

**NATIONAL MUSEUMS SCOTLAND  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 27 SEPTEMBER 2023 AT THE  
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF SCOTLAND, EDINBURGH**

**Present:**

Mr Ian Russell	Chairman
Ms Ann Allen	Trustee
Prof Mary Bownes	Trustee
Ms Mimi Brophy	Trustee
Mr Adam Bruce	Trustee
Prof Monojit Chatterji	Trustee
Mr Stephen Dando	Trustee
Dr Bridget McConnell	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 & Resources
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 Michelle Hausrath (MH)	Head of People (for Item 12)

**Apologies:**

Mr Graeme Gibson	Trustee
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**PRESENTATION**

Stig Walsh (Senior Curator, Vertebrate Palaeobiology) gave a presentation on: *Jurassic Island: fossils from the Isle of Skye tell the story of a vanished world* and invited questions from the Board. Trustees extended their thanks for the presentation.

**ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES**

1.1 Apologies were received from Graeme Gibson.

**ITEM 2 – MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 07 JUNE 2023**

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 07 June 2023 were approved.

**ACTION**

**ITEM 3 – MATTERS ARISING**

3.1 Matters arising from the last meeting were taken under the main agenda items.

**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 (2023) 23**

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

- Across our four museums, NMS has welcomed 1.67 million visitors this financial year-to-date, and visits were up 10% year on year for the period April -August.
- Significant national and international coverage of the *Beyond the Little Black Dress* exhibition since its opening at the end of June.
- Scottish Government had approved annual funding for Maths Week Scotland in June.
- The reopening of Kilmartin Museum in Argyll on 4 September, where one third of the material on display was on long-term loan from NMS.

5.2 The Board noted that the House of Ni’isjoohl Memorial Pole had been returned to the Nisga’a Nation. NMS had welcomed a Nisga’a delegation on 28 August, to perform a spiritual ceremony to prepare the pole for its journey. The ceremony was attended by the Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs & Culture. Trustees congratulated all those colleagues involved for their hard work and sensitive handling of the return and noted the positive feedback from the rest of the museum sector.

5.3 The Director reported that he would be attending a meeting of the Scottish Parliament’s Constitution, Europe, External Affairs & Culture Committee the next day, at which culture leaders would be giving evidence to the Committee as part of its pre-budget scrutiny of the 2024/25 Scottish Government budget. In addition, he was participating in new sessions with other culture leaders and civil servants, organised by Scottish Government to progress its Public Service Reform agenda.

5.4 The Director reported that, as part of our regular schedule of internal audits, we had recently audited our security processes and were satisfied that, while we can never be complacent, they are robust and that our staff have a good understanding of them.

**ITEM 6 – FINANCIAL REPORT**

**NMS (2023) 24**

6.1 Keith Pentland presented the report which had been circulated.

6.2 The Board noted:

- Current information suggested we would break even, subject to Scottish Government funding Pay Policy.
- Discussions were ongoing with the trade unions and the Scottish Government in relation to Pay.

**ITEM 7 – BUDGET 2023/24**

**NMS (2023) 25**

7.1 Keith Pentland presented the paper which had been circulated. He confirmed that:

- The 2023/24 budget remained unchanged from the paper presented in June, with a deficit caused by funding of pay increases.
- No progress had been made in relation to the level of increase or how this would be funded.
- The Payroll Section of the paper (section 4) had been updated to provide a summary of discussions with the Trade Unions and the Scottish Government, otherwise the rest of the budget remained as it was.
- The Executive Team would consider potential savings that may be required to make up the deficit if the pay award was not fully funded by Scottish Government.
- The budget included the forecasted contribution from NMS Enterprises Ltd.
- Assumptions for Income and Costs had not changed since the draft paper was presented to the Board in March.

7.2 The Board of Trustees approved the 2023/24 budget in principle, subject to Pay Policy and appropriate funding from the Scottish Government.

7.3 The Chairman reported that, if there were any significant developments before the next Board meeting, he may convene an online meeting of the Board.

**ITEM 8 – ANNUAL REPORT & ACCOUNTS 2022/23: UPDATE** **NMS (2023) 26**

8.1 The Annual Report and Accounts for 2022/23 were noted, prior to their formal approval at the November Board of Trustees' meeting.

8.2 In the meantime, Trustees were invited to send any queries and comments to Keith Pentland.

**ITEM 9 – CORPORATE RISK REGISTER**

**NMS (2023) 27**

9.1 Keith Pentland presented the paper and explained that:

- The Corporate Risk Register was reviewed formally by the Audit & Risk Committee at every meeting and was reviewed by the Executive Team twice a year.
- During 2022/23, the Internal Auditors had conducted a Risk Management audit and had recommended that the Board of Trustees reviewed the Register once a year.

9.2 Following a brief discussion, the Board welcomed the current Corporate Risk Register and the general risk assessment, and it was agreed that the specific comments would be explored further at the next Audit & Risk Committee meeting.

JS, KP

**ITEM 10 – COLLECTIONS & RESEARCH REPORT** **NMS (2023) 28**

10.1 Trustees noted the Collections & Research Report.

**ITEM 11 – SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY 2023-30** **NMS (2023) 29**

11.1 Ruth Gill presented the paper on the new Sustainable Development Policy Statement and Organisational Strategy which had been circulated. Trustees welcomed the new Strategy and congratulated Ruth Gill and all the colleagues involved in its development.

11.2 There followed a wide-ranging discussion including funding for sustainability improvements, staff resourcing to support the implementation of the Strategy, the challenge of the decarbonisation of heating, and the importance of benchmarking.

11.3 The Board of Trustees:

- Approved the new Sustainability Strategy 2023-30.
- Noted that it would be communicated and rolled out over the next 6 months, and that a distilled version would be produced for the public domain.

**ITEM 12 – EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION:  
ANNUAL REPORT** **NMS (2023) 30**

12.1 Michelle Hausrath presented the annual report on Equality & Diversity 2022/23 which had been circulated.

12.2 The Board noted with approval the progress made by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group in the second year of the current four-year reporting period (2021-25).

**ITEM 13 – REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES**

**(i) People & Remuneration Committee**

13.1 The Chairman noted that the approved minutes of the People & Remuneration Committee meeting held on 30 May and the draft minutes of the meeting held on 17 July 2023 had been circulated.

**(ii) Nominations & Governance Committee**

13.2 The Chairman noted that the draft minutes of the Nominations & Governance Committee held on 05 June 2023 had been circulated.

13.3 The Chairman highlighted that our two new Trustees would commence their terms of appointment on 01 October as planned, and thus be attending the next Board meeting.

**(iii) National Museums Scotland Enterprises Ltd Board**

13.4 The Chairman noted that the draft minutes of the NMS Enterprises Board meeting held on 09 June 2023 had been circulated.

13.5 Jandy Stevenson (Chairman of the NMSE Ltd Board) reported that NMSE Ltd was currently on track to exceed its budget target at year-end.

**(iv) Estates Committee**

13.6 The Chairman noted that the draft minutes of the Estates Committee meeting held on 11 July 2023 had been circulated.

**(v) Finance Committee**

13.7 The Chairman noted that the draft minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 02 August 2023 had been circulated.

**(vi) Audit & Risk Committee**

13.8 The Chairman noted that the draft minutes of the Audit & Risk Committee meeting held on 23 August 2023 had been circulated.

**(vii) Acquisitions Committee**

13.9 It was noted that the next meeting of the Acquisitions Committee would be held on 24 October 2023.

**ITEM 14 – BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING DATES: 2023-26 NMS (2023) 31**

14.1 Trustees noted the Board meeting dates.

**ITEM 15 – FORWARD PROGRAMME OF BUSINESS NMS (2023) 32**

15.1 The Board noted the Forward Programme of Business.

15.2 The Chairman gave a verbal update on the plan for the informal pre-Board/presentation sessions.

**ITEM 16 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

16.1 There was no other business.

**ITEM 17 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

17.1 The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 29 November 2023.