

**NATIONAL MUSEUMS SCOTLAND  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 01 FEBRUARY 2023 AT THE  
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF SCOTLAND, EDINBURGH**

**Present:**

Mr Ian Russell	Chairman
Prof Mary Bownes	Trustee
Ms Mimi Brophy	Trustee
Mr Adam Bruce	Trustee
Mr Stephen Dando	Trustee
Mr Graeme Gibson	Trustee
Dr Brian Lang	Trustee
Dr Catriona Macdonald	Trustee
Ms Beth McKillop	Trustee
Ms Jandy Stevenson	Trustee
Prof Ian Wall	Trustee (from item 6 onwards)
Dr Laura Young	Trustee

**In Attendance:**

Dr Chris Breward (CB)	NMS Director
Mr Keith Pentland (KP)	Director of Finance, Planning & ICT
Ms Julie Brown (JB)	Head of Corporate Policy & Performance
Mr Peter Williamson (PW)	Managing Director of NMSE Ltd
Ms Ruth Gill (RG)	Director of Public Programmes

**Apologies:**

Ms Ann Allen	Trustee
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**PRESENTATION**

Geoff Belknap (Keeper of Science & Technology) and Julie Gibb (Assistant Curator, Science) gave a presentation entitled *The Howarth Looms Photography Collection* and invited questions from the Board. Trustees extended their thanks and appreciation for the presentation.

**ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES**

1.1 Apologies were received from Ann Allen.

**ITEM 2 – MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 30 NOVEMBER 2022**

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2022 were approved.

**ACTION**

**ITEM 3 – MATTERS ARISING**

3.1 Minute Item 6

The Director reported on the discussions held to date to progress the transfer of the Memorial Pole to the Nisga'a Museum in British Columbia and responded to questions from Trustees.

3.2 Minute Items 12 and 13

A request was made for the final versions of the two approved strategies to be circulated to Trustees.

SA

**ITEM 4 – DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

4.1 Laura Young declared an interest in a potential acquisition [ref. Paper NMS (2023) 01].

**ITEM 5 – DIRECTOR'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES**

**NMS (2023) 01**

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

- Visits to the National Museum of Scotland over November and December 2022 exceeded those in the same period 2019 by 3%, evidence of the extraordinarily strong post-Covid recovery made by our largest site.
- The *Doctor Who: Worlds of Wonder* exhibition opened on 10 December.
- The Natural History Museum in Kuopio, Finland, confirmed their hire of *Monkey Business* exhibition in 2024.

5.2 The Director gave a verbal update on:

- The progress made to date on the fundraising for a potential high-profile acquisition.
- A recent meeting with the Chairman and John-Paul Marks (the new Permanent Secretary to the Scottish Government).

**ITEM 6 – FINANCIAL REPORT**

**NMS (2023) 02**

6.1 Keith Pentland presented the report which had been circulated.

6.2 The Board noted:

- Current information suggested a surplus for 2022/23.
- The forecast reflected the increase in the pay awards and increased profit from NMS Enterprises Ltd.

**ITEM 7 – DRAFT BUDGET 2023/24**

**NMS (2023) 03**

7.1 Keith Pentland presented the paper which had been circulated.

7.2 The Board of Trustees noted:

- The 2023/24 budget was being developed.
- The deficit position would be considered by the Executive Team after the Scottish Government confirmed the pay award and the extent to which it would be funded. Any remaining shortfall would be considered, and spending cut where required.

- A detailed plan for the Backlog Maintenance needed to be agreed in conjunction with the Estates Committee.
- An updated budget with forecasts for 2024/25 and 2025/26 would be reviewed by the Finance Committee on 02 March, prior to coming to the Board meeting on 22 March for approval.

KP

7.3 There followed a discussion regarding the impact of inflationary pressures and also the Scottish Government's new Public Services Reform agenda.

**ITEM 8 – COLLECTIONS & RESEARCH REPORT**

**NMS (2023) 04**

8.1 Trustees noted the Collections & Research Report.

8.2 The Director reported on the BBC's recent *Winterwatch* TV programme which had raised the profile of our natural history expertise and research.

**ITEM 9 – CAPITAL PROJECTS: INVESTMENT PLANS**

**NMS (2023) 05**

9.1 Keith Pentland introduced the paper which set out National Museums Scotland's capital investment plans. It outlined four large-scale projects centred around: the National Museum of Flight; the Scotland Galleries; carbon reduction; and the National Museums Collection Centre.

9.2 Trustees noted that:

- The Executive Team's initial plan had been to present a follow-up paper at the next meeting to seek their views on the prioritisation of the four projects.
- There had been a reappraisal of this approach in recognition that the external world had changed in recent times, principally around funding.
- A new plan had been formulated to help all stakeholders understand the organisation's capital ambitions and longer term aims, allowing internal teams to focus on short and medium-term delivery, while acknowledging that some aspirations would now take longer to achieve.
- The proposed way forward had been debated by the Estates Committee and had its support.
- The National Museum of Rural Life was not a focus for major capital investment in the short to medium term, but the theme of food production would be reviewed.

CB, RG

9.3 Following a detailed and wide-ranging discussion, the Board agreed:

- The organisation would now take a concurrent phased approach to progressing all 'projects' within current resource constraints through the next 3-5 years, whilst being open to opportunities that may enable us to speed one or more projects up.
- It would like to receive regular updates on progress and pace in the approach that will be taken with the Scotland Galleries.
- Masterplan designs would be commissioned in 2023/24, to accompany the development of a case for funding.
- Each project would follow due process for governance and be brought back through the relevant committees, and if appropriate the Board, for further scrutiny once the details had been worked through.

CB, KP

**ITEM 10 – REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES**

**(i) Estates Committee**

10.1 The Board noted that the Estates Committee had met on 11 January to debate the draft of the ‘Capital Projects: investment plans’ paper [NMS (2023) 05].

**(ii) Acquisitions Committee**

10.2 It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on 27 February 2023.

**(iii) Finance Committee**

10.3 It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on 02 March 2023.

**(iv) Audit & Risk Committee**

10.4 Jandy Stevenson (Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee) reported that the internal auditors were currently looking at risk management.

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

10.5 Jandy Stevenson (Chair of NMS Enterprises Ltd) confirmed that NMSE Ltd was performing well and now ahead of its planned budget target for 2022/23.

**(vi) People & Remuneration Committee**

10.6 Mary Bownes (Chair of the Personnel & Remuneration Committee) updated Trustees on the People Directorate.

**(vii) Nominations & Governance Committee**

10.7 The Chairman reported on the forthcoming Trustee recruitment round and undertook to share details when these were ready.

IR, JB

**ITEM 11 – FORWARD PROGRAMME OF BUSINESS**

**NMS (2023) 06**

11.1 The Board noted the Forward Programme of Business.

11.2 The Chairman highlighted the Board ‘strategy/away’ day on 28 September, which would be preceded by the Board meeting and also a Trustees’ dinner on 27 September.

Note

**ITEM 12 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

12.1 There was nothing to report.

**ITEM 13 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

13.1 The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 22 March 2023.