

**National Museums Scotland
Board Of Trustees**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 26 MARCH 2025
AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF SCOTLAND, EDINBURGH**

Present:

Mr Ian Russell	Chair
Ms Mimi Brophy	Trustee
Dr Hermione Cockburn	Trustee
Ms Judith Cruickshank	Trustee
Mr Stephen Dando	Trustee
Ms Beth McKillop	Trustee
Ms Sally Mackay	Trustee
Ms Jandy Stevenson	Trustee
Prof Ian Wall	Trustee

In Attendance:

Dr Chris Breward (CB)	NMS Director
Dr Sam Alberti (SA)	Director of Collections
Ms Michelle Eaves (ME)	Corporate Support Manager
Ms Emily Freeman (EF)	Manager, Treasure Trove Unit
Ms Ruth Gill (RG)	Director of Public Programmes
Mrs Michelle Hausrath (MH)	Head of People
Ms Helen Ireland (HI)	Director of External Relations
Dr Rebecca Jones (RJ)	Keeper, Scottish History and Archaeology
Mr Antony Lee (AL)	Acting Manager, Treasure Trove Unit
Mr Keith Pentland (KP)	Director of Finance & Resources

Apologies:

Ms Ann Allen	Trustee
Prof Manuel Fernández-Götz	Trustee
Mr Graeme Gibson	Trustee
Dr Bridget McConnell	Trustee
Prof Richard Oram	Trustee
Dr Laura Young	Trustee

PRELIMINARIES

The Chair welcomed everyone to the Board meeting.

PRE-MEETING SESSION

Trustees received a presentation from the *Scottish History & Archaeology Keeper and Treasure Trove Unit* which included an update on processes and recent finds:

- Rebecca Jones, Keeper, Scottish History and Archaeology
- Antony Lee, Acting Manager, Treasure Trove Unit
- Emily Freeman, Manager, Treasure Trove Unit

Trustees extended their thanks for the presentation.

ACTION

ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Ann Allen, Manuel Fernández Götze, Graeme Gibson, Bridget McConnell, Richard Oram and Laura Young.

The meeting was quorate.

ITEM 2 – MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 5 FEBRUARY 2025

NMS (2025) 1st Mtg

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2025 were **approved**, (*subject to the amendment that Bridget McConnell was present at the meeting*).

ITEM 3 – MATTERS ARISING

3.1 Matters arising from the last meeting were discussed under agenda item 6 of this meeting.

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.

Dr Bridget McConnell declared that she is Chair of the Hunterian which had received a grant from the National Fund for Acquisitions, towards the restoration of the John Knox painting, *Glasgow Fair*.

ITEM 5 – DIRECTOR'S REPORT TO TRUSTEES

NMS (2025) 06

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

Impact

- Across our four museums, we have welcomed 3 million visits in the financial year to the end of February, 8% ahead of forecast and up 4% on the same period in 2023/24.

- Our announcement of the newly translated runic inscription of four arm rings from the Galloway Hoard reached far and wide, including a mention in his speech to the Scottish Labour Conference by the Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer quoting the runic inscription translated as *“This is the community’s wealth”*.

National & International

- As part of our National Training Programme, a one-day symposium *Collecting Environmental Change: Case Studies from Scotland and Europe* (13 March) explored how museums are developing collections and exhibitions that represent the impacts of, and responses to, environmental change.

Digital Media

- A light-hearted Instagram reel encouraging visitors to spend time enjoying the displays at NMoS achieved ‘virality’ i.e. reaching over 100k views, plus 8k likes, and 62 enthusiastic comments.

Public Programmes

- Climate Change for All, a fully funded Scottish Government initiative aimed to engage families and older audiences in climate change conversation. We engaged nearly 6,000 people through this project.
- After a bumpy start in hurricane weather, Audubon’s Birds of America has closed at the Museum of Fine Arts in St Petersburg, Florida. The exhibition is currently in transit to Houston. The deinstall went smoothly and we expect their visitor figures and other evaluative data shortly.

The Director gave a verbal update on Public Service Reform, including news from the Symposium he had attended in Glasgow in February.

The Cabinet Secretary would be attending the opening of the Monkeys exhibition in June 2025.

The Chair invited Questions on the Director’s Report

ITEM 6 – FINANCIAL REPORT

NMS (2025) 07

The Board noted the Finance Report which had been circulated and the Chair invited questions on it.

ITEM 7 – DRAFT BUDGET 2025-2026

NMS (2025) 08

7.1 Keith Pentland presented the 2025-26 draft Budget which had been presented to the Finance Committee in February before coming back to this Board Meeting for approval.

7.2 The Board was invited to note and comment on the paper.

7.3 The Chair thanked Keith Pentland and the Finance team for all their hard work and Trustees formally **approved** the Budget 2025-26.

ITEM 8 – COLLECTIONS & RESEARCH REPORT

NMS (2025) 09

8.1 Trustees noted the Collections & Research Report and congratulated the Collections team on the quality and diversity of the publications.

ITEM 09 – COLLECTIONS DISPOSAL JUSTIFICATION

NMS (2025) 10

9.1 Trustees noted the Collections Disposal Justification Report, and the Board were invited to ask questions on the paper.

9.2 Trustees **approved** the recommended disposal, subject to the risks and actions discussed being reported upon on a regular basis.

SA

ITEM 10 – TRANSFER PROCEDURE

NMS (2025) 11

10.1 Trustees noted the report regarding Transfer Procedure which had been circulated, and the Board were invited to ask questions on the paper.

10.2 The Board **approved** the paper and its publication on the website.

SA

ITEM 11 – EQUALITY MAINSTREAMING REPORTS 2021-2025

Michelle Hausrath, Head of People, was welcomed to the meeting.

11.1 Trustees received and noted the following reports:

- Equality Mainstreaming report 2021-2025. **NMS (2025) 12**
- Workforce Monitoring Report 2025 **NMS (2025) 13**
- Disaggregated Workforce Data **NMS (2025) 14**

11.2 The Board thanked MH and her team for all their hard work in producing the information and asked questions on the papers.

11.3 Trustees **approved** the Equality Mainstreaming report 2021-2025 and its publication.

MH

11.4 The Workforce Monitoring Report 2025 was part of the above report which explored the journey over the last 4 years, providing a summary on people metrics and what the disaggregated data is telling us. Trustees **approved** this for publication.

MH

ITEM 12 – EQUALITY OUTCOMES 2025-2029

NMS (2025) 15

12.1 Trustees noted the Equality Outcomes 2025-29 and were invited to ask questions.

12.2 Trustees **approved** the publishing of the Equality Outcomes 2025-29

MH

ITEM 13 – APPOINTMENTS TO BOARD COMMITTEES & RELATED GROUPS

NMS (2025) 16

13.1 Trustees noted the report regarding recent Trustee retirements and new appointments which had been circulated.

13.2 Trustees **approved** the proposed appointments to Board Committees and related groups.

ITEM 14 – BOARD COMMITTEES

People & Remuneration Committee

14.1 The Chair noted that the draft minutes of the People & Remuneration Committee meeting held on 6 February 2025 had been circulated.

Collections Development Committee

14.2 The Chair noted that the draft minutes of the Collections Development Committee meeting held on 18 February 2025 had been circulated.

The Terms of Reference for this committee would be reviewed and presented to Nominations and Governance Committee for its approval.

ME

Estates Committee

14.3 The Chair noted that the draft minutes of the Estates Committee meeting held on 26 February 2025 had been circulated.

Finance Committee

14.4 The Chair noted that the draft minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 26 February 2025 had been circulated.

Audit & Risk Committee

14.5 The Chair gave a verbal update from the last meeting of 10 March 2025.

National Museums Scotland Enterprises Ltd Board

14.6 The Chair of the NMS Enterprises Ltd Board gave a verbal updated from the last meeting of 14 March 2025.

Nominations & Governance Committee

14.7 The committee structure with effect from 1st April 2025 was reviewed and agreed under Item 13 of this meeting.

The next meeting of this committee would take place on 23 April 2025.

ITEM 15 – FORWARD PROGRAMME OF BUSINESS

NMS (2025) 17

15.1 The Board noted the forward programme of business, in particular, that the meeting on 04 June would be held at the Collections Centre from 10am-4pm

ITEM 16 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

16.1 The Board of Trustees conveyed their sincere thanks and best wishes to retiring Trustee Jandy Stevenson after 8 years on the Board.

ITEM 17 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

17.1 The next meeting would be held on Wednesday 4 June 2025 at the National Museum of Scotland, with a tour prior to the meeting at the Collections Centre.