

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Minutes of a meeting of the Board of Trustees held on Friday, 22 May 2009, at 1130 hrs in the Board Room at the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum.

Trustees Present:

Mr Dan Harvey	(Chairman)
Mr Tom Shaw	(Vice Chairman)
Dr Alastair Walker	
Mr Pat Carvill	
Ms Linda Beers	
Lt Col Harvey Bicker	
Mrs Wendy Osborne	
Dr Richard McMinn	
Mr David Moore	
Ms Anne Peoples	
Dr Brian Scott	

In Attendance:

Mr Tim Cooke	(Chief Executive)
Dr Jim McGreevy	(Director of Collections & Interpretation)
Mr Mark Wilkinson	(Acting Director of HR & Organisational Development)
Mrs Joanne Sloan	(Acting Director of Finance & Planning)
Mrs Gillian McLean	(Director of Marketing, Trading and Communications)
Mr Marshall McKee	(Director of Operations)
Mr Paddy Gilmore	(Director of Learning & Partnership)
Mr John Gilmour	(Director of Development)
Mr Oliver McKenna	(Business Planning Manager)
Ms Heather Henning	(Committee Secretary)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from the following Trustees, Dame Geraldine Keegan, Mr Joe Kelly, Mr Neil Bodger and from the Director of Sport, Museums and Recreation, Ms Hazel Campbell.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13 February 2009

Board members approved the minutes of the meeting held on 13 February 2009.

Collections Care Award

In advance of the main agenda, the Director of Collections and Interpretation advised the Board that National Museums Northern Ireland had received the Best Collections Care Award at the 2009 Museum Awards in Dublin for the Ulster Museum decant. Dr McGreevy said this was a wonderful achievement and praised all of the staff involved in the decant for their hard work and dedication. Dr McGreevy said that the award was also significant given that the decant had been undertaken entirely by the museum's own staff in contrast to other national museums which had used outside contractors to carry out the decant on similar projects. The Board of Trustees congratulated the Executive and all of the staff involved in the decant.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 13 February 2009

Art Gallery

Mr Carvill asked if there had been any response by the Northern Ireland Arts Council to the Board's response to the terms of reference, prepared by the Arts Council, for the development of a feasibility

report for the National Gallery project. The Chief Executive said that he had nothing further to report at present.

4.0 BUSINESS OF EXECUTIVE

4.1 2008/09 Business Plan Quarterly Update

Trustees noted that the Quarterly Update reflected the fourth quarter of the 08/09 financial year and provided a progress report on the objectives contained within the Business Plan. The Chief Executive reviewed the museum's overall performance in both the final quarter and across the year noting the outcomes against the KPIs.

Dalchoolin Gallery

In response to a query about the museum's grant application to the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) to upgrade the museum's exhibition in the Dalchoolin Gallery at the UFTM, the Director of Development said that the NITB were examining the bid in terms of full appraisal.

MLA (Museums, Libraries and Archives Council) Accreditation

Dr McGreevy said that work in this area had been progressing steadily and that the accreditation application was due to be submitted during the last week in June in respect of Armagh County Museum, Ulster American Folk Park and Ulster Folk and Transport Museum. It would be the intention to achieve provisional accreditation for the Ulster Museum as the assessment of user services and visitor facilities could not be undertaken until the museum was operational.

4.2 Corporate Planning

4.2.1 Draft Business Plan 2009-10 and Draft Corporate Strategy 2009-12 and Consultation Process

The Chairman advised the Board that he had received a letter from the Permanent Secretary of DCAL advising him that DCAL were content to formally approve the 2009/10 Business Plan subject to a few minor amendments.

The letter also referred to the Corporate Strategy 2009/12 and gave general approval noting a need to consider maritime and military heritage as part of the review of wider development plans.

The Chief Executive advised the Board that the museum had consulted on the draft Corporate Strategy 2009/12 and had received positive and constructive replies from Derry City Council, Newry and Mourne District Council and the University of Ulster together with offers of partnerships. It was agreed that copies of the final document would be circulated to Board members in due course.

4.3 Ulster Museum Update

The Director of Development reported that work on the Ulster Museum was progressing well with the main contractor, Pattons, scheduled to hand over the building week commencing 23 May 2009. Following the handover ownership of the site and responsibility for security, public access and health and safety would revert to National Museums Northern Ireland. The fit-out of the building, by Beck Interiors, would continue until the end of August and be handed over to the museum in stages. The recant of objects into the galleries had commenced with a number of the larger objects such as the Armada canon already in place. An internal "Countdown Group" comprising staff from the various directorates had been set up to plan and work towards the re-opening of the Ulster Museum. The capital spend on the project to date was £17.2m however fund-raising was continuing to enhance areas of the project. The media had recently toured the building and subsequent press and TV coverage had been very positive. It was agreed that another tour of the building for Board members would be organised during June.

4.4 Capital Funding 2009-10

The Director of Development reported that DCAL had confirmed that National Museums could proceed with its plans to implement its capital programme of £7.623m during the current financial year despite the fact that only £5.623m of funding had been confirmed as part of the June monitoring round. The Executive had made the assumption that the remaining funding would come from the sale of Malone Buildings as DCAL had indicated that should the sale of the Malone property not be completed within the current financial year it would endeavour to find the shortfall in the interim. DCAL had also recently approved the appointment of consultants in respect of the Collections Resource Centre.

The Director of Development circulated details of the intended capital expenditure over the next three years. Trustees noted that security systems were also being extended to the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, Armagh County Museum and the Ulster American Folk Park. The Chairman advised Trustees

that he had approved a number of purchase orders on behalf of the Board (archive copy attached to minutes) all of which formed part of business cases already approved by DCAL.

4.5 Sale of Malone Buildings

The Director of Operations said that Land and Property Services (LPS) were advising the museum on the sale of Malone Buildings (as per the current guidelines on the Disposal of Surplus Public Sector Property). To date there had been two expressions of interest (one from Queens University and one from the Housing Executive acting on behalf of a Housing Association). The expression of interest on behalf of the Housing Association had been withdrawn however due to a lack of funding. The Director of Operations explained the options of (a) placing the property on the open market (which required Departmental approval) and (b) the public sector clearing arrangement route. Queens University had just discovered however that the legislative powers enabling them to compulsorily purchase public sector buildings under the public sector clearing arrangements had not been transferred from the Department of Education (DENI) to the Department of Education and Learning (DEL). Given that the legislative powers required by Queens University to purchase the building under the public sector clearing arrangements were not in place, the Director of Operations said that LPS was proposing that the property be valued and put on the open market. He also stated that the Department was being routinely appraised of the situation.

Following a brief discussion of the options Trustees approved the recommendation by LPS to have the property valued and placed on the open market. The Director of Operations agreed to continue to update the Board of Trustees and DCAL on the matter.

4.6 Acquisition Policy

Trustees noted that this was the first time that the museum had tabled a joint Acquisition and Disposal Policy for approval. The Director of Collections and Interpretation explained that the combined policy was a key requirement of National Museums' application for MLA Accreditation which was scheduled for submission on 14 July 2009. The policies on which the joint policy was primarily based had been approved by the Board of Trustees on 27 February 2004, although the Disposal Policy had been reviewed in the interim (28 November 2008) to take account of changes to the Museum Association's (MA) ethical advice on disposal of collections and the PAC recommendation to subject the policy to public consultation.

The Director of Collections and Interpretation said that a number of adjustments had been made following guidance from the former MLA Accreditation Manager. The description of collections had been changed and was now based on broad subject areas/curatorial departments as opposed to sites, the specific mention of organisations whose collecting policies would be taken into account by National Museums Northern Ireland and the removal from Disposal Category 3 of 'objects for which there is not adequate documentation'. The Director of Collections and Interpretation said that responses to the public consultation on the Disposals Policy were positive and no changes to the policy were considered necessary. The joint Acquisition and Disposal Policy was approved by the Board of Trustees.

4.7 Education and Training Inspectorate Report

The Director of Learning and Partnership reported that the Deputy Secretary of DCAL had written to the Chief Executive endorsing the work of the museum following the recent inspection of the museum provision by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI). The letter also suggested that the Head of Museums Branch meet with the Director of Learning and Partnership to review any relevant "areas of improvement" identified in the report and agree an action plan which would subsequently be sent to ETI for comment and this work was in hand. The Director of Learning and Partnership said that DCAL had historically used mainly quantitative KPIs to set and agree targets with its arms length bodies but planned to establish a system which used a new set of qualitative and quantitative measures. The Director of Learning and Partnership assured the Board that the recommendations by ETI would be taken on board and were part of the museum's future plans within the Learning and Partnership directorate.

4.8 Live and Learn Big Lottery Funding Update

The Director of Learning and Partnership announced that National Museums Northern Ireland had been one of the seventeen successful projects awarded funding under The Big Lottery's Live and Learn Programme. The museum had been awarded a grant of just under £986k over five years to support a project that had been developed in partnership with Age Concern to engage older people who faced barriers to participation in cultural activities. The funding would enable four staff to be employed within the Learning and Partnership directorate to develop relationships with older people through outreach and to offer a range of museum programmes. The Board of Trustees welcomed the funding from The Big Lottery's Live and Learn programme.

The Director of Learning and Partnership then sought the approval of the Board of Trustees to submit a £2m bid to Peace 3 under the theme of 'Acknowledging and Dealing with the Past.' If successful this funding would enable the museum to enhance the programming and resources that support the Troubles Gallery. The bid was being developed in partnership with the BBC, who would digitise and provide access to 30 years of archive news footage, and with WAVE, who would bring expertise in dealing with victims and survivors groups. The Board of Trustees approved the application to Peace 3.

4.9 Museums Policy Update

The Chief Executive advised the Board of Trustees that there had been only one meeting of the Museums Policy Steering Group to date.

4.10 Reform and Modernisation Process

4.10.1 Opening Hours Review Update

The Chairman referred to the response from NIPSA regarding the Review of Opening Hours that had been circulated to Board members. Following a brief discussion of the content of the letter, the Board concluded that it was not their role to enter into dialogue with the union as the Executive was already negotiating with the union through the recognised industrial relations process. The Chairman agreed to respond to NIPSA, on behalf of Board members, to this effect.

4.10.2 VER Phase 4

The Acting Director of HR & OD briefed the Board on the funding available to launch the fourth phase of the voluntary early retirement programme (VER) and the eligibility of staff. Mr Wilkinson said that Civil Service Pensions had agreed the final launch document which would be issued later that afternoon and those staff who agreed to accept the offer would exit the organisation at the end of September.

4.11 Approval of Loans

The Board formally approved the request for a number of loans to and from the museum's collection (archive copy attached to minutes).

5. BUSINESS OF CHAIRMAN

5.1 Northern Bank Lectures

The Chairman referred to the recent Northern Bank Lecture series which had been delivered by an excellent group of speakers and well supported by the public. The Chair also acknowledged the participation of Anne Peoples who hosted the lecture in Portstewart and the marketing teams from National Museums and the Northern Bank for organising the series.

5.2 Meeting with Minister

The Chairman reported that he had attended an accountability meeting with the Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure, Mr Gregory Campbell. The Minister had demonstrated an interest in a number of key areas of National Museums activities including performance targets and strategic objectives, the progress of the new Board and the reopening of the Ulster Museum.

5.3 Sub-Committees

The Chairman reminded the Board of Trustees that he was continuing to examine the work of the various sub-committees of the Board with a view to possible restructuring in light of changing priorities for the group.

5.4 Trustee Appraisal Forms

The Chairman requested that Trustees return their completed appraisal forms to him at their earliest convenience as DCAL had been given an assurance that completed forms would be returned by the end of May 2009.

6. TRUSTEES SUB-COMMITTEES

6.1 Audit Committee

6.1.1 Approval of Minutes of meeting held on 13 February 2009

Trustees approved the minutes of the meeting held on 13 February 2009.

6.1.2 Verbal report of meeting held on 22 May 2009

The Chairman of the Audit Committee, Dr Scott said that many of the items discussed at the meeting had already been addressed within the current agenda. The Committee welcomed the fact that the Department had approved the first stage of the consultancy work on the Collections Resource Centre and the Visitor Centres and the business case for the Cultra Manor project. The Committee noted that significant progress had been made in respect of the organisational structure although disappointingly one or two posts remained unfilled. The Chairman had also advised the Committee that the terms of reference for the Board of Trustees' sub-committees would be reviewed as part of KPMG's follow-up on Corporate Governance. The Director of Finance and Planning provided Committee members with a verbal report on two minor incidents of theft at the UFTM site. The museum's internal auditors had also given an overall "satisfactory" assurance over the internal control environment within National Museums Northern Ireland based on the internal audit undertaken during 2008/09. KPMG had also complimented the Finance directorate on the reduction in audit recommendations within the current year.

6.2 Staffing Committee

6.2.1 Verbal report of meeting held on 20 February 2009

The Chairman of the Staffing Committee reported that the meeting dealt with five main items, namely Recruitment, VER, Reform and Modernisation, HR Policies and Procedures and Learning and Development. Committee members noted that management was awaiting a response from the trade union in respect of the draft Attendance Management Policy following which a draft Recruitment and Selection Policy would be submitted for consultation thus completing the suite of policy and procedures to be implemented by HR & OD. Committee members acknowledged the excellent progress that had been made in the implementation of these policies. The development of a Performance Management System (PMS) was ongoing and was expected to be operational by the beginning of the 2010/11 financial year.

6.3 General Purposes and Finance Committee

6.3.1 Verbal report of meeting held on 20 February 2009

Board members noted that the meeting had been chaired by Mr Shaw in the absence of the Chairman and Mr Shaw gave the following verbal report. The Acting Director of Finance & Planning briefed committee members on the financial report for the 10 month period to 31 January 2009 and the Chief Executive assured committee members that the budget was being managed towards a balancing position. The meeting also received an update on the Ulster Museum project, the capital programme and the proposed disposal of Malone Buildings. In discussing the 10 year development strategy Dr Walker had suggested that it would be useful to maintain contact with the Nomadic Trust. The Chief Executive also referred to recent correspondence in relation to military heritage and the committee supported the suggested way forward in the Chief Executive's response to Major Gray as a clear and constructive way to explore the parameters of the proposal from the Royal Irish Regiment (RIR) without compromising the museum's 10 year development plan. The Chair of W5, Dr Walker also briefed the committee on a proposal by the Deputy Secretary of DCAL regarding funding arrangements for W5. The recent report by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) into the education provision by National Museums Northern Ireland was noted and welcomed by the Committee.

6.4 Marketing, Development and Fund-raising Committee

6.4.1 Approval of minutes of meeting held on 27 November 2008

Trustees approved the minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2008.

6.4.2 Approval of minutes of meeting held on 19 February 2009

Trustees approved the minutes of the meeting held on 19 February 2009.

6.4.3 Verbal report of meeting held on 23 April 2009

The Chair of the Marketing, Development and Fund-raising Committee, Ms Beers said that many of the items discussed at the April meeting had been addressed within the Board's agenda. The Committee welcomed the exceptional visitor figures for the last financial year and the fact that in 2007/08 National Museums Northern Ireland outperformed National Museums Scotland, Liverpool and Wales in terms of visitors as a percentage of the population. It was agreed that the Marketing, Development and Fund-raising Committee would meet in early September rather than the beginning of October given that the Ulster Museum would be opening in the autumn.

7.0 Whowhatwherewhenwhy (W5)

7.1 Minutes of W5 Board meeting held on 22 January 2009

Trustees noted the minutes of the W5 Board meeting held on 22 January 2009.

7.2 Minutes of W5 Board meeting held on 27 February 2009

Trustees noted the minutes of the W5 Board meeting held on 27 February 2009.

7.3 Minutes of W5 Board meeting held on 27 March 2009

Trustees noted the minutes of the W5 Board meeting held on 27 March 2009.

7.4 Verbal report of meeting held on 24 April 2009

The Chairman of W5, Dr Walker advised the Board of Trustees that W5 had attracted over 231,000 visitors during 08/09 exceeding its target of 208,000 and when corporate and outreach visitors were added the figure increased to over 260,000 visitors using W5's service and facilities. Dr Walker said that discussions between National Museums and OTC were ongoing and the relationship between the two parties was positive. National Museums had also agreed to examine W5's development in the context of the museum's 10 year development strategy. Trustees noted that this was the first year that W5 had been subjected to an audit by the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) and Dr Walker thanked the Financial Controller, Mrs Erwin and her staff for their efforts.

Dr Walker said that the Wind, Wings and Waves had been launched on 7 May and had been very well received. Dr Montgomery, Chief Executive of W5 had also secured a major grant from the Wellcome Trust, in partnership with the Centre for Excellence for Public Health at Queens University Belfast to examine teenager's perceptions in relation to skin cancer, high cholesterol and genetic factors. Trustees noted that W5 had also made another grant application to the Wellcome Trust that was a collaborative project with four other centres and the Royal College of Pathology.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Northern Bank – Business Investment Account

Resolution: The Board of Trustees approved the resolution to the Northern Bank Ltd to open a Business Investment Account (archive copy attached to minutes).

9. DATE, TIME AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Board of Trustees will be held on Friday 11 September 2009, at 1130 hrs, in the Board Room at the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum.

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Copied to: Those Present, Dr Brian Scott, Ms Anne Peoples, Mr Joe Kelly and File.