

# National Library of Scotland Board Meeting

Date: 26 June 2024

## Participants

**Present:**

* Sir Drummond Bone (Board Chair) - DB
* Ruth Crawford KC (Board Vice Chair) - RC
* Emily Drayson - ED
* Alan Horn - AH
* Alison Kidd – AK
* Kirsty Lingstadt - KL
* Justin McKenzie Smith – JMS
* Lesley McPherson - LMcP
* 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
* Susanne Munro, Minutes – SM
* Lydia Williams, Personal Assistant - LW

## Minutes of meeting

In advance of the formal agenda, Kay Foubister (Acquisitions Curator, Moving Image and Sound Archive) provided an overview of the Cinema Sgire project. The Cinema Sgire collection of over 100 videotapes, produced in the Outer Hebrides in the late 1970s, had been in the care of Museum nan Eilean and was donated to the Library in 2020. These films are now available to view on the Library's website. With the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with Sabhal Mor Ostaig earlier this year it is hoped that there will be opportunities to do more collaborations with Gaelic speaking communities. A project such as this might also provide an opportunity for crowd sourcing Gaelic language volunteers and to use technology to work with remote communities.

### Chair's Welcome

Sir Drummond Bone (Board Chair) welcomed all to the meeting, including Neil Mackenzie KC as the Faculty of Advocates representative.

### Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies.

### Declarations of Interests

Declarations are as recorded in the Board Register of Interests.

### Horizon Scanning

The Board was asked to note the following items:

* Pay award discussions for 2024/25;
* Implementation of the 35-hour week;
* Kate Forbes' role in Culture decision making. This possible change is due to a perceived conflict of interest for the Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture.

### Minutes of meetings

The minutes of 27 March 2024 were approved as a correct record.

### Actions outstanding and matters arising from previous meetings

The Board noted the status of the actions.

In relation to BM24.03 Alan Horn confirmed that he had spoken with Lucy Clement (LC), Head of Development. LC will now prepare a paper for the Library Leadership Team in relation to amending relevant Library policies to give the Library some additional comfort.

### Chief Executive's Update and Performance Report

The Librarian, Amina Shah, spoke to the Activity report and wished to acknowledge the work and commitment from staff evident in the report. Amina Shah, highlighted:

* Hidden Collections work which has recently passed the milestone of providing access to over one million items. AS advised that all organisations have hidden collections, but it is unusual to be so open about this aspect of our work. The Library is a leader in this area across the sector. they do not highlight this aspect of their collections.
* AS and Lucy Clement were in New York for Tartan Week in April. This was a hugely successful visit, the highlight of which was Ralph McLean's, Curator (Long 18th Century Collections), talk. Some of those engaged with came to the launch of the Library's latest exhibition – Renaissance.
* The Library's Climate Action Plan is progressing well. The Green Team have been organising beach clean-ups, one in Cramond and one in Musselburgh, with more in the planning for later this year.
* AS was asked to speak on behalf of the 'Culture Cluster' at a recent meeting of the Scottish Leaders Forum. Other speakers included, J P Marks, Head of the Civil Service in Scotland and the CEO of SEPA. Delegates were senior leaders from across all areas of the Public Sector and the discussion focused on collaborative working to support sustainable public services.
* The Library is sponsoring an event at the Edinburgh International Book Festival. Phillipa Gregory will be interviewed by Val McDermid. Board members will be invited.

The Chief Operating Officer, Anthony Gillespie, highlighted:

* Generally, there has been good performance across the quarter. Web visits have increased and are at their highest level for four years.
* The Library did not meet a few targets, including staff absence, growth in collections due to the British Library cyber incident and fundraising due to late endowments.

The Board noted the report and during discussion:

* Noted Scottish Government (SG) ambition regarding increased philanthropic giving to support the sector has several challenges, including donors' preference for adding value rather funding core functions.

### Audit Committee (AC) Update

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

* A recent security incident at the British Library (BL) was discussed and the Library team has been invited to review its procedures for the Treasures and other spaces.
* Approved a release of funds from the Denis Roberts Fund for a light brand refresh.
* Oversaw an internal audit tender - Wylie Bisset were successful.
* Noted that the management of a historical theft requires monitoring and further information is required.

AG advised that in relation to the recent incident at the BL, the Library had already arranged an event planned around protests. He could not say at the time of the Audit Committee to maintain the element of surprise. This event was held at the end of May and involved 'protestors' in the Treasures space and then trying to invade the General Reading Room.

AS advised that in relation to the historical theft, she has spoken to the interim Chief Executive at National Records of Scotland to prompt the sharing of more information, including a clear timeline.

### Governance Committee (GC) Update

Robert Wallen (Governance Committee Chair) advised there had been no Governance Committee since the last formal Board meeting.

### Staffing & Remuneration (S&R) Chair update

Alison Kidd (S&R Committee Chair) advised that, following a full and informative pre-meeting with Trade Union representatives in advance of the last Committee meeting, the Committee:

* Advises that the relationship with the Trade Unions is good. Workforce Planning is at the forefront of their thinking and the TU are very supportive, but decisions are not always welcome.
* Notes that the results of the staff survey show a disparity between staff working from home and in the buildings. There is concern that some staff are working excessive hours and how that scenario interacts with a move to a 35-hour working week.
* The new HR system has gone live and had been very well managed.
* There has been an increase in absence due to work related stress.

AG clarified that the stress-related absence was primarily in one area and that all staff are now back at work, with action being taken to remedy issues.

A discussion took place around a co-opted Committee member who has been unable to attend meetings. AK will reach out to this member.

The Chair thanked the Committee Chairs for the valuable updates.

### Risk Management Policy

AG advised that this version is a light touch refresh, following significant updates in 2023, including:

* Being clearer about a tolerable risk position, with an aim to move from tolerable to optimal with a road map for that.
* Risk management training for managers has been updated.

The Policy was approved.

### Strategic Risk Register

Anthony Gillespie provided an overview highlighting:

* Incorporating work at Causewayside.
* Looking ahead at Scottish Government funding settlements.
* Estates and Collections Care have done good work updating a document on planning for events, and a training session has taken place on Managing a Major Incident.

In response to a question AG confirmed that the Risk Management Procedures document contains more on fundraising and GDPR as requested by the Audit Committee.

### 2025 Meeting Dates

The meeting dates for 2025 were noted, with the Chair advising that the September 2025 meeting will take place a week earlier than usual.

Helen Abel (HA), Visitor Services Manager joined the meeting.

### Safeguarding Annual Report

Rob Wallen had reviewed the paper as Chair of Governance Committee and advised:

* Clarity was sought in relation to the effectiveness of action taken and was satisfied with the Library's response.
* If a relevant eLearning module can be sourced, it may be advantageous for Board members to complete this.

Helen Abel, Visitor Services Manager, provided an overview of the Safeguarding report highlighting:

* All public facing staff have completed training in safeguarding, using Library-based scenarios. This forms part of the induction programme for new staff.
* There was one incident in the last year, which did not reach a satisfactory conclusion, as it could not be progressed without the date of birth of the person involved.

A discussion took place around whether training or peer organisations could advise on changes to the policy. HA agreed to reach out to organisations in the sector.

Helen Abel left the meeting. Claire Allan (CA), Centenary Producer joined the meeting.

### Centenary 2025

The Board took the paper as read. CA provided an overview of progress since the last report to the Board in March:

* There has been progress on the national tour, which is now under the banner of a national programme.
* The first funding application is being submitted this week. Other funding opportunities are being explored.
* Work is ongoing to shape the Love Libraries Campaign. Young Scot is now involved and are reaching out to young people.
* The Library hosted a successful event with Damien Barr earlier in June. He and Val McDermid have both agreed to be Centenary Champions for the Library.

In response to questions, it was confirmed:

* Scottish Government and the Sponsor Team are aware of the Library's centenary and the accompanying events.
* Work is ongoing on messaging to external audiences, and objectives and outcomes will be monitored.

Claire Allan left the meeting. Rob Cawston (RCa), Director of Digital and Service Transformation joined the meeting.

### Digital Update

The Board took the paper as read with RCa highlighting:

* The aim is to have Cyber Security accreditation by August 2024.
* A systems mapping project was undertaken with the intention of creating diagrams which would show the Library's digital estate, alongside a systems catalogue showing who owns what system and their lifecycle.
* An AI statement was drawn up and shared with LLT and now the Board. This is an essential part of the Library's adoption of AI tools.
* The DAMS project, which has been running for two years has been reviewed and a different more achievable approach is now being taken.

The Board noted the report and thanked RCa for the useful work being undertaken especially in relation to systems mapping and the AI statement.

In response to a question RCa confirmed that cloud storage does not necessarily equal cheaper or more secure storage. As the Library onboards to the Scottish Government cloud infrastructure, there will be more protection but it is not without some level of risk.

Rob Cawston left the meeting.

###  Financial Update

The Board took the paper as read and noted that Audit Committee have had prior sight of the report, and a financial update was provided at the Board Away Day in June.

The Board thanked AG and the Finance team for their work on the audit.

### Health & Safety report

The Board took the paper as read with AG highlighting:

* No incidents since the last meeting.
* The fire alarm systems across all buildings are to be replaced and once this work is done the Library will have the same system across all sites.

### Approved minutes

The Board noted the approved minutes of the Audit Committee (4 February 24 and Staffing & Remuneration Committee (12 March 24).

###  NLS Foundation minutes

The Board noted the NLS Foundation meeting minutes of 19 February 2024.

AH advised there was nothing further to report.

###  Date of next meeting:

The Board noted the provisional agenda items for the next scheduled Board meeting of 25 September 2024 (proposed location: Kelvin Hall, Glasgow).

The Board moved to a closed session.