

## Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of the National Library of Ireland

Thursday 29 June 2023 at 11:00

Hybrid Meeting: Alexander Anderson Boardroom, Quadrangle,  
University of Galway, University Road, Galway, H91 TK33 and video  
conferencing

<p><b>Board</b></p>	<p><b>Present:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Eoin McVey, Chairperson</li> <li>- Prof Ciarán Ó hÓgartaigh, Deputy Chairperson</li> <li>- Dr Marie Bourke</li> <li>- Prof Maeve Conrick (1-10.1 and 10.3 via video conferencing)</li> <li>- John Grenham</li> <li>- Dr Conor Kostick (via video conferencing)</li> <li>- Caitriona Sharkey</li> <li>- Jennifer Taaffe (5-10.1 and 10.3 via video conferencing)</li> </ul> <p><b>Apologies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lorelei Harris</li> <li>- Lisa Grimm</li> <li>- Prof Kalpana Shankar</li> </ul>
<p><b>Staff</b></p>	<p><b>In attendance:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dr Audrey Whitty, Director (1-13)</li> <li>- Orla Sweeney, Board Secretary (1-13)</li> </ul> <p>All staff listed below attended via video conferencing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Liz Coffey, Head of Communications and Development (7)</li> <li>- Della Keating, AKI, Digital Collecting (8.2)</li> <li>- Eoghan Ó Carragáin, Head of Digital Collections (8.2)</li> <li>- Brian O'Donnell, Head of Estates (9.1-9.2)</li> <li>- Colette O'Flaherty, Keeper of Special Collections and Chief Herald of Ireland (9.3)</li> <li>- Kieran O'Leary, Digital Preservation Manager (8.2)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Kathleen Ruane, Head of Finance-CRO (10.2-10.3)</li> <li>- Sara Smyth, Acting Head of Exhibitions, Learning and Programming (8.1)</li> </ul>
<b>Service Providers</b>	<p>The following attended via video conferencing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Olwyn Enright, Director, DHR Communications (7)</li> <li>- Joanne Ahern, Director, DHR Communications (7)</li> </ul>
<p>Note: There is one vacancy on the Board. All Board members were present for the full duration of the meeting unless otherwise stated. (1-13) denotes where a Board or staff member was not present/in attendance for the full duration, but present/in attendance for certain sections of the minutes.</p>	

## 1. Opening remarks

The Chairperson welcomed the Board members to the first meeting of the Board outside the NLI campus. The Chairperson, on behalf of the Board, noted his appreciation to Prof Ciarán Ó hÓgartaigh for hosting the Board in the University of Galway.

## 2. Interests and procedural matters

The Chairperson confirmed that the meeting was quorate. The Board adopted the Agenda. In response to the Chairperson's request for the Board to declare any conflicts of interests, the following declarations were made:

- Prof Maeve Conrick advised the Board that in relation to Agenda Item 9.4 [REDACTED] she is a member of University College Cork's Governing Body; however, the matter had not come before her as a member of the said Body. Prof Conrick informed the Board that she would not comment in relation to Agenda Item 9.4 and offered to absent herself should the Chairperson deem it necessary. The Chairperson thanked Prof Conrick for her declaration; noted that Prof Conrick would not comment in relation to Agenda Item 9.4; and advised that her abstention in relation to said Agenda Item was not necessary.
- The remaining Board members had no conflicts of interests to declare.

**The Board meeting was quorate. The Board adopted the Agenda. Prof Maeve Conrick made a declaration in relation to Agenda**

**Item 9.4 and the Chairperson agreed the measures to be followed as a result of the declaration. The remaining Board members had no conflicts of interests to declare.**

Note: All Board papers were circulated in advance of the Board meeting unless otherwise stated and taken as read.

### **3. Draft minutes of the Board meeting of 27 April 2023 and their publication**

The Board Secretary addressed a query from the Board concerning the rationale for redactions to the draft minutes and advised that redactions should be removed from the published minutes when the rationale for the initial redaction no longer applies. The Board Secretary informed the Board that going forward the draft minutes would detail the rationale for the proposed redactions.

The Director advised the Board that a meeting of the NLI, Heritage Council, Irish Manuscripts Commission and Dublin Diocesan Archivist is scheduled to take place on 21 July 2023 concerning the Board's endorsement of the Committee on Genealogy and Heraldry's strong recommendation that the Leadership Team begin the process of contacting other relevant cultural bodies with a view to focusing interest on the archival survival of existing Catholic parish registers.

**The Board approved the draft minutes of the Board meeting of 27 April 2023 with no amendments. The Board advised on the need to be as open and as transparent, where possible. The Board approved the publication of the approved minutes with the redactions in place.**

### **4. Matters arising**

The Director outlined the relevant Board paper.

**The Board noted:**

- **The matters arising action table.**
- **A verbal briefing by the Director on the proposed new 'Gov & Ops' arrangements for the Capital Development Project.** The Director advised the Board of: (i) personnel changes and unit restructuring within the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media (D/TCAGSM); and (ii) the

views shared by the Council of National Cultural Institutions (CNCI) with senior D/TCAGSM officials at its recent meeting.

- **Jennifer Taaffe resigned from the Audit and Risk Committee on 9 May 2023.**
- **On 6 June 2023, the Board provided exceptional approval by email for the awarding of a contract by the NLI to Hays for a Specialist HR Contractor, to undertake work on NLI Recruitment, [REDACTED].** The Director addressed a query from the Board concerning the Specialist HR Contractor's commencement date.

## 5. Executive Report

The Director outlined the relevant Board paper. The Director provided the Board with further information under the following sections of the Report:

- **Development:** On 30 June 2023, the Director will meet the Director of the British Council in Ireland.
- **Onsite events:** On 4 July 2023, the 'Seamus Heaney: Listen Now Again' exhibition will mark its fifth anniversary.
- **Capital Development:** D/TCAGSM has provided sanction for the NLI to hire an [REDACTED] and once the post is filled then the renovated Art Room may open as a reading room for visual collections.
- **Collaborations:** [REDACTED] The Director issued an invitation to the Director of the German National Library to visit the NLI. The NLI's financial contribution to the Irish Research Council (IRC) – Enterprise Partnership Scheme was outlined.

The Director addressed queries from the Board concerning the reason for the leak in the East Wing Attic Store; preparations underway for the lodgement shortly of the planning application for the Capital Development Project and the proposed timeline thereafter until contractors are onsite; and learnings from recent conferences that the Director attended.

The Board commended the Executive's engagement efforts to reach more diverse groups through the Director's tours; social

media; Lego; the Capital Development Project; reviewing the age by which anyone can apply for a Readers' Ticket; and increasing its collection holdings of the translated works of Irish authors.

The Board welcomed the Director's verbal briefing on the renewed efforts to open a new lecture theatre in time for the NLI's participation in the commemorative programme to mark the centenary of the Nobel Laureate award to WB Yeats.

A Board member offered to share their research bibliography with the IRC scholar should it be of assistance. A further Board member offered their assistance to the Director in establishing a collaborative approach to increasing the holding of translated works of Irish authors in the NLI's collections.

**The Board noted and commented on the Director's verbal briefing and the Executive Report with an amendment i.e. Professor Christine Kinealy delivered the online lecture as part of the NLI's annual Famine Day commemoration.**

## **6. Board Committees**

### **6.1 Audit and Risk Committee: Report of 14 June 2023 and Minutes of 12 April 2023.**

The Chairperson of the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) outlined the relevant Board paper noting in particular that:

- (i) Papers for Agenda Items 10.1 and 10.2 were submitted to the ARC; and
- (ii) There are a number of items that the ARC would like to bring to the Board's attention, noted in short, as:
  - NLI needs to re-engage with the D/TCAGSM on the planned Gov & Ops arrangements for the Capital Development Project.
  - On 23 November 2023, there may only be 2 Board members on the ARC.
  - As of the 14 June 2023, the NLI was awaiting sanction to backfill the Health and Safety Officer post.
  - The high level of retirements expected in 2023 and matters of corresponding interest such as

succession planning and the backfilling of posts process as required by D/TCAGSM.

The Director informed the Board that D/TCAGSM's sanction approval to backfill the Health and Safety Officer post was recently received.

**The Board noted the Committee Chairperson's report on the ARC meeting of 14 June 2022 and the approved minutes of the ARC meeting of 12 April 2023.**

## **6.2 Committee on Genealogy and Heraldry**

The Chairperson of the Committee on Genealogy and Heraldry (CGH) provided the Board with a verbal briefing, as follows:

- The Committee had no meetings scheduled between the previous and present Board meeting;
- The sub-group of the Committee will meet prior the next CGH meeting as soon as the Executive members are available;
- The next Committee meeting is scheduled to take place on 13 September 2023;
- The Committee will review the sub-group's report, outlining a range of possible options to the Board to broaden the reach of the Office of the Chief Herald and the NLI's genealogy and heraldry offerings, keeping in mind the severe constraints of time and personnel under which the Library operates; and
- The Committee will submit the sub-group's report to the Board.

**The Board noted the Committee Chairperson's verbal report on the CGH.**

## **6.3 Readers' Advisory Committee**

In the absence of the Chairperson of the Readers' Advisory Committee (RAC), the Director, as a member of the RAC provided the Board, with a verbal briefing, as follows:

- The Committee had no meetings scheduled between the previous and present Board meeting;

- The next Committee meeting will take place in September 2023 with the date to be confirmed; and at this meeting, the Committee will receive separate presentations from (i) Dr Miriam Nyhan Grey whose areas of interest include migration, race, ethnicity and diaspora nationalism and (ii) Oein DeBhairduin, Irish Traveller, writer, activist and educator.

**The Board noted the Committee member's verbal report on the RAC.**

## **7. Presentation: Environment Scan**

The Head of Communications and Development, Liz Coffey, introduced Olwyn Enright and Joanne Ahern, Directors of DHR Communications, to the Board.

Ms Enright and Ms Ahern presented the Board with an overview of their report entitled 'Environment Scan for the National Library of Ireland, May 2023'. The scan identifies key global issues, how these impact on Ireland and the questions that these might present for the NLI.

The Head of Communications & Development and the Director addressed queries from the Board concerning actions the Executive plans to take arising from the information contained in the said report.

The Board discussed the said report with a particular focus on challenges and opportunities posed by artificial intelligence for libraries.

**The Board noted and discussed the report and corresponding presentation on the 'Environment Scan for the National Library of Ireland, May 2023' by DHR Communications.**

## **8. Policies**

### **8.1 Exhibitions, Learning and Programming: Interim Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Policy**

Sara Smyth, Acting Head of Exhibitions, Learning and Programming (ELP), outlined the relevant Board paper.

The Acting Head of ELP addressed queries from the Board concerning the approach taken by other national cultural institutions in relation to this matter and an approximate timeline by which a permanent Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Policy will be submitted to the Board for approval.

**The Board approved the draft NLI Interim Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Policy (doc. 1) and confirmed the Executive does not need to revert to the Board to approve operational updates (for example, changes to the named designated liaison persons) to the said Policy. The Board noted the said Policy will be published on the NLI website.**

## **8.2 Digital Collections: Digital Preservation Policy**

The Head of Digital Collections outlined the relevant Board paper with input from Della Keating, AKI, Digital Collecting and Kieran O'Leary, Digital Preservations Manager.

The Head of Digital Collections addressed a query from the Board concerning the approximate timeline for publishing the said Policy on the NLI's website. The Board commended the development of the Policy.

**The Board approved the draft NLI Digital Preservation Policy (NLI\_POL1\_36) and noted the approved Policy will be published on the NLI website.**

## **8.3 Estates: Safety Statement**

**The Board noted that the annual review of the NLI Safety Statement will be submitted to the Board at its next meeting.**



## 9. Business Cases

### 9.1 Estates: Supply and Installation of Audio Visual (AV) and Related Equipment to the new Accessible Lecture Theatre

The Head of Estates, Brian O'Donnell, outlined the relevant business case.

The Head of Estates addressed queries from the Board concerning the new Lecture Theatre including: the proposed fit-out; engagement with disability groups; and venue hire on a commercial/non-commercial rate basis.

**The Board provided its approval for the Executive to publish an RFT on E-tenders under open procedure for the Supply & Installation of Audio Visual (AV) & Related Equipment to the new Accessible Lecture Theatre.**

### 9.2 Estates: Strategic Assessment of Collection Storage and Masterplan Requirements for Kildare Street Campus

The Head of Estates outlined the relevant business case and addressed queries from the Board concerning the procurement process.

**The Board provided its approval for the Executive to issue a request to tender (3 quotes) for a strategic assessment report on Masterplan development for the Kildare Street campus including a collections storage solution.**

### 9.3 Special Collections:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[Redacted text]

[Redacted text]

[Redacted text]

**9.4 Special Collections:** [Redacted text]

[Redacted text]

- [Redacted list item]
- [Redacted list item]

[Redacted text]

[Redacted text]

[Redacted text]



Note: Due to a technical issue with the AV, the Board addressed Agenda Item 10.3 first followed by Items 10.1 and 10.2; however, for the purposes of clarity, the minutes will continue to align with the Agenda.

## **10. Corporate Affairs**

### **10.1 Finance**

#### **10.1.1 Management Accounts for the year to 30 April 2023**

The Head of Finance-CRO, Kathleen Ruane, outlined the relevant Board paper.

**The Board approved Management Accounts for the year to 30 April 2023.**

#### **10.1.2 Letter of Representation, Chairperson's Comprehensive Report to the Minister and Financial Statements (2022)**

The Head of Finance-CRO outlined the relevant Board paper. In addition, the Head of Finance-CRO proposed that the Financial Statements 2022 be amended by the Board to note Prof Ciarán Ó hÓgartaigh as Deputy Chairperson in line with the Business and Financial Reporting Requirements of the Code of Practice for Governance of State Bodies 2016. The Head of Finance-CRO addressed a query from the Board concerning heraldry income.

**The Board reviewed the draft Letter of Representation to the Comptroller and Auditor General in connection with the audited Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2022.**

**The Board noted the draft Chairperson’s Comprehensive Report to the Minister for the financial year ended 31 December 2022.**

**The Board approved the draft audited Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2022 subject to noting Prof Ciarán Ó hÓgartaigh as Deputy Chairperson and any further amendments by the Comptroller and Auditor General.**

## **10.2 Risk Management**

### **10.2.1 Authorisation chart, purchase order, invoice and payment approval threshold review**

The Head of Finance-CRO outlined the relevant Board paper. The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee noted that the paper to the Board aligns with the recommendations put forward by the ARC at its meeting of the 14 June 2023.

**The Board approved the draft updated Authorisation chart, purchase order, invoice and payment approval thresholds including (i) the proposed thresholds for contracts governed by Procurement (Appendix A); (ii) proposed thresholds for Collection items (Appendix B); and (iii) Payment Processing authorisations (Appendix C).**

## **10.3 Governance**

### **10.3.1 ‘State Code’ 2022 Compliance Checklist for Non-Commercial State Bodies between D/TCAGSM and NLI**

The Board Secretary outlined the relevant Board papers including a supplementary paper which was circulated to the Board at the meeting. The Head of Finance-CRO addressed a query from the Board concerning the NLI’s PQ- 29484/23 return on the NLI’s compliance with protocols

and standings for the provision of information to the members of the Oireachtas.

**The Board provided approval for the Executive to record the NLI's compliance with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2016) by responding 'yes', with the exception of non-applicable provisions, to each of the 147 provisions in the 'State Code' 2022 Compliance Checklist for Non-Commercial State Bodies between D/TCAGSM (Tab A).**

**The Board noted that the said Checklist will then be signed by the Chairperson and returned to the D/TCAGSM on 30 June 2023 for counter-signing.**

**The Board also noted the Executive's proposed response to two further documents: (i) Divisional Report for Non-Commercial State Bodies (Tab B); and (ii) Template for Annual Report and Financial Report references for Non-Commercial State Bodies (Tab C).**

**11. External evaluation of the Board and its Committees**

The Board Secretary informed the Board that a relevant service provider will be need to be procured to support the implementation of the recommendations arising from the external evaluation of the Board and its Committees with an initial focus on a suite of corporate governance documentation.

**12. Next Board meeting: Thursday 31 August 2023, 11:00**

**The next meeting of the Board will take place on Thursday 31 August 2023 at 11am in the NLI's Boardroom.**

**13. AOB**

There were no other matters arising.

#### **14. Time alone**

The Chairperson recommended that the Board not hold a private session as a light lunch was pending and the Board had a number of afternoon commitments including a presentation by the University of Galway's Librarian and Deputy Librarian on plan for the University's new Learning Commons and a guided tour of the Hardiman Research Building and James Hardiman Library.

**The Board did not hold a private session.**

**The Chairperson closed the meeting.**