

**NATIONAL MUSEUMS SCOTLAND
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 30 NOVEMBER 2022 AT THE
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF SCOTLAND, EDINBURGH**

Present:

Mr Ian Russell	Chairman
Ms Ann Allen	Trustee
Prof Mary Bownes	Trustee
Mr Graeme Gibson	Trustee
Dr Brian Lang	Trustee
Dr Catriona Macdonald	Trustee
Ms Beth McKillop	Trustee
Ms Jandy Stevenson	Trustee
Prof Ian Wall	Trustee
Dr Laura Young	Trustee

In Attendance:

Dr Chris Breward (CB)	NMS Director
Mr Keith Pentland (KP)	Director of Finance, Planning & ICT
Ms Julie Brown (JB)	Head of Corporate Policy & Performance
Dr Sam Alberti (SA)	Director of Collections
Ms Helen Ireland (HI)	Director of External Relations
Mr Peter Williamson (PW)	Managing Director of NMSE Ltd
Ms Ruth Gill (RG)	Director of Public Programmes
Ms Lynn Smith (LS)	Director of People
Ms Chanté St Clair Inglis	Head of Collections Services (for item 6)
Dr John Giblin	Keeper of Global Arts, Design and Culture (for item 6)
Ms Deborah Wilson	Volunteer Coordinator (for item 7)

Apologies:

Ms Mimi Brophy	Trustee
Mr Adam Bruce	Trustee
Mr Stephen Dando	Trustee

PRESENTATION

Alice Blackwell (Senior Curator, Medieval Archaeology & History) gave a presentation entitled *Late Medieval Collections* and invited questions from the Board. Trustees extended their thanks and appreciation for the presentation.

ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES

1.1 Apologies were received from Adam Bruce, Mimi Brophy and Stephen Dando.

ACTION

ITEM 2 – MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21 SEPTEMBER 2022

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2022 were approved.

ITEM 3 – MATTERS ARISING

3.1 With regard to Minute Items 10.5 and 13.2, the Board noted that the discussion regarding major capital projects and investment priorities would now take place at the February meeting and the follow-up session would be in March.

AA, CB,
KP

ITEM 4 – DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

4.1 It was noted that there were no declarations of interests from Board members in relation to the substantive items on the agenda.

ITEM 5 – DIRECTOR’S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES **NMS (2022) 38**

5.1 The Director presented his report which had been circulated. Highlights included:

- The National Museum of Scotland had attracted over 192,000 visits in October 2022. This was ahead of the October 2019 numbers and the first time we had topped 2019 figures since the Covid-19 pandemic.
- The *Anatomy: A Matter of Death and Life* exhibition (open 2 July to 30 October) had exceeded its visitor target.
- Our *Monkey Business* exhibition on tour in Tampere, Finland had received a record-breaking number of visitors.
- The successful opening of the new *Bernat Klein: Design in Colour* exhibition on 5 November.

5.2 The Director and gave a verbal update on the NMS Annual Open Meeting held on 24 November and the recent Museums Association conference.

ITEM 6 – REQUEST FOR TRANSFER OF MEMORIAL POLE **NMS (2022) 39**

6.1 Brian Lang (in his role of the Chair of the Acquisitions Committee) and Sam Alberti presented the paper which had been circulated regarding the requested permanent transfer of A.1930.291, the memorial pole, to the Nisga’a Nation.

6.2 It was noted that:

- In accordance with National Museums Scotland’s [Transfer Procedure](#), information about the history and cultural context for the Nisga’a memorial pole, due diligence investigation into the request, and legal and external expert advice had been commissioned and received.
- Following a detailed review of the request and the evidence provided, the Board’s Acquisitions Committee had recommended that the memorial pole be permanently transferred to the Nisga’a Museum.

6.3 Trustees acknowledged the importance and sensitivity of the request under consideration. Following discussion, the Board:

- Agreed to the permanent transfer of the memorial pole to the Nisga'a Museum in British Columbia, subject to the approval of the Scottish Government.
- Agreed that the Director should proceed with a request to the Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, External Affairs & Culture regarding the required Ministerial approval of the transfer.
- If the Cabinet Secretary approved the transfer, resolved that the Director would write to the representatives of the Nisga'a Nation, Nisga'a Museum and Nisga'a Lisims Government, on behalf of the Board, to confirm that National Museums Scotland was willing to permanently transfer the memorial pole to the Nisga'a Museum.
- Noted that next steps would be discussed with the representatives of the Nisga'a Nation as soon as possible.

CB, HI

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ITEM 7 – VOLUNTEER REPORT 2020-22

NMS (2022) 40

7.1 Deborah Wilson presented the new-style report which had been circulated. She highlighted the range of support provided by our volunteers, including events, curatorial, collections care, school activities and guiding, as well as the diversity of the people who gave us their time.

7.2 The Board expressed their appreciation of the valuable contribution of our volunteers to National Museums Scotland and asked that their gratitude be conveyed to them. Trustees looked forward to meeting volunteers from three of our sites over lunch, and hearing about the varied work they have been undertaking for the organisation.

ITEM 8 – STRATEGIC PLANNING UPDATE

NMS (2022) 41

8.1 The Board of Trustees noted the paper which provided an update on progress following the launch of the new Strategic Plan 2022-27 and the process by which the organisation was planning at the next levels, monitoring progress and measuring performance.

ITEM 9 – FINANCIAL REPORT

NMS (2022) 42

9.1 Keith Pentland presented the report which had been circulated.

9.2 The Board noted:

- That current information suggested we will break even in 2022/23.
- The forecast reflected the recent increase in the pay awards and additional funding from the Scottish Government to contribute towards the costs.

9.3 With regard to 2023/24, Keith Pentland reported that Scottish Government would be announcing its budget on 15 December so it would be another few weeks until the implications of our Grant-in-Aid settlement on our budgets would be fully understood. The Board of Trustees would be kept fully updated on this.

CB, KP

ITEM 10 – ANNUAL REPORT & ACCOUNTS 2021/22

NMS (2022) 43

10.1 Keith Pentland presented the final, audited draft of the Annual Report & Accounts for 2021/22 which had been circulated.

10.2 The Board noted:

- The requested letter of comfort from Scottish Government which had been received.
- The additional narrative requested by the Board's Audit & Risk Committee in the financial statements on sustainability/going concern matters, which had been approved by Audit Scotland.
- Some minor tweaks to wording with regard to updated tense and reflecting changes requested at the Board meeting on 21 September.

10.3 The Annual Report and Accounts for 2021/22 and the accompanying Letter of Representation were approved.

ITEM 11 – COLLECTIONS & RESEARCH REPORT

NMS (2022) 44

11.1 Trustees noted the Collections & Research Report.

ITEM 12 – COLLECTIONS DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2022-27 NMS (2022) 45

12.1 Sam Alberti presented the circulated cover paper setting out the planned approach to developing and researching our collections in the context of the new Strategic Plan over the next five years.

12.2 The Board of Trustees noted:

- The Collections Development Strategy and Research Strategy were designed to match each other, so that collections development and research would be undertaken with end users in mind.
- The strategies proposed that the majority of our collections development and research would be thematic over the next five years,
- The intention was to make our collecting and research more sustainable.

12.3 There followed a wide-ranging discussion including the importance of Scotland being the starting point, ensuring the distinctiveness of the work of our Museums and our connection with Scotland, accreditation, digitisation of our collections, and the detail of the sustainability-related wording in the documents.

12.4 The Board of Trustees approved the Collections Development Strategy 2022-27, subject to the agreed amendments.

SA

ITEM 13 – RESEARCH STRATEGY 2022-27

NMS (2022) 46

13.1 Trustees considered the Research Strategy together with the Collections Development Strategy. [see minute items 12.1 – 12.3 above]

13.2 The Board approved the Research Strategy 2022-27, subject to the agreed amendments.

SA

ITEM 14 – REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES**(i) Personnel & Remuneration Committee**

14.1 The Chairman noted that the draft minutes of the Personnel & Remuneration Committee meeting held on 12 October 2022 had been circulated.

14.2 It was reported that, following a decision made at the meeting, the Committee had now formally completed the change of its name to People & Remuneration Committee.

14.3 The Director gave a verbal update on possible industrial action following a national ballot and vote on pay, pension and redundancy matters by the PCS Union. Trustees would be kept updated on this matter.

CB, LS

(ii) Finance Committee

14.4 The Chairman noted that the draft minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 01 November 2022 had been circulated.

(iii) Estates Committee

14.5 The Chairman noted that the draft minutes of the Estates Committee meeting held on 02 November 2022 had been circulated.

14.6 Ann Allen (Chair of the Estates Committee) reported that the meeting had included a site visit at the National Museums Collection Centre, Granton.

(iv) Acquisitions Committee

14.7 The Chairman noted that the draft minutes of the Acquisitions Committee meeting held on 08 November 2022 had been circulated.

(v) Audit & Risk Committee

14.8 The Chairman noted that the draft minutes of the Audit & Risk Committee meeting held on 09 November 2022 had been circulated.

(vi) National Museums Scotland Enterprises Ltd Board

14.9 The Chairman noted that the draft minutes of the NMSE Ltd Board meeting held on 18 November 2022 had been circulated.

14.10 Jandy Stevenson (Chair of the NMS Enterprises Ltd Board) confirmed that retail was performing very well. With regard to Hospitality & Events, Trustees noted that the entire sector had been experiencing very short lead times since Covid-19 which created challenges for planning.

(vii) Nominations & Governance Committee

14.11 The Chairman reported on his latest thoughts on the next Trustee recruitment round.

ITEM 15 – FORWARD PROGRAMME OF BUSINESS

NMS (2022) 47

15.1 The Board noted the Forward Programme of Business.

ITEM 16 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

16.1 There was nothing to report.

ITEM 17 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

17.1 The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 01 February 2023.