

24 June 2005

MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES OF NORTHERN IRELAND BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Minutes of a meeting of the Board of Trustees held on Friday, 24 June 2005, at 9.30 am, at Armagh County Museum.

Present:

Mrs Margaret Elliott (Chair)
Miss Linda Beers
Mr Harvey Bicker
Sir Kenneth Bloomfield
Mr Dan Harvey
Mr Sean Neeson
Ms Wendy Osborne
Mr Tom Shaw
Dr Alastair Walker

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 (Acting Director of Finance)
Ms Jenny Carmichael (Minute Secretary)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Dame Geraldine Keegan and Mr Bill Montgomery.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 15 MARCH 2005

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2005 had been circulated to Trustees in advance of the meeting. Subject to the Chief Executive making some minor amendments and to the recording of one item under Reserved Business, on the proposal of Sir Kenneth Bloomfield, seconded by Mr Shaw, the minutes of the meeting of 15 March 2005 were accepted as a true record and approved.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 15 MARCH 2005

There were no matters arising from the minutes that would not be covered under later agenda items.

4. BUSINESS OF EXECUTIVE

4.1 Executive Summary

The Executive Summary was taken as read. The Chief Executive drew attention to the following points:

a) **Visitor Figures:** a total of 810,530 people visited MAGNI during 2004/05. This was an exceptional performance across all sites, setting a new record for the second, consecutive year;

b) **Web Site:** the method of recording the number of virtual visitors to the MAGNI web site had been changed from counting page impressions to recording visits, a much more widely

accepted performance indicator;

c) **Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Phase I Bid:** MAGNI had been advised late in March that its Phase I bid to the HLF for the refurbishment of the Ulster Museum had been successful. The Chief Executive paid tribute to the Director of Development and his team for all their work in securing this funding. Trustees noted that the deadline for lodging the bid for Phase II was 5 April 2006;

d) **Specimen Acquisitions:** MAGNI had been successful in purchasing two items of special interest at auction. The first, for the UFTM archives, was a Gaumont newsreel film showing The Titanic immediately prior to completion in 1912. This had been purchased for £13,000, £3,000 of which had been secured from Belfast City Council. The second item was a silver cup, dating from 1792, for the collections at ACM;

e) **Awards:** W5 had won the Northern Ireland Tourist Board Visitor Attraction of the Year Award, and both it and UAFP had also been highly commended in three other award categories. The Chief Executive congratulated staff on this outstanding success;

f) **ICT Infrastructure:** the introduction of a MAGNI-wide Area Network, together with a Local Area Network at the Ulster Museum, had made a major difference to the working lives of staff and had greatly improved internal communication. The Chief Executive thanked the Director of Operations and the ICT Committee, under the Chairmanship of Dr Peter Crowther, for all their work in achieving this significant step forward.

In response to a query from the Chair regarding the modernisation programme and possible interim arrangements, the Chief Executive advised Trustees that, while it would be his preference to proceed immediately with the filling of the new Directorial posts, given the delays being experienced in securing DCAL approval, it might be necessary to introduce interim measures to reduce the risks associated with ongoing gaps in key management areas. Mr Shaw advised Trustees that this matter had also been discussed at some length by the Staffing Committee, who were concerned at the impact on staff of the ongoing delay, especially given the significant agenda associated not only with the reform programme but also the refurbishment project. It was the Committee's view that some interim measures were needed to ensure the safe delivery of that project.

Sir Kenneth Bloomfield welcomed the proposed pilot waste recycling project at Cultra and recommended that it be given significant publicity on its introduction.

4.2 Strategic Outline Case 2005-2011

This item was discussed under 'Reserved Business'.

4.3 Ulster Museum Project

The Director of Development reported that MAGNI's Stage I application to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) had been successful and had secured a development grant of £186,000, to be used in the preparation of the Stage II application for a grant of £4½ million. The deadline for submission of the application was 6/4/06 and the total project was expected to cost £11½ million.

HLF had provided clear guidelines regarding the type of information required in the Stage II application and this included architectural drawings, a detailed Business Case and proposals for the accommodation of the collections during the project. The Director of Development advised Trustees that the architectural team would be appointed over the summer months with the assistance of the Central Procurement Department.

The Director of Development advised Trustees that once the Business Case was approved, a decision would have to be taken regarding whether or not to close the Ulster Museum during the refurbishment work. This might prove necessary for reasons of safety of staff,

public and collections, and to assist delivery of the project within time and budget. The removal of the collections would be a major logistical exercise, requiring careful planning. Trustees noted that the Minister was keen to be involved in the public announcement of the refurbishment plans.

Trustees accepted that it might be necessary to close the Ulster Museum during the refurbishment period and authorised the Chief Executive to take the final decision and to make public the proposals through the Department. Provided the Business Case was approved, it was expected that the announcement would be made in late July or early August.

4.4 Approval of Loans

The Board of Trustees approved the schedule of loans to and by the Ulster Museum, as set out in the schedule dated 24 June 2005.

5. BUSINESS OF CHAIR

5.1 Schedule of Meetings for MAGNI Board of Trustees 2005/06: noted.

5.2 Visit of Minister to MAGNI: Chair's report noted.

5.3 MAGNI Insurance: following a procurement exercise, the insurance brokers, Marsh Ltd, had been awarded the contract to provide MAGNI's insurance requirements, at a cost of £149,000, of which £89,000 referred to the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum. On the proposal of Sir Ken Bloomfield, seconded by Mr Harvey, Trustees approved the awarding of the contract to Marsh Ltd.

5.4 Use of Seal: Trustees approved the use of the seal in the renewal of the lease of the store at the Channel Commercial Park, owned by Titanic Properties Ltd, at a cost of £22,000.

6. REVIEW OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

The Director of Operations drew Trustees' attention to the document, The Review of Public Administration in Northern Ireland - Further Consultation (March 2005), which had been circulated in advance of the meeting, and also to his discussion paper prepared to assist Trustees in considering the options set out in the Review, particularly with regard to the future of MAGNI. The closing date for submission of responses to the Review Team was 30/9/05. Decisions in relation to the Review were likely to be taken early in 2006, for implementation gradually by 2009.

Trustees noted that the Review concentrated on the future of local government and of the health and education sectors in Northern Ireland, and that decisions on these areas were likely to be driven by political considerations, outside the influence of MAGNI. However, the Review did also consider the reduction of the number of executive non-departmental public bodies in Northern Ireland with a view to increasing accountability and improving efficiencies within the Province's public services. The options for the future of MAGNI were set out in Appendix 6 of the Review.

Trustees considered the nature and extent of their response. They agreed unanimously that MAGNI should continue as an independent integrated organisation, as per the terms of The Museums and Galleries (Northern Ireland) Order 1998, and authorised the Director of Operations to prepare a response along these lines. A copy of the response would be circulated to Trustees in due course.

7. TRUSTEES' COMMITTEES

7.1 General Purposes and Finance Committee

7.1.1 Approval of minutes of meeting held on 17 May 2005

The Board of Trustees approved the minutes of the meeting of 17 May 2005.

7.2 Staffing Committee

7.2.1 Approval of minutes of meeting held on 17 May 2005

The Board of Trustees approved the minutes of the meeting of 17 May 2005. Mr Shaw, Chair of the Staffing Committee, reviewed the above minutes, making specific reference to the discussion regarding the impact on staff of the capital development project at the Ulster Museum. He advised Trustees that the Executive Team was seeking means of ensuring that the impact would be positive, giving staff opportunities to learn new skills and gain additional experience. The Director of Human Resources & Organisational Development planned also to discuss these issues with the trade union, NIPSA.

7.3 Audit Committee

7.3.1 Approval of minutes of meeting held on 15 March 2005

The Board of Trustees approved the minutes of the meeting of 15 March 2005.

7.4 Marketing, Development and Fundraising Committee

7.4.1 Approval of minutes of meeting held on 24 May 2005

The Board of Trustees approved the minutes of the meeting of 24 May 2005.

Mr Neeson, Chair of the Marketing, Development and Fundraising Committee, tabled information on the National Register of Historic Vessels and its core collection.

8. WHOWHATWHEREWHENWHY (W5)

8.1 Minutes of W5 Board meeting held on 25 February 2005

The Board of Trustees noted the minutes of the W5 Board meeting held on 25 February 2005.

8.2 Minutes of W5 Board meeting held on 22 March 2005

The Board of Trustees noted the minutes of the W5 Board meeting held on 22 March 2005.

8.3 Minute of W5 Board meeting held on 22 April 2005

The Board of Trustees noted the minutes of the W5 Board meeting held on 22 April 2005.

8.4 Verbal Report of W5 Board meeting held on 20 May 2005

This item was discussed under 'Reserved Business'.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No other items of business were raised.

10. DATE, TIME AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Board of Trustees would take place on 30 September 2005 at 11.00 am at the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum.

The meeting ended at 12.00 noon.