National Galleries of Scotland
Board of Trustees

Public minute of the meeting of the Board of Trustees held in the Modern Two Boardroom on Monday 27 November 2023 at 1430hrs.

Present: Benny Higgins (Chair)
          Apphia Campbell       Lynn Richmond
          Chris Sibbald        Dawn Thomson
          Hannah Rudman        Gemma Gray
          Jim McConville      Audrey Carlin

In Attendance: Sir John Leighton, Director-General
               Bryan Robertson
               Anne Lyden
               Imogen Gibbon
               Donella Steel
               Isabella Miller
               Jacqueline Ridge

Apologies: Rucelle Soutar
           Professor Kate Sang

Secretariat: Elaine Anderson

Open Business
1 Declarations of Interest

There were no new declarations of interest.

2 Chairman’s Business

The Chairman shared an update on progress with discussions with politicians/government on The Art Works.

There was no other business.

3 Minutes

3.1 Minute of the meeting of 11 September 2023
The minute of the meeting of 11 September 2023 was approved.

4 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising which were not already covered on the agenda.

Reserved Business

5 Director-General’s Report

The Director-General referenced the opening of the new Scottish gallery on 30 September. The events had been very successful and the public reaction had been really positive. The key aims of the project had been realized and the Scottish collection had now found a new home.

*Remaining discussion redacted.*

The Director-General noted that Ms Clausen Pedersen was returning to post in December following maternity leave. The Board thanked Ms Gibbon and Ms Lyden for stepping into the director role on an interim basis for the previous 12 months.

The Director-General thanked the Board for supporting him through his tenure, noting that this was his last meeting prior to retirement.

Open Business

6 Reports

6.1 Collection Report

*Reserved Business: Redacted.*

*Open Business:*

It was noted that the Sue Black painting would be on display before Christmas.

The Miners photography exhibition was due to open in March 2024, with a public Gala day. There had been strong collaboration with the communities to create the show.

Doors Open Day had proved a success once again.

The Galleries Community Day had taken place and had also proved successful.
A Memorandum of Understanding had been signed with Heritage Malta through the conservation teams.

Ms Gibbon highlighted the collection system, which records and tracks objects in the collection. The system was being upgraded over a four-year period. The system would be connected to other systems and bring together the management of NGS’s digital assets.

Outreach:
Trustees queried the expectation from government for supporting the outreach and EDI work. Ms Lyden noted that some funding had been forthcoming to support the miners’ project. Other funding had come from NGS core funding. There was increasing competition for external funding, which challenged the delivery of some projects. Ms Carlin noted that The Art Works would aid delivery of NGS’s aims in relation to EDI and community work. A Board session on this subject area would be useful.

Trustees noted the complexity of measuring success in this area. The Chairman suggested pulling together terms of reference for NGS and detailing what we want to achieve. This could become a powerful part of the comms on TAW.

Reserved Business
6.1.1 Proposed Acquisitions

Redacted.

Open Business
6.2 Public Programme 2023-25
Ms Lyden updated trustees on the Public Programme, noting that Printmakers Art was due to open the following weekend.

The forthcoming programme for 2024 had been announced publicly and Ms Lyden shared some of the details.
Ms Lyden noted the huge success of the Grayson Perry show, which had finished number four in the list of all time successful shows at NGS. In the final week of the show the opening hours had been extended to 9am-9pm, which had proved very popular. The Chairman was keen to discuss with trustees more widely about the potential for more commercial successes in the future.

Your Art World was currently showing at the National. The offer was going to be developed to extend the family aspect, with a more engaging space as part of Family Fridays.

The Alberta Whittle exhibition was due to close in early January. Visitor numbers had fallen away, but that may have been due to the Grayson Perry success as visitors flocked to the National.

6.3 Audience & Digital Quarterly Report
Ms Miller noted the visitor figures to date. The National was leading the way following the success of the Grayson Perry show. The Portrait was improving and showing higher figures than the same time last year. The Moderns were continuing to sit behind target.

Ms Miller noted that the Grayson Perry audio guide had been picked up by 27% of visitors and the trading company had excellent sales. The Trustees commended the success of the show. Ms Rudman asked whether the connection with customer relationship software had made a difference to commercial sales. Ms Miller noted that the huge success of the show and related sales had negated the need for that link, but it would be key for future exhibitions.

Membership:
There were 2,400 new Friends since the opening of the Scottish Galleries.

Trustees discussed the ticket prices in relation to Friends membership. The concessions for the Perry show were enabled by the full price ticket of £19. The pricing structure had been successful and the show as a result reached a broader audience.

Ms Carlin thanked the team for the phenomenal success of the last quarter.
Reserved Business
6.4 Chief Operating Officer’s Report
   Redacted.

Reserved Business
7 Financial Matters

Redacted.

7.1 Finance Report: Q2 to September 2023
Ms Steel noted that a balanced budget was predicted for the year. The two main pressures were the paybill and utilities costs. The pay award this year was affordable.

The opening of the Scottish Galleries had already had a positive impact on financials, giving around £500k back into the public programme.

7.2 Budget Update
Ms Steel noted the pressure on the budget. Some funding was anticipated for the external cost increases. This included NI, pensions and the impact of the 35 hour week.

The budget for 2024-25 was in draft and awaited the budget announcement on 19 December.

7.4 Audit & Risk Committee
7.4.1 Report from the Audit & Risk Committee: 22 November 2023
Mr McConville shared the discussion from the meeting the previous week.

Ms Rudman queried whether environmental sustainability measures were being adequately established at NGS. Mr McConville noted the complexity of the measures being used in some sectors, noting that NGS needed to spend a bit of time on this area to establish the right measures.

7.4.2 Minutes from the Audit & Risk Committee Meeting: 6 September 2023
Mr McConville shared the discussions at the 6 September meeting, which centred around the annual accounts. There had been an initial
discussion on the BM theft case and the root cause of the issue which led to the internal theft. The Committee had been satisfied that NGS had adequate controls in place.

8  **Major Projects Progress Reports**

*Redacted.*

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**Open Business**

10  **Compliance & Risk**

10.1  **Business Plan & KPIs: Q2 2023-24**

Noted.

10.2  **Strategic Risk Register**

Noted.

10.3  **Safeguarding**

Nothing to report.

11  **Any Other Business**

Ms Miller reported that there were two new members on the Trading Company Board.

The Director-General noted that the National had closed that day due to a power cut. There had been a major impact on the gallery and systems, which did not come back up after the power outage. This was being investigated and it was hoped to reopen the following morning.

The Board meeting closed with a vote of thanks to the Director-General for his extraordinary service, as this was his last meeting.
Monday 29 January 2023 at 1400 hours.