

# National Library of Scotland Board Meeting

Date: 29 March 2023

## Participants

**Present:**

* Sir Drummond Bone (Board Chair) - DB
* Ruth Crawford KC (Board Vice Chair) - RC
* Emily Drayson - EM
* Alan Horn - AH
* Alison Kidd – AK
* Lesley McPherson - LM
* Kirsty Lingstadt – KL
* Justin McKenzie Smith – JMS
* Michael Muir - MM
* Robert Kilpatrick - RK
* Robert Wallen - RW

**In attendance:**

* Neil Mackenzie KC, Faculty of Advocates - NM
* Amina Shah, National Librarian - AS
* Anthony Gillespie, Chief Operating Officer - AG
* Jackie Cromarty, Director of Engagement – JCr
* Susanne Munro – Trade Union representative - SM
* Kathy Hutton, Board Support & Compliance Officer – KH
* John Coll, Associate Director of Access – JC (part-time)
* Lucy Clement, Head of Development – LC (part-time)

## Minutes of meeting

In advance of the formal agenda Julie Bon, Head of Collections Care, provided a comprehensive overview of the conservation work undertaken to sustainably protect the Library's collections. This included:

• The Preservation Services Unit at Sighthill makes use of innovative box making designs allowing increased efficiency in use of Library storage space. Presently the Library gains income from making boxes for other organisations and hopes to expand this income stream in the future.

• Ways to further highlight the work of the department and engage with the public are being explored, particularly in relation to inclusion in the Centenary programme of activities.

The Chair thanked Julie Bon for the informative presentation on the work of the department and looked forward to hearing updates through the Librarian's report in the future. Julie Bon left the meeting.

### Chair's Welcome

Sir Drummond Bone (Board Chair) welcomed all to the meeting, especially Emily Drayson, Justin McKenzie Smith and Michael Muir who have recently joined the Board. Also, Susanne Munro attending as trade union representative and Neil McKenzie as Faculty of Advocates representative.

### Apologies for Absence

No apologies were received.

### Declarations of Interests

Declarations are as recorded.

### Horizon scanning

The Board noted:

* The Library was grateful to the NLS Foundation in approving backstop funding for the Centenary, allowing work to progress on the project.
* The Public Bodies Reform Review which the Director of Culture and Major Events will provide an update on later in the meeting.
* The recently published Scottish Government (SG) 2023/24 public sector pay policy.

### Minutes of meetings

The minutes of 23 November 2022 were approved as a correct record.

### Actions outstanding and matters arising from previous meetings

The Board noted the status of the actions.

### National Librarian's Report

Amina Shah highlighted some points from the Librarian's report:

* The Voluntary Early Exit scheme is now almost complete and has resulted in some restructuring within the Library Leadership Team (LLT) as detailed in the paper.
* Alison Stevenson has recently been appointed as Director of Collections, Access and Research following undertaking this role on an interim basis. An external offer has also been made to an applicant for the role of Director of Digital and Service Transformation. All appointments were externally competitive.
* The Librarian will represent the Non Departmental Public Bodies (NDPB) Chief Executives forum on two Scottish Government Committees: (1) The Digital Board and (2) Shared Services Board.
* Our ‘Save Scotland’s Newspapers’ fundraising appeal, launched November 2022, has been the Library’s most successful annual fundraising appeal to date.
* The John Francis Campbell exhibition will open at George IV Bridge in June. The dual-language Gaelic/English exhibition will be the Library's first dual language exhibition developed through working in collaboration with colleagues in Gaelic language.
* A joint event with BBC Scotland (Festival of Broadcasting) at Kelvin Hall included a talk to independent film producers promoting the Library's film archive for use in documentaries and films.
* The target for the Library's collection to be held in one third digital is close to completion, ahead of the forecast target date. The conversation on understanding the carbon footprint impact of digitally holding duplicate copies of material is ongoing within the Research Libraries UK network.
* The Library will be mapping out its international partnerships shortly and will review how these could be further developed.

The Chair thanked the Librarian for the comprehensive update.

### Audit Committee (AC) Update

Ruth Crawford KC (Audit Committee Chair) advised the Committee considered:

* The annual external audit plan and two internal audit reports – Project Management and Procurement which provided Moderate and Substantial assurance respectively.

Michael Muir advised a potential conflict of interest as is employed by a Tier 1 supplier on the Crown Commercial Services (CCS) Framework.

* The procurement route for a major upcoming project - smoke extraction and damper replacement system at Causewayside. The Committee agreed the Library should proceed with a call off procurement from the Crown Commercial framework in the first instance. If sufficient interest is not received, the Library can revert reasonably quickly to open procurement. Tender issue is expected in May, contract award in November, work commencing early 2024 and completing end March 2025. The project will be subject to robust governance processes through both the Library Leadership Team and Audit Committee.

### Staffing & Remuneration (SR) Chair update

Alison Kidd (S&R Committee Chair) advised:

* The Committee continues to monitor the Public Bodies Reform Review as well as cost of living and staff wellbeing, particularly in relation to long Covid.
* Internal audits on Staff Wellbeing and Equality, Diversion and Inclusion will be undertaken during 2023/24.

In relation to the recent staff survey:

* The results showed a strong level of participation and representation. Key concerns raised by staff included hybrid working, macro-economic turbulence and late settlement of pay award. Also, some emerging concerns around silo working was evident.

AS advised:

* The Library is seeking to address any staff concerns with consistent all staff communications as much as possible in person whilst creating opportunities for more in person staff engagement throughout the Library.
* The staff survey took place in advance of the 2022/23 pay settlement, it is therefore possible that some issues around for example staff economic anxiety may have already started to be addressed.
* A mid-point check between this survey and the next may be useful to gauge whether the actions put in place have helped.

The Chair thanked the Committee Chairs for the useful updates.

### Draft Library Plan and Budget 2023/24

* AS advised the draft Library Plan and Budget has been produced through increased collaboration with managers across the Library, focussing where possible on objectives with cross Library impact and in line with National Outcomes from the SG's National Performance Framework.
* AG provided an overview of the draft Budget highlighting the settlement from SG was more positive than anticipated.

The Chair thanked both for the overview and the Board approved the draft Library Plan and Budget. The Board noted that patrons such as the American Patrons of the National Library and Galleries seek to support specific projects rather than day to day Library running costs.

### Draft Internal Audit Plan

JCr advised the draft 2023/24 internal audit plan has been reviewed by the March Audit Committee who recommended it come to the full Board for review. The 2023/24 will be the last for the existing internal auditors with a procurement exercise due to start in the latter half of 2023.

The Board noted the plan and made no recommendations for change, noting the draft plan would now go back to May's Audit Committee for final approval.

The Board concurred with the proposed 2023/24 draft internal audit plan whilst remaining mindful of progress with the existing IT General Controls recommendations and looked forward to receiving an update from the new Director of Digital and Service Transformation.

Lucy Clement (LC) joined the meeting.

### Fundraising Annual Update

The Board took the paper as read and LC highlighted the following:

* The external fundraising landscape appears to be slowly returning to pre pandemic levels but the difficult economic environment continues to have a detrimental impact.
* The donor base has tripled over the last two years. The Library's annual appeal (Newspaper Conversation) has been one of the most successful to date attracting new donors.
* Direct mailing continues to be a key element of any appeal whilst work continues to make online giving easier.
* No breaches in fundraising policies were reported in the previous year, with no complaints specifically related to fundraising noted.

The Chair thanked LC for the comprehensive update. The Board noted the strong results in the past few years, especially with the size of the fundraising team and asked thanked LC for the work to date and asked for thanks to passed to the fundraising team.

Lucy Clement left the meeting.

### Centenary 2025

JCR advised good progress had been made in Centenary planning and highlighted:

* The NLS Foundation has agreed to fund two temporary roles to support the Centenary at both co-ordination and producer level and to underwrite some Centenary production costs. Fundraising is intended to form the main support with the NLS Foundation's support underwriting costs to allow continued progress.
* The June Board will receive a proposed communications and engagement plan along with first look at proposed large scale legacy projects for consideration by the Board.

The Chair thanked JCr for the update. The Board noted it was reassuring to see the progress being made and asked the followed be considered by the Centenary Working Group:

* How to increase accessibility and opportunities to enhance links with universities.
* How best to celebrate the collections with a theme that links with the strategy of Reaching People.
* An outcome focused programme of events, setting appropriate targets and having one or two achievable objectives.
* Review setting the right tone, ie (1) the collections belong to the people of Scotland with the Library is maintaining these for them and (2) being more collaborative with other libraries, eg schools, where appropriate.
* Engaging with the Faculty of Advocates with the original gift to the nation coming from the Faculty.

At the start of discussion concerning the Faculty, Ruth Crawford KC declared an interest as Treasurer of the Faculty.

**Action: Jackie Cromarty**

John Coll (JC) joined the meeting.

### Safeguarding Annual Update

As the designed Library Leadership Team lead for safeguarding, JC advised:

* Two additional safeguarding officers have undertaken NSPCC training bringing the total to five. This provides good coverage across all public sites ensuring a safeguarding officer is available at all sites during opening hours.
* An online module training is available for appropriate staff. Further training for public facing staff and managers has also been undertaken including scenarios which are more Library specific.
* The Safeguarding Policy has recently been updated and will shortly be reviewed by the LLT. Only minor changes are proposed. The Policy continues to be available on the Library's website as a means of transparency and to provide assurance. The Policy and operating procedures supporting will continue to be benchmarked with similar organisations.
* No report safeguarding incidents have been received in the last 12 months.
* Jackie Cromarty will take over as the LLT's Safeguarding Officer following John Coll's departure from the Library.

The Chair thanked JC for the update. The Board thanked JC for all his input into safeguarding over the last few years.

The Board asked that consideration be given to update training for Board members on safeguarding responsibilities as part of the June Board Away Day, specifically scenario examples appropriate to the Library.

**Action: Board Chair**

### Quarterly Finance Report

The Board took the paper as read with AG highlighting:

* The Library is £74k better positioned than expected at end Q3. Most of this relates to better than anticipated income receipts.
* The 2022/2023 pay settlement has been processed and is now reflected in quarter end figures. This was funded mainly by SG and part funded through Library reserves.
* Utility costs are higher than budgeted due to external market pressures.
* The Library is on plan to spend all its Collections Purchase fund.
* The Voluntary Early Exit scheme is now largely complete which will result in some future savings.
* At this time, it is difficult to know specifically where the Library's budget will fall at year end however there continues to be a high level of budget monitoring in place within the Library to ensure that financial plans keep on track.

The Chair thanked AG for the update and the Board noted the report.

### Health & Safety report

The Board took the paper as read with AG highlighting:

* One minor incident had been reported in the last quarter with the long-term trend being downward.
* The Scottish Fire and Rescue Services are due to change how they respond to fire alarms; they will only come on site following confirmation from a Library staff member that there is a fire. This is a Scotland wide policy. In advance of this change, the Library will change some procedures and initiate appropriate training.

The Chair thanked AG for the update and the Board asked to be kept appraised of steps taken to mitigate any risk from the change in Scottish Fire and Rescue Services procedures.

**Action: Anthony Gillespie**

### Approved minutes

The Board noted the approved minutes of the:

* Audit Committee, 7 November 2022
* Staffing & Remuneration Committee, 2 November 2022

### NLS Foundation minutes

The Board noted the NLS Foundation meeting minutes of 2 August 2022 and 11 November 2022.

### Date of next meeting:

The Board noted the provisional agenda items for the June 2023 Board as well as the Board Away Day scheduled for 8 June 2023 (afternoon).

### Public Bodies Reform Review

Penelope Cooper, Director of Culture and Major Events, joined the meeting virtually and thanked the Library Leadership Team for the excellent quality of their recent return for the Public Bodies Service Review.

Following an exchange of ideas and discussion, the Board thanked Penelope Cooper for taking the time to update the Board on the current status of the Public Bodies Reform Review.

During discussion the opportunities for collaboration with other organisations was noted, for example expanding the Library's public genealogy offering.

The Chair thanked all for their time today and the meeting ended following a closed session for Board members only which was not minuted.