

**National Museums Scotland
Board Of Trustees**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 5 FEBRUARY 2025
AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF SCOTLAND, EDINBURGH**

Present:

Mr Ian Russell	Chair
Ms Ann Allen	Trustee
Dr Hermione Cockburn	Trustee
Ms Judith Cruickshank	Trustee
Mr Stephen Dando	Trustee
Prof Manuel Fernández-Götz	Trustee
Mr Graeme Gibson	Trustee
Ms Sally Mackay	Trustee
Dr Bridget McConnell	Trustee
Ms Beth McKillop	Trustee
Ms Jandy Stevenson	Trustee
Prof Ian Wall	Trustee
Dr Laura Young	Trustee

In Attendance:

Dr Chris Breward (CB)	NMS Director
Mr Keith Pentland (KP)	Director of Finance & Resources
Dr Sam Alberti (SA)	Director of Collections
Ms Helen Ireland (HI)	Director of External Relations
Ms Michelle Eaves (ME)	Corporate Support Manager

Apologies:

Ms Mimi Brophy	Trustee
Prof Richard Oram	Trustee
Ms Ruth Gill	Director of Public Programmes

PRELIMINARIES

The Chair welcomed everyone to the Board meeting.

PRE-MEETING SESSION

Hannah Boddy, Exhibitions & Displays Officer and **Sophie Goggins**, Senior Curator of Biomedical Science gave an overview of the Injecting Hope exhibition and invited questions from the Board.

Trustees extended their thanks for the presentation and congratulated them on the superb exhibition.

ACTION

ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Prof Richard Oram and Ms Mimi Brophy

ITEM 2 – MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27 NOVEMBER 2024

NMS (2024) 5th Mtg

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2024 were **approved**, (*subject to the amendment of the figures in bullet point 2 in Section 5.1*)

ITEM 3 – MATTERS ARISING

3.1 Matters arising from the last meeting had been actioned.

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.

ITEM 5 – DIRECTOR’S REPORT TO TRUSTEES

NMS (2025) 01

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

Impact

- 2024 was the busiest calendar year on record for the National Museum of Scotland which welcomed over 2.3m visitors and the National Museum of Rural Life with over 115,000 visitors. A news release from ALVA (Association of Leading Visitor Attractions) will announce the most visited UK attractions at the beginning of March.
- The Galloway Hoard’s international tour was announced in December, highlighting its exhibition at the South Australian Museum, Adelaide from 8 February 2025. Extensive coverage included the *BBC*, *The Independent*, *STV News*, *The Herald*, *The National* and the *Edinburgh Evening News*, as well as multiple regional and international outlets.

- The Peebles Hoard Appeal, to fund a three-year investigative conservation programme, has raised £128,357 (incl. Gift Aid) to date, 64% of the project income target of £200,289.
- 2024 has seen our social media presence develop at an accelerated rate, supported by the creation of unique collections-related content such as the 10th anniversary of the discovery of the Galloway Hoard and the conservation of the Roman Arm Guard. Our current cross-platform follower count is approaching 300,000, delivering a reach of over 14.5 million.

Public Programmes

- Game On closed on 3 November exceeding targets for both ticket income and visit numbers.
- *Sprogmanay* with Unique Assembly engaged 5,000 audiences over New Year and the puppets from *Circus in The Netherlands* were a hit, performing twice in the afternoon.

People

- A new set of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Outcomes for 2025-2029 are currently being developed.

5.2 The Director gave a verbal update on working with the Scottish Government, in particular, Public Service Reform and the drive for efficiencies and collaboration.

5.3 The Chair congratulated the team on representing the museum, and the large amount of time which had been invested on this.

5.4 Public Service Reform would be a standing item on the agenda of every meeting.

CB/KP

5.5 A draft response to the Public Service Reform would be shared with the Board at the meeting in March 2025.

CB/KP

ITEM 6 – FINANCIAL REPORT

NMS (2025) 02

6.1 Keith Pentland presented the report which had been circulated and confirmed it represented the overall position for the period to 31 December 2024.

6.2 The Board noted:

- Current information forecasted a loss but there was confidence we would break even by the end of the financial year.
- Income from donations at the National War Museum had been lower than anticipated and therefore annual income had been forecast downwards.
- Commercial trading performance had been better than budgeted.
- The 35 Hour week had been implemented and took effect from 1 August.
- The outcome of the Voluntary Exit Scheme had taken effect from 31 October.

ITEM 7 – DRAFT BUDGET 2025-2026

NMS (2025) 03

7.1 Keith Pentland presented the 2025-2026 draft Budget which had been circulated. He confirmed that the final version would go to the Finance Committee in February before coming back to the March Board Meeting for approval.

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

7.3 The Chair thanked the team for all their hard work.

ITEM 8 – COLLECTIONS & RESEARCH REPORT

NMS (2025) 04

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

ITEM 9 – BOARD COMMITTEES

Estates Committee

9.1 The Chair noted that the draft minutes of the Estates Committee meeting held on 13 November had been circulated.

National Museums Scotland Enterprises Ltd Board

9.2 The Chair noted that the draft minutes of the National Museums Scotland Enterprises Ltd Board meeting held on 22 November had been circulated.

Collections Development Committee

9.3 The Chair noted that the draft minutes of the Collections Development Committee meeting held on 29 November had been circulated.

Audit & Risk Committee

9.4 The Chair noted that the draft minutes of the Audit & Risk Committee meetings held on 10 December had been circulated.

People & Remuneration Committee

9.5 The Chair of the People & Remuneration Committee advised that there were no updates, and their next meeting would be on 06 February 2025.

Finance Committee

9.6 The Chair of the Finance Committee confirmed that they would discuss the budget in depth at their next meeting on 26 February 2025.

Nominations & Governance Committee

9.7 The Chair of the Nominations & Governance Committee advised that the committee structure would be reviewed with effect from 1st April 2025 to accommodate the change in memberships of the Board of Trustees.

ITEM 10 – FORWARD PROGRAMME OF BUSINESS

NMS (2025) 05

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

ITEM 11 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

11.1 There was no other business to discuss at this meeting.

11.2 As we say formally to record thanks to Ann Allen for all her work as a Trustee the Board wished her well for the future.

ITEM 12 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

12.1 The next meeting would be held on Wednesday 26 March 2025 at the National Museum of Scotland.