

**National Museums Scotland  
Board Of Trustees**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 5 JUNE 2024  
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
Prof Manuel Fernández-Götz	Trustee
Mr Graeme Gibson	Trustee
Dr Bridget McConnell	Trustee
Ms Beth McKillop	Trustee
Prof Richard Oram	Trustee
Ms Jandy Stevenson	Trustee
Prof Ian Wall	Trustee
Dr Laura Young	Trustee

**In Attendance:**

Dr Chris Breward (CB)	NMS Director
Ms Julie Brown (JB)	Head of Corporate Policy & Performance
Ms Ruth Gill (RG)	Director of Public Programmes
Ms Helen Ireland (HI)	Director of External Relations
Mr Keith Pentland (KP)	Director of Finance & Resources
Lorraine Russell (LR)	Manager of Health & Safety (for item 8)

**SITE TOUR**

Sarah Laurenson (Principal Curator of Modern & Contemporary History), Calum Robertson (Senior Curator of Modern & Military History) and Sarah Teale (Exhibitions & Displays Manager) led a tour of the National War Museum. Trustees extended their thanks and appreciation for the tour and to the site team for their warm welcome and hospitality.

**ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES**

1.1 There were no apologies.

**ITEM 2 – MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON  
27 MARCH 2024**

**NMS (2024) 2<sup>nd</sup> Mtg**

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 27 March 2024 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 TRUSTEES**

**NMS (2024) 12**

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

- Across our four museums, we welcomed 3,127,600 visitors in the financial year 2023/24, 1% above forecast and 3% up on 2022/23. This was the third highest visitor figure total in the past 10 years.
- The National Museum of Scotland retained its title as the most visited museum in the UK outside of London and the most popular visitor attraction in Scotland. It was also 23<sup>rd</sup> in the Art Newspaper listing of the most popular museums and galleries in the world.
- The Edinburgh Science Festival included displays, talks, a sculpture and a large-scale sell-out After Hours event, attracting 57,000 participants.
- *Monkeys! A Primate Story* opened at the Natural History Museum in Kuopio, Finland on 30 March, running until 29 September.

5.2 The Director gave a verbal update on the meeting in early May with Kaukab Stewart MSP who had been appointed as Minister for Culture, Europe & International Development in February. He confirmed that, following the Scottish Cabinet reshuffle on 08 May, Deputy First Minister, Kate Forbes, would now be responsible for taking decisions regarding the National Collections institutions. The Director also reported on the recent appointment of the new Director of Culture in Scottish Government and the most recent funding discussions with our Sponsor Team.

5.3 The Board received the year-end reports on the 2023/24 annual Operational Plan and Key Performance Indicators, and the new Plan and KPI targets for this financial year. The Chairman emphasised that the 2023/24 reports set out what had been achieved in Year 2 of the organisation’s 5-year Strategic Plan (2022-27).

**ITEM 6 – FINANCIAL REPORT**

**NMS (2024) 13**

6.1 Keith Pentland presented the report which had been circulated and confirmed it represented the 2023/24 year-end position for 2023/24.

6.2 The Board noted:

- Current information suggested we would make a small loss.
- The increased levels of commercial and philanthropic income.
- The additional 2% increase to team members earning less than £65k was paid in January.

6.3 Keith Pentland gave a progress update on the different elements of the organisation's cost savings plan which had been considered necessary to balance our budget for 2024/25. Trustees recognised the impact on the organisation of the difficult decisions that have had to be taken over recent months.

**ITEM 7 – COLLECTIONS & RESEARCH REPORT** **NMS (2024) 14**

7.1 Trustees noted the Collections & Research Report.

**ITEM 8 – HEALTH & SAFETY: ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24** **NMS (2024) 15**

8.1 The Board noted with approval the contents of the annual report on Health & Safety 2023/24 and recognised the huge breadth of the Museum's activities.

8.2 Lorraine Russell reported that she was planning to develop the wellbeing section of the report for next year with the Head of People.

**ITEM 9 – REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES**

**(i) Estates Committee**

9.1 The Chairman noted that the draft minutes of the Estates Committee meeting held on 8 March had been circulated.

**(ii) People & Remuneration Committee**

9.2 The Chairman noted that the draft minutes of the People & Remuneration Committee meeting held on 30 April had been circulated.

**(iii) Nominations & Governance Committee**

9.3 The Chairman noted that the draft minutes of the Nominations & Governance Committee meeting held on 1 May had been circulated.

9.4 The Chairman gave a verbal report on the current recruitment round for new Trustees. It was noted that the interviews would be taking place later in the month and the selection panel's recommendations would then go to Ministers for final decision. The Chairman undertook to keep the Board updated on the new appointments.

**(iv) Finance Committee**

9.5 The Chairman noted that the draft minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 13 May had been circulated.

**(v) Collections Development Committee**

9.6 Beth McKillop (Chair of the Collections Development Committee) gave a verbal update on the meeting held on 22 May.

**Chair**

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

9.7 Jandy Stevenson (Chair of the NMSE Ltd Board) gave a verbal update on the recent meeting held on 31 May. She reported that the 2023/24 accounts had been approved, and that NMSE Ltd was already ahead of budget for 2024/25 following a positive start to the year.

**ITEM 10 – BOARD EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW: OUTCOMES      NMS (2024) 16**

10.1 The Board of Trustees noted:

- The biennial Board Effectiveness Review for 2024 has been completed.
- The agreed actions arising from the Review.

**ITEM 11 – FORWARD PROGRAMME OF BUSINESS      NMS (2024) 17**

11.1 The Board noted the Forward Programme of Business.

11.2 The Chairman announced the intention to hold a strategy session in the autumn, perhaps adjacent to the Board meeting on 27 November. More information would be provided in due course.

**Chair,  
CB, KP,  
JB**

**ITEM 12 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

12.1 There was no other business.

**ITEM 13 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

13.1 The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 2 October 2024 at the National Museum of Scotland.