

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

Thursday 26th October 2023 at 11:00

Hybrid meeting: Boardroom, National Library of Ireland,
4 Kildare Street, Dublin 2, D02 A322 and video conferencing (VC)

Board	<p>Present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Eoin McVey, Chairperson - Prof Ciarán Ó hÓgartaigh, Deputy Chairperson (VC) (5-13) - Dr Marie Bourke (2-13) - Prof Maeve Conrick - Lisa Grimm - John Grenham - Lorelei Harris - Dr Conor Kostick - Prof Kalpana Shankar (VC) (1-4) - Caitriona Sharkey (VC) (3.3-13) - Jennifer Taaffe
Staff	<p>In attendance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dr Audrey Whitty, Director - Orla Sweeney, Board Secretary - Liz Coffey, Head of Communications and Development (3.3) - Colette O’Flaherty, Keeper of Special Collections and Chief Herald of Ireland (7.1) - Eoin McCarney, Head of Published Collections (7.2) - Brian O’Donnell, Deputy Director and Head of Estates (7.3-8) - Kathleen Ruane, Head of Finance and Chief Risk Officer (9.1-10.2)
<p>Note: There is one vacancy on the Board. All Board members were present for the full duration of the meeting unless otherwise stated. (1-14) denotes where a Board or staff member was not present/in attendance for the full duration, but present/in attendance for certain section/s of the minutes.</p>	

1. Interests and procedural matters

The Chairperson confirmed that the meeting was quorate. In response to the Chairperson's request for the Board to declare any conflicts of interests, the following declarations were made with reference to Agenda Item 7.1, 'Special Collections: [REDACTED]':

- The Chairperson declared [REDACTED] as an acquaintance.
- Dr Conor Kostick declared his long-standing professional relations with [REDACTED].
(Note: There are no conflicts of interests as provided for under the Ethics Acts for either the Chairperson or Dr Kostick.)

Dr Kostick informed the Chairperson that he would absent from this agenda item. The Chairperson noted Dr Kostick's abstention and advised him that he could remain in situ for the agenda item and not participate in the deliberation or decision-making for Agenda Item 7.1.

The Board meeting was quorate. The Chairperson and Dr Conor Kostick made declarations in relation to Agenda Item 7.1. Dr Kostick absented from Agenda Item 7.1 and the Chairperson outlined 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. At the meeting, the Board received the NLI Digital Preservation Policy (2023); a leaflet 'Enjoy your National Library this autumn'; and a selection of postcards relating to the 'People & Places' exhibition in the National Photographic Archive and 'Le Grá, Seamus' at the Seamus Heaney: Listen Now Again exhibition.

2. Draft minutes of the Board meeting of 31st August 2023 and their publication

The Director requested that the 'Matters arising' section of the minutes relate to the NLI.

The Board approved the draft minutes of the Board meeting of 31st August 2023 subject to an amendment and the publication of the approved minutes with redactions as highlighted.

3. Matters arising

3.1 Action table

The Director outlined the relevant Board paper. In addition, the Director verbally briefed the Board on the following topics:

- Capital Development Project: The NLI awaits the legal advice from its legal service provider, Beauchamps, on the proposed new Gov & Ops arrangements.
- Board membership: The Director outlined all the communications she has had to date with the D/TCAGSM in an effort to progress the appointment of a staff nominee to the Board and the publication of the Stateboards.ie booklet. The Director has been assured by the D/TCAGSM that the matter is at the highest level of D/TCAGSM management.

The Board noted the matters arising action table and the Director's verbal briefing.

3.2 Review of redactions in the published version of the 2021 Board minutes

The Chairperson outlined the relevant Board paper.

The Board approved the removal of 10 redactions and the retaining of 5 redactions in the published version of the 2021 Board minutes; and noted that a revised version of the 2021 Board minutes will be published.

3.3 Provision of Public Relations, Public Affairs and Communications Services

Upon the invitation of the Chairperson, the Director advised the Board that:

- The Head of Communications and Development shared the Board's comments, as provided the previous Board meeting, with DHR Communications;
- The OGP's Multi-Supplier Framework Agreement for the provision of Public Relations and Communications Services (MMP066F) is in place until 2026; and
- The Executive's rationale for utilising the said Framework in 2022 up to 2026.

The Director responded to a query from the Board concerning the provision of public relations, public affairs and communications services post 2026, either internally through staffing or externally through procurement.

The Head of Communications and Development joined the Board meeting. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

4. Executive Report

The Director outlined the relevant Board paper. In addition, the Director verbally briefed the Board on the following matters:

- Capital Development Project:
 - One observation by Transport Infrastructure Ireland regarding the application of the Section 49 Luas Line Levy has been submitted to date in relation to the planning application.
 - The Steering Committee (comprising representatives from D/TCAGSM, OPW and NLI) at its meeting of 25th October 2023 approved the Design Team costs

associated with progressing from planning lodgement to tender preparation.

- At the next Steering Committee meeting on 15th November 2023, the NLI will seek approval for costs associated with the development of interpretation, exhibition design and fit out services for 2024.
 - The Taoiseach was receptive and supportive of the Project when he toured the main building with the Director as an aside to an external event he was attending in the front hall.
 - The Director had a positive meeting with the OPW Chairman on 10th October 2023.
 - The RCPI announced development plans for its Heritage Centre at No 6 Kildare Street.
- **Philanthropy:** The Director outlined the advice she received in relation to 501(c)(3) of the US Internal Revenue Code and how the NLI could meet the Code's requirement for a base in the US.
 - **Events/Exhibitions:**
 - In an effort to meet demand, the Deputy Director will now facilitate tours directly prior to the Director's Tours for the remaining dates in 2023.
 - The NLI's programme of events to mark the centenary of the award to the Nobel Prize for Literature to WB Yeats commenced on 17th October 2023.
 - The 'Seamus Heaney: Listen, Now Again' exhibition opens from Tuesdays to Fridays up to the end of November 2023 due to staff shortages. The exhibition will open up to 5 days and later up to 6 days as more staff are recruited.
 - **Research:** The Library is:
 - an enterprise partner to two Irish Research Council post-doctoral research awards;
 - in discussions regarding participating in the All-Island Research Culture Network; and
 - is advocating that the UK-based Independent Research Organisation Consortium for arts and humanities be replicated here in Ireland thus allowing the national cultural institutions to be recognised as independent research organisations and be considered for funding in the same way as a university.

- The Director's three-year term as Chair of the Irish Museums Association concludes today and she will continue as a member of its Board.

The Chairperson recommended that the Executive should consider the financial solvency of potential partners or collaborators before engaging with them on projects, events etc.

The Board discussed:

- Briefly, the Government's announcement to examine the possible establishment of a new national women's museum. The level of public interest in the Director's Tours. The value of the 'Hidden Treasures' documentary mini-series (scheduled to air on RTÉ in early 2024) to the Library nationally and internationally, with divergent views among the Board on this matter.
- At length, Budget 2024 including the budget allocation variance among members of the Council of National Cultural Institutions and the rationale for same; the CNCI's collective engagement with the D/TCAGSM; and the CNCI's collective influence. The Board also discussed the NLI's direct engagement with D/TCAGSM.

The Board noted the Executive Report and the additional verbal briefing provided by the Director. The Board discussed a range of matters.

5. NLI Strategic Organisational Priorities 2023: Mid-Year Review

The Director outlined the relevant Board paper. In addition, the Director provided a verbal briefing to the Board, as follows:

- The Director confidentially informed the Board that Dr Sinéad McCool had been appointed as the new Head of Exhibitions, Learning and Programming (ELP); outlined Dr McCool's professional career; and advised that Dr McCool would commence her post on 30th November 2023. The Director commended Sara Smyth in her role as Acting Head of ELP.
- The Director met the Secretary-General of the Department of the Taoiseach at a recent event in which they informally discussed

the NLI's Capital Development Project and the Shared Ireland Fund.

The Board noted the mid-year review of the NLI Strategic Organisational Priorities 2023. The Board recommended that the next review of the NLI's Corporate Risk Register takes account of this Board paper as the lack of resources, outlined in the paper, may have risk implications for the Library.

6. Presentation: Overview of MoLI

The Director outlined slides 1-5 of a presentation provided to the NLI Board on 14th December 2017 concerning the Ulysses Centre later MoLI. In addition, the Director verbally briefed the Board on:

- MoLI's funding model and finances;
- MoLI's Board including its composition of Directors appointed by either UCD or the NLI.
- MoLI's footfall, entrance fee and free to access days/timeslots on offer.
- The Collaboration Agreement of 26th October 2017 between the NLI, UCD, Newman House Literary Centre. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The Board members appointed from 2015 onwards referred the Director to the Board records concerning the establishment of the Ulysses Centre/ Newman House Literary Centre/MoLI, and recalled matters of interest to the Board at that time including the loan of NLI collections; entrance fee applied to MoLI when the NLI, as a collaborative partner, is free to access; and the importance of free-to-access offerings in MoLI. The Board had a general discussion on MoLI.

The Board noted the presentation providing an overview of MoLI and discussed same.

7. Business Cases

7.1 Special Collections: [REDACTED] Archive

Before the Keeper of Special Collections outlined the relevant Board paper, the Chairperson advised her of the declarations of conflicts of interests as per Agenda Item 1.

The Keeper of Special Collections responded to a query from the Board concerning storage for the archive.

The Board approved the purchase by the NLI of the archives of [REDACTED]

[REDACTED].

7.2 Published Collections: Supply of books of Irish interest published outside Ireland

The Head of Published Collections outlined the relevant Board paper.

The Chairperson noted a discrepancy between the spending limit noted in the cover paper in comparison to the business case. The Head of Published Collections advised that the spending limit as detailed in the cover paper was correct and outlined the rationale for the increase in the spending limit.

The Head of Published Collections responded to queries from the Board concerning the proposed procurement process and quantity of books of Irish interest published outside Ireland.

The Board provided approval for the Executive to proceed to tender for the supply of books of Irish interest published outside Ireland under a pending Multi Supplier Framework Agreement for the Provision of Library Goods prepared by the Education Procurement Service, when available, for an initial period of 24 months with an option of 2 further 12 month extensions.

7.3 Estates: Provision of Commercial Cleaning Services and Associated Products

The Deputy Director-Head of Estates outlined the relevant Board paper.

In addition, the Deputy Director-Head of Estates informed the Board that as a pilot to increase the cleaning services in the main building from 5 days to 7 days (in line with opening hours to the public) was successful, this additional service is now included in the option to extend the contract with Moore Cleaning Services, and hence the increase in the projected contract cost.

The Deputy Director-Head of Estates addressed a query from the Board concerning public sector wide move towards engaging commercial cleaning services.

The Board provided approval for the Executive to avail of the option to extend a contract with Moore Cleaning Services for one (1) 12-month period to run from 1st December 2023 to 1st December 2024 [REDACTED].

8. No 5 Kildare Street façade restoration

The Chairperson informed the Board that he had raised the dilapidated appearance of No 5 Kildare Street façade with every Director/Acting Director since his appointment as Chairperson of the Board.

The Deputy Director-Head of Estates outlined the relevant Board paper. The Board noted that in relation to No 5 Kildare Street, the immediate focus would be on the façade restoration, and any internal works and changes to its functions would be a future project as part of the 'NLI Storage Masterplan Project' concept.

The Board discussed the restoration of No 5 Kildare Street façade.

The Board recommended that the Deputy Director-Head of Estates ask the OPW to assign resources to repair, repoint and restore the façade to its original condition. The Board noted the

Deputy Director-Head of Estates' support for the Board's recommendation.

The Board requested that the Deputy Director-Head of Estates submit a draft of the said request to the Board for approval at the Board meeting of 14th December 2023.

The Board provided the Deputy Director-Head of Estates with discretion to submit the said request to the OPW on a date, in early 2024, he deems most suitable.

In light of the Board's feedback, the Deputy Director-Head of Estates advised the Board that he will consider if generic window blinds could be installed pending the restoration of the façade.

9. Policies

9.1 Finance: Draft Procurement Policy for Goods & Services and Draft Procurement Procedure for Goods & Services

The Head of Finance-CRO outlined the relevant Board paper and in addition, noted that the Procurement Manger commenced in June 2023.

The Board welcomed and approved the draft Procurement Policy for Goods and Services (FIN-PO-01) and the draft Procurement Procedures for Goods and Services (FIN-PR-01).

10. Corporate Affairs

10.1 Finance: Management Accounts for year to 31st August 2023 and draft Revised Budget Forecast for the remainder of 2023 – B11: Pay and Pensions and B7: Cultural Infrastructure and Development – Capital

The Head of Finance-CRO outlined the relevant Board paper with a particular focus on pay and pensions. The Head of Finance-CRO responded to a query from the Board concerning pay and pensions in 2024.

The Board:

- **Approved the Management Accounts for the year to 31st August 2023;**
- **Approved the draft Revised Budget Forecast for the remainder of 2023 – B11: Pay and Pensions and B7: Cultural Infrastructure and Development – Capital;**
- **Approved the draft Revised Profiled Budget (revisions reflected August to December) for 2023 based on the draft Revised Budget Forecast for the remainder of 2023; and**
- **Noted the Procurement Report Update for contracts awarded over €25,000 in Quarter 3, 2023 which were approved by the Executive and did not require Board approval.**

10.2 Risk Management

The Head of Finance-CRO verbally briefed the Board on the blue sky risk forum review, as follows:

- The ARC reviewed and considered the draft requirements and specifications for planned engagement of an external risk management consultant at its meeting of 11th October 2023.
- An external risk management consultant, Risk and Resilience Ltd., has been procured by direct drawdown via cascade from Lot 1 of the Multi Supplier Framework Agreement for the Provision of Business, Management and ICT Consultancy Services - PAS122F.
- A high-level overview of the risk management review including the programme of work, timeline and stakeholders to be engaged, was provided.

The Director verbally briefed the Board on:

- the impact of the protest of 20th September 2023 on the NLI including the sudden midday closure of the Main Building to the public (Yeats Exhibitions, Main

Reading Room, Family History Room and Readers Ticket Office) and the racism encountered by a staff member; and

- the impact of the security cordon put in place by An Garda Síochána in anticipation of protests on 10th October 2023, which resulted in the planned closure of all Kildare Street buildings to the public (Yeats Exhibition, Main and Manuscripts and Family History Reading Rooms, and Ticket Office). The Director responded to a query from the Board concerning the ability of staff to access the Kildare Street buildings on the day.

The Board noted:

- **The verbal briefings on risk management.**
- **The risk protests in the vicinity of the Houses of the Oireachtas pose to staff and the collections.**
- **The Director, in line with the D/TCAGSM recommendation, would write to D/TCAGSM Secretary General concerning the protest of 20th September 2023 noting health and safety concerns and the need to close the buildings.**

10.3 Governance

10.3.1 External evaluation of the Board and its Committees

The Board Secretary conveyed her apologies to the Board that she was unable to submit a paper (re: draft action plan on the implementation of the recommendations arising from the evaluation and a procurement specification to engage a professional service provider to assist with the implementation of the recommendations) to the Board for this meeting due to competing work demands.

The Board Secretary advised the Board that she would appraise the Chairperson of her work on this item going forward.

The Board noted the verbal briefing on the external evaluation of the Board and its Committees.

10.3.2 Board Meeting Schedule 2024

The Board approved the draft Board Meeting Schedule for 2024.

11. Board Committees

11.1 Audit and Risk Committee: Report of 11th October 2023; Internal Audit Plans 2024-2025; Minutes of 14th August 2023.

The Chairperson of the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) outlined his Report on the Committee meeting of 11th October, noting in particular that:

- The papers for Agenda Items 9.1 and 10.1 were submitted to the ARC, and the ARC's comments were recorded and incorporated into the papers submitted to the Board.
- The ARC made a number of recommendations to the Executive concerning reporting to the Board at its upcoming meetings including:
 - The Director to send another communication to the D/TCAGSM in an effort to progress the appointment of a staff nominee to the Board and the publication of the Stateboards.ie booklet.
 - [REDACTED]
 - [REDACTED]
 - [REDACTED]
 - The Executive pursue its internal audit recommendation concerning compliance with statutory obligations regarding the Irish Language (to encompass all

collections/collecting, learning, outreach and communications) through engagement with relevant State agencies.

- The Director brief the Board on the protest of 20th September 2023 and D/TCAGSM recommendation that the Director write to the D/TCAGSM's Secretary General.
 - The D/TCAGSM be included as a relevant stakeholder in the blue sky risk forum.
- The ARC made one recommendation to the Board, as follows:
 - The Board's consideration of the Corporate Risk Register should be scheduled following the completion of the external risk management consultants review (blue sky review) of the Corporate Risk Register and Risk Management Documentation.
 - In addition, the Committee Chairperson informed the Board of the Committee's private session and subsequent communications with the Director, as follows:
 - The ARC Chairperson advised the Director that the ARC would have welcomed information concerning the 326 items noted as missing (i.e. 1.9% of the total checked as part of the department's systematic stock of all catalogued material) as part of the Executive's update on the status of implementation of the recommendations from the Internal Audit Report on Collections including Acquisitions (2022).
 - In response, the Director advised the ARC Chairperson that the first member of the new Library Assistant, Grade 3 panel employed will be assigned to Special Collections, whose duties will also include stock checking. Moreover, the Executive will revert back to the ARC in Q1 2024 on the stock-checking of

Special Collections including items noted as 'missing'.

- In conclusion, the Committee Chairperson advised the Board that: (i) the Committee meeting of 11th October 2023 was Prof Maeve Conrick's last Committee meeting as her Board and Committee term expires on 23rd November 2023; (ii) Dr Marie Bourke's re-appointed term on the Committee commences on 24th November 2023; and (iii) the next Committee meeting will take place on 1st December 2023.

The Director informed the Board that an FOI Request had been received in September 2023 for information on items that have gone missing from the collections from 2020-2022 inclusive, which may have stemmed from the British Museum's media release on missing, stolen and damaged museum items. The Board noted that 'CBF - Can't be Found' was a long standing term used by the Library internally and in its direct communications with readers on their collection orders.

The Board noted the Committee Chairperson's report to the Board on the Audit and Risk Committee meeting of 11th October 2023 and the approved minutes of the Committee meeting of 14th August 2023. The Board also noted the Internal Audit Plans 2024-2025.

The Board advised the Committee that it would welcome a briefing on the stock-checking of Special Collections at a Board meeting in 2024.

11.2 Committee on Genealogy and Heraldry

11.2.1 Report of 13th September 2023 and Minutes of 28th March 2023

The Chairperson of the Committee on Genealogy and Heraldry (CGH) informed the Board that the most significant item on the agenda at its meeting of 13th September 2023 was the 'Draft report of the subgroup advising on possible NLI

options in relation to Genealogy and Heraldry' in preparation for its submission to the Board at the present meeting.

The Board noted the Committee Chairperson's verbal report on the Committee on Genealogy and Heraldry meeting of 13th September 2023; and the approved minutes of the Committee meeting of 28th March 2023.

11.2.2 Report of the subgroup advising on possible NLI options in relation to Genealogy and Heraldry

The Committee Chairperson outlined the relevant Board paper noting in particular:

- The genealogical expertise among the Committee members.
- The report aims to offer the Board, the Director and the Chief Herald with a range of possible options to broaden the reach of the Office of the Chief Herald and the NLI genealogy and heraldry offerings.
- The report is mindful of the severe constraints of time and personnel under which the NLI operates.
- The initial draft report was lengthy but the version submitted to the Board puts forward the recommendations as succinctly as possible. The Committee (in concert with the Executive) can expand further on the recommendations in light of any feedback provided by the Board.
- The NLI is already undertaking a lot of the recommendations citing the Library's work on engagement with local genealogy and history groups, and diaspora heritage and genealogy groups. Indeed, the Director had advised the Committee Chairperson, prior

to the start of the Board meeting, of Library's potential engagement with an Irish diaspora gathering in the US in 2024.

The Committee Chairperson provided a detailed outline of two recommendations: (i) diversity of coats of arms and (ii) the preservation of Catholic parish registers.

Fellow Committee member, Dr Conor Kostick, commended the Committee Chairperson on his leadership and in rejuvenating the work of the Committee which can be challenging at times in light of the NCI Act, 1997 under which the Committee was established.

The Board welcomed the Report of the subgroup advising on possible NLI options in relation to Genealogy and Heraldry noting in particular the recommendations on (i) diversity of coats of arms and (ii) the preservation of Catholic parish registers.

The Chairperson invited the Board to contact the Committee Chairperson directly with any further feedback. The Chairperson advised the Board that it will return to this agenda item again at a future Board meeting.

11.2.3 Membership

The Committee Chairperson outlined the relevant Board paper and thanked Dr Conor Kostick, whose Board and Committee membership expires on 23rd November 2023, for his commitment to the Committee and its work.

Upon the recommendation of the Chairperson of the Board, in consultation with the CGH Chairperson, the Board approved the appointment of Board member, Dr Marie Bourke, as an ordinary member of the Committee on Genealogy and Heraldry effective from 24th November 2023 until three

Board members, appointed through the PAS appointment process, are in place.

11.3 Readers' Advisory Committee: Report of 28th September 2023 and Minutes of 19th April 2023

The Chairperson of the Readers' Advisory Committee (RAC) informed the Board that the Committee were joined by two guest presenters to discuss a vision of inclusivity at the NLI at its meeting of 28th September 2023:

- Dr Miriam Nyhan Grey, Founder, NYU's Black, Brown and Green Voices; and Board member, African American Irish Diaspora Network; and
- Oein DeBhairduin, acclaimed author and Traveller Cultural Development Officer at the National Museum of Ireland.

The Committee Chairperson advised the Board that the two priority projects the Committee had agreed in September 2022 to pursue had not progressed due to a lack of resources.

The Committee Chairperson expressed her concern on the contribution the Committee could make to the work of the Library during its term; and in this regard, the Committee would instead pursue a temporary regional NLI exhibition.

The Board noted the Committee Chairperson's verbal report on the Readers' Advisory Committee meeting of 28th September 2023 and the approved minutes of the Committee meeting of 19th April 2023.

12. Next Board meeting: Thursday 14th December 2023, 11:00

The Board noted the next hybrid meeting of the NLI Board will take place on Thursday 14th December 2023 at 11.00am.

13. AOB

The Chairperson noted that this was the last Board meeting for members, Prof Maeve Conrick, Dr Conor Kostick and Jennifer Taaffe as their terms expire on 23rd November 2023.

The Chairperson thanked Prof Conrick, Dr Kostick and Ms Taaffe for their valued commitment and contribution to the work of the Board and its Committees during their reappointed terms from November 2020.

14. Time alone

The Board held a private session.

The Chairperson closed the meeting.