. The Board receives written reports on key strategic areas and on the status of delivery against Business Plan objectives. The quality and timeliness of the information and reports has been acceptable to the Board.

I meet formally with our Sponsor Branch in the Department for Communities regularly as set out in the engagement plan section of the Partnership Agreement. At the formal partnership meetings, National Museums NI is assessed against its delivery of the Ministerial and Departmental priorities as agreed in the Corporate Strategy and Museums Policy as well as the review of the management of risk within National Museums NI.

The Board

The Board takes an objective long-term view of the business of the organisation, leading its strategic planning process and supporting and challenging the Chief Executive as Accounting Officer in setting and meeting its corporate aims and objectives.

The key aspects of the Board's role include:

- Setting the strategic direction for the organisation, including its vision, values and strategic objectives;
- Overseeing the implementation of its Corporate and Business Plans, monitoring performance against objectives and supervising its budget;
- Leading and overseeing the process of change and encouraging innovation, to enhance the organisation's capability to deliver;
- Overseeing the strategic management of staff, finance, information and physical resources, including setting training and health and safety priorities; and
- Establishing and overseeing the implementation of the corporate governance arrangements including risk management.

The Board has delegated to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee responsibility for an assessment of the effectiveness of the system of internal control.

As part of their induction, all Board Members attend training in respect of their responsibilities for corporate governance and accountability of the organisation.

In order to manage any conflicts or potential conflicts of interest, the Chairman asks those present at the start of each meeting if they are conflicted with any of the agenda items.

For further information on any actual or potential conflicts arising at National Museums NI board meetings, minutes are available for review on the National Museums NI website nationalmuseumsni.org.

Board Membership and Attendance

During 2025/26 the following served as Board Members:

	Attendance at Board meetings	Maximum Possible in Year	Percentage Attendance
Mr Gordon Milligan (Chairman)	8	8	100%
Miss Charlotte Jess (Vice Chair)	8	8	100%
Dr Robert Whan	6	8	75%
Mr William McMullan	8	8	100%
Mr Keith Charlton	7	8	88%
Mr Mark Walker	8	8	100%
Mr Ryan Cornett	5	8	63%
Dr Sally Montgomery OBE	8	8	100%
Ms Therese Rafferty	6	8	75%
Ms Fiona Ryan*	4	8	50%
Mr Peter Osborne	6	8	75%
Mr Shane Quinn	7	8	88%

** Resigned on 16 April 2026*

The Board receives reports covering key performance indicators, business plan performance, financial performance, capital programme activity, loans (to and from the organisation) for agreement and minutes from each of the sub-committees. The Board has assessed its effectiveness and has identified areas where it can improve. These areas include induction for new Board Members, committee membership, advocacy and conduct at meetings.

Appointments to the Board are for a period of up to five years.

Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) met four times during the year to review reports on risk management, the control environment, matters arising from internal and external audits, progress on the implementation of audit recommendations, and to review and endorse the Annual Report and Accounts to the Board to approve.

The Committee discharged its oversight responsibilities in accordance with the Terms of Reference and it has the requisite skills (including governance, financial reporting, risk management, auditing, strategic planning and understanding the core functions of the organisation) to discharge its responsibilities effectively.

During the year the following Members attended meetings of the ARAC as follows:

	Attendance at ARAC meetings	Maximum Possible in Year	Percentage Attendance
Mr Mark Walker (Chair)	4	4	100%
Mr William McMullan	3	4	75%
Mr Keith Charlton*	1	2	50%
Mr Ryan Cornett	2	4	50%
Dr Sally Montgomery OBE	3	4	75%
Mr Shane Quinn	3	4	75%
Ms Therese Rafferty**	2	2	100%

* Resigned from committee on 16 Sept 2025 (as per AGM)

** Appointed to committee on 16 Sept 2025 (as per AGM)

In addition to its members, the following normally attend the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee:

- The Accounting Officer
- The Chief Operating Officer
- The Director of Collections
- The Head of Finance & Governance
- The Health & Safety Manager
- Representative(s) from the NI Audit Office & its contractor for external audit services, Sumer NI
- Representative from the Department for Communities
- Internal Audit

Business Planning and Risk Management

Business Plan

The 2025/26 Business Plan was approved by Trustees at the March 2025 Board meeting.

Risk Management

The Risk Management Framework sets out the process whereby the National Museums NI methodically identifies, assesses and responds to the risks attached to its activities. It assigns responsibility and accountability for risk management; defines the processes for risk review and reporting; describes a format for the organisation's corporate risk register; and explains the organisation's approach to training in risk management.

Each risk is allocated a risk rating based on an evaluation of its impact and likelihood in two stages:

1. Assessment of inherent risk before any controls are identified.
2. Assessment of residual risk taking account of current risk response and controls and the required action plan.

Residual risk ratings are compared to the risk appetite and if the controls are judged to be inadequate to manage risk within the risk appetite, then further action is identified to strengthen these controls.

Any strategic and/or key risks are escalated and included within the Corporate Risk Register. The Corporate Risk Register identifies risks and agreed actions and allocates responsibility for those to a risk owner. The Register is reviewed regularly by the Executive and Senior Management Team and quarterly by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and reported to the Board at each meeting.

In addition to the Corporate Risk Register, Internal Project Boards have developed project risk registers with project Senior Responsible Owners responsible for risk management. The Senior Management Team are fully involved in the continual review and management of risks and are trained and equipped to manage risk in a way appropriate to their authority and duties. The Internal Auditors provide advice and guidance on good practice in the management of risk throughout the audit process. Changes in the risk environment during the year have been dealt with by considering the impact of the risks assessed and taking action to manage the risks.

During the year the following key strategic risks relating to business objectives were identified, and presentations made to Trustees to provide context and greater understanding of specific emerging risks:

1. The external macro environment creates significant uncertainty, volatility & inertia **(risk now closed with residual risk covered in other operationally managed risks);**
2. Fulfilment of Statutory Obligations are placed at risk due to unaddressed structural underfunding **(risk now closed);**
3. Approval and investment is not secured to deliver the major capital programme **(risk now moved to major capital project risk register);**
4. A cybersecurity event occurs on National Museums NI systems which allows exposure or loss of data;
5. Lack of agility and flexibility within CPD (Construction and Procurement Delivery) inhibits business responsiveness and effectiveness;
6. Necessary investment and approvals are not secured to deliver the annual capital programme **(risk level now changed to operational);**
7. Injury and illness from exposure to collections hazards;
8. Decline in visitors to paid entry sites;
9. Carbon reduction targets and sustainability action plan actions are not delivered;
10. The conservation heritage of our built estate is not addressed effectively through annual capital and revenue funding to prevent further deterioration;
11. A breach in security leads to a loss or damage to collections and reputation;
12. Not achieving a balanced budget in 2026/27; and
13. The maintenance requirement of our estate is not sufficiently supported through the revenue budget;

In 2025/26 there were no instances where the Committee determined that risk(s) lay outside the organisation's risk appetite and were thus unacceptable. The Board continue to review corporate risks and provide their views on a quarterly basis.

Fraud Risk and Information Risk

The management and control of the risk of fraud is set out in the Anti-Fraud Policy and Fraud Response Plan. Further related guidance is provided in the Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy, the Conflicts of Interest Policy, the Staff Code of Conduct and the Raising Concerns Policy.

The Anti-Fraud Policy and Fraud Response Plan were updated in March 2024 to continue promotion of a culture within the organisation which raises awareness of the risks and consequences of fraud, and incorporates all relevant fraud related guidance and good practice. The plan is reviewed every three years.

There were no gifts provided to any parties during the year.

There were no personal data related incidents during the year.

There were no fraud incidents or attempts during the year.

Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2022

National Museums NI, has continued to comply with guidelines and principles of the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland (CCNI) and will comply with the resultant Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2022.

Disclosure of Audit Information

So far as the Accounting Officer is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the Board's auditors are unaware. The Accounting Officer has taken all necessary steps to make herself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the Board's auditors are aware of that information.

Important events since the end of the financial year

There were no events since the end of the financial year requiring disclosure.

Northern Ireland Audit Office

The Northern Ireland Audit Office completed the audit of the 2025/26 financial statements in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs) issued by the Financial Reporting Council; with Practice Note 10 'Audit of Financial Statements of Public Sector Entities in the United Kingdom'; and with the Audit Strategy presented to the Audit Committee in March 2026.

Sources of Independent Assurance

National Museums NI draws assurance on its system of internal control and governance arrangements from independent sources, in particular:

Internal Audit

The primary objective of internal audit is to provide an independent and objective opinion to the Board and Audit and Risk Assurance Committee on the adequacy and effectiveness of the system of internal control. The work of internal audit is informed by an analysis of the risks to which National Museums NI is exposed.

NATIONAL MUSEUMS NI
ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

National Museums NI and the Board contracts out its internal audit services. The appointed firm of Internal Auditors operates to Global Internal Audit Standards (GIAS). The Internal Audit Plan 2025/26 was approved by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee in June 2025. The Committee considered reports on the following audits performed in 2025/26:

AUDIT ASSIGNMENT	ASSURANCE OPINION
Review of Commercial Strategy	Satisfactory
Review of Health & Safety Arrangements	Satisfactory
Review of Programme of Events Planning, Delivery and Evaluation	Satisfactory
Review of Customer Booking and Membership Arrangements	Satisfactory
Review of Budgeting and Management Reporting	Satisfactory

During 2025/26 the Internal Auditors identified no Priority 1 issues.

For the 12 months ended 31 March 2026, the Head of Internal Audit opinion for National Museums NI is as follows:

‘On the basis of the programme of work undertaken during the 2025/26 financial year, we can conclude that the National Museums NI has established a framework of controls that provides Satisfactory assurance regarding the effective and efficient achievement of its objectives, and the management of key risks.’

Financial Management

Responsibility for ensuring that an effective system of internal financial control is maintained and operated rests with the Accounting Officer supported by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. The systems of internal financial control provide reasonable but not absolute assurance that assets are safeguarded, that transactions are authorised and properly recorded, and that material errors or irregularities are either prevented or will be detected within a timely period.

Internal financial control is based on a framework of management information, financial regulations and administrative procedures, which include the segregation of duties, management supervision and a system of delegation and accountability.

National Museums NI has established Financial Policies and Procedures that address areas of risk as well as operational efficiency and effectiveness. These documents act as a reference point detailing all Financial Policies and Procedures that have been approved by the Board of National Museums NI.

All staff are briefed on these policies during their induction and at regular staff meetings. Any needs identified are addressed through the National Museums NI annual training and development plan.

Internal Governance Divergences

During the year there were no Priority One recommendations which have been described in the statement by the Head of Internal Audit.

It should be further noted that no 'ministerial directions' have been issued to the National Museums NI and there have been no reported lapses of protective security.

Conclusion

As Accounting Officer, I am satisfied that an appropriate system of internal governance is in place within National Museums NI.



Kathryn Thomson
Chief Executive
Date: 22 September 2026

3.2 Remuneration and Staff Report

Remuneration Policy

The Chairman of the Board is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the performance of the Chief Executive in accordance with the Senior Civil Service Pay Strategy.

The Chief Executive is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the performance of the Executive Team of National Museums NI in accordance with the SCS Pay Strategy (for those Directors employed under SCS terms) and in accordance with the Northern Ireland Civil Service Pay Strategy for other Directors.

The pay remit for the Northern Ireland Civil Service, including senior civil servants (SCS), is normally approved by the Minister of Finance. Following approval of the 2025/26 Budget in the Assembly on 19th May 2025, in which the Finance Minister outlined the overarching approach to public sector pay, the NI public sector pay policy guidance was published on 27 May 2025 in FD (DoF) 04/25.

Annual NICS pay awards are made in the context of the wider public sector pay policy. The 2024 pay award, due from 1 August 2024, was paid in June 2025. The 2025 pay award, due from 1 August 2025, was paid in November 2025.

The pay of National Museums NI staff is based on the NICS system of pay scales for each grade, including SCS, containing a number of pay points from minimum to maximum, allowing progression towards the maximum based on performance.

Service Contracts

The Civil Service Commissioners (NI) Order 1999 requires Civil Service appointments to be made on merit on the basis of fair and open competition. The Recruitment Code published by the Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland specifies the circumstances when appointments may be made by exception to merit. Unless otherwise stated, the officials covered by this report hold appointments that are open-ended. Early termination, other than for misconduct, would result in consideration of the individual receiving compensation as set out in the Civil Service Compensation Scheme.

Policy on duration of contracts, notice periods and termination payments

Senior staff, including the Chief Executive, are permanent employees of National Museums NI. The notice period for senior staff is three months. Termination payments are in accordance with contractual terms and those of the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (NI).

Remuneration (including salary) and pension entitlements

The following sections provide details of the remuneration and pension interests of the most senior management (i.e., Directors) of National Museums NI.

Senior Management Total Remuneration (Audited Information)

	Salary £'000		Pension Benefits ¹ (to nearest £1,000)		Total £'000	
	2025/26	2024/25	2025/26	2024/25	2025/26	2024/25
K Thomson Chief Executive	120-125	115-120	58,000	55,000	180-185	170-175
C Catney Chief Operating Officer	60-65	55-60	25,000	25,000	85-90	80-85
W Blair Director of Collections	95-100	90-95	81,000	47,000	175-180	135-140
A Ward Director of Public Engagement	90-95	80-85	36,000	50,000	125-130	130-135

Salary

Salary includes gross salary; overtime; recruitment and retention allowances; private office allowances and any other allowance to the extent that it is subject to UK taxation and any severance or ex gratia payments. This report is based on accrued payments made by National Museums NI and thus recorded in these accounts.

Benefits in kind

The monetary value of benefits in kind covers any benefits provided by the employer and treated by HM Revenue and Customs as a taxable emolument. There were no benefits in kind provided during the financial year (2024/25: £nil).

Pension Benefits

Benefits are shown in real terms and outcomes are dependent on the pension scheme each employee belongs to. Please see below to explanation for any negative outcomes:

- In some cases, the real increase in CETV and the pension benefits accrued for the single total figure of remuneration can be negative – that is, there can be a real decrease. This is particularly likely to happen during periods of pay restraint and/or where inflation is higher than pay increases.
- The final salary pension of a person in employment is calculated by reference to their pay and length of service. The pension will increase from one year to the next by virtue of a member having an extra year's service and by virtue of any pay rise during the year. Where there is no pay rise, the increase in pension due to extra service may not be sufficient to offset the inflation increase – that is, in real terms, the pension value can reduce, hence the negative values.
- For example, this is particularly likely to happen for members in the 'Classic Plus' scheme where no service after 30 September 2002 counts towards the calculation of the lump sum.

¹ The value of pension benefits accrued during the year is calculated as (the real increase in pension multiplied by 20) plus (the real increase in any lump sum) less (the contributions made by the individual). The real increases exclude increases due to inflation or any increases or decreases due to a transfer of pension rights.

Fair Pay Disclosures (Audited information)

Pay Ratios

Reporting bodies are required to disclose the relationship between the remuneration of the highest-paid director in their organisation and the lower quartile, median and upper quartile remuneration of the organisation's workforce.

The banded remuneration of the highest-paid director in National Museums NI in the financial year 2025/26 was £120,001 - £125,000 (2024/25: £115,001 - £120,000). The relationship between the mid-point of this band and the remuneration of the organisation's workforce is disclosed below.

2025/26	25th Percentile	Median	75th Percentile
Total Remuneration (£)	£26,264	£27,092	£36,606
Pay Ratio	4.66:1	4.52:1	3.35:1

2024/25	25th Percentile	Median	75th Percentile
Total Remuneration (£)	£23,349	£23,919	£32,168
Pay Ratio	5.03:1	4.91:1	3.65:1

The 25th percentile, median and 75th percentile remuneration figures are based on annualised salaries for the last month of the financial year, adjusted for any non-consolidated payments made to staff during the year.

Total remuneration includes salary, non-consolidated performance-related pay and benefits-in-kind. It does not include employer pension contributions and the cash equivalent transfer value of pensions.

The values for the salary component of remuneration for the 25th percentile, median and 75th percentile were £26,264 (2024/25: £23,349), £27,092 (2024/25: £23,919) and £36,606 (2024/25: £32,168) respectively.

In 2025/26 and 2024/25, no employees received remuneration in excess of the highest-paid director.

Remuneration ranged from £25,796 to £122,500 (2024/25: £23,177 to £117,500).

Changes in the pay ratios in 2025/26 compared to 2024/25 were as a result of how the pay awards impacted the grades throughout the staffing structure as well as the impact of progression through the salary points.

Percentage Change in Remuneration

Reporting bodies are also required to disclose the percentage change from the previous financial year in the:

- a) salary and allowances, and
- b) performance pay and bonuses

of the highest paid director and of their employees as a whole.

The percentage changes in respect of National Museums NI are shown in the following table. It should be noted that the calculation for the highest paid director is based on the mid-point of the band within which their remuneration fell in each year.

Percentage change for:	2025/26 v 2024/25	2024/25 v 2023/24
Average employee salary and allowances	+12.31%	+0.79%
Highest paid director's salary and allowances	+4.25%	+4.44%

No performance pay or bonuses were payable in these years.

Remuneration of Board Members

No emoluments were paid to members of the Board for the year ended 31 March 2026 except for an honorarium to the Chairman amounting to £10,815 (2024/25: £10,500).

Pensions of Senior Management (Audited Information)

	Accrued pension at pension age as at 31/3/26 and related lump sum	Real increase in pension and related lump sum at pension age	CETV at 31/3/26	CETV at 31/3/25	Real increase in CETV
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
K Thomson Chief Executive	55-60	2.5-5	900	817	39
C Catney Chief Operating Officer	15-20	0-2.5	295	264	20
W Blair Director of Collections	50-55	2.5-5	817	712	60
A Ward Director of Public Engagement	10-15	0-2.5	154	126	18

Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) Pension Arrangements

Pension benefits are provided through the Northern Ireland Civil Service pension schemes which are administered by Civil Service Pensions (CSP).

The alpha pension scheme was initially introduced for new entrants from 1 April 2015. The alpha scheme and all previous scheme arrangements are unfunded with the cost of benefits met by monies voted each year. The majority of members of the Classic, Premium, Classic Plus and Nuvos pension arrangements (collectively known as the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland) (PCSPS(NI))) also moved to alpha from that date. Transitional protection measures introduced alongside these reforms meant any members who on 1 April 2012 were within 10 years of their normal pension age remained in their previous scheme arrangement (full protection) and those who were between 13.5 years and 10 years of their normal pension age were given a choice between moving to alpha on 1 April 2015 or at a later date determined by their age (tapered protection).

McCloud Judgment and 2015 Remedy

In 2018, the Court of Appeal found that the transitional protections put in place back in 2015 that allowed older workers to remain in their original scheme, were discriminatory on the basis of age. As a result, steps have been taken by the Department of Finance to remedy this discrimination.

The Department has now made regulations which remedy the discrimination by:

- ensuring all active members are treated equally for future service as members of the reformed alpha scheme only from 1 April 2022, and
- providing each eligible member with options to have their pension entitlements for the period when the discrimination existed between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022 (the Remedy Period) retrospectively calculated under either the current (reformed) scheme rules, or the old (pre-reform) legacy rules which existed before 2015.

This means that all active NICS Pension Scheme members are in the same pension scheme, alpha, from 1 April 2022 onwards, regardless of age. This removes the discrimination going forwards in providing equal pension provision for all scheme members.

The Department is now implementing the second part of the remedy, which addresses the discrimination which was incurred by affected members between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022.

Eligible members with relevant service between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022 (the Remedy Period) will now be entitled to a choice of alternative pension benefits in relation to that period. i.e. calculated under the pre-reformed PCSPS(NI) 'Classic', 'Premium' or 'Nuvos' rules or alternatively calculated under the reformed alpha rules. As part of this 'retrospective' remedy most active members will now receive a choice about their Remedy Period benefits at the point of retirement. This is known as the Deferred Choice Underpin (DCU). For those members who already have pension benefits in payment in relation to the Remedy Period, they will receive an Immediate Choice. There are a significant number of Immediate Choice Remediable Service Statement (RSS) packs to issue. This process involves complex calculations to provide members with individually tailored statements. Due to the complexity of the calculations and some prolonged work to finalise policy elements of the remedy, not all Immediate Choice packs have been able to be issued by the original regulatory timeline of 31 March 2025. The Scheme Manager has invoked the discretion allowed by the remedy legislation and has extended the timeline for issuing Immediate Choice RSS packs to 31 March 2027. The Pensions Regulator has been notified of this extension. Our priority remains to provide members with all the accurate information they need to make a choice. It can be noted that other Public Service Pension Schemes are also in a similar position.

Further information on the remedy will be included in the NICS pension scheme accounts which, once published, are available at [DoF Annual Report and Accounts | Department of Finance \(finance-ni.gov.uk\)](https://finance-ni.gov.uk).

As part of the remedy involved rolling back all remediable service into the relevant legacy PCSPS(NI) arrangement for the 7-Year Remedy Period, the value of pension benefits for the 2025-26 pension disclosures for affected members continue to be based on the rolled back position.

Alpha

Alpha is a 'Career Average Revalued Earnings' (CARE) arrangement in which members accrue pension benefits at a percentage rate of annual pensionable earnings throughout the period of scheme membership. The current accrual rate is 2.32%.

From 1 April 2015, all new entrants joining the NICS can choose between membership of alpha or joining a 'money purchase' stakeholder arrangement with a significant employer contribution (Partnership Pension Account).

Information on the PCSPS(NI) – Closed Scheme

Staff in post prior to 30 July 2007 were eligible to be in one of three statutory based 'final salary' legacy defined benefit arrangements (Classic, Premium and Classic Plus). From April 2011, pensions payable under these arrangements have been reviewed annually in line with changes in the cost of living.

New entrants who joined on or after 1 October 2002 and before 30 July 2007 will have chosen between membership of Premium or joining the Partnership Pension Account. New entrants who joined on or after 30 July 2007 were eligible for membership of the legacy PCSPS(NI) Nuvos arrangement or they could have opted for a Partnership Pension Account. Nuvos was also a CARE arrangement in which members accrued pension benefits at a percentage rate of annual pensionable earnings throughout the period of scheme membership. The rate of accrual was 2.3%.

Benefits in Classic accrue at the rate of 1/80th of pensionable salary for each year of service. In addition, a lump sum equivalent to three years' pension is payable on retirement. For Premium, benefits accrue at the rate of 1/60th of final pensionable earnings for each year of service. Unlike Classic, there is no automatic lump sum (but members may give up (commute) some of their pension to provide a lump sum). Classic Plus is essentially a variation of Premium, but with benefits in respect of service before 1 October 2002 calculated broadly as per Classic.

Partnership Pension Account

The Partnership Pension Account is a stakeholder pension arrangement. The employer makes a basic contribution of between 8% and 14.75% (depending on the age of the member) into a stakeholder pension product chosen by the employee. The employee does not have to contribute but where they do make contributions, the employer will match these up to a limit of 3% of pensionable salary (in addition to the employer's basic contribution). Employers also contribute a further 0.5% of pensionable salary to cover the cost of centrally provided risk benefit cover (death in service and ill health retirement).

Annual Benefit Statements

Active members of the pension scheme will receive an Annual Benefit Statement. The accrued pension quoted is the pension the member is entitled to receive when they reach their scheme pension age, or immediately on ceasing to be an active member of the scheme if they are at or over pension age. The normal scheme pension age in alpha is linked to the member's State Pension Age but cannot be before age 65. The Scheme Pension age is 60 for any pension accrued in the legacy Classic, Premium, and Classic Plus arrangements and 65 for any benefits accrued in Nuvos. Further details about the NICS pension schemes can be found at the website [Civil Service Pensions \(NI\) | Department of Finance \(finance-ni.gov.uk\)](https://civilservicepensions.ni.gov.uk).

Pension Increases

All pension benefits are reviewed annually in line with changes in the cost of living. Any applicable increases are applied from April and are determined by the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) figure for the preceding September. The CPI in September 2025 was 3.8% and HM Treasury has announced that public service pensions will be increased accordingly from April 2026.

Employee Contribution Rates

Percentage rates for employee contributions were revised for all members from 1 July 2025 as a result of the Northern Ireland Civil Service Pension Scheme: Consultation on Scheme Yield / Member Contributions as shown below*:

Annualised Rate of Pensionable Earning (Salary Bands) 1 April 2025 to 31 August 2025		Contribution rates – All members from 1 April 2025 to 30 June 2025	*Contribution rates – All members from 1 July 2025
From	To		
£0	£27,091.99	4.60%	4.65%
£27,092.00	£61,645.99	5.45%	5.65%
£61,646.00	£165,793.99	7.35%	7.55%
£165,794.00 and above		8.05%	8.25%

Salary bands were also updated from 1 September 2025 as follows:

Annualised Rate of Pensionable Earning (Salary Bands) 1 September 2025 onwards		Contribution rates – All members from 1 July 2025
From	To	
£0	£28,716.99	4.65%
£28,717.00	£65,343.99	5.65%
£65,344.00	£175,740.99	7.55%
£175,741.00 and above		8.25%

Cash Equivalent Transfer Values

A Cash Equivalent Transfer Value (CETV) is the actuarially assessed capitalised value of the pension scheme benefits accrued by a member at a particular point in time. The benefits valued are the member's accrued benefits and any contingent spouse's pension payable from the scheme. A CETV is a payment made by a pension scheme or arrangement to secure pension benefits in another pension scheme or arrangement when the member leaves a scheme and chooses to transfer the benefits accrued in their former scheme. The pension figures shown relate to the benefits that the individual has accrued as a consequence of their total membership of the pension scheme, not just their service in a senior capacity to which disclosure applies. The CETV figures, and from 2003-04 the other pension details, include the value of any pension benefit in another scheme or arrangement which the individual has transferred to the NICS pension arrangements. They also include any additional pension benefit accrued to the member as a result of their purchasing additional years of pension service in the scheme at their own cost. CETVs are calculated in accordance with The Occupational Pension Schemes (Transfer Values) Regulations 1996 (as amended).

HM Treasury provides the assumptions for discount rates for calculating CETVs payable from the public service pension schemes. On 27 April 2023, HM Treasury published guidance on the basis for setting the discount rates for calculating cash equivalent transfer values payable by public service pension schemes. In their guidance of 27 April 2023, HM Treasury advised that, with immediate effect, the discount rate adopted for calculating CETVs should be in line with the new SCAPE discount rate of 1.7% above CPI inflation, superseding the previous SCAPE discount rate of 2.4% above CPI inflation. All else being the same, a lower SCAPE discount rate leads to higher CETVs. The HM Treasury Guidance of 27 April 2023 can be found at [Basis for setting the discount rates for calculating cash equivalent transfer values payable by public service pension schemes - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/basis-for-setting-the-discount-rates-for-calculating-cash-equivalent-transfer-values-payable-by-public-service-pension-schemes). As at the year-end there have been no further changes to the SCAPE discount rate of 1.7% above CPI inflation since the HM Treasury guidance was published.

Real increase in CETV

This reflects the increase in CETV that is funded by the employer. It does not include the increase in accrued pension due to inflation, contributions paid by the employee (including the value of any benefits transferred from another pension scheme or arrangement) and uses common market valuation factors for the start and end of the period (which therefore disregards the effect of any changes in factors).

Compensation for loss of office (Audited information)

No compensation for loss of office was payable in the year.

Staff report

Total Staff Costs (Audited Information)

Staff Cost	Permanently employed staff £	Others £	2026 £	2025 £
Salaries and wages (includes temporary non-payroll staff)	10,767,728	274,797	11,042,525	10,026,964
Social security costs	1,338,996	-	1,338,996	901,929
Pension costs	3,573,737	-	3,573,737	3,173,959
Apprenticeship levy	40,231	-	40,231	36,881
Total	15,720,692	274,797	15,995,489	14,139,733

The Northern Ireland Civil Service main pension schemes are unfunded multi-employer defined benefit schemes but National Museums NI is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities.

The Public Service Pensions Act (NI) 2014 provides the legal framework for regular actuarial valuations of the public service pension schemes to measure the costs of the benefits being provided. These valuations inform the future contribution rates to be paid into the schemes by employers every four years following the scheme valuation. The Act also provides for the establishment of an employer cost cap mechanism to ensure that the costs of the pension schemes remain sustainable in future.

The Government Actuary's Department (GAD) is responsible for carrying out scheme valuations. The Actuary reviews employer contributions every four years following the scheme valuation. The 2020 scheme valuation was completed by GAD in October 2023. The outcome of this valuation was used to set the level of contributions for employers from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2027.

The Cost Cap Mechanism (CCM) is a measure of scheme costs and determines whether member costs or scheme benefits require adjustment to maintain costs within a set corridor. Reforms were made to the CCM which was applied to the 2020 scheme valuations and included the introduction of a reformed scheme-only cost control mechanism which assesses just the costs relating to reformed schemes (alpha for the NICS) and introduced an economic check. Prior to the cost control mechanism reforms, legacy scheme (PCSPS(NI)) costs associated with active members were also captured in the mechanism. The reformed-scheme-only design and the economic check were applied to the 2020 scheme valuations for the devolved public sector pension schemes, including the NICS pension scheme. The 2020 scheme valuation outcome was that the core cost cap cost of the scheme lies within the 3% cost cap corridor. As there is no breach of the cost control mechanism, there is no requirement for the Department of Finance to consult on changes to the scheme. Further information can be found on the Department of Finance website <https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/articles/northern-ireland-civil-service-pension-scheme-valuations>

For 2025-26, employers' contributions of £3,608,089 (including £39,831 of capitalised contributions) were payable to the NICS pension arrangements at a flat rate of 34.25% of pensionable pay, for all salaries (2024/25: £3,184,437 at 34.25%).

Employees can opt to open a partnership pension account, a stakeholder pension with an employer contribution. Employers' contributions of £5,290 (2024/25: £6,237) were paid to one or more of the panel of three appointed stakeholder pension providers. Employer contributions are age-related and range from 8% to 14.75% (2024/25: 8% to 14.75%) of pensionable pay.

The partnership pension account offers the member the opportunity of having a 'free' pension. The employer will pay the age-related contribution and if the member does contribute, the employer will pay an additional amount to match member contributions up to 3% of pensionable earnings.

Employer contributions of £189, 0.5% (2024/25 £225, 0.5%) of pensionable pay, were payable to the NICS Pension schemes to cover the cost of the future provision of lump sum benefits on death in service and ill health retirement of these employees. Contributions due to the partnership pension providers at the reporting period date were £Nil (2024/25: £Nil). Contributions prepaid at that date were £Nil (2024/25: £Nil).

No persons (2024/25: None) retired early on ill-health grounds; the total additional accrued pension liabilities in the year amounted to £Nil (2024/25: £Nil).

Staff costs apportioned by activity (Audited Information)

Activity area	2026	2025
	£	£
Trading (Primary & Non Primary)	432,366	409,681
Collection Services	2,238,107	1,931,232
Curatorial & Education	2,903,976	2,615,859
Experience & Enterprise	7,118,007	6,499,596
Audience Development	1,466,508	1,294,801
Operations	1,836,525	1,388,564
Total	<u>15,995,489</u>	<u>14,139,733</u>

The average number of persons employed (Audited Information)

The average number of full-time equivalent employees employed during the year analysed by category of staff was as follows:

	Permanently employed staff	Others	2026 Total	2025 Total
Experience & Enterprise Development	125	-	125	116
Collection Services	37	-	37	42
Operations	31	-	31	31
Curatorial and Education	36	9	45	40
Audience Development	21	-	21	23
Support	20	8	28	23
Trading	7	-	7	6
Chief Executive's Office	<u>8</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>5</u>
	<u>285</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>302</u>	<u>286</u>

Further analysis of full-time equivalent employees at 31 March is as follows:

	2026		2025	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Chief Executive	-	1	-	1
Directors	3	-	3	-
Employees	<u>135</u>	<u>173</u>	<u>124</u>	<u>154</u>
Total	<u>138</u>	<u>174</u>	<u>127</u>	<u>155</u>

Other Disclosures

- Staff Turnover Percentage was 6.16% for the year (2024/25: 9.23%).
- Per our Staff Pulse survey in November 2024, the composite staff engagement score was 72.7% (2024/25: 73.9%).
- There were no off-payroll arrangements with any individuals during the year (2024/25: £nil).
- There was £nil expenditure on external consultancy during the year (2024/25: £nil).
- Travel expenses of £1,808 were reimbursed to eight Trustees (2024/25: £2,172 to nine Trustees).
- Further information on staff costs is contained in note 6 of the financial statements.

Sickness Absence

National Museums NI employed 302 staff (expressed as full-time equivalents). Overall staff absenteeism for the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 was 5.95% (2024/25: 4.45%), which equates to an average per FTE of 7.48 days (2024/25: 6.01 days).

The majority of sickness absence continues to be attributable to staff on long term sickness.

Staff Policies

As an equal opportunities employer, National Museums NI do not discriminate against staff or applicants for posts on any grounds, including disability. Care is taken to ensure the needs of disabled applicants are considered in the recruitment and promotion processes. National Museums NI also considers and introduces reasonable adjustments to support the employment of people with disabilities and to support the continuing employment of staff who have a disability.

National Museums NI is committed to the priorities as set out in legislation on equality, disability discrimination, dispute resolutions, health and safety, safeguarding, data protection and freedom of information.

In line with our corporate commitment to champion inclusion, diversity and accessibility we developed a new Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility Policy which was approved by the Board in March 2022 and this is currently undergoing review.

Within the policy, we have outlined specific initial priority outcomes, including workplace culture which we shall continue to monitor and improve throughout the period of our Corporate Plan 2025-30.

Reporting of Civil Service and other compensation schemes – exit packages (Audited Information)

Redundancy and other departure costs have been paid in accordance with the provisions of the Civil Service Compensation Scheme (Northern Ireland), a statutory scheme made under the Superannuation (Northern Ireland) Order 1972. Exit costs are accounted for in the year in which the relevant exit packages are agreed.

There were no exit packages agreed in 2025/26.

Any ill-health retirement costs are met by the pension scheme and are not included in this disclosure.



K Thomson
Chief Executive
Date: 22 September 2026

3.3 Sustainability Report

TCFD Compliance Statement (Voluntary)

National Museums NI has voluntarily adopted elements of HM Treasury's Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) aligned disclosure guidance for the UK public sector.

As an Arm's-Length Body with fewer than 500 staff and income below £500 million, the organisation is not formally in scope of mandatory TCFD reporting requirements.

In this reporting period, disclosures focus on Governance, Risk Management, and Metrics & Targets, with further development planned in line with a proportionate and phased approach.

Governance

The environment is one of 4 key impact areas in our 2025-30 Corporate strategy. We recognise that our museums have a responsibility to mobilise collections, particularly our Natural Sciences collection, in support of action against environmental catastrophe, highlighting both threats and solutions.

Delivery of our Environmental Sustainability Policy and Action Plan is monitored through governance structures, including regular reporting to the Senior Management Team and Audit and Risk Assurance Committee as appropriate.

Oversight of Environmental risk mitigation is provided through the Board and Audit and Risk Committee. Climate-related risks are considered as part of the corporate risk register, estate management, and strategic planning processes.

During 2025/26, the organisation submitted a statutory Mitigation and Adaptation Report to DAERA, strengthening understanding and oversight of climate risks.

Executive management, supported by operational teams and the Sustainability Manager, is responsible for delivery of sustainability initiatives.

Risk Management

Climate risk management is fully integrated into the organisation's overall risk management framework and governance processes.

The organisation recognises the following key categories of climate-related risk:

Physical risks

- Increased frequency and severity of extreme weather events (e.g. flooding, storms) affecting museum sites
- Impacts of temperature and humidity changes on collections and storage environments
- Potential disruption to operations and visitor access

Transition risks

- Increasing energy costs and carbon-related regulatory requirements
- Expectations for public sector bodies to contribute to net zero targets
- Risks associated with failure to deliver sustainability plans and emissions reductions
- Reputational impacts arising from environmental performance

An identified corporate risk (reference COR 0008) relates to the risk of failing to meet sustainability ambitions due to missed carbon reduction targets and delivery risks within the sustainability action plan. Climate-related risks are evaluated alongside other principal risks in terms of:

- Likelihood
- Impact
- Potential effect on service delivery and organisational objectives

	Impact Score	Likelihood Score	Overall score
Inherent	4	4	16
Residual	3	4	12
Target	2	4	8

The primary control for this risk is the Environmental Sustainability Policy and Action Plan. This sets out:

- The organisation's environmental sustainability ambitions
- Actions required to reduce carbon emissions and improve energy efficiency
- A structured basis for monitoring delivery of sustainability objectives
- Mitigation actions against COR 0008 include Carbon Literacy training, carbon audit, solar PV feasibility study, sustainability framework aligned to UN SDGs, waste initiatives and engagement with DfC Climate Division.

Additional mitigation actions include:

- active monitoring of emissions performance through the corporate KPI (Scope 1 & 2 emissions)
- energy efficiency improvements across the estate
- appointment of a dedicated Energy Officer to drive reductions in energy usage
- development and submission of statutory climate Mitigation and Adaptation Reports to DAERA

These actions are designed to reduce the impact of the risk over time.

Metrics and Targets

The key organisational KPI is Total Scope 1 & Scope 2 emissions (tCO₂e).

2025/26: 1,782 tCO₂e. (target 1,600 tCO₂e)

2024/25: 1,611 tCO₂e (target: 1,804 tCO₂e).

Performance is monitored annually and informs estate and energy management decisions.

Future Development

Priority areas include improving data quality, developing formal reduction targets, and expanding disclosures.

Strategy and scenario analysis will be developed over time.

3.4 Statement of Trustees' and Chief Executive's Responsibilities for the Year Ended 31 March 2026

Under Article 10(2) of the Museums and Galleries (NI) Order 1998 the National Museums NI is required to prepare a statement of accounts for each financial year in the form and on the basis determined by the Department for Communities with the approval of the Department of Finance. The accounts are prepared on an accruals basis and must give a true and fair view of National Museums NI's state of affairs at the year end and of its financial activities and cash flows for the financial year.

In preparing the accounts the Board are required to:

- observe the accounts direction issued by the Department for Communities, including relevant accounting and disclosure requirements, and apply suitable accounting policies on a consistent basis;
- make judgements and estimates on a reasonable basis;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed and disclose and explain any material departures in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis, unless it is inappropriate to presume that National Museums NI will continue in operation; and
- ensure the Annual Report and Accounts as a whole is fair, balanced and understandable and take personal responsibility for the Annual Report and Accounts and the judgements required for determining that it is fair, balanced and understandable.

The Accounting Officer for the Department for Communities has designated the Chief Executive as the Accounting Officer for National Museums NI. The relevant responsibilities of an Accounting Officer, including the responsibility for the propriety and regularity of the public finances for which the Accounting Officer is answerable, for keeping of proper records and for safeguarding National Museums NI's assets, are set out in the Managing Public Money NI, issued by the Department of Finance. As Accounting Officer, I can confirm:

As the Accounting Officer, I have taken all the steps that I ought to have taken to make myself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that National Museums NI's auditors are aware of that information. So far as I am aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the auditors are unaware.

3.5 Assembly Accountability & Audit Report (Audited Information)

Losses and Special Payments

There were no special payments or losses made in the financial year (2024/25: £nil).

Remote Contingent Liabilities

National Museums NI has no remote contingent liabilities at the end of the financial year (2024/25: nil).

Regularity of Expenditure

National Museums NI noted no issues with regularity of expenditure during the financial year.



Kathryn Thomson
Chief Executive
Date: 22 September 2026

THE CERTIFICATE AND REPORT OF THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL TO THE NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

Opinion on financial statements

I certify that I have audited the financial statements of the National Museums Northern Ireland for the year ended 31 March 2026 under the Museums and Galleries (Northern Ireland) Order 1998. The financial statements comprise: the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement; and the related notes including significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in the preparation of the National Museums Northern Ireland's financial statements is applicable law United Kingdom Accounting standards including Financial Reporting Standard (FRS) 102, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

I have also audited the information in the Accountability Report that is described in that report as having been audited.

In my opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of National Museums Northern Ireland's affairs as at 31 March 2026 and of its total incoming resources and expenditure of resources for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the Museums and Galleries (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 and Department for Communities directions issued thereunder.

Opinion on regularity

In my opinion, in all material respects the income and expenditure recorded in the financial statements have been applied to the purposes intended by the Assembly and the financial transactions recorded in the financial statements conform to the authorities which govern them.

Basis for opinions

I conducted my audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (ISAs) (UK), applicable law and Practice Note 10 'Audit of Financial Statements and Regularity of Public Sector Bodies in the United Kingdom'. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of my certificate.

My staff and I are independent of National Museums Northern Ireland in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard, and have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

I believe that the audit evidence obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinions.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, I have concluded that National Museums Northern Ireland's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate. Based on the work I have performed, I have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the National Museums

Northern Ireland's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

The going concern basis of accounting for National Museums Northern Ireland is adopted in consideration of the requirements set out in the Government Financial Reporting Manual, which require entities to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements where it anticipated that the services which they provide will continue into the future.

My responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Trustees and the Accounting Officer with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this certificate.

Other Information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements, the parts of the Accountability Report described in that report as having been audited, and my audit certificate and report. The Trustees and the Accounting Officer are responsible for the other information included in the annual report. My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in my report, I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

My responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or my knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If I identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, I am required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact.

I have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinion on other matters

In my opinion the part of the Remuneration and Staff Report to be audited has been properly prepared in accordance with Department for Communities' directions made under the Museums and Galleries (Northern Ireland) Order 1998.

In my opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the parts of the Accountability Report to be audited have been properly prepared in accordance with Department for Communities directions made under the Museums and Galleries (Northern Ireland) Order 1998; and
- the information given in the Performance and Accountability Reports for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements.

Matters on which I report by exception

In light of the knowledge and understanding of the National Museums Northern Ireland and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, I have not identified material misstatements in the Annual Report.

I have nothing to report in respect of the following matters which I report to you if, in my opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements and the parts of the Accountability Report to be audited are not in agreement with the accounting records; or

- certain disclosures of remuneration specified by the Government Financial Report Manual are not made; or
- I have not received all of the information and explanations I require for my audit; or
- certain disclosures of remuneration specified by the Museums and Galleries (Northern Ireland) Order 1998. have not been made or parts of the Remuneration Report to be audited is not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- the Governance Statement does not reflect compliance with the Department of Finance's guidance.

Responsibilities of the Trustees and Accounting Officer for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of the Trustees and Accounting Officer Responsibilities, the Trustees and the Accounting Officer are responsible for:

- maintaining proper accounting records;
- the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view;
- ensuring such internal controls are in place as deemed necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements to be free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error;
- ensuring the Annual Report, which includes the Remuneration and Staff Report, is prepared in accordance with the Government Financial Reporting Manual;
- assessing the National Museums Northern Ireland's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Trustees and Accounting Officer anticipates that the services provided by National Museums Northern Ireland will not continue to be provided in the future.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

My responsibility is to examine, certify and report on the financial statements in accordance with the Museums and Galleries (Northern Ireland) Order 1998.

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error and to issue a certificate that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

I design procedures in line with my responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of non-compliance with laws and regulation, including fraud.

My procedures included:

- obtaining an understanding of the legal and regulatory framework applicable to the National Museums Northern Ireland through discussion with management and application of extensive public sector accountability knowledge. The key laws and regulations I considered included Museum and Galleries (Northern Ireland) Order 1998;
- making enquiries of management and those charged with governance on National Museums Northern Ireland's compliance with laws and regulations;

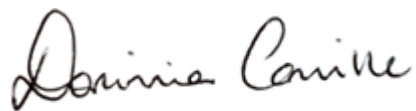
- making enquiries of internal audit, management and those charged with governance as to susceptibility to irregularity and fraud, their assessment of the risk of material misstatement due to fraud and irregularity, and their knowledge of actual, suspected and alleged fraud and irregularity;
- completing risk assessment procedures to assess the susceptibility of National Museums Northern Ireland's financial statements to material misstatement, including how fraud might occur. This included, but was not limited to, an engagement director led engagement team discussion on fraud to identify particular areas, transaction streams and business practices that may be susceptible to material misstatement due to fraud. As part of this discussion, I identified potential for fraud in the following areas: revenue recognition, expenditure recognition, posting of unusual journals;
- engagement director oversight to ensure the engagement team collectively had the appropriate competence, capabilities and skills to identify or recognise non-compliance with the applicable legal and regulatory framework throughout the audit;
- documenting and evaluating the design and implementation of internal controls in place to mitigate risk of material misstatement due to fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations;
- designing audit procedures to address specific laws and regulations which the engagement team considered to have a direct material effect on the financial statements in terms of misstatement and irregularity, including fraud. These audit procedures included, but were not limited to, reading board and committee minutes, and agreeing financial statement disclosures to underlying supporting documentation and approvals as appropriate;
- addressing the risk of fraud as a result of management override of controls by:
 - performing analytical procedures to identify unusual or unexpected relationships or movements;
 - testing journal entries to identify potential anomalies, and inappropriate or unauthorised adjustments;
 - assessing whether judgements and other assumptions made in determining accounting estimates were indicative of potential bias; and
 - investigating significant or unusual transactions made outside of the normal course of business; and

A further description of my responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of my certificate.

In addition, I am required to obtain evidence sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the income and expenditure recorded in the financial statements have been applied to the purposes intended by the Assembly and the financial transactions recorded in the financial statements conform to the authorities which govern them.

Report

I have no observations to make on these financial statements.



Dorinnia Carville
Comptroller and Auditor General
Northern Ireland Audit Office
106 University Street
BELFAST
BT7 1EU

2 October 2026

NATIONAL MUSEUMS NI
ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

	Note	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2026 £	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2025 £
Income from:							
<i>Donations and Legacies</i>							
Donations	2	-	180,467	180,467	5,000	117,622	122,622
Gifts in kind	2	3,129,775	-	3,129,775	2,160,447	-	2,160,447
<i>Charitable activities</i>							
Grant-in-aid	3	2,745,400	21,761,000	24,506,400	1,037,000	18,047,000	19,084,000
Admissions	3	-	1,371,252	1,371,252	-	1,327,993	1,327,993
Other grants	3	862,333	64,103	926,436	1,041,978	52,729	1,094,707
<i>Other trading activities</i>							
Sponsorships	4	6,667	-	6,667	16,000	-	16,000
Trading	4	-	1,543,297	1,543,297	-	1,582,348	1,582,348
Investment income		-	74,601	74,601	-	59,766	59,766
Other income	5	-	86,276	86,276	-	81,640	81,640
Total income		6,744,175	25,080,996	31,825,171	4,260,425	21,269,098	25,529,523
Expenditure on:							
<i>Raising funds</i>							
Trading	6	19,330	1,328,997	1,348,327	16,593	1,260,848	1,277,441
<i>Charitable activities</i>							
Collection Services	6	62,727	3,093,350	3,156,077	40,988	2,853,397	2,894,385
Curatorial & Education	6	809,762	3,879,628	4,689,390	980,270	3,593,931	4,574,201
Experience & Enterprise	6	169,901	10,068,654	10,238,555	182,213	9,498,974	9,681,187
Audience Development	6	39,701	2,379,524	2,419,225	53,866	2,152,327	2,206,193
Operations	6	115,106	7,678,547	7,793,653	83,746	6,877,791	6,961,537
		1,216,527	28,428,700	29,645,227	1,357,676	26,237,268	27,594,944
Net income/(expenditure) before tax		5,527,648	(3,347,704)	2,179,944	2,902,749	(4,968,170)	(2,065,421)
Tax credit	8	-	234,782	234,782	-	70,836	70,836
Net income/(expenditure) after tax		5,527,648	(3,112,922)	2,414,726	2,902,749	(4,897,334)	(1,994,585)
Transfers between funds		(2,162,294)	2,162,294	-	(1,417,335)	1,417,335	-
Other recognised gains/(losses)							
Gains on revaluation of fixed assets	9	-	1,975,077	1,975,077	-	1,552,367	1,552,367
Net movement in funds		3,365,354	1,024,449	4,389,803	1,485,414	(1,927,632)	(442,218)
Reconciliation of funds:							
Total funds brought forward		25,440,972	78,986,963	104,427,935	23,955,558	80,914,595	104,870,153
Total funds carried forward		28,806,326	80,011,412	108,817,738	25,440,972	78,986,963	104,427,935

NATIONAL MUSEUMS NI
ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

BALANCE SHEET
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

	Note	2026 £	2025 £
Fixed Assets			
Tangible assets	9	87,053,193	87,743,221
Heritage assets	9	19,446,421	16,210,318
Intangible assets	11	847,810	370,034
Investment in subsidiary	12	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>
		107,347,426	104,323,575
Current Assets			
Stock	13	348,213	333,263
Debtors	14	1,512,929	1,309,653
Cash at bank and in hand	15	<u>4,026,402</u>	<u>2,239,286</u>
		5,887,544	3,882,202
Liabilities			
Creditors - amounts falling due within one year	16	<u>(3,962,255)</u>	<u>(3,327,921)</u>
Net current assets		<u>1,925,289</u>	<u>554,281</u>
Total assets less current liabilities		109,272,715	104,877,856
Provision for liabilities and charges	17	<u>(454,977)</u>	<u>(449,921)</u>
Total Net Assets		<u><u>108,817,738</u></u>	<u><u>104,427,935</u></u>
Represented by:			
Restricted funds	18	28,806,326	25,440,972
Unrestricted funds	18	27,066,460	27,473,274
Revaluation reserve	18	<u>52,944,952</u>	<u>51,513,689</u>
		<u><u>108,817,738</u></u>	<u><u>104,427,935</u></u>

The notes on pages 64 to 78 form part of these accounts.

The accounts on pages 61 to 78 were approved by the Board of Trustees of National Museums NI on 22 September 2026 and are signed on its behalf.

G Milligan
Chairman of The Board of Trustees


K Thomson
Chief Executive

NATIONAL MUSEUMS NI
ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

	Note	2026 £	2025 £
Cash flows from operating activities:			
Net cash provided by operating activities	21	<u>3,276,183</u>	<u>380,924</u>
Cash flows from investing activities:			
Interest received		74,601	59,766
Proceeds from the sale of property, plant and equipment		26,961	543,555
Purchase of intangible fixed assets		(524,012)	(117,885)
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(1,138,673)	(1,650,132)
Tax received		<u>72,056</u>	<u>-</u>
Net cash used by investing activities		<u>(1,489,067)</u>	<u>(1,164,696)</u>
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period		1,787,116	(783,772)
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 April 2025	21	<u>2,239,286</u>	<u>3,023,058</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at 31 March 2026	21	<u><u>4,026,402</u></u>	<u><u>2,239,286</u></u>

Further detail to this cash flow statement is reported in Note 21.
The notes on pages 64 to 78 form part of these accounts.

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of accounting

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the historical cost convention as modified by the revaluation of certain assets. The accounts are presented in the functional currency, pounds sterling, and in whole pounds. Non-functional currency transactions are translated at the prevailing rate at the transaction date.

Without limiting the information given, the accounts meet the accounting and disclosure requirements of the Companies Act 2006, the accounting standards issued or adopted by the Accounting Standards Board and disclosure requirements issued by the Department of Finance in so far as those requirements are appropriate. They also comply with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) (2019). Charities SORP (FRS 102) (2025) has been issued and is effective for periods starting on or after 1 January 2026. The provisions within this updated accounting standard will be reflected in the 2026-27 financial year.

These accounts are prepared under a direction issued by the Department for Communities in accordance with Article 10 of the Museums and Galleries (Northern Ireland) Order 1998.

The charity is a public benefit entity.

There are no material uncertainties related to events or conditions that cast significant doubt on the ability of National Museums NI to continue as a going concern.

The principal policies which have been adopted in the preparation of these accounts are as follows:

Incoming resources

Grant income from the Department for Communities is shown in the Statement of Financial Activities in the year in which it is received. Undrawn grant-in-aid is not available to be carried forward from one year to the next.

Other grant income is recognised as and when the conditions for its receipt have been met.

Deferred income will be matched and released as and when the conditions for its application have been met.

Gifts in kind donated, where a third party is bearing the cost, are included at the cost to the third party.

Admissions income, trading income and donations are accounted for on an accruals basis.

No amounts are included in the accounts for services donated by volunteers.

Resources expended

Resources expended are accounted for on an accruals basis. Expenditure is classified under principal charitable activities or costs of generating funds in order to provide more useful information to the users of the accounts.

Expenditure is classified to be in furtherance of charity objectives when it is directly attributable to the projects undertaken. All other expenditure is allocated either to support costs or costs of generating funds, as appropriate. Support costs comprise the costs of the Chief Executive's Office, Human Resources, Finance and Governance costs and are allocated to the charitable activities on a basis consistent with the use of the resources. The support costs are allocated according to the number of full time equivalent staff employed in each activity. Governance costs are the costs incurred to ensure proper standards of public accountability within National Museums NI and are made up of internal audit, external audit and professional fees associated with governance.

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

Tangible Assets and Depreciation

Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost or valuation.

Depreciation is provided on all tangible fixed assets, other than land, assets under construction and heritage assets, at rates calculated to write off the cost or valuation, less estimated residual value, on a straight line basis for each asset over its expected useful life as follows:

Buildings	2% - 5%	per annum
Permanent exhibitions	2% - 20%	per annum
Computer equipment	5% - 20%	per annum
Fixtures and equipment	5% - 20%	per annum
Plant and machinery	5% - 15%	per annum
Motor vehicles	7% - 15%	per annum

Land and buildings are professionally revalued every year. With the exception of permanent exhibitions, the cost of all other fixed assets are restated annually to reflect their current value using the relevant price indices at the year end and to identify any impairment of value. The revaluation surplus or loss, net of the corresponding adjustment to accumulated depreciation, is credited to the revaluation reserve.

The assets' residual values and useful lives are reviewed, and adjusted, if appropriate, at the end of each reporting period.

The minimum level for capitalising tangible fixed assets is £1,000, although lower valued items may be pooled and capitalised where they constitute a unit or group.

Heritage Assets

Objects purchased since 1 April 2001 are included in the balance sheet at cost. Depreciation is not charged and the objects are not revalued.

Objects donated since 1 April 2001 are included at valuation based on the amount paid by the donor or an estimate of fair value based on the opinion of National Museums NI's specialist staff. Where obtaining a value is not practicable, donated heritage assets are not recognised in the accounts.

Collections acquired before 1 April 2001 are assets of historical and scientific importance held to advance National Museums NI's educational and cultural objectives. These assets were not capitalised in past accounting periods as reliable cost information was not available and a reliable valuation approach was not considered to be commensurate with the benefits to users of the financial statements.

Nature & scale of heritage assets

The collections of National Museums NI are multidisciplinary, diverse and span all time periods, referencing Northern Ireland within, and to, the wider world. Historically, they have grown on the site-based framework of the Ulster Museum, the Ulster Folk & Transport Museums and the Ulster American Folk Park. However, since similar collection types can relate to more than one site, they are more appropriately classified within six broad and complementary subject areas. National Museums NI will continue to collect within these subject areas and the time periods and geographic areas to which they relate:

1. Art;
2. Emigration;
3. Folk Life and Agriculture;
4. Human History;
5. Natural Sciences; and
6. Transport, Industry and Technology.

Policy on acquisition and disposal of Heritage Assets

National Museums NI has a Collections Development Policy in place. This policy provides further information on the nature of heritage assets held. It is available online at www.nationalmuseumsni.org.

Policy on management and preservation of heritage assets

Three policies outline National Museums NI's intent towards the development, management, care, conservation of, and access to the collections: the Collections Development Policy; the Collections Care and Conservation Policy; and the Collections Information and Access Policy. In addition, a National Museums NI Collections Documentation Plan exists which outlines the tasks required to progress the management of the collections in alignment with the minimum industry standard known as SPECTRUM.

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

Intangible assets

Intangible assets are stated at cost less accumulated amortisation and accumulated impairment losses. Amortisation is calculated, using the straight-line method, to allocate the depreciable amount of the assets to their residual values over their estimated useful lives, as follows:

Software	3 - 5 years
On-Trade License	10 years

Development costs that are directly attributable to the design and testing of identifiable and unique software products controlled by National Museums NI are recognised as intangible assets when the following criteria are met:

- it is technically feasible to complete the software so that it will be available for use;
- management intends to complete and use it;
- it can be demonstrated how the software will generate probable future economic benefits;
- adequate technical, financial and other resources to complete the development and to use the software are available; and
- the expenditure attributable to the software during its development can be reliably measured.

Other development expenditures that do not meet these criteria are recognised as an expense as incurred.

The minimum level for capitalising intangible fixed assets is £1,000, although lower valued items may be pooled and capitalised where they constitute a unit or group.

Investment in subsidiaries

Investment in subsidiaries are valued at book value, less any provision for material impairment.

Stocks

Stocks have been valued at the lower of cost and estimated net realisable value.

Creditors

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the net amount prepaid.

Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and in hand include deposits held at call with banks and petty cash and float balances.

Liabilities

Liabilities are recognised as resources expended as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing National Museums NI to expenditure.

Provisions

Provisions are recognised where there is a legal or constructive obligation of uncertain timing or amount committing National Museums NI to expenditure on the basis of the best estimate of the expenditure required to settle the obligation where this can be determined. Where the effect if time value of money is significant, the estimated cash flows have been discounted using appropriate rates.

Taxation

All income and expenditure is stated exclusive of VAT, which is fully recoverable. VAT assets and liabilities are netted due to legal right of offset and a single recoverable or payable position disclosed.

National Museums NI has been granted charitable status by HM Revenue & Customs.

Corporation tax applies to all chargeable gains relating to the non-primary purpose trading activities of National Museums NI.

Given the nature of its activities, National Museums NI is able to access the Museums & Galleries Exhibition Tax Relief scheme.

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

Reserves Policy

National Museums NI forecasts to operate on an annual basis within a balanced funding formula of grant-in-aid, sponsorship and donations, and self-generated income. Annual operating surpluses (or deficits) are kept to a minimum and are transferred to the Unrestricted General Reserve at 31 March each year.

The Charities SORP requires capital grants to be included within the Statement of Financial Activities in the year in which they are receivable. The only expenditure against this is depreciation. Therefore during periods of high capital investment, surpluses will arise on the Statement of Financial Activities.

The balance on the Restricted General Fund available at 31 March 2026 was £28.8m. The Trustees consider that sufficient funds are held in an appropriate form to enable funds to be applied in accordance with any restriction imposed. The balance on the Unrestricted General Fund, together with this policy, is reviewed on an annual basis.

National Museums NI receives various types of funding which require separate disclosure. These are differentiated between restricted and unrestricted funds.

Restricted Funds

Restricted funds are those funds which are subject to specific restriction imposed by the donor, by the purpose of an appeal or are received for a specified purpose. They comprise the following:

Collection acquisition fund - this fund represents the value of heritage assets funded by restricted donations and grant-in-aid since April 2001.

Government grant for fixed assets - this fund represents funding from the Department for the acquisition of fixed assets which following acquisition have no restriction on use and therefore transfer to the unrestricted funds.

Exhibition fund - this fund represents the net book value of National Museums NI's permanent exhibitions.

The Voluntary Exit Scheme Fund - to fund future obligation under the Voluntary Exit Scheme.

O.L. Nelson Legacy fund - donated to National Museums NI for the specific purpose to purchase prints and drawings.

Patrick Donald Legacy Fund - donated to National Museums NI for the specific purpose to purchase artefacts of Irish interest.

General fund - this fund is to enable National Museums NI to manage its working capital relating to restricted activities.

Unrestricted Funds

Unrestricted funds are those funds which are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of National Museums NI. They comprise the following:

Capital reserve - represents fixed assets transferred to National Museums NI from the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum when National Museums NI was established under the Museums and Galleries (Northern Ireland) Order 1998. This fund is reduced annually by depreciation.

Revaluation reserve - this fund represents the revaluation surplus or loss, net of the corresponding adjustment to accumulated depreciation on the revalued assets.

Government grant for fixed assets - this fund together with the capital fund and the revaluation reserve represents the net book value of all unrestricted assets, namely land and buildings, fixtures and equipment and motor vehicles.

General fund - this fund is to enable National Museums NI to manage its working capital relating to unrestricted activities.

Unrestricted Designated Funds

Board Reserve fund - donation monies set aside to fund future projects approved by the Trustees, in the furtherance of our general objectives.

Board Reserve capital fund - proceeds of sale of assets to re-invest in capital projects approved by the Trustees.

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

2. DONATIONS AND LEGACIES

	2026 £	2025 £
Donations:		
Gift Aid	61,331	36,907
Other donations	119,136	85,715
Total donations	<u>180,467</u>	<u>122,622</u>
Gifts in kind:		
Donated assets	3,129,775	2,160,447
Donated services	-	-
Total gifts in kind	<u>3,129,775</u>	<u>2,160,447</u>

Of the income from donations, £180,467 are unrestricted (2024/25: £117,622) and £nil (2024/25: £5,000) was for a specific purpose and is considered restricted. Gifts in kind income at March 2026 comprises donations to the collections of £3,129,775 (2024/25: £2,160,447). In addition to above is the contribution made by volunteers. Volunteers make a significant and diverse contribution to the success of National Museums NI. They support us in many areas of the organisation, in roles ranging from assisting Curatorial staff, to assisting with Visitor Services and Education staff.

3. INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	2026 £	2025 £
Grant-in-aid from the Department for Communities		
Resource grant-in-aid (Unrestricted)	21,761,000	18,047,000
Capital grant (Restricted)	2,745,400	1,037,000
Total received	<u>24,506,400</u>	<u>19,084,000</u>
Admissions	<u>1,371,252</u>	<u>1,327,993</u>
Other grants		
Capital grants:		
The Goldsmiths' Company	4,000	-
The Art Fund	-	19,000
Friends of the Ulster Museum	-	13,000
Esmee Mitchell Trust	-	7,000
National History Museum	-	-
Total capital grants	<u>4,000</u>	<u>39,000</u>
Revenue grants:		
Northern Ireland Environment Agency	848,729	831,531
Fermanagh & Omagh District Council	76,553	-
National Lottery Heritage Fund	11,914	18,484
National Archives	10,481	21,750
Other	7,447	28,109
The Broderers Charity Trust	(13,315)	20,000
The Art Fund	(19,373)	61,607
Department for Communities	-	40,577
Nottingham Trent University	-	20,075
National History Museum	-	11,824
Tate (British Art Network)	-	1,750
Total revenue grants	<u>922,436</u>	<u>1,055,707</u>
Total other grants	<u>926,436</u>	<u>1,094,707</u>

With the exception of resource grant-in-aid and the indirect fee element of the Northern Ireland Environment Agency revenue grant (£64,103), all of the grants are held in a restricted fund (further detail on restricted funds is provided in note 1). Admissions income is unrestricted.

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

4. INCOME FROM OTHER TRADING ACTIVITIES

	2026 £	2025 £
Sponsorships	<u>6,667</u>	<u>16,000</u>
Trading:		
Retail	1,009,456	1,003,814
Hire of facilities	252,046	256,837
Consultancy fees	2,209	2,003
Photographic sales	26,031	34,927
Events income	70,764	117,598
Franchise income	<u>182,791</u>	<u>167,169</u>
Total trading income	<u>1,543,297</u>	<u>1,582,348</u>

Sponsorship income relates to specific programmes and events and is restricted. During the year, sponsorship income of £6,667 was received from Fermanagh and Omagh District Council in relation to the Bluegrass event held at the Ulster American Folk Park. Trading income is unrestricted.

5. OTHER INCOME

	2026 £	2025 £
Other Income	<u>86,276</u>	<u>81,640</u>

Other income relates to income not readily categorised by the existing splits including, but not limited to, income associated with data and information requests and reimbursement of costs from third parties, which are not grant income in nature. Other income is unrestricted.

6. EXPENDITURE

	Staff costs £	Other direct costs £	Indirect costs £	Depreciation & impairment £	2026 Total £	2025 Total £
Trading	432,366	641,224	55,066	219,671	1,348,327	1,277,441
Collections Services	2,238,107	136,040	267,738	514,192	3,156,077	2,894,385
Curatorial & Education	2,903,976	749,400	272,013	764,001	4,689,390	4,574,201
Experience & Enterprise Development	7,118,007	534,478	917,991	1,668,079	10,238,555	9,681,187
Audience Development	1,466,508	400,747	157,827	394,143	2,419,225	2,206,193
Operations	<u>1,836,525</u>	<u>4,460,256</u>	<u>227,120</u>	<u>1,269,752</u>	<u>7,793,653</u>	<u>6,961,537</u>
	<u>15,995,489</u>	<u>6,922,145</u>	<u>1,897,755</u>	<u>4,829,838</u>	<u>29,645,227</u>	<u>27,594,944</u>

Expenditure on charitable activities was £29,645,227 (2024/25: £27,594,944) of which £1,216,527 was restricted (2024/25: £1,357,676).

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

6. EXPENDITURE (continued)

Staff costs

	Incurring costs £	Capitalised costs £	2026 Total £	2025 Total £
Salaries and wages (includes temporary non-payroll staff)	11,157,264	(114,739)	11,042,525	10,026,964
Social security costs	1,354,437	(15,441)	1,338,996	901,929
Pension costs	3,613,568	(39,831)	3,573,737	3,173,959
Apprenticeship levy	40,231	-	40,231	36,881
Total staff costs	16,165,500	(170,011)	15,995,489	14,139,733

Included in the above costs is £274,797 (2024/25: £264,699) paid in respect of employment agency staff.

Staff costs of £170,011 (2024/25: £70,140) have been capitalised in relation to capital project management time and are not included in resources expended.

The following table shows the number of employees who received salaries and wages greater than £60,000 during the financial year.

Banding	2026 No.	2025 No.
£120,000 - £129,999	1	-
£110,000 - £119,000	-	1
£90,000 - £99,999	2	1
£80,000 - £89,999	-	1
£60,000 - £69,999	8	7
Total	11	10

Further information on staff costs is contained within the Remuneration and Staff Report.

Support costs

	Trading £	Collections Services £	Curatorial & Education £	Experience & Enterprise £	Audience Development £	Operations £	2026 Total £	2025 Total £
Finance/CEO Office/ Human Resources	116,972	568,730	577,812	1,949,998	335,257	482,450	4,031,219	4,179,380
Governance - included in above	6,023	29,287	29,754	100,415	17,264	24,844	207,587	859,580

Governance costs

	2026 £	2025 £
Audit and accountancy fees	74,550	75,300
Other governance costs	133,037	784,280
	207,587	859,580

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

7. NET INCOMING RESOURCES

Net incoming resources is stated after charging:

	2026	2025
	£	£
Auditors' remuneration:		
in respect of external audit services	31,000	29,800
in respect of internal audit	43,550	45,500
in respect of other non-audit services	-	1,382
Stock expensed	463,713	421,540
Depreciation	4,378,664	4,021,652
Amortisation	451,174	539,423
Impairment charges	-	-
(Profit)/loss on disposal of fixed assets	<u>(24,845)</u>	<u>14,337</u>

8. TAXATION

Tax included in Statement of Financial Activities

	2026	2025
	Total	Total
	£	£
Current tax charge/(credit)		
UK Corporation tax on profits for the year	(94,000)	-
Adjustment in respect of prior periods	<u>(140,782)</u>	<u>(70,836)</u>
	<u>(234,782)</u>	<u>(70,836)</u>

Reconciliation of tax

Tax assessed for the year is lower (2024/25: lower) than the standard rate of corporation tax in the UK for the year ended 31 March 2026 of 25% (2024/25: 25%). The differences are explained below:

	2026	2025
	Total	Total
	£	£
Net income/(expenditure) before tax	<u>2,179,944</u>	<u>(2,065,421)</u>
Net income/(expenditure) before tax multiplied by the standard rate of rate in the UK of 25% (2024/25: 25%)	544,986	(516,355)
Effects of:		
Income not subject to tax	(7,756,369)	(6,010,893)
Expenditure not deductible for tax purposes	7,211,383	6,534,794
Losses surrendered for creatives exhibition tax credit	28,250	-
Other tax adjustments, reliefs and transfers	(36,031)	-
Prior period adjustment	(140,726)	(70,836)
Exhibition production tax profit adjustment	(180,246)	-
Movement in deferred tax not recognised	92,246	-
Timing difference	<u>1,725</u>	<u>(7,546)</u>
	<u>(234,782)</u>	<u>(70,836)</u>

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

9. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Land and Buildings £	Permanent Exhibitions £	Fixtures and Equipment £	Motor Vehicles £	Sub Total £	Heritage Assets £	Total £
Cost or valuation							
At 1 April 2025	74,664,929	13,647,255	17,836,814	549,457	106,698,455	16,210,318	122,908,773
Additions	769,405	486,543	815,254	49,411	2,120,613	3,236,103	5,356,716
Disposals	-	-	(3,596,257)	(76,172)	(3,672,429)	-	(3,672,429)
Transfers	-	-	(1,300,174)	-	(1,300,174)	-	(1,300,174)
Impairment	-	-	(1,288)	-	(1,288)	-	(1,288)
Revaluation	(1,349,858)	-	1,042,831	7,604	(299,423)	-	(299,423)
At 31 March 2026	<u>74,084,476</u>	<u>14,133,798</u>	<u>14,797,180</u>	<u>530,300</u>	<u>103,545,754</u>	<u>19,446,421</u>	<u>122,992,175</u>
Accumulated depreciation							
At 1 April 2025	12,074	5,080,801	13,440,106	422,253	18,955,234	-	18,955,234
Depreciation	2,523,062	369,014	1,435,660	50,928	4,378,664	-	4,378,664
Impairment Charges	-	-	(1,288)	-	(1,288)	-	(1,288)
Disposals	-	-	(3,596,257)	(74,056)	(3,670,313)	-	(3,670,313)
Transfers	-	-	(895,236)	-	(895,236)	-	(895,236)
Revaluation	(2,523,062)	-	254,561	(5,999)	(2,274,500)	-	(2,274,500)
At 31 March 2026	<u>12,074</u>	<u>5,449,815</u>	<u>10,637,546</u>	<u>393,126</u>	<u>16,492,561</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>16,492,561</u>
Net book value							
At 31 March 2026	<u>74,072,402</u>	<u>8,683,983</u>	<u>4,159,634</u>	<u>137,174</u>	<u>87,053,193</u>	<u>19,446,421</u>	<u>106,499,614</u>
At 31 March 2025	<u>74,652,855</u>	<u>8,566,454</u>	<u>4,396,708</u>	<u>127,204</u>	<u>87,743,221</u>	<u>16,210,318</u>	<u>103,953,539</u>

Land and buildings at net book value comprise:

	2026 £	2025 £
Long leaseholds	<u>74,072,402</u>	<u>74,652,855</u>

A full valuation for all land and buildings was carried out by Land and Property Services (LPS) at 31 March 2026. The valuations and basis of valuation, across all sites were as follows:

Property	Basis of Valuation	Value £
Ulster Museum	Land at existing use value and buildings at depreciated replacement cost	27,154,251
Ulster Folk Museum	Land at existing use value and buildings at depreciated replacement cost	14,331,162
Ulster Transport Museum	Land at existing use value and buildings at depreciated replacement cost	19,032,794
Ulster American Folk Park	Land at existing use value and buildings at depreciated replacement cost	5,161,485
Residential Centre	Land at existing use value and buildings at depreciated replacement cost	1,642,710
Stores	Land and buildings at existing use value	<u>6,750,000</u>
		<u>74,072,402</u>

All other assets of National Museums NI were revalued in line with appropriate indices. The latest Producer Price Indices available from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) reflect the correction of the issue in the prior year where ONS noted they had identified a problem with the chain-linking methods used to calculate their Producer Price Indices, affecting the years from 2008 onwards.

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

9. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS (continued)

Heritage assets acquired since 1 April 2001 have been capitalised at either purchase cost or at a valuation based on the amount paid by the donor or an estimate of fair value based on the opinion of National Museums NI's specialist staff. The analysis of additions between purchases and donations for the current year and the preceeding four years are summarised below. No assets have been disposed of, depreciated or impaired.

	2026	2025	2024	2023	2022
	£	£	£	£	£
Acquisitions at cost	106,328	147,163	203,786	500,851	623,075
Donated assets at valuation	3,129,775	2,160,447	1,027,890	99,725	442,670
	3,236,103	2,307,610	1,231,676	600,576	1,065,745

10. OPERATING LEASES

Financial commitments under operating leases:

	2026	2025
	£	£
Buildings:		
Not later than one year	38,625	37,781
Later than one year and not later than five years	106,219	144,844
	144,844	182,625
Other:		
Not later than one year	12,149	12,796
Later than one year and not later than five years	21,699	33,255
Later than five years	-	593
	33,848	46,644
Total commitments under operating leases	178,692	229,269

The total expenditure relating to operating leases recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities during 2025/26 is £52,055 (2024/25: £40,391).

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

11. INTANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

Cost or valuation	Computer software £	On-trade licence £	Total £
At 1 April 2025	1,386,582	199,588	1,586,170
Additions	524,012	-	524,012
Disposals	-	-	-
Transfers	1,300,174	-	1,300,174
At 31 March 2026	3,210,768	199,588	3,410,356
Amortisation			
At 1 April 2025	1,169,196	46,940	1,216,136
Charge for year	429,367	21,807	451,174
Disposals	-	-	-
Transfers	895,236	-	895,236
At 31 March 2026	2,493,799	68,747	2,562,546
Net book value			
At 31 March 2026	716,969	130,841	847,810
At 31 March 2025	217,386	152,648	370,034

12. INVESTMENTS

	2026 £	2025 £
Investment in Subsidiary - National Museums Northern Ireland Enterprises Limited	2	2

National Museums NI owns the whole of the issued share capital of National Museums Northern Ireland Enterprises Limited (NMNIEL), a registered company. The registered office of NMNIEL is Administration Office, Ulster Folk Museum, Bangor Road, Holywood, Northern Ireland, BT18 0EY. At 31 March 2026, NMNIEL had net assets totalling £2.

13. STOCK

	2026 £	2025 £
Shop goods for resale	292,079	257,566
Academic publications for resale	7,492	16,549
Maintenance materials and consumables	23,320	30,416
Farm stock	25,322	28,732
	348,213	333,263

14. DEBTORS

	2026 £	2025 £
Trade debtors	459,030	410,546
Prepayments and accrued income	613,871	593,559
Other debtors	440,028	305,548
	1,512,929	1,309,653

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

15. CASH AT BANK AND IN HAND

	2026 £	2025 £
Cash at bank and in hand	<u>4,026,402</u>	<u>2,239,286</u>

16. CREDITORS (amounts falling due within one year)

	2026 £	2025 £
Trade creditors	265,828	814,272
Other taxes and social security	288,653	199,522
Accruals	3,152,881	2,196,532
Deferred income	254,690	117,593
Other creditors	<u>203</u>	<u>2</u>
	<u>3,962,255</u>	<u>3,327,921</u>

Included within the accruals balance is £155,068 for the expected financial outlay following final judgement in the (PSNI v Agnew) legal case in the Supreme Court, and legal advice sought by National Museums NI. This was included in the 2023/24 financial year and remains outstanding at 31 March 2026. The funding of this expected outlay has been provided by the Department for Communities.

Movement on deferred income

	Contract/grant £	Event deposit £	Advance admin charge £	Total £
Balance as at 1 April 2025	33,790	80,053	3,750	117,593
Amounts released from previous years	(4,324)	(73,439)	(3,750)	(81,513)
Incoming resources deferred in the current year	<u>125,499</u>	<u>93,111</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>218,610</u>
Balance as at 31 March 2026	<u>154,965</u>	<u>99,725</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>254,690</u>

Deferred income will be matched and released as and when the contractual obligations have been discharged.

17. PROVISIONS FOR LIABILITIES AND CHARGES

	Total £
Balance as at 1 April 2025	449,921
Provided in year	25,459
Provisions not required written back	-
Utilised in year	<u>(20,403)</u>
Balance as at 31 March 2026	<u>454,977</u>

At the financial year end, a provision has been made in respect of a position with Civil Service Pensions in relation to a claim made against them by a former employee of National Museums NI. Uncertainty over the timing of this settlement has given rise to a provision. Inflationary increases have been assumed in the calculation of the provision.

Analysis of expected timing of discounted flows

	Total £
Less than one year	20,184
Later than one year and not later than five years	77,592
Later than 5 years	<u>357,201</u>
Balance as at 31 March 2026	<u>454,977</u>

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

18. STATEMENT OF FUNDS

	At 1 April 2025 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Revaluation £	Transfers £	At 31 March 2026 £
Restricted Funds						
Collection acquisition fund	16,210,318	3,199,749	-	-	36,354	19,446,421
Government grant for fixed assets	(13,228)	2,188,883	-	-	(2,158,082)	17,573
Exhibition fund	8,566,454	486,543	(369,014)	-	-	8,683,983
Voluntary Exit Scheme fund	3,787	-	-	-	-	3,787
O.L. Nelson Legacy	394,117	-	-	-	-	394,117
P Donald Legacy	237,856	-	-	-	(25,266)	212,590
General fund	41,668	869,000	(847,513)	-	(15,300)	47,855
	<u>25,440,972</u>	<u>6,744,175</u>	<u>(1,216,527)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(2,162,294)</u>	<u>28,806,326</u>
Unrestricted Funds						
Designated fund:						
Board Reserve fund	438,363	150,000	-	-	(29,123)	559,240
Board Reserve capital fund	1,214,882	-	-	-	(71,845)	1,143,037
Undesignated funds:						
Capital reserve	861,423	-	(530,054)	-	-	331,369
Revaluation reserve	51,513,689	-	(559,837)	1,975,077	16,023	52,944,952
Government grant for fixed assets	27,171,689	-	(3,370,933)	-	2,139,943	25,940,699
General fund	(2,213,083)	24,930,996	(23,733,094)	-	107,296	(907,885)
	<u>78,986,963</u>	<u>25,080,996</u>	<u>(28,193,918)</u>	<u>1,975,077</u>	<u>2,162,294</u>	<u>80,011,412</u>
Total Funds	<u>104,427,935</u>	<u>31,825,171</u>	<u>(29,410,445)</u>	<u>1,975,077</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>108,817,738</u>

The transfer of £2,158,082 from Restricted Funds: Government grant for fixed assets, represents the acquisition of assets during the year which have no restrictions on use.

Remaining transfers of restricted funds represent utilisation of funds which fulfil the restricted criteria.

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

19. ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2026 Total £	2025 Total £
Fixed Assets	28,130,404	79,217,022	107,347,426	104,323,575
Current Assets	4,062,406	1,825,138	5,887,544	3,882,202
Liabilities	(1,943,583)	(2,473,649)	(4,417,232)	(3,777,842)
Total Net Assets	<u>30,249,227</u>	<u>78,568,511</u>	<u>108,817,738</u>	<u>104,427,935</u>

20. CAPITAL COMMITMENTS

There were no capital commitments at 31 March 2026 (2024/25: £nil) relating to multi-year capital projects.

21. NOTES TO CASHFLOW

Reconciliation of net income/(expenditure) to net cash provided by operating activities

	2026 £	2025 £
Net income/(expenditure) for the reporting period as per the statement of financial activities	2,414,726	(1,994,585)
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation	4,378,664	4,021,652
Amortisation	451,174	539,423
(Profit)/loss on disposal of fixed assets	(24,845)	14,337
Donated assets	(3,129,775)	(2,160,447)
Increase in stock	(14,950)	(34,211)
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	(203,276)	340,686
Decrease in creditors	(453,934)	(736,086)
Increase in provision	5,056	449,921
Deposit interest receivable	(74,601)	(59,766)
Tax received	(72,056)	-
Net cash provided by operating activities	<u>3,276,183</u>	<u>380,924</u>

Analysis of cash and cash equivalents

	2026 £	2025 £
Cash at bank and in hand	<u>4,026,402</u>	<u>2,239,286</u>

Analysis of change in net debt

	At 1 April 2025 £	Cash flows £	At 31 March 2026 £
Cash	<u>2,239,286</u>	<u>1,787,116</u>	<u>4,026,402</u>

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

22. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

National Museums NI is a Non-Departmental Public Body funded by the Department for Communities.

The Chief Executive is a non-executive director of Strategic Investment Board (SIB). During the year £109,319 was paid to SIB for seconded services to provide Asset Management support (2024/25: £60,463). No money was received from SIB during the year (2024/25: £nil). The Chief Executive is a non-executive director of Tourism Ireland. During the year £3,125 was paid to Tourism Ireland in respect of attendance at trade events (2024/25: £nil) and £2,721 was received as a donation (2024/25: £2,721). The Chief Executive is the Chair and Trustee of Strand Arts Centre. During the year, nothing was paid to Strand Arts Centre (2024/25: £nil) and £150 was received in relation to photographic sales (2024/25: £nil).

The Director of Public Engagement is a director of the Association of Leading Visitor Attractions (ALVA). During the year, the annual membership fee of £1,820 was paid to ALVA (2024/25: £4,284). No money was received from ALVA during the year (2024/25: £nil). The Director of Public Engagement is a director of the Northern Ireland Tourism Alliance (NITA). During the year £3,000 was paid to NITA for membership fees (2024/25: £nil) and no money was received (2024/25: £nil).

Dr Sally Montgomery OBE, Trustee, is a Northern Ireland committee member for National Lottery Heritage Fund. During the year, a grant of £101,500 was received, with £11,914 recognised as grant income and £89,586 as deferred income (2024/25: £18,484 was received in grant income and £195 was received for space hire). No money was paid to National Lottery Heritage Fund (2024/25: £nil).

Conflicts are managed appropriately.

National Museums NI has had a number of transactions with other Government Departments and other Central Government Bodies. These have been mainly with Central Procurement Directorate and Civil Service Pensions Branch within the Department of Finance and Personnel.

23. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

National Museums NI's resources are met through grant-in-aid funding received from the Department for Communities and also through grant funding from other sources and from income generated through admissions, trading activities and donations. National Museums NI does not hold any complex financial instruments. The only financial instruments included in the accounts are receivables and payables, cash and short term investments. Trade receivables are recognised at fair value less a provision for impairment (bad debt). The provision is made when the National Museums NI is of the view that the debt may not be collectable in full, or in part, in accordance with the terms. The organisation has no borrowings and relies primarily on departmental grants for its cash requirements. Other than the financial assets and liabilities which are generated by day to day operational activities, National Museums NI holds no financial instruments.

Liquidity Risk

National Museums NI secures funding for inescapable core activities in advance of expenditure being committed. National Museums NI however relies on Self-Generated Income to discharge its full statutory obligations therefore is exposed to some liquidity risk.

Credit Risk

National Museums NI have credit policies and procedures in place and currently do not extend material credit facilities. National Museums NI is not therefore exposed to any material credit risk.

24. CONTINGENT LIABILITIES

With regards to the (PSNI v Agnew) legal case referred to in Note 16, uncertainty exists in relation to whether interest or any other uplift will become payable on the sums due to the Claimants to reflect the passing of time. As this matter is not agreed, no provision has been made, however a contingent liability is being disclosed in the event that the position changes during the remaining course of settlement proceedings.

There are a number of on-going legal cases which may give rise to future costs but these cannot yet be reliably measured so a contingent liability is being disclosed.

25. EVENTS AFTER THE REPORTING DATE

There were no events since the end of the financial year requiring disclosure.

The Accounting Officer authorised these financial statements for issue on 2 October 2026.