

# 23 June 2006

## NATIONAL MUSEUMS NORTHERN IRELAND BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Minutes of a meeting of the Board of Trustees held on Friday, 23 June 2006, at 9.30 am, in the Point Board Room at W5, 2 Queen's Quay, Belfast.

### Trustees Present:

Mrs Margaret Elliott (Chairman)  
Sir Kenneth Bloomfield (Vice-Chairman)  
Miss Linda Beers  
Lt Col Harvey Bicker  
Mr Dan Harvey  
Mr Sean Neeson  
Mrs Wendy Osborne  
Mr Tom Shaw  
Dr Alastair Walker  
Mr Bill Montgomery

### In attendance:

Mr Tim Cooke (Chief Executive)  
Mrs Jude Helliker (Director of HR & Organisational Development)  
Mr John Gilmour (Director of Development)  
Mr Marshall McKee (Director of Operations)  
Ms Amanda Lilley (Director of Finance & Planning)  
Mrs Gillian McLean (Director of Marketing, Communications & Trading)  
Dr Jim McGreevy (Director of Collections & Interpretation)  
Mr Oliver McKenna (Business Planning Manager)  
Mrs Heather Henning (Committee Secretary)

### 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from two trustees, namely Professor Eithne McLaughlin and Dame Geraldine Keegan.

The Chairman welcomed the following staff recently appointed to senior posts within the organisation -

- Mrs Gillian McLean, Director of Marketing, Communications & Trading
- Dr Jim McGreevy, Director of Collections & Interpretation
- Mr Oliver McKenna, Business Planning Manager

### 2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 24 March 2006

The Board approved the minutes of the meeting held on 24 March 2006.

### 3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 24 March 2006

It was agreed that any matters arising from the minutes of the September 2005 meeting would be addressed within the agenda of the meeting.

### 4. BUSINESS OF EXECUTIVE

## 4.1 Executive Summary

The Chief Executive reported visitor figures of slightly less than 750,000 for 05/06 which exceeded the KPI (key performance indicator) target of 728,000. In addition the website had received almost 1.9 million visits which was just short of the target which was just in excess of 2 million visits. Board members noted that this was the first time that page visits had been used as previous targets had been based on page impressions. This was an encouraging performance and an area that the organisation would focus upon and develop in the future. The Chief Executive drew the Board's attention to the development of a bespoke website on the *Titanic* collections at the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum that was expected to attract considerable interest. The development of the website was being funded by PEACE II as part of the international marketing initiative.

During the summer period, the Ulster American Folk Park would be celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary and the planned celebrations were attracting significant publicity and interest for the museum. The Folk Park's annual *Bluegrass Festival* had been awarded *NITB Event of the Year 2006* and National Museums as a whole was awarded the *NITB Marketing Excellence Award – (Large Organisation) 2006* at the recent NITB awards.

**Centralised Storage Facilities:** The Chief Executive advised the Board that following recommendations by the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) that new centralised storage facilities be developed at the Cultra site, the Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) was being commissioned to initiate a detailed feasibility study and to prepare a business case for DCAL and DFP.

**Accommodation:** Trustees welcomed the announcement that DCAL had recently approved the accommodation strategy business case and secondly that North Down Borough Council had approved the planning application for modular office accommodation at the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum. The Chief Executive said these approvals were a major step forward that would support the much needed business merger of the organisation by enabling the organisation to develop a corporate headquarters with the required physical space to match business need.

**Recruitment:** In response to a query by the Chairman about recruitment planned for the incoming quarter, the Director of HR & Organisational Development said that recruitment of planned posts was governed by the Staff Protocol. Posts would be advertised internally in the first instance but in the event of no suitable candidates being appointed, the posts would then be advertised externally.

**Fund-raising Advisory Committee:** The Chairman also referred to the Fund-raising Advisory Committee and was advised by the Director of Development that he expected the Committee to be finalised by the end of the summer.

The Chairman emphasised the importance of delivering both the accommodation strategy and the Ulster Museum project on time and within budget and asked that the Board be advised promptly of any timing issues.

## 4.2 Draft Business Plan 2006/2007

The Chief Executive reported that 2006/2007 Business Plan had been redrafted following some comments from DCAL and resubmitted to the Department for approval. A copy of the approved plan would be re-issued to Board members in due course.

## 4.3 Draft Corporate Strategy 2006/2009

The Chief Executive said that the previous plan had been significantly redrafted to set out clearly the change programme that would be implemented throughout the organisation over the next few years and would now be referred to as the Draft Corporate Strategy 2006/2009. The aim of the document was to enable key groups such as DCAL, DFP, staff, outside funders, Ministers and other stakeholders to grasp with ease and clarity the

strategies and plans that would be implemented within the organisation over the next few years. Incorporated within the strategy were the key elements of the Strategic Outline Case (SOC), a restatement of the organisation's mission and the key strategic aims which were the mainstay of the last draft corporate plan. The Chief Executive said that the museum was principally about people and collections and its mission was to connect the collections, knowledge and public spaces of the museum with the widest possible audience to inform and inspire their understanding of the past, the present and the future of people, culture, places and of the natural environment here and across the world. The Chief Executive referred to four key areas of transformation identified within the strategy namely public engagement, physical spaces, organisational structures, systems and processes and financial sustainability and described the various strategies that had been developed to support each transformation process.

Subject to Board approval, the next step would be to submit the draft corporate strategy to DCAL for approval subject to some amendment/adjustments to KPIs resulting from the NIAO report on Collections Management and subsequent PAC hearing. Mr Harvey asked if it was the intention to give every member of staff a copy of the strategy. The Chief Executive said that when the Corporate Strategy 2006/09 was approved by DCAL the document would form part of a major communication exercise within the organisation.

The Draft Corporate Strategy 2006/2009 was approved unanimously by the Board of Trustees who congratulated the Executive Team on producing a very clear and concise document.

#### **4.4 Organisation Structure**

The Director of HR and Organisational Development presented the broad structure that had been developed to deliver the major programmes within the new Corporate Strategy by directorate.

Trustees noted that provisional agreement had been reached with Civil Service Pensions to roll out a further phase of the VER Scheme in late July with exits taking place in early autumn. A third phase of the scheme would follow with exits in December 2006/January 2007 depending upon the closure of the Ulster Museum.

The Director of HR and Organisational Development said that providing the Board was content with the broad themes of the proposed structure it was the Executive's intention to meet with staff to deliver more information regarding the proposed structures. The Board of Trustees welcomed the presentation by the Director of HR and Organisational Development and approved the proposed structures with the understanding that they would be further developed.

#### **4.5 PAC Hearing on Collections Management**

The Chief Executive referred to the NIAO report on Collections Management which had been circulated to Board members and reassured Trustees again that 90% of the museum's collections were held in conditions that were excellent, good or acceptable and the remainder of the collection were items of a lesser value that were unlikely to be affected by environmental conditions. The Chief Executive felt this message had not come through strongly enough in the report and that there had not been enough qualitative assessment of the relationship between the collections and the stores. The Chief Executive advised the Board that the PAC Committee would issue its report in the autumn and that the museum would respond with an action plan.

Trustees welcomed the fact that the PAC hearing had highlighted a number of issues which had concerned the Board and Executive for some time. The Chief Executive said that the museum would also be examining the possibility of disposals as part of a wider rationalisation programme of the collections however he had explained to the PAC Committee hearing that under the code of Ethics and Guidelines of the Museums and Libraries Archive Council (MLA), which provides the museum with its accreditation, that it

was not acceptable for a museum to dispose of its collections with the principal aim of generating funds.

#### **4.6 Ulster Museum Project**

The Director of Development advised the Board that the Stage II Application for the Ulster Museum Project had been submitted to HLF with the outcome expected to be announced at the end of September 2006. If successful, this would leave a funding shortfall for the project of just under £3m. Board members welcomed the news that the Wolfson Foundation had just awarded the project a grant of £100k and the Chief Executive and Head of Appeals were exploring a number of other fund-raising opportunities.

It was the intention to close the museum at the end of August 2006 to facilitate the decant of staff and objects and detailed surveys of the building. The Director of Development reported that temporary storage facilities, comprising 15,000 sq metres, had been leased for a 3-5 year period to house the Ulster Museum collections. The completion date for the project remained Spring 2009.

Ms Beers enquired about the communications strategy that was being used to publicise access to the collections during the closure of the Ulster Museum. The Director of Marketing, Trading and Communications said that a new website page for the Ulster Museum was under construction and would be launched in September alongside a PR programme emphasising the outreach programme planned during the period of closure. Various exhibitions had been organised to maintain and develop the museum's existing audience and these would be supported by a number of smaller travelling exhibitions. Mr Shaw referred to the activities undertaken by the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam during its period of closure and the Chief Executive and Director of Collections and Interpretation agreed to investigate their approach to ascertain the benefits.

#### **4.7 Smithsonian Folklife Festival**

The Director of Marketing, Communications and Trading advised the meeting that Northern Ireland had been invited to participate in the 2007 Smithsonian Folklife Festival. The festival takes place in the centre of America's National Mall surrounded by the U.S. Capitol, the Washington Monument and the Smithsonian's national museums and attracts more than one million visitors annually to the 10 day event. DCAL were responsible for co-ordinating Northern Ireland's presence at the event under the umbrella of Rediscover Northern Ireland. Participants from both the public and private sectors had been invited to take part in the event and National Museums was working closely with DCAL to identify a suitable event and venue that would best showcase the museum and its collections.

### **5. BUSINESS OF THE CHAIRMAN**

#### **5.1 Annual Pay Award SCS Staff**

This item was discussed under *Reserved Business*.

#### **5.2 Lease of Temporary Storage Facilities**

The Board signalled its retrospective approval of the 3-5 year lease of temporary storage facilities lease to house the Ulster Museum collections during the period of closure.

#### **5.3 Membership of Committees of National Museums Northern Ireland**

The Chairman advised the Board that Sir Kenneth Bloomfield had indicated his wish to retire from the Board of National Museums Northern Ireland at the end of the month. On behalf of the Board, Mrs Elliott thanked Sir Kenneth Bloomfield for his commitment and enthusiasm as a Trustee of the museum during his term of office especially in the key roles of Vice-Chairman of the Board and Chairman of the Audit Committee.

As a result of Sir Kenneth's retirement, the Chairman tabled various changes to the Sub-Committees of National Museums Northern Ireland and W5 which were approved by the Board.

Board members approved two further nominations by the Chairman namely that Mr Bill Montgomery represent National Museums on the Fund-raising Advisory Committee and the election of Mr Dan Harvey as Vice-Chairman of the Board of Trustees.

## **6. TRUSTEES' SUB-COMMITTEES**

### **6.1 Staffing Committee**

#### **6.1.1 Approval of minutes of meeting held on 19 May 2006**

Board members approved the minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2006.

### **6.2 General Purposes and Finance Committee**

#### **6.2.1 Approval of minutes of meeting held on 10 February 2006**

Board members approved the minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2006.

#### **6.2.2 Verbal report of the meeting held on 19 May 2006**

The verbal report of this meeting was deferred until the next Board meeting.

### **6.3 Audit Committee**

#### **6.3.1 Approval of minutes of meeting held on 27 March 2006**

Board members approved the minutes of the meeting held on 27 March 2006.

#### **6.3.2 Verbal report of the meeting held on 23 June 2006**

The verbal report of this meeting was deferred until the next Board meeting.

### **6.4 Marketing, Development and Fund-raising Committee**

#### **6.4.1 Approval of minutes of meeting held on 21 March 2006**

Board members approved the minutes of the meeting held on 21 March 2006.

#### **6.4.2 Verbal report of the meeting held on 18 May 2006**

The verbal report of this meeting was deferred until the next Board meeting

## **7. WHOWHATWHEREWHENWHY (W5)**

### **7.1 Minutes of W5 Board meeting held on 21 February 2006**

Board members noted the minutes of the W5 Board meeting held on 21 February 2006.

### **7.2 Minutes of W5 Board meeting held on 24 March 2006**

Board members noted the minutes of the W5 Board meeting held on 24 March 2006.

### **7.3 Minutes of W5 Board meeting held on 25 April 2006**

Board members noted the minutes of the W5 Board meeting held on 25 April 2006.

### **7.4 Verbal report of W5 Board meeting held on 18 May 2006**

The verbal report of this meeting was deferred until the next Board meeting.

## **8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

### **8.1 Collections Sub-Committee**

Mrs Osborne referred to previous discussion about the creation of a Sub-Committee to discuss collections. The Chief Executive said there had been some discussion about stream-lining and broadening the activity of some of the committees and suggested that collections could be incorporated into one of the existing committees. The Chairman suggested that Mrs Osborne discussed the matter in further detail with the Chief Executive.

### **8.2 Resolution to establish an E-Banking facility**

The Board approved the resolution by the Audit Committee for the supply of an electronic banking service known as "Business eBanking" between the Northern Bank Ltd and the Ulster Museum.

## **9. DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Chairman advised Board members that a new business planning schedule of meetings would be circulated to each Trustee in due course.