



NI
Museums
Council

Annual Report 2024-25

Northern Ireland Museums Council

Financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025

Registered Company Number: NI027735

Charity Registration Number: NIC101873

CONTENTS	PAGE
Members of the Board and professional advisors	1
Non-Executive Director's Report	2
Report of the Directors	3
Remuneration and Staffing Report	25
Governance Statement	32
Membership of the Northern Ireland Museums Council	40
Accountability report	42
Report of the independent auditor	43
Statement of financial activities	47
Balance sheet	48
Statements of cashflows	49
Notes to the financial statements	50

Members of the Board and professional advisors

Directors

Nora Douds (Chair)
Jessica Hoyle (Vice-Chair)
Brona Moffett
Nuala Toman
Prof. Elizabeth Crooke
Matthew McMahon
Cllr. John McClaughry
Alan Freeburn (appointed 21 May 2024)
Ald. Paul Greenfield (appointed 11 June 2024)
Sarah Calvin (appointed 6 Sept 2024)
Sean Bardon (appointed 6 Sept 2024)
Cllr. Kevin Savage (resigned 11 June 2024)
Paul Allison (resigned 06 Sept 2024)
Jayne Clarke (resigned 06 Sept 2024)
Julie Andrews (resigned 12 Sept 2024)
Cllr. Christine Creighton (resigned 29 Oct 2024)

Audit & Risk Assurance Committee

Brona Moffett (Chair) (appointed 24 Sep 2024)
Nuala Toman
Matthew McMahon (appointed 12 Nov 2024)
Jessica Hoyle (Appointed 24 Feb 2025)
Prof. Elizabeth Crooke (appointed 24 Feb 2025)
Paul Allison (resigned 6 Sept 2024)
Julie Andrews (Chair) (resigned 12 Sept 2024)

Grant Committee

Nuala Toman (Chair)
Simon Hunter - co opted
Jessica Hoyle
Alan Freeburn (appointed 13 Nov 2024)
Sean Bardon (appointed 13 Nov 2024)
Prof. Elizabeth Crooke (resigned 10 Sept 2024)

External Auditor

Northern Ireland Audit Office
106 University Street
Belfast
BT7 1EU

Business Planning Committee (suspended in September 2024)

Bankers

Danske Bank
Corporate Banking
PO Box 183
Donegall Square West
Belfast
BT1 6JS

Company Secretary

Johnathan Dalzell (until 1 November 2024)
Heather McGuicken (1 day per week from 13 December 2024 and full time from 24 February 2025).

Accounting Officer

Johnathan Dalzell (seconded out from 1 November 2024)
Heather McGuicken (seconded in 1 day per week from 13 December 2024. Substantively appointed from 24 February 2025).

Registered Office

153 Bangor Road
Holywood
Co. Down
BT18 0EU

Principal Office

153 Bangor Road
Holywood
Co. Down
BT18 0EU

Charity Registration Number

NIC101873

Registered Company Number

NI027735

Non-Executive Director's Report

Last year, I noted that the only constant is change. Yet, in some ways, the absence of change, as we face the same persistent challenges, has become equally difficult. Uncertainty around public funding has long threatened the Northern Ireland Museums Council's ability to deliver its objectives, which prompted serious reflection throughout 2024-25 on our long-term viability. When we are unable to consistently provide grants, programmes, training, and onsite support, to our museum members, we must question the impact we offer. Still, the NIMC team has worked with determination to deliver significant value despite limited resources. I recognise that we are not alone, as many vital organisations, and indeed our own museums members face ongoing financial uncertainty.

Despite this we have continued to support the development, protection, and promotion of museum collections through our administration of the Museum Accreditation Scheme offering guidance to both accredited museums and those working toward accreditation. Advocacy remained central to our work. Our Museums Forum in September 2024 brought together sector representatives, the Department for Communities (DfC) Museums Policy team, and Minister Gordon Lyons. This key event allowed members to engage with the Museum Trends Survey, influence the evolving Museums Policy, and showcase their creativity. We are grateful to DfC for their direction and to our members for recognising the value of NI Museum Council's role.

In 2024–25, notable highlights included another successful Playful Museums Festival, a new partnership with Scouts NI to develop the new NI Challenge Badge, and our Early Years Museum Pilot Project with Libraries NI and the Department for Education. We also supported study trips, co-hosted the Education & Outreach Forum with the Irish Museums Association in Dublin, and delivered training to over 120 museum professionals. Communications remained strong through our 'Let's Talk' sessions, Museum Beat ezines, and sector newsletters.

We are proud of our ongoing work on Global Voices, Local Choices, supported by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. This initiative, which deepens leadership and awareness across the sector, has been shortlisted for a national Museums + Heritage Award – recognising the strength of sector-wide collaboration.

Yet, the message is clear: with more, we could do more. Static funding has placed real constraints on our ability to meet rising sectoral needs. Our museums are pushing boundaries, but without a well-supported infrastructure body, their potential is limited. I hope that this year's research, sectoral surveys, and training feedback – especially the Museum Trends Survey – will strengthen the case for greater support. Museums are not a luxury. They are vital engines of education, community engagement, well-being, and economic growth. We must ensure their contributions are recognised and sustained.

I extend sincere thanks to the Department for Communities for establishing a framework in which NIMC contributes to the Programme for Government. In addition, I would like to thank the Art Fund, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, the NI Museum Council team, the Board, and our partners across the sector who make this work possible. The year ahead will bring challenges, but with commitment and support, NI Museum Council will continue to provide steady leadership.

Nora Douds
Chair

Signed: 

DATE: 28/08/2025

Report of the Directors for the year ended 31 March 2025

The Directors of the Northern Ireland Museums Council (NIMC), for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, submit their annual report and the audited financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025.

NIMC was established in 1993 to support local museums (i.e. non-National museums) in Northern Ireland in maintaining and improving their standards of collections care and service to the public and to promote a coherent framework of museum provision.

In pursuit of these aims NIMC's main objectives are:

- To assist museums in Northern Ireland to improve standards of collections care.
- To assist museums in Northern Ireland to improve the range and quality of services to the public.
- To improve the status and standing of museums.
- To promote and advance education by supporting and assisting museums and galleries and to encourage the use and enjoyment by the public of museums and galleries in Northern Ireland, and thus advance the arts, culture, heritage, and science for the benefit of the public.
- To promote a coherent framework of museum provision in Northern Ireland.
- To operate efficiently, effectively, and economically.

NIMC's functions include the following:

- The development and maintenance of links with interested bodies and agencies.
- The provision of information, advice, and training to museums across a range of activities such as curatorial practice, collections management, conservation services, marketing and income-generation, etc.
- To encourage, support and assist educational of museums.
- Assistance with feasibility studies and carrying out developmental research.
- The disbursement of grants to local museums towards approved projects and specimen purchase.
- The promotion of Museum Accreditation for local museums.

NIMC is registered as a company limited by guarantee and operates in compliance with the Companies Act 2006. It is a registered charity. NIMC is funded, in the main, by the Department for Communities (DfC) and as such operates as a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB). NIMC does not carry out its functions on behalf of the Crown.

With this remit, and through these aims, NIMC plays a unique and fundamental role in the delivery of the Northern Ireland Museums Policy, as well as contributing to the Programme for Government Outcomes Delivery Plan and the Departmental vision and strategic priorities to deliver outcomes/results, which will support people, improve communities and tackle disadvantage. For museums, these aspects become manifest through the protection and enhancement of the cultural assets they hold, and the prioritising of audience engagement programmes.

The vision of the Northern Ireland Museums Policy is for *"a coordinated and sustainable museum sector that develops, preserves and interprets its collections to the highest possible standards; delivers quality services that inspire, educate and engage local, national and international visitors and users; harnesses its strengths and diversity to support economic, social and cultural development in Northern Ireland and a shared and better future."*

Report of the Directors for the year ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

The NIMC Corporate Plan 2022-25, “Museums at the Heart” was developed with the Board of Directors following a stakeholder engagement process. Five strategic goals were identified, which support NIMC’s mission to champion, develop and strengthen museums:

1. Museums are connected to their communities and cultivate a shared sense of place.
2. Museums enrich people’s lives and create opportunities for enjoyment, learning and fulfilment.
3. Museums drive transformation to make us more sustainable, inclusive, and innovative.
4. Museums contribute to economic and social recovery.
5. Museums develop, protect, and promote their collections and collections knowledge for the benefit of their audiences.

NIMC measured its performance during 2024-25 with eight Key Performance Indicators outlined below:

NO.	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	Target	Actual 2024-25
1.	Local museums maintain and enhance their standards. Assess accreditation applications within a six-month timeframe.	90%	100%
2.	Local museums develop new projects and programmes to engage visitors. Administer at least five grants to local museums.	5	9
3.	Engaged and informed members, stakeholders and public. Maintain the digital engagement portfolio (newsletters, bulletins and social media channels).	16	16
4.	A skilled and knowledgeable museum workforce. Secure 150 participants in training and shared learning events.	150	378
5.	NIMC is a financially sustainable and resilient organisation. Secure at least 10% non-grant-in-aid funding	10% (£25k)	9.2% (£23.1k)
6.	A skilled and knowledgeable NIMC staff, to better support our members. NIMC staff attended at least four professional development events	4	21
7.	Research that supports and develops the local museum sector. Undertake and publish the Museum Trends Survey Report.	Publish Report	Ongoing
8.	Effective advocacy to ensure a well-supported and resilient local museum sector. Undertake at least five advocacy actions.	5	13

Report of the Directors for the year ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

Public Benefit Statement

NIMC's charitable purpose is to promote and advance education by supporting and assisting museums and galleries and to encourage the use and enjoyment by the public of museums and galleries in Northern Ireland, and thus it advances the arts, culture, heritage or science. NIMC supports local museums by:

- Ensuring they maintain recognised standards.
- Assisting them to improve their public facilities.
- Providing financial assistance to support accredited local museums.
- Providing training.
- Advising on the learning and education programmes.
- Enhancing public awareness of the events at museums.
- Undertaking evaluations and research.
- Delivering strategic, sector-wide programmes.
- Providing advice, guidance and information in response to queries from the sector and the general public.

Beneficiaries include the people of Northern Ireland, visitors to museums from outside the area and online users of the NIMC website: www.nimc.co.uk.

2024-25 Performance

1. Museums are connected to their communities and cultivate a shared sense of place.

Our local museums are central to their communities. They create a sense of place and celebrate history and creativity through their collections. They provide space to explore and reflect and can cultivate a sense of pride and collective heritage.

NIMC worked with our museums over the course of 2024-25 to ensure that museums have a powerful and meaningful impact on their communities. NIMC provided training and support for community engagement, programmes that make museums vibrant, cherished and inspiring places, and supported museums to engage and involve young people.

Five training courses including Dementia Friends, Poverty Proofing Museums, Creating Family Friendly Museums, GLAM Cares NI (Sectoral Community Support Network) and Autism Awareness were delivered.

NI Challenge Badge Sponsored by NI Museums Council in Partnership with Scouts NI.

A partnership with Scouts NI has been agreed for NIMC to sponsor a redesigned NI Challenge Badge for all six age sections to encourage fuller engagement between local museums and all the age groups represented under Scouts NI. NIMC has procured the production of the physical badges. Participation and engagement of ten accredited museums has been achieved. The badges will be launched at the end of April 2025. This will be a rolling programme designed to be self-perpetuating and open for the inclusion of more museums and more activities.

Report of the Directors for the year ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

NIMC Early Years Museum Pilot Project

NIMC embarked on a pilot project to explore and strengthen the connection between early years education and museums through the medium of a children's book. This initiative built on the success of the NIMC Playful Museums Festival and was further guided by the Department of Education's *A Fair Start* review, which emphasized the importance of targeted support for under-5s.

Museums across Northern Ireland were invited to submit an Expression of Interest to participate. North Down Museum and Ballymoney Museum were selected based on their proximity to nurseries and libraries, as well as their prior experience with early years engagement through the Playful Museums Festival.

As part of the project, professional illustrators and writers were contracted to co-create a children's book alongside local nursery groups, using inspiration drawn from each museum's collections and stories. Workshops were held both in museums and nurseries, allowing children to explore museum objects and share what they found most exciting. These insights helped shape the development of characters and storylines, with children actively contributing to the creative process.

The resulting books, 'Our Museum Day: Ballymoney Museum' and 'Max's Magical Visit to the Museum' were printed in March 2025 and distributed to the museums for use in Storytime sessions, outreach programming, and children's reading corners. Each museum was granted a license to use the book's characters in a variety of educational materials such as activity packs, loan boxes, and colouring sheets.

Every participating child was credited as a co-creator, and the associated nursery's name and logo featured prominently in the book. Ballymoney Museum held its book launch on 11th April 2025, where each child received a personal copy of the book and a certificate celebrating their involvement. The nursery also received a copy for future use with new cohorts of children. The launch of the North Down Museum book will take place in June 2025.

Libraries NI has committed to stocking the books across libraries in the relevant council areas and will host their own community launch events. In addition, and NIMC funded promotional video is currently in production to support the book launches and will also serve as valuable evidence for future funding opportunities. Comprehensive evaluation is underway, capturing feedback from museums, nurseries, children, parents/carers, freelancers, and Libraries NI staff.

Book 1: 'Our Museum Day: Ballymoney Museum'

	Name	NIMC funded Costs
Museum	Ballymoney Museum	Nil
Nursery	Ballymoney Playgroup	Nil
Writer	Tale Time Stories	£2,700
Illustrator	Kerrie Illustrates	£4,200
Printer	GPS	£1,098
	TOTAL	£7,998

Report of the Directors for the year ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

Book 2: 'Max's Magical Visit to the Museum'

	Name	Associated Costs
Museum	North Down Museum	Nil
Nursery	Ballymoney Playgroup	Nil
Writer and illustrator	Ellan Rankin	£5,000
Printer	GPS	£723
	TOTAL	£5,723

IMA-NIMC Education & Outreach Forum

Once again, NIMC partnered with the Irish Museums Association (IMA) in May 2024 to deliver the annual Education & Outreach Forum, which was hosted at the Law Society of Ireland in Dublin, attracting 80 attendees. The Education & Outreach Forum has become a key event in the calendar for museum practitioners and educators from the wider cultural, arts and heritage sector, to meet and discuss a wide range of topics related to learning programmes, and with a focus on the community impact of museums. It provides an informal and supportive platform for knowledge exchange and networking with colleagues, providing time for debate and critical engagement.

Ten presentations were delivered during the day-long event, with three presentations from NI museum/heritage professionals, covering topics related to social prescribing, disability, storytelling and public engagement.

2. Museums enrich people's lives and create opportunities for enjoyment, learning and fulfilment.

Museums and their collections are richly stimulating. They tell stories of the past, feeding our imaginations and enabling us to explore topics that challenge and motivate us to learn and grow. They provide opportunities for connecting us with our communities and can improve our quality of life.

Over the course of 2024-25, NIMC supported museums to provide positive and inspiring experiences for individuals and groups across society, working with target groups to help them live their best lives.

Playful Museums Festival

The 9th Playful Museums Festival ran during February 2025. The festival has an early year's focus, helping museums to engage with children under five and their carers.

The Playful Museums grant programme was funded by an Art Fund grant to Museums Development UK, of which NIMC is a member organisation. Local museums could apply for grants up to £500 to fund projects that met the developmental needs of babies, toddlers and/or pre-schoolers under the age of five.

The 2024-25 programme included onsite workshops, storytelling, music, play and an 'imagination workout' workshop in the Irish language.

Report of the Directors for the year ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

Playful Museums Grant Support

Grants were awarded to help museums deliver a range of activities at the following museums:

Museum	Project Name	Amount Awarded
Tower Museum	Living Art - meet the stories behind the art	£500.00
Mid Antrim Museum	Deadly dragons at Ballymena Castle	£443.00
Coleraine Museum	On the Farm	£500.00
Armagh Robinson Library & No5 Vicar's Hill	Love A Tree	£462.90
Linen Hall	Rita agus an Dineasár - an 'imagination workout' with Máire Zepf	£500.00
Fermanagh County Museum	Play days	£490.00
Ballymoney Museum	Wee Critters on Safari	£500.00
Railway Preservation Society NI	Choo Choo time with Moo Music	£500.00
Armagh County Museum	Art, Rhythm and Rhyme for Under 5's	£500.00
	Total	£4395.90

The implementation of these projects led to various positive outcomes for the museums and their communities. NIMC will review and collate these outcomes via returned Project Evaluation Forms which are due to be completed and returned by 31st May 2025.

Play Resource membership

As not all the MDUK (Museum Development UK) fund was awarded, NIMC used the remaining underspend to fund membership to the Bryson group Play Resource for one museum. Membership provides access to creative learning resources, information, support, and advice. The membership was promoted on the NIMC website, social media channels and mailing lists. Museums were asked to submit Expressions of Interest, and the successful museum was chosen at random.

Membership lasts for one year, which will allow the museum to continue their early years engagement beyond the duration of the festival in February.

Museum Name	Expenditure	Cost
NI War Memorial	Play Resource Membership	£75 + £15 VAT
	Total	£90

Aligned Festival Activity

The popularity of the festival since 2016-17 has led to it being an integral part of event programming across Northern Ireland. Two museums ran events in February 2025 as part of the under 5s festival but did not apply/receive a grant. This shows that museums are planning their own Early Years engagement and are training staff in-house. The events happened at Newry Museum and North Down Museum and were promoted under the umbrella of the Playful Museums Festival.

Report of the Directors for the year ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

Festival highlight summary:

	NIMC Grant Funded	Non-Grant Funded	Total
Number of events	44	7	51
Number of museums grant-aided	9	2	11
Number of attendees	859 Total 594 Children 265 Adults	39	898
Number of resources created	9	-	9

Global Voices, Local Choices

The *Global Voices, Local Choices* (GVLC) partnership project set out to deliver a creative and community-centred approach to decolonisation within Northern Ireland's museum sector. This collaborative initiative brought together NIMC, National Museums NI, and African and Caribbean Support Organisation Northern Ireland (ACSONI), with support from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation.

GVLC focused on meaningful engagement with marginalised communities, particularly those from African and Caribbean backgrounds, enabling them to explore, interpret, and respond to artefacts from the National Museums NI 'World Cultures' collection. Five museums took part in the project: Armagh Robinson Library and No.5 Vicar's Hill, Carrickfergus Museum, Causeway Coast and Glens Museum Services, Tower Museum and the Ulster Museum.

Together, the partners facilitated a series of community workshops that fostered trust, encouraged creative expression, and strengthened relationships between local museums and underrepresented groups. These workshops culminated in exhibitions at each participating venue, featuring artefacts selected by community participants and accompanied by their personal reflections, interpretations, and artistic responses.

Project Impact and Evaluation

Independent evaluation analysed qualitative and quantitative data throughout the project. The report highlighted several key outcomes:

- Strong, lasting relationships were built between museums and participants.
- All partners reported increased personal and professional understanding of decolonisation practices.
- A clear, replicable process for community-led interpretation of collections was established.
- Museums gained valuable insights from community engagement and widened their connections.
- Participants found the workshops enjoyable and enriching, appreciating both the learning experience and the opportunity to connect with others.

Legacy and Future Commitment

Informed by this evaluation, the project partners co-produced a guidance document: *Global Voices, Local Choices: Supporting Decolonisation in Northern Ireland – Lessons Learnt Through a Creative Engagement Programme in Museums*.

Report of the Directors for the year ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

This document aims to support others who wish to undertake decolonisation work in their own organisations. While GVLC focused on museums and the World Cultures collection, the underlying approach is adaptable and relevant to other sectors and contexts. The partners recommend that this guidance be kept active by regularly reviewing and updating it in line with evolving practices and community needs.

As part of the project's ongoing legacy, NIMC and the GVLC partner museums have committed to quarterly GVLC Network meetings to share updates on decolonisation work, foster collaboration, and identify new opportunities for partnership and progress.

The GVLC project was shortlisted for the Museums + Heritage Awards 2025 in the Partnership category. The project received a 'Highly Commended' achievement at the awards ceremony in May. A welcome recognition of the project's collaborative spirit and impact.

3. Museums drive transformation to make us more sustainable, inclusive and innovative

Museums can be active forces that catalyse and influence change across society. They are uniquely placed to communicate through their collections and stories, to provide a safe and trusted environment to challenge perceptions, and to empower their audiences to shape change within their communities and beyond.

NIMC encouraged and equipped museums to provide safe, welcoming and trusted spaces, to facilitate conversations on a wide range of issues, and to contribute to societal transformation throughout 2024-25.

Supporting Inclusivity - Access and Inclusion Grants

In 2023-2024, the Department for Communities provided NIMC with £71,460 in grants for three accredited museums to make capital improvements associated with Access and Inclusion Audits. Unfortunately, DfC did not offer NIMC this funding in 2024-25 so no grants took place.

Communications

NIMC continued to highlight the work of local museums, alongside NIMC activities through a variety of digital newsletters, mailshots, social media channels and website news articles:

- 'Museum Beat' is circulated to members, communicating NIMC news, training and events, jobs, projects and toolkits, and funding opportunities; twelve issues of Museum Beat were issued in 2024-25.
 - NIMC sent 38 emails to its mailing list containing information about deadlines, training, events and membership opportunities.
-

Report of the Directors for the year ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

- The NIMC Newsletter is targeted at a variety of stakeholders, including members and non-members. Two Newsletters were issued in 2024-25, which celebrated successes including grant and project outcomes, partnership projects and conferences, as well as training and outreach projects. The NIMC Newsletter has now opened to accept submissions from students, museums, galleries and heritage organisations who want to showcase their projects, expanding the breadth and quality of content for readers.
- NIMC maintained four social media channels in 2024-25 (Facebook, Instagram, X and LinkedIn), which it used to engage a broad range of stakeholders, chiefly to promote the work of NIMC and local museums, as well as highlighting European Heritage Open Days, and Museum Week.

Let's Talk

NIMC continued to deliver the online forum 'Let's Talk' for NIMC members, which was originally launched in June 2020, in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Let's Talk provides members with an opportunity to hear about a particular topic and feed into learning and discussion. The sessions addressed a variety of subjects and featured speakers from across the UK.

Title	Date	Number of Participants
Fixing our Broken Planet	18/05/2024	10
Redevelopment & Reimagining	15/10/2024	19
Funding	13/01/2025	16
Digital & Museums	25/02/2025	17
	TOTAL	62

Members Study Trips

NIMC Members' Study Trips are designed to foster networking, peer learning, and the development of future collaborative opportunities within the museum sector.

On 21 January 2025, NIMC led a study visit to EPIC- The Irish Emigration Museum in Dublin with a group of six delegates. The delegates were selected from eleven expressions of interest to ensure a balanced representation of professional specialisms and geographic spread across Northern Ireland.

During the visit, EPIC staff delivered presentations on a range of topics including Interpretation Strategies, their 10-year strategy, Learning and Education Review and Annual Action Plan 2025. Delegates also toured the immersive museum exhibits and visited the Jeanie Johnston, a replica famine ship docked nearby.

Evaluation feedback from the trip was very positive, with some participants already having applied learnings and insights gained from the visit in their own organisations.

Museum Forum

The annual NIMC Museum Forum took place at Cultra Manor, bringing together 63 attendees from across the museum sector. The event was formally opened by Minister Gordon Lyons.

Report of the Directors for the year ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

The central theme of the 2024 forum was the development of the new Northern Ireland Museums Policy. Members of the Department for Communities (DfC) Policy Team joined sector representatives to explore the needs of museums and key areas to be addressed in the policy.

Five presentations were delivered, each aligned with one of NIMC's key performance indicators. Presenters included:

- Armagh Robinson Library
- Armagh Observatory & Planetarium
- Northern Ireland War Memorial
- National Museums NI
- African and Caribbean Support Organisation Northern Ireland (ACSONI)

Following each presentation, delegates participated in round table discussions, providing feedback on a series of questions. Notes from these discussions were compiled and shared with the DfC Policy Team to inform the development of the draft Museums Policy which currently due to be completed in December 2025.

Annual Training Programme

During the 2024–25 period, NIMC's annual training programme was delivered through a combination of online and in-person, skills-based sessions. A total of 10 training sessions were held, attended by 121 participants. Of these, 9 sessions were delivered online, attracting 111 attendees.

Due to delays in receiving the 2024–25 budget from DfC, NIMC staff were instructed by the Director to cancel scheduled fee-paying courses and postpone future training until after Autumn 2024 when the budget allocation was confirmed. In the interim, free training opportunities were made available through partnerships with GLAM Cares, Kids in Museums, Dementia Friends, and National Museums NI.

NIMC's training budget was reinstated in Summer 2024, but the delay impacted forward planning, lead time for delegates to book, and resulted in a concentration of training delivery in Q3 and Q4.

NIMC's training programme is designed to provide participants with opportunities to develop new skills and knowledge that support their workplaces, personal growth, well-being, and employment prospects across the museum, heritage, and cultural sectors.

In addition to delivering its own programme, NIMC collaborated with and supported external organisations to deliver four specialised training and peer learning events, including:

1. Poverty Proofing Culture Training

In partnership with Thrive, NIMC brought the first *Poverty Proofing Culture* training to Northern Ireland. The training was delivered by Children North East, developers of the nationally recognised *Poverty Proofing*© tool.

Report of the Directors for the year ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

2. Heritage Emergencies Study Day

NIMC partnered with the Institute of Conservation UK (NI group) and the Institute of Conservator Restorers Ireland to develop and deliver a Heritage Emergencies Study Day for museum and heritage members. This fully booked day covered an introduction to Emergencies and Emergency Planning, and engaging case studies on during and after different types of incidents.

3. ICOM UK Annual Conference

NIMC supported the ICOM UK annual conference held in Belfast, themed “*Common Ground: The role of museums in divided communities.*” NIMC staff received subsidised places, and four NIMC members were financially supported to attend.

4. Museums of Hope Event

In collaboration with the Natural History Museum, NIMC co-delivered the *Museums of Hope* event at the Ulster Museum, supported by National Museums NI and NI Environment Link. The event explored the role of museums in responding to the planetary emergency.

Training Courses Delivered including Charges

Title	Date	No. of Participants	Cost (trainer, room hire, catering)	Fee per person
Dementia Friends	10/06/2024	12	0	0
Glam Cares NI	26/09/2024	10	0	0
Creating Family Friendly Museums	01/10/2024	16	0	0
Collections Care (in person)	19/11/2024	10	0	0
Copyright	26/11/2024	15	0	0
Poverty Proofing	30/01/2025	23	0 (Trainer fee paid by Thrive)	0
Autism Awareness	03/03/2025	8	£1,001.99 (Trainer fee, Eventbrite fee)	£25 Members, £35 Non-Members Total £218.00
Collections Review	13/03/2025	11	£587.77 (Trainer fee, Eventbrite fee)	£55 Members £65 Non-Members Total £605
Deaccessioning and Disposal	27/03/2025	14	£587.77 (trainer fee, Eventbrite fee)	£55 Members £65 Non-Members Total £810
Safeguarding	4/02/2025 19/03/2025	2	£50.00 (Trainer fee)	0
	TOTAL	121	£2,227.53	£1,633.00

Report of the Directors for the year ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

Networking, Peer Sharing and Study trips

Title	Date	No. of Participants	Cost (trainer, room hire, catering)	Fee per person
LET'S TALK	18/05/2024 15/10/2024 13/01/2025 25/02/2025	62	0	0
Museum Forum	24/09/2024	63	£695.86 (Eventbrite fee £7, catering*)	0
Heritage Emergencies Study Day	24/03/2025	40	0 (Catering fee paid by ICON NI)	0
IMA-NIMC Education & Outreach Forum	02/05/2024	80	0 (Venue hire and catering paid by IMA)	0
Dublin Study Trip	21/01/2025	6	£369.48 (Travel & lunch)	0
Museum ID Courses (London)	28/01/2025 18/02/2025 18/03/2025	6	£2012.19 (Travel and course fees*)	0
Transforming Youth Engagement in Your Museum				
Playful Approached to Museum Interpretation				
Making Playable Immersive Experiences in Your Museum				
	TOTAL	257	£3,077.53	0
	TOTAL BOTH TABLES	378	£5,305.06 (£2,597.01 from Training Budget)	£1,633.01

*Funded by NIMC Programming Budget and not the training budget.

Free and Paid Training Events – NIMC Approach

Typically, NIMC offer three pricing levels

- Free and for members only
- Fee paying for members
- Fee paying for non-members

NIMC offers a range of free events such as peer-sharing sessions, networking opportunities, and study trips. These are provided as a member benefit and do not follow a formal course structure.

Report of the Directors for the year ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

In contrast, training events that involve a structured course or are delivered by a professional trainer are offered for a fee. These fees are typically set on a cost-recovery basis, calculated according to the maximum number of participants allowed by the trainer. However, in some cases, trainer fees may exceed what can reasonably be covered by participant contributions. When this occurs, NIMC aims to subsidise the shortfall by adjusting fees for other courses, ensuring the overall training budget remains balanced.

NIMC is committed to keeping training affordable and accessible, particularly for courses that support wider participation and meet the Programme for Government objectives. At the same time, course fees must remain competitive with those offered by other museum support organisations, such as the Museums Association, Kids in Museums, and the Group for Education in Museums (GEM).

Due to the delayed reinstatement of the training budget until summer 2024, NIMC's ability to fully recover training costs this year has been limited. This has impacted the scope and sustainability of the current training programme.

4. Museums develop, protect and promote their collections and collections knowledge for the benefit of their audiences.

Museum Accreditation

NIMC continued to manage and administer the UK Museum Accreditation Scheme in partnership with Arts Council England (ACE), the Museums, Archives and Libraries Division of the Welsh Government, and Museums Galleries Scotland. Throughout the year, NIMC actively engaged in Accreditation Partner meetings, Panel meetings, and contributed to the ongoing review of the UK Accreditation Guidance.

NIMC maintained the schedule for the Accreditation returns cycle, originally developed around a five-year review period. Applications received were assessed, reviewed by the Accreditation Panel, and outcomes were confirmed as follows:

Full Accreditation was retained by FE McWilliam Gallery and Studio, Armagh Robinson Library and No. 5 Vicars' Hill, Mid-Antrim Museum and Fermanagh County Museum. These museums were formally presented with award certificates and recognised through online platforms and NIMC publications.

In early 2025, Ballymoney, Ballycastle, Coleraine and Limavady Museums also received Full Accreditation. These Full Awards will be celebrated in the next Newsletter and on NIMC social media. Green Lane Museum was moved to Provisional Accreditation whilst they agree a new partnership to open the museum.

Provisional Accreditation was also awarded to Newry and Mourne Museum, Down County Museum and Craigavon Museum at the Barn. These museums are required to submit returns addressing specific actions within 12 months to enable them to move towards full accreditation.

Report of the Directors for the year ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

A review was undertaken for Downpatrick and County Down Railway due to its ongoing closure from flood damage. The museum's status was updated to Provisional Accreditation, with a return due in 12 months to enable them to move towards full accreditation.

A Provisional Return submitted by the Inniskillings Museum raised unresolved concerns regarding collection accountability. As a result, the museum was removed from the scheme and excluded from Accreditation for a five-year period from May 2022. They may reapply to the scheme in May 2027 if they wish to do so.

Milford House Museum was removed from the scheme due to Governing Body changes and the closure of the premises. Benburb Priory Library and Museum submitted an eligibility questionnaire, and this was confirmed as eligible, receiving Working Towards Accreditation status.

The cycle of assessments will continue into 2025-26. Currently there are 39 accredited museums in the scheme, 29 of which are local museums and 4 National museums holding Full Accreditation and 6 holding Provisional Accreditation status. There are 2 local museums with an eligible status that are 'Working Towards Accreditation'.

Advice and Guidance

NIMC continued to provide members with advice and guidance throughout 2024-25. This mostly focused on accreditation, training and information regarding conservation and other specialist services. Specific examples included:

- Advice on the proposed development of the Harry Ferguson Museum
- Collections Development Policy and Disposal advice for the Railway Preservation Society of Ireland
- General accreditation guidance to the Regimental Museums, Causeway Coast and Glens Museum service, The Police Museum and Newry, Mourne and Down Museums
- Eligibility guidance to Benburb Priory, Clifton House, the Peace Museum, and Ulster Aviation Society.

Collecting Our Heritage Funding

In late 2024, NIMC secured £15,000 from the Esmé Mitchell Trust for *Collecting Our Heritage*, a three-year initiative designed to enhance the care, preservation, and strategic acquisition of cultural collections in accredited local museums across Northern Ireland. *Collecting Our Heritage* focuses not only on strengthening museums' collections through targeted acquisitions in collaboration with their communities, but also on improving collections management, care, and security.

NIMC will distribute this funding over the next three years. This foundational support enables the development of a grants programme to be rolled out in 2025–2026, with additional resources actively being sought to expand its reach and impact.

Report of the Directors for the year ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

5. Museums contribute to economic and social recovery.

Advocacy

NIMC continued to implement its organisational advocacy strategy for 2024-2025, aligned with its Corporate Strategy, *Museums at the Heart*. A key highlight of the year was the Museums Forum in September 2024, where representatives from across the museum sector met with the Department for Communities (DfC) and the Minister, Gordon Lyons.

NIMC also maintained an active role in external stakeholder engagement. It is a member of both the Historic Environment Division Stakeholder Group and the Heritage Data Working Group. Through these platforms, NIMC continued to advocate for the needs and opportunities of the local museum sector, encouraging increased support from DfC, funders, and other key stakeholders in culture, arts, and heritage.

In addition, NIMC staff met with the Minister and representatives of the Ferguson Celebration Committee to explore the feasibility of establishing a Harry Ferguson Museum at his family home in Dromore. Discussions are still ongoing.

Collaboration with the University Sector

Throughout 2024-25, NIMC developed collaborative partnerships with universities, focusing on two main areas: Co-ordinating university student placements within local museums; and developing collaborative research projects. These initiatives support a vibrant and inclusive knowledge and skills economy, enhancing capacity across the museum sector.

NIMC facilitated placement opportunities by collecting and sharing details with local museums and university partners via email, social media, and the NIMC Newsletter. Testimonials from students and museums were also featured to showcase the value of these experiences.

NIMC responded to several enquiries from university staff and students regarding volunteer placements and internships outside formal university schemes. Staff signposted opportunities and provided guidance, including contacts for museums and heritage organisations, links to volunteering platforms and information about the NI and Kids in Museums Youth Council.

NIMC also received a placement request from a Stranmillis University College student. Unfortunately, the museum approached did not have sufficient staff capacity to support the placement at that time. Universities have since developed a central database of host organisations, with many NI museums already listed. This development may suggest that NIMC's coordination role in this area is becoming less essential moving forward.

6. Delivery Principles

Effective Delivery

NIMC is committed to evaluating and improving the way it works and the quality of service it provides, to ensure a more efficient and effective organisation for its members and stakeholders.

Report of the Directors for the year ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

Performance Risks

As part of our commitment to transparency and strategic oversight, NIMC has identified key risks associated with its 2024–25 performance. These risks are monitored regularly and inform our planning and decision-making processes.

Risk Area	Description	Potential Impact	Mitigation Strategy
Financial Sustainability	Slight shortfall in non-grant-in-aid funding (9.2% vs. 10% target).	Reduced flexibility in funding new initiatives.	Diversify income streams; strengthen fundraising and partnership efforts.
Project Completion	Museum Trends data collection completed, but inconsistencies during analysis postponed publication.	Accuracy and integrity of final report could be called into question.	Ensure all data discrepancies are resolved so the final publication reflects the standards and credibility NIMC upholds.
Resource Strain	High participation in training (378 vs. 150 target).	Potential staff burnout or resource overextension.	Monitor staff workload; evaluate capacity and adjust programming accordingly.
Stakeholder Engagement	Digital engagement met targets, but qualitative impact unclear.	Risk of disengagement or unmet expectations.	Conduct audience feedback surveys; refine content strategy.
Staff Dependency	High staff involvement in professional development.	Knowledge loss if key staff leave.	Implement succession planning and knowledge-sharing practices.
Reputational Risk	Risk of future underperformance in advocacy or research.	Stakeholder trust and credibility may be affected.	Maintain transparency; communicate progress and challenges proactively.

Comply or Explain Statement

In preparing this Annual Report and Accounts, NIMC has complied with the requirements of the HM Treasury Financial Reporting Manual (FReM), which sets out the principles for annual reporting by public sector bodies.

Where full compliance with specific FReM requirements was not possible or appropriate, NIMC has applied the “comply or explain” principle. In such cases, we have provided clear justifications for any departures, ensuring transparency and accountability in our reporting.

Report of the Directors for the year ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

For the reporting period 2024–25, the following exceptions are noted:

1. Secure at least 10% non-grant-in-aid funding: In line with the requirements of the HM Treasury Financial Reporting Manual (FReM), NIMC is committed to achieving financial sustainability through diversified income streams. For the 2024–25 financial year, NIMC set a target to secure at least 10% of its income from non-grant-in-aid sources, equivalent to £25,000. While significant progress was made, the actual income achieved from non-grant-in-aid sources was £23,100, representing 9.2% of total income.

The shortfall was primarily due to membership fees remaining static due to a lack of grant funding for the sector, a number of unsuccessful grant applications and resource constraints during the changeover in Directors. Despite this, NIMC successfully increased its engagement with potential funders and laid the groundwork for future income diversification.

2. Museum Trends Survey Report: While FReM encourages timely publication of sector research outputs, the Museum Trends Survey Report remains in progress at the end of the reporting period. This delay is due to contradictory data and resource constraints during the changeover of Directors. NIMC remains committed to completing and publishing the report in the next financial year to support evidence-based decision-making across the sector.

Members Review and Training Needs Survey

In 2024-25, the members' review and training needs survey was amalgamated to reduce the number of surveys that the sector is asked to complete. The combined survey is live and asks for feedback in the 2024-25 year. The link has been sent directly to members and was featured in Museum Beat with a deadline date of 30 April 2025.

Museum Trends

The last edition of *Museum Trends* was published in 2016. A new comprehensive survey was distributed during 2022-2023 to gather data. However, some of the survey results were contradictory, making it difficult to produce a comprehensive report. This meant that NIMC did not meet KPI 7 on page 4. Therefore, this KPI will be brought forward into 2025-2026.

From April through September 2025, key insights and trends will be shared regularly with the sector. This information will be disseminated via the NIMC website, *Museum Beat*, and NIMC social media channels.

Considering the challenges that faced the last survey, NIMC will also undertake a review of the purpose and role of *Museum Trends*. The aim is to improve how data is gathered and ensure it provides meaningful insight that supports funding applications, informs government lobbying efforts, and helps protect and develop the museum sector.

Evaluating and Improving Services

During 2024-25, NIMC updated its Grant Processes and Procedures, including matters related to project evaluation and impact assessment. The review and improvement of NIMC processes and services has ensured that there are robust systems in place and has enabled a more effective service to our members and stakeholders.

Report of the Directors for the year ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

NIMC also has a range of policies and procedures to ensure that there is clear guidance in place for its operation and delivery of services. These are regularly reviewed and updated.

The following policies and procedures were updated in 2024-25:

- Business Continuity Plan
- Fraud and Bribery Prevention Policy
- Information Technology Security
- Complaint Policy
- Gifts and Hospitality Policy
- Memorandum of Terms of Occupation – National Museums NI
- Grant Policy
- Grant Procedures

Impact Orientated- Connected

During 2024-2025 NIMC maintained membership and active participation with relevant organisations to raise the national and international profile of NIMC and gain wider opportunities of support for our members.

Contracts and Service Level Agreements

Financial Support Services and IT Support Services are contractually outsourced.

NIMC has a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Libraries NI for HR Support Services.

NIMC continues to seek shared services in support of business efficiency.

Disability Action Plan

NIMC continued to support local museums to improve their accessibility through the provision of Access and Inclusion Audits. Three museums- Arthur Cottage, Green Lane and Florence Court were audited this year and reports given to the respective museums. Unfortunately, DfC Access and Inclusion Grants (which NIMC dispenses on behalf of DfC) were not available this year, so the audit recommendations could not be implemented.

NIMC also held three training days- Dementia Friends, Autism Awareness and GLAM Cares. The latter is a network to support people working with marginalised, and excluded audiences, or communities whose lived experience may require greater safeguarding and support.

Governance and Accountability

In line with the requirements and guidance provided, NIMC has reported in full on the governance of the company during 2024-25 through the Governance Statement which follows.

NIMC operates in a transparent manner, with the website carrying information on the company and the Board of Directors.

As a membership organisation, NIMC is responsive to the sector, providing leadership and advocacy to advance its interests. It liaises with the membership during each year and consulted

Report of the Directors for the year ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

with membership on the DfC Museum Policy, Museum Trends survey and through the Membership and Training Survey. The Board of Directors reported to NIMC's membership at the Annual General Meeting held on 24 September 2024.

Statement of Directors' and Accounting Officers' Responsibilities

The Board of Directors has overall responsibility for ensuring that NIMC has appropriate system of controls, financial and otherwise. They are also responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities and to provide reasonable assurance that:

- NIMC is operating efficiently and effectively
- It maintains a Fraud Prevention Policy and Response Plan
- Its assets are safeguarded against unauthorised use or disposition
- Proper records are maintained, and financial information used by NIMC or used for publication is reliable
- That NIMC complies with relevant laws and regulations

Company and charity law require the Board of Directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the situation and of the surplus or deficit for that period. In preparing the accounts, the Accounting Officer is required to comply with the requirements of the Government Financial Reporting Manual and in particular to:

- observe any Accounts Direction issued by Department for Communities, including the relevant accounting and disclosure requirements, and apply suitable accounting policies on a consistent basis. In preparing the annual report and financial statements of NIMC, the Board of Directors has adopted the provisions of the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) Financial Reporting Standard (FRS) 102;
- make judgements and estimates on a reasonable basis;
- state whether applicable accounting standards as set out in the Government Financial Reporting Manual have been followed, and disclose and explain any material departures in the accounts;
- prepare the accounts on a going concern basis; and
- confirm that the Annual Report and Accounts as a whole is fair, balanced and understandable and take personal responsibility for the Annual Report and Accounts and the judgements required for determining that it is fair, balanced and understandable.

The Department for Communities has appointed the Director as Accounting Officer of NIMC. The responsibilities of an Accounting Officer, including responsibility for the propriety and regularity of the public finances for which the Accounting Officer is answerable, for keeping proper records and safeguarding NIMC's assets, are set out in Managing Public Money published by the HM Treasury.

As the Accounting Officer, I have taken all the steps that I ought to have taken to make myself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that NIMC'S auditors are aware of that information. So far as I am aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the auditors are unaware.

Report of the Directors for the year ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

Financial Review

It is the view of the Board of Directors that NIMC operated prudently and effectively within the parameters of the financial resources which were available to it. The Board of Directors formally monitors the financial position of NIMC at least on a quarterly basis, at its scheduled meetings.

NIMC operates with limited cash reserves; DfC is aware of this position.

NIMC operates within the framework of Managing Public Money NI (MPMNI) and, notwithstanding the issues outlined in the Governance Statement, operates on the basis of not drawing down cash resources from its funders in advance of need.

The financial allocation to NIMC from DfC for 2024-25 was £250,000. Subsequently, NIMC was allocated an additional £4,000 to cover IT requirements, £2,000 to cover additional financial services expenditure & an additional £8,000 for wages. The total drawdown for 2024-25 was therefore £264,000.

Plans for the Future

NIMC's Board of Directors has agreed the key components of its planned activity for 2025-26, which aim to address identified statutory obligations, deliver the Programme for Government, the Outcomes Delivery Plan, the Northern Ireland Museums Policy, the DfC Strategy, "Building Inclusive Communities" and the strategic themes within the NIMC Corporate Strategy 2022-25. These activities include the delivery of:

- Guidance and support to local museums regarding the UK Museum Accreditation Scheme.
- Administering the UK Museums Accreditation Scheme in Northern Ireland.
- Supporting audience development including increasing the number and diversity of people accessing and engaging in cultural activities.
- Support to local museums through grant programmes, where possible.
- Undertake advocacy in support of local museums.
- Undertake research that will capture and communicate the impact of museums across society.
- Continuous professional development, skills development, building resilience and capacity for those working and volunteering in the sector.
- Assistance to local museums in developing learning and outreach programmes.
- Devising plans to address issues concerning collections storage, security, care and documentation, and audience development at local museums.
- Promoting and increasing awareness of museums and their positive social and economic impact on Northern Ireland society.
- Deliver the Disability Action Plan.
- Advice and information to the heritage sector and the public generally.

Personnel matters

Employees have been consulted on matters of concern to them by means of regular staff meetings and have been kept informed on specific matters directly by management. NIMC reviewed and developed a new policy and procedures for the annual evaluation of staff performance and appraisal, as well as the upward feedback for senior management and the Board of Directors.

Report of the Directors for the year ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

NIMC operates several detailed policies in relation to personnel matters including:

- Equal Opportunities
- Health and Safety
- Harassment in the Workplace
- Grievance
- Raising Concerns
- Staff appraisal

NIMC policies are in alignment with those areas covered in the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) Handbook: <https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/articles/northern-ireland-civil-service-handbook>

In accordance with the Equal Opportunities Policy, NIMC has long established fair employment practices in the areas of recruitment, selection, retention and training of staff.

Alignment with Government Functional Standards

NIMC is committed to operating in accordance with the UK Government’s suite of Functional Standards, which provide a consistent and coherent framework for managing specialist functions across government. These standards support improved performance, risk management, and value for money.

During the 2024–25 reporting period, NIMC aligned its operations with the following key Functional Standards:

Standard	Title	Application at NIMC
GovS 001	Government Functions	Ensured clarity of roles, responsibilities, and governance across all functional areas.
GovS 002	Project Delivery	Applied structured project management practices to grant administration and sector development initiatives.
GovS 006	Finance	Maintained robust financial controls and reporting, with partial achievement of non-grant-in-aid funding targets.
GovS 008	Commercial	Continued to explore partnerships and external funding opportunities to enhance financial resilience.

Proportionality and Governance

As an arm’s-length body, NIMC applies these standards proportionately to its size and complexity, in line with guidance from the Cabinet Office.

Political and Charitable Donations

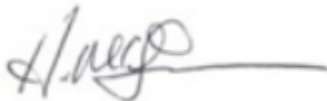
NIMC made no political or charitable donations during the 2024-25 year (2023-24: nil).

Report of the Directors for the year ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

Auditors

The statutory audit of NIMC was undertaken by the Northern Ireland Audit Office's (NIAO) Comptroller and Auditor General. So far as the Directors are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which NIMC's auditors are unaware, and we have taken all the steps that we ought to have taken as Directors in order to make ourselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that NIMC's auditors are aware of that information.

By order of the Board of Directors



Heather McGuicken
Accounting Officer

DATE: 28/08/25



Nora Douds
Chair

DATE: 28/08/25

Remuneration and Staffing Report

Remuneration Policy

The pay remit for the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS), including senior civil servants (SCS), is normally approved by the Minister of Finance. Following approval of the 2024-25 Budget in the Assembly, on 28 May 2024, in which the finance minister outlined the overarching approach to public sector pay, the NI public sector pay policy guidance was published on 31 May 2024 in FD (DoF) 07/24.

Annual NICS pay awards are made in the context of the wider public sector pay policy. Subject to satisfactory testing, we aim to pay the award effective from 1 August 2024, for NICS non-industrial and industrial staff, including SCS, in the May 2025 payroll.

The pay of NICS staff is based on a system of pay scales for each grade, including SCS, containing a number of pay points from minimum to maximum, allowing progression towards the maximum based on performance and other eligibility criteria.

Service Contracts

The Civil Service Commissioners (NI) Order 1999 requires Civil Service appointments to be made on merit on the basis of fair and open competition. The Recruitment Code published by the Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland specifies the circumstances when appointments may be made by exception to merit.

Unless otherwise stated, the officials covered by this report hold appointments that are open-ended. Early termination, other than for misconduct, would result in consideration of the individual receiving compensation as set out in the Civil Service Compensation Scheme.

Staff Profile, Turnover, Remuneration (audited)

On 31 March 2025, five staff were on payroll, comprising four females and one male. One male member of staff was on secondment (from November 2024). The profile of the Board of Directors of the Company at that date was six females and five males.

Staff turnover for the year 2024-25 was 0% (2023-24 was 0%). The outgoing accounting officer is on secondment at another organisation but is still on NIMC payroll and is still an NIMC employee.

The staff costs of NIMC during 2024-25 was as follows:

	2025	2024
	£	£
Wages and salaries	153,990	152,008
Social security costs	11,628	9,825
Other pension costs	53,654	44,873
Sub Total	219,272	206,706
Less recoveries in respect of outward secondments	(39,205)	-
Total net costs	180,067	206,706

No remuneration was paid to the Board of Directors of the company. The total Board of Directors' expenses reimbursed by the company during the year was £112.00 (2023-24: £105.00).

Remuneration and Staffing Report (continued)

Salary and pension entitlements

The following sections provide details of the remuneration and pension interests of the senior management of NIMC.

Total remuneration (Audited Information)

	2024-25					2023-24 (restated***)				
	Salary £'000	Bonus payments £000	Benefits in kind (to nearest £100)	Pension Benefits ¹ (to nearest £1,000)	Total ² £000	Salary £'000	Bonus payments £000	Benefits in kind (to nearest £100)	Pension Benefits* (to nearest £1,000)	Total £000
J Dalzell Chief Executive (To November 2024)*	30-35 (FTE 60- 65)	-	-	9	40-45	55-60	-	-	19	75-80
H McGuicken Chief Executive (From February 2025)**	5-10 (FTE 55- 60)	-	-	2	5-10	-	-	-	-	-

*J Dalzell was Chief Executive and Accounting Officer of NIMC until 4 November 2024. After this date he commenced a secondment period with another public sector organisation and continues to be an NIMC employee with all related salary costs being recharged. The 2024-25 FTE equivalent salary reflects his change in salary arising from the secondment position.

**H McGuicken joined NIMC on secondment from NMNI from 19 December 2024, one day a week, and became the Chief Executive of NIMC, full-time, from 24 February 2025.

*** The 2023/24 figures have been restated to reflect the adjustment to the 2023/24 pay award.

Accrued pension benefits included in this table for any individual affected by the Public Service Pensions Remedy have been calculated based on their inclusion in the legacy scheme for the period between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022, following the McCloud judgment. The Public Service Pensions Remedy applies to individuals that were members, or eligible to be members, of a public service pension scheme on 31 March 2012 and were members of a public service pension scheme between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022. The basis for the calculation reflects the legal position that impacted members have been rolled back into the relevant legacy scheme for the remedy period and that this will apply unless the member actively exercises their entitlement on retirement to decide instead to receive benefits calculated under the terms of the Alpha scheme for the period from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2022.

Salary

“Salary” includes gross salary, overtime and any other allowances to the extent that it is subject to UK taxation and any severance or ex gratia payments. This report is based on accrued payments made by NIMC and thus recorded in these accounts.

Benefits in kind

The monetary value of benefits in kind covers any benefits provided by the employer and treated by HM Revenue and Customs as a taxable emolument. There were no benefits in kind during the financial year.

Bonuses

Bonuses relate to the performance in the year which they become payable to the individual. No bonuses were paid in the year 2024-25 £nil (2023-24 £nil).

Fair Pay Disclosures (Audited information)

Pay ratios

Reporting bodies are required to disclose the relationship between the remuneration of the highest paid director in their organisation and the lower quartile, median and upper quartile remuneration of the organisation’s workforce.

The banded remuneration of the highest-paid officer in NIMC in the financial year 2024-25 was £60,000 - £65,000 (2023-24; £55,000 - £60,000). The relationship between the mid-point of this band and the remuneration of the organisation’s workforce is disclosed below.

Remuneration and Staffing Report (continued)

2024-25	25 th Percentile	Median	75 th Percentile
Total remuneration (£)	36,814	39,882	45,180
Pay ratio	1.7:1	1.57:1	1.38:1

2023-24	25 th Percentile	Median	75 th Percentile
Total remuneration (£)	33,183	36,116	38,201
Pay ratio	1.7:1	1.6:1	1.5:1

Total remuneration includes salary, non-consolidated performance-related pay, and benefits-in-kind. It does not include severance payments, employer pension contributions and the cash equivalent transfer value of pensions. Total remuneration includes the accrued pay award for 2024-25.

In 2024-25, no employees (2023-24; 0) received remuneration in excess of the highest-paid officer.

Remuneration ranged from £33,479 to £62,500 (2023-24; £30,068 to £57,500).

Percentage change in remuneration

Reporting bodies are also required to disclose the percentage change from the previous financial year in the:

- a) salary and allowances, and
- b) performance pay and bonuses

of the highest paid director and of their employees as a whole.

The percentage changes in respect of NIMC are shown in the following table. It should be noted that the calculation for the highest paid director is based on the mid-point of the band within which their remuneration fell in each year.

Percentage change for:	2024-25 v 2023-24	2023-24 v 2022-23
Average employee salary and allowances	12.46%	12.11%
Highest paid director's salary and allowances	8.00%*	0.00%

Pension benefits (Audited Information)

	Accrued pension at pension age as at 31/03/2025	Real increase in pension and related lump sum at pension age	CETV at 31/3/25	CETV at 31/3/24	Real increase in CETV
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Mr J Dalzell	5-10	0-2.5	76	51	16
Ms H McGuicken	0-5	2.5-5	37	0	36

Accrued pension benefits included in this table for any individual affected by the Public Service Pensions Remedy have been calculated based on their inclusion in the legacy scheme for the period between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022, following the McCloud judgment. The Public Service Pensions Remedy applies to individuals that were members, or eligible to be members, of a public service pension scheme on 31 March 2012 and were members of a public service pension scheme between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022. The basis for the calculation reflects the legal position that impacted members have been rolled back into the relevant legacy scheme for the remedy period and that this will apply unless the member actively exercises their entitlement on retirement to decide instead to receive benefits calculated under the terms of the Alpha scheme for the period from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2022.

Remuneration and Staffing Report (continued)

Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) Pension Schemes

Pension benefits are provided through the Northern Ireland Civil Service pension schemes which are administered by Civil Service Pensions (CSP).

The alpha pension scheme was initially introduced for new entrants from 1 April 2015. The alpha scheme and all previous scheme arrangements are unfunded with the cost of benefits met by monies voted each year. The majority of members of the Classic, Premium, Classic Plus and Nuvos pension arrangements (collectively known as the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland) [PCSPS(NI)]) also moved to alpha from that date. Transitional protection measures introduced alongside these reforms meant any members who on 1 April 2012 were within 10 years of their normal pension age remained in their previous scheme arrangement (full protection) and those who were between 13.5 years and 10 years of their normal pension age were given a choice between moving to alpha on 1 April 2015 or at a later date determined by their age (tapered protection).

McCloud Judgment and 2015 Remedy

In 2018, the Court of Appeal found that the transitional protections put in place back in 2015 that allowed older workers to remain in their original scheme, were discriminatory on the basis of age. As a result, steps have been taken by the Department of Finance to remedy this discrimination.

The Department has now made regulations which remedy the discrimination by:

- ensuring all active members are treated equally for future service as members of the reformed alpha scheme only from 1 April 2022, and
- providing each eligible member with options to have their pension entitlements for the period when the discrimination existed between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022 (the Remedy Period) retrospectively calculated under either the current (reformed) scheme rules, or the older (pre-reform) legacy rules which existed before 2015.

This means that all active NICS Pension Scheme members are in the same pension scheme, alpha, from 1 April 2022 onwards, regardless of age. This removes the discrimination going forwards in providing equal pension provision for all scheme members.

The Department is now implementing the second part of the remedy, which addresses the discrimination which was incurred by affected members between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022.

Eligible members with relevant service between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022 (the Remedy Period) will now be entitled to a choice of alternative pension benefits in relation to that period. i.e. calculated under the pre-reformed PCSPS(NI) 'Classic', 'Premium' or 'Nuvos' rules or alternatively calculated under the reformed alpha rules. As part of this 'retrospective' remedy most active members will now receive a choice about their Remedy Period benefits at the point of retirement. This is known as the Deferred Choice Underpin (DCU). For those members who already have pension benefits in payment in relation to the Remedy Period, they will receive an Immediate Choice. There are a significant number of Immediate Choice Remediable Service Statement (RSS) packs to issue. This process involves complex calculations to provide members with individually tailored statements. Due to the complexity of the calculations and some prolonged work to finalise policy elements of the remedy, not all Immediate Choice packs will issue by 31 March 2025 as originally planned. The legislation for the 2015 Remedy provides discretion which allows the Scheme Manager to extend beyond this date, so it has become necessary to engage this discretion.

At this stage, allowance has not yet been made within CETVs for this remedy. Further information on the remedy will be included in the NICS pension scheme accounts which, once published, are available at DoF Annual Reports and Accounts. [DoF Annual Report and Accounts 2023-24](#)

Remuneration and Staffing Report (continued)

As part of the remedy involved rolling back all remediable service into the relevant legacy PCSPS(NI) arrangement for the 7-Year Remedy Period, the value of pension benefits for the 2024-25 pension disclosures for affected members continue to be based on the rolled back position.

Alpha

Alpha is a 'Career Average Revalued Earnings' (CARE) arrangement in which members accrue pension benefits at a percentage rate of annual pensionable earnings throughout the period of scheme membership. The current accrual rate is 2.32%.

From 1 April 2015, all new entrants joining the NICS can choose between membership of alpha or joining a 'money purchase' stakeholder arrangement with a significant employer contribution (Partnership Pension Account).

Information on the PCSPS(NI) – Closed Scheme

Staff in post prior to 30 July 2007 were eligible to be in one of three statutory based 'final salary' legacy defined benefit arrangements (Classic, Premium and Classic Plus). From April 2011, pensions payable under these arrangements have been reviewed annually in line with changes in the cost of living. New entrants who joined on or after 1 October 2002 and before 30 July 2007 will have chosen between membership of Premium or joining the Partnership Pension Account.

New entrants who joined on or after 30 July 2007 were eligible for membership of the legacy PCSPS(NI) Nuvos arrangement or they could have opted for a Partnership Pension Account. Nuvos was also a CARE arrangement in which members accrued pension benefits at a percentage rate of annual pensionable earnings throughout the period of scheme membership. The rate of accrual was 2.3%.

Benefits in Classic accrued at the rate of 1/80th of pensionable salary for each year of service. In addition, a lump sum equivalent to three years' pension is payable on retirement. For Premium, benefits accrued at the rate of 1/60th of final pensionable earnings for each year of service. Unlike Classic, there is no automatic lump sum (but members may give up (commute) some of their pension to provide a lump sum). Classic Plus is essentially a variation of Premium, but with benefits in respect of service before 1 October 2002 calculated broadly as per Classic.

Partnership Pension Account

The Partnership Pension Account is a stakeholder pension arrangement. The employer makes a basic contribution of between 8% and 14.75% (depending on the age of the member) into a stakeholder pension product chosen by the employee. The employee does not have to contribute but where they do make contributions, the employer will match these up to a limit of 3% of pensionable salary (in addition to the employer's basic contribution). Employers also contribute a further 0.5% of pensionable salary to cover the cost of centrally-provided risk benefit cover (death in service and ill health retirement).

Annual Benefit Statements

Active members of the pension scheme will receive an Annual Benefit Statement. The accrued pension quoted is the pension the member is entitled to receive when they reach their scheme pension age, or immediately on ceasing to be an active member of the scheme if they are at or over pension age. The normal scheme pension age in alpha is linked to the member's State Pension Age but cannot be before age 65. The Scheme Pension age is 60 for any pension accrued in the legacy **Classic**, **Premium**, and **Classic Plus** arrangements and 65 for any benefits accrued in Nuvos. Further details about the NICS pension schemes can be found at the website [Civil Service Pensions \(NI\)](#).

Remuneration and Staffing Report (continued)

Pension Increases

All pension benefits are reviewed annually in line with changes in the cost of living. Any applicable increases are applied from April and are determined by the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) figure for the preceding September. The CPI in September 2024 was 1.7% and HM Treasury has announced that public service pensions will be increased accordingly from April 2025.

Employee Contribution Rates

Employee contribution rates for all members for the periods covering 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025 and 1 April 2025 – 30 June 2025 are as follows:

Annualised Rate of Pensionable Earnings (Salary Bands) 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025		Annualised Rate of Pensionable Earnings (Salary Bands) 1 April 2025 to 30 June 2025		Contribution rates – All members
From	To	From	To	
£0	£26,302.49	£0	£27,091.99	4.6%
£26,302.50	£59,849.99	£27,092.00	£61,645.99	5.45%
£59,850.00	£160,964.99	£61,646.00	£165,793.99	7.35%
£160,965 and above		£165,794.00 and above		8.05%

Cash Equivalent Transfer Values

A Cash Equivalent Transfer Value (CETV) is the actuarially assessed capitalised value of the pension scheme benefits accrued by a member at a particular point in time. The benefits valued are the member's accrued benefits and any contingent spouse's pension payable from the scheme. A CETV is a payment made by a pension scheme or arrangement to secure pension benefits in another pension scheme or arrangement when the member leaves a scheme and chooses to transfer the benefits accrued in their former scheme. The pension figures shown relate to the benefits that the individual has accrued as a consequence of their total membership of the pension scheme, not just their service in a senior capacity to which disclosure applies.

The CETV figures, and from 2003-04 the other pension details, include the value of any pension benefit in another scheme or arrangement which the individual has transferred to the NICS pension arrangements. They also include any additional pension benefit accrued to the member as a result of their purchasing additional years of pension service in the scheme at their own cost.

CETVs are calculated in accordance with The Occupational Pension Schemes (Transfer Values) Regulations 1996 (as amended).

HM Treasury provides the assumptions for discount rates for calculating CETVs payable from the public service pension schemes. On 27 April 2023, HM Treasury published guidance on the basis for setting the discount rates for calculating cash equivalent transfer values payable by public service pension schemes. In their guidance of 27 April 2023, HM Treasury advised that, with immediate effect, the discount rate adopted for calculating CETVs should be in line with the new SCAPE discount rate of 1.7% above CPI inflation, superseding the previous SCAPE discount rate of 2.4% above CPI inflation. All else being the same, a lower SCAPE discount rate leads to higher CETVs. The HM Treasury Guidance of 27 April 2023 can be found at [Basis for setting the discount rates for calculating cash equivalent transfer values payable by public service pension schemes - GOV.UK](#). **As at the year-end there** have been no further changes to the SCAPE discount rate of 1.7% above CPI inflation since the HM Treasury guidance was published.

Real increase in CETV

This reflects the increase in CETV that is funded by the employer. It does not include the increase in accrued pension due to inflation, contributions paid by the employee (including the value of any benefits transferred from another pension scheme or arrangement) and uses common market

Remuneration and Staffing Report (continued)

valuation factors for the start and end of the period (which therefore disregards the effect of any changes in factors).

Compensation for Loss of Office (Audited)

No staff were compensated in 2024-25 (2023-24: nil).

Sickness Absence

NIMC's overall sickness absence rate was 1 day lost per employee in 2023/24. Annual sickness absence figures can be found in [Sickness Absence in the Northern Ireland Civil Service 2023/2024](#). The 2024/25 sickness absence data is not currently available and will be published later this year after this report is published.

During 2024-25, NIMC had no expenditure on consultancy and had no off-payroll engagements requiring assessment in line with IR35 conditions.

Staff Policies

NIMC is committed to the development of its staff and to policies that enable them to contribute to the performance and long-term effectiveness of the organisation.

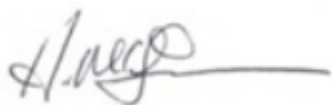
In particular, NIMC:

- follows the NICS Policy that all eligible persons shall have equal opportunity for employment on the basis of their ability, qualification and aptitude for the work
- gives equality of opportunity when considering applications from disabled persons, in compliance with all existing legislation with regard to disabled employees
- recognises the benefit of keeping employees informed of the progress of the business and of involving them in the company's performance
- regularly provides employees, through meetings and notices, with information regarding the financial and economic factors affecting the performance of the company and on other matters of concern to them

All of NIMC's policies are agreed by the Board of Directors and are accessible to all members of staff.

Staff Engagement

Staff Engagement NIMC did not participate in the Civil Service People Survey and due to NIMC having a small number of employees, no internal people surveys were completed. However, employees are afforded regular opportunity to raise concerns with management.



Heather McGuicken
Accounting Officer
DATE: 28/08/2025

Governance Statement for the year ended 31 March 2025

Introduction and Remit

NIMC was established in 1993 by order of the Minister for Education and is constituted as a company limited by guarantee (without share capital) and has charitable status. As such it operates under the Companies Act 2006 and associated subsequent legislation. NIMC is not a Statutory Agency and does not carry out its functions on behalf of the Crown, however, for policy and administrative purposes, NIMC is classified as a Non-Departmental Public Body of DfC, through which it received most of its funding.

The Government has approved NIMC's overall aim of supporting local museums in Northern Ireland to maintain and improve their standards of collections care and services to the public and to promote a coherent framework of museum provision.

Compliance with Corporate Governance Code

NIMC, in so far as it is relevant for a NDPB, complies with the Corporate Governance Code for Central Government Departments 2025. As this code was updated in February 2025, NIMC reviewed and approved its Board Operating Framework 2025-2027 on 25 March 2025 so that it is compliant with the latest code requirements. Further training for the NIMC Audit and Risk Assurance Committee will take place in June 2025.

Governance Framework

NIMC is in compliance with the Code of Good Practice 2025, issued by DoF, concerning corporate governance in central government departments. While the Code does not apply to NDPBs, NIMC operated within its principles during the financial year 2024-25.

NIMC is governed by a Board of Directors comprising between seven and 15 members. Board members serve on a voluntary basis and are normally appointed for a period of three years. Directors are drawn from various bodies and constituencies as follows:

- The Minister of the DfC has the right to nominate three Directors
- Local Government Councils that operate an Accredited Museum have the right to nominate three Directors
- The Northern Ireland Regional Museum Curators Group has the right to nominate three Directors
- The Independent and service museums have the right to nominate two Directors
- Queen's University, Belfast and Ulster University have the right to nominate one Director
- National Museums Northern Ireland may nominate one Director
- Other Directors may be co-opted
- If a Director resigns before the end of their term, their nominating body may send another representative to complete the term period

The Board of Directors report to the NIMC membership at the Annual General Meeting, which is held in September each year.

The Role of the Board of Directors and Governance Framework

The Board of Directors has the corporate responsibility for ensuring that NIMC effectively and efficiently fulfils its aims and objectives while being mindful of its statutory authority and obligations. To this end, the Board of Directors:

Governance Statement for the year ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

- Establishes the overall strategic direction of NIMC within the determined policy and resources framework
- Monitors the performance of NIMC as it pursues its aims and objectives
- Observes the highest standards of propriety, particularly in relation to corporate governance and the stewardship of public funds
- Operates within the limits of its statutory authority and any delegated authority agreed with the DfC, and in accordance with any other conditions relating to the use of public funds
- Takes account of the views and opinions of the NIMC membership in devising the work of NIMC
- Takes account of any guidance issued by the DfC when reaching its decisions
- Establishes a committee structure, including an Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, to assist in carrying out the work of NIMC
- Appoints, and monitors, the performance of NIMC's Accounting Officer

In carrying out these functions the Board of Directors usually meets four times a year, during March, June, September and December. During 2024-25 all of the meetings were held in person, at various museum member sites.

The Directors of the Board do not receive remuneration for their service to NIMC.

A system of internal control is maintained, which includes the formulation of policies and procedures relating to- fraud prevention; raising concerns and the requirements of the Bribery Act 2010; financial planning; staff performance; procurement; the freedom of information and data management; risk management; business planning and performance. These, and other associated matters, are scrutinised by NIMC's Board of Directors at each of its meetings and are the focus of discussions at the bi-annual accountability meetings held between the NIMC Accounting Officer and DfC.

NIMC retains the services of the NI Civil Service's Internal Audit Service (DfC) to provide internal audit services, with external audit being undertaken by the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO).

The aim of the system of internal control is to manage the risks to a reasonable level, rather than seek to eliminate all the risks that NIMC faces in undertaking its remit and duties.

The Work of the Board of Directors and its Committees

Mindful of its statutory obligations, the Board of Directors delegates the operation and monitoring of the governance framework to management, together with the day-to-day operation of NIMC. However, it reserves particular matters for decision by the Board of Directors, including issues of corporate strategy; key strategic objectives and targets; major decisions involving the use of financial and other resources; and personnel issues including key appointments and standards of conduct. At each of its meetings the Board of Directors receive a report on the management and operation of NIMC from the staff.

Governance Statement for the year ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

Currently the NIMC Board of Directors has two Committees, each having a Terms of Reference agreed by the Board:

- Audit and Risk Assurance Committee – deals with the strategic processes of audit, risk, control and governance.
- Grant Committee – assesses the requests for grant assistance (decisions on the allocation of NIMC acquisition grants up to £1,000 is delegated to the Chair).

The Board decided to pause the Business Planning Committee for a period of one year to form a task and finish working group, which would consider and progress discrete pieces of work. All Business Planning Committee work was passed in full to the Board, relating to corporate planning, business planning, staff appraisal and human resource matters. It has not yet been determined if the Business Planning Committee will be reinstated.

To manage any conflicts or potential conflicts of interest, the Chair of each Committee asks those present at the start of each meeting if they are conflicted with any of the agenda items. Using this process, reported conflicts are noted in the minutes.

The Board of Directors

During 2024-25, the Board of Directors formally met on four occasions, with the Committees meeting at intervals between the Board meetings. The table below provides an overview of attendance at meetings of the Board of Directors throughout the year, with the number of meetings attended being set against the total number of meetings that the Director could have attended.

Board of Directors	Actual	Possible
Nora Douds	4	4
Jessica Hoyle	4	4
Brona Moffett	4	4
Nuala Toman	3	4
Prof. Elizabeth Crooke	4	4
Matthew McMahon	4	4
Cllr John McClaughry	3	4
Alan Freeman	3	4
Alderman Paul Greenfield	1	4
Sarah Calvin	2	3
Sean Barden	3	3
Paul Allison	1	1
Jayne Clarke	1	1
Julie Andrews	0	1
Cllr Christine Creighton	2	2

The Board of Directors agree a Business Plan for each financial year, which sets out the actions, targets and the allocation of resources to be delivered in support of NIMC's aims, the draft Programme for Government, Outcomes Delivery Plan and the Northern Ireland Museums Policy. The draft Business Plan is submitted to the DfC no later than the 31 January each year.

The NIMC Board of Directors did not receive any Ministerial Direction during 2024-25.

Governance Statement for the year ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

Standing agenda items for the quarterly meetings of the Board of Directors include written reports from the Director on the performance against the Business Plan targets, the financial performance, and governance compliance.

Notable aspects of the business conducted by the Board of Directors during 2024-25 included reviewing NIMC's governance documents, updating the organisation's policies, approving grant support for museums and consideration of the DfC Partnership Agreement.

The Committees

The NIMC Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) met on four occasions during the year. ARAC meetings are also attended by representatives of the NIMC internal and external auditors. ARAC activities included the review of various policies and procedures and the active management of corporate risks through the scrutiny of the Corporate Risk Register at each meeting. It also noted progress made in addressing the recommendations of auditors.

The Grant Committee met two times to assess the applications received from museums for support and to discuss prospective grant applications.

The table below provides an overview of attendance at Committee meetings during 2024-25, with the number of committee meetings attended being set against the total number of meetings that the member could have attended.

Audit & Risk Assurance Committee	Actual	Possible
Brona Moffett	4	4
Nuala Toman	3	4
Matthew McMahon	2	2
Jessica Hoyle	1	1
Elizabeth Crooke	1	1
Paul Allison	1	1
Julie Andrews	1	1
Grant Committee	Actual	Possible
Nuala Toman	2	2
Simon Hunter	1	2
Jessica Hoyle	2	2
Alan Freeman	1	1
Sean Barden	1	1
Prof Elizabeth Crooke	1	1
Business Planning Committee		
Suspended		

Governance Statement for the year ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

Governance Issues

During the transitional period of Directors within the Council (from November 2024 to February 2025), despite efforts to mitigate financial risks, procedures regarding the authorisation and signing of Purchase Orders (POs) were not adhered to during this time.

Consequently, the new Director informed DfC of the situation and reviewed all POs issued during this timeframe, confirmed that all goods and services ordered were duly received and was satisfied that no instances of fraud occurred.

To regularise the situation, the POs raised without the required authorisations were signed retrospectively by the Director to reflect the correct procedure required for all purchases. The Director also initiated a review of NIMC's Financial Procedures and guided staff on the protocols to ensure compliance in future.

The recommendations resulting from the internal and external audits will be integrated into the organisation's financial controls moving forward. The revised Financial Procedures will be presented to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC), ensuring that the Board is fully apprised of progress.

Independent Assurance

On 18 June 2025 the NIMC ARAC considered the final 'Internal Audit Annual Report 2024-25' received from DfC Internal Audit Service. The report provides an overall satisfactory opinion. Satisfactory opinions were provided for Accounts Payable, Safeguarding Policy and Procedures, Budgetary Control and Financial Management, and follow up on previous audit recommendations.

The Comptroller and Auditor General certifies the NIMC accounts and provides an opinion on the financial statements and whether they have been properly prepared in accordance with UK Generally Accepted Accounting Procedures. A *Report to Those Charged with Governance* was also issued by the Northern Ireland Audit Office.

Operation and Performance

Business Planning

During 2024-25 NIMC delivered a Business Plan that was structured around the corporate strategic themes. The Business Plan was framed around eight Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for NIMC. By the end of 2024-25, six of the eight KPIs had been fully delivered or exceeded. For KPI 5, only 9.2% of external funding was secured which did not meet the 10% target. KPI 7 to undertake and publish the Museum Trends sectoral survey was not completed. Results will be published in 2025-2026.

Risk Management

NIMC identifies and evaluates risks to its business through its ARAC. ARAC received a quarterly risk assessment at each of its meetings, which identified the risk and how it would be treated and managed. Significant risks are escalated to the Board of Directors as and when it is deemed necessary. NIMC systems have been in place for the year under review and up to the date of approval of the annual report and accounts.

Governance Statement for the year ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

The Corporate Risk Register identified six corporate risks that were continually reviewed throughout 2024-25.

Risk 1	There is a risk that recurring reductions in grant-in-aid will mean that NIMC will operate at a deficit by April 2025 and is unsustainable as an independent organisation.
Risk 2	There is a risk that recurring reductions in grant-in-aid will severely reduce services to NIMC members by April 2025, resulting in a lack of support from members and the wider NI museum sector.
Risk 3	The Museums Policy represents both an opportunity and a potential risk to the operational integrity and functions of the organisation.
Risk 4	NIMC's current cloud file storage system relies on an open architecture that is weak on version control management and increases the risk of unintentional or malicious file movement/deletion.
Risk 5	Recruitment of new Director
Risk 6	There is a risk that the current financial services arrangements will cease, with no alternative provision in place.

The Corporate Risk Register is also reviewed by the DfC at bi-annual accountability meetings.

Financial Planning

The financial allocation to NIMC from DfC for 2024-25 was £250,000. Subsequently, NIMC was allocated an additional £4,000 to cover IT requirements, £2,000 to cover additional financial services expenditure & an additional £8,000 for wages. The total drawdown for 2024-25 was therefore £264,000.

Procurement

NIMC maintains procedures regarding procurement. It continues to ensure that services and goods are procured in line with Managing Public Money Northern Ireland and related guidance by DoF.

Prompt Payments

NIMC is committed to the prompt payment of bills for goods and services. The target for payment of bills from the Department for Communities is 10 days from receipt of an appropriate and valid invoice. Performance in this regard was monitored throughout the year, with 82% of bills being paid within the stipulated timeframe and 89% of payments were paid within the 30-day timeframe. Our target was impacted by the lack of a Director during the year.

Fraud

NIMC maintains policy and procedures relating to fraud prevention. In analysing fraud risk within NIMC, general payments, and those relating to grant assistance, were identified as the highest risk elements. No incidents of fraud were identified in 2024-25. (2023-24: nil).

Health and Safety

In line with the NIMC Health and Safety policy and procedures, various checks were undertaken during the year. No health and safety issues or concerns occurred during 2024-25. (2023-24: nil).

Governance Statement for the year ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

Conflicts of Interest

NIMC maintains a Register of Interests of its Board of Directors and Accounting Officer. Declarations of interest are made and recorded at each meeting of the Board of Directors and its Committees. No associated issues arose during the year.

Gifts and Hospitality

NIMC has a policy relating to gifts and hospitality. There was no gifts and hospitality declared by Board members in 2024-25. (2023-24: nil).

Freedom of Information and Data Management

NIMC received three requests under the Freedom of Information Act during 2024-25 (2023-24: nil). These were around banking and insurance providers, pest infestation, and film and television. They were all answered within the one calendar month timescale required.

In compliance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018, NIMC maintains an associated policy and procedures. NIMC is compliant with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). No issues concerning data loss or personal data related incidents occurred during the year (2023-24: nil).

Safeguarding Children and Young People

NIMC has a Safeguarding Policy Statement. NIMC does not require its Board or staff members to undertake or participate in any 'regulated' or 'controlled' activity on its behalf. Consequently, staff members are not required to register with the Independent Safeguarding Authority under the vetting and barring arrangements. An AccessNI check is performed by new staff members on appointment.

Review of Effectiveness

NIMC has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control. The review of effectiveness is informed by the work of the staff that have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, the reports and recommendations of Internal Audit, comments made by the external auditors and other review agencies.

In March 2025, an assessment of the Board of Directors performance was undertaken, drawing upon the *Unlocking your Board's full potential – Board Evaluation Questionnaire*, issued by the National Audit Office (NAO). This examined the Board of Directors' understanding of its remit and role, performance management, relationships with key stakeholders, propriety and fraud, project management, risk management and audit. It concluded that performance and effectiveness were satisfactory, that it was compliant with the principles of good practice of Corporate Governance Code, and that the quality of information and data made available to it was accurate and of a distinct and consistently high calibre.

The NIAO Effective Audit and Risk Assurance Committees Good Practice Guide and checklist were sent to members of ARAC in March 2025. There will also be an information session with a representative of NIAO at the June 2025 ARAC meeting to discuss responsibilities expected from the Committee members.

Governance Statement for the year ended 31 March 2025 (continued)

Quality of Information

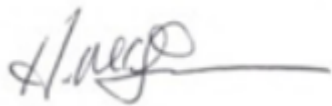
Based on the control procedures noted and effective implementation of recommendations from internal and external reviews, the Board of Directors is content with the quality of the information and data that it receives.

Significant Control Weakness

The Head of Internal Audit has provided a **Satisfactory** opinion in the 2024-25 Annual Assurance Report. There were no significant weaknesses arising this year.

Conclusion

The information provided above gives an understanding of the internal control structure and stewardship of NIMC operating in the 2024-25 year up to date of approval of the annual report and accounts. The detail gives a sense of the risks and vulnerabilities encountered during the year and how these have been addressed, and from which I conclude that the systems of governance and internal control operated by NIMC are satisfactory.



Heather McGuicken
Accounting Officer
DATE: 28/08/2025

Membership of the Northern Ireland Museums Council at 31 March 2025

NIMC is a membership organisation with three categories of member: Museum Member; Supporting Member; and Associate Member. NIMC had 85 members as of 31 March 2025 (2023-24: 81). In many cases, museum membership is held by a parent authority. The name of the museum is shown in brackets, where appropriate.

Benefits of NIMC Membership

Becoming a member of NIMC offers a range of valuable benefits, including:

- Digital copies of *Museum Beat* and our *Newsletter*, with information about the latest news, events, training opportunities, and job vacancies across the museum sector.
- Significant savings on high-quality training courses designed to support professional development.
- Dedicated assistance and advice from experienced NIMC staff to support museum needs.
- A variety of networking and learning events hosted by NIMC and partners, connecting professionals from across the region.

Membership Fees

Membership fees are reviewed annually by the NIMC Board. In recent years, fees have remained unchanged, reflecting NIMC's limited resources and the absence of a dedicated grants programme. Current funding constraints have also impacted the development of projects that directly support museums and their collections.

Membership fees are subsidised by the Council and any funding secured assists to cover general costs and helps NIMC to meet KPI 5 to secure at least 10% non-grant-in-aid funding and show the Council is a financially sustainable and resilient organisation. In 2024-2025, membership fee income was £14,147. Membership fees are reviewed annually and as NIMC did not meet KPI 5 this year, this will be taken into account at the next review.

Museum Members

This class of membership is open to accredited museums in Northern Ireland. Museum Members are entitled to professional support, training and grant-aid.

- Ards and North Down Borough Council (North Down Museum)
 - Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council (Armagh County Museum, Craigavon Museums at the Barn, and F. E. McWilliam Gallery and Studio)
 - Armagh Observatory
 - Armagh Robinson Library and No. 5 Vicar's Hill
 - Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council (Ballycastle Museum, Ballymoney Museum, Coleraine Museum, Green Lane Museum, Limavady Museum)
 - Derry City and Strabane District Council (Tower Museum)
 - Downpatrick and County Down Railway
 - Fermanagh and Omagh District Council (Fermanagh County Museum)
 - Garvagh Museum
 - HMS Caroline
 - The Linen Hall
 - Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council (Irish Linen Centre & Lisburn Museum)
 - Mid and East Antrim Borough Council (Andrew Jackson Cottage and US Rangers Museum, Carrickfergus Museum and Mid-Antrim Museum)
 - Newry, Mourne and Down District Council (Down County Museum and Newry and Mourne Museum)
 - Northern Ireland War Memorial Museum
 - Police Museum
 - Whitehead Railway Museum of Railway Preservation Society of Ireland
 - Royal Irish Fusiliers Museum
-

Membership of the Northern Ireland Museums Council at 31 March 2025 (continued)

- The National Trust (Ardress House, The Argory, Castle Ward, Florence Court, Hezlett House, Mount Stewart, Spring Hill)
- The Siege Museum
- The Somme Association (Somme Museum)

Membership fees for museum members is:

- For museums with a turnover up to £25,000 per year – £115/year
- For museums with a turnover of £25,000 – £75,000 per year – £230/year
- For museums with a turnover over £75,000 per year – £345/year

Supporting Members

This class of membership is open to Borough and District Councils in Northern Ireland that operate non-Accredited museums and to those that do not operate museum services. Membership of this category entitles councils to advice, information, training and assistance with feasibility and development studies.

There is currently one Supporting Member – Larne Museum (Mid and East Antrim Borough Council).

Membership fees for supporting members is £175/year

Associate Members

This class of membership is open to the national and centrally funded accredited museums of Northern Ireland, other museums, and any agency, commercial company, individual or other body wishing to subscribe. Membership provides access to advice, information and training.

There are currently 48 Associate Members.

Membership fees for museum members is:

- Individual – £35/year
 - Corporations and Institutions – £115/year
-

Accountability Report

Losses and special payments (audited information)

Losses Statement

NIMC had no losses (2023-24: £nil) exceeding £250,000. There was no bad debt / membership income write offs during 2024-25 (2023-24: nil).

Special Payments

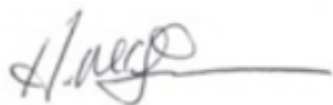
NIMC had no special payments (2023-24: nil) exceeding £250,000.

Other payments

NIMC has not made any other significant payments, including making gifts in the year to 31 March 2025 (2023-24: nil).

Remote Contingent Liabilities (audited information)

NIMC has no remote contingent liabilities (2023-24: nil).



Heather McGuicken
Accounting Officer
DATE: 28/08/25

**THE CERTIFICATE AND REPORT OF THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL TO
THE NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY**

Opinion on financial statements

I certify that I have audited the financial statements of the Northern Ireland Museums Council for the year ended 31 March 2025 under the Companies (Public Sector Audit) Order (Northern Ireland) 2013. The financial statements comprise: the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement and the related notes, including significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom accounting standards including Financial Reporting Standard (FRS) 102, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

I have also audited the information in the Remuneration and Staffing Report, and Accountability Report that is described in these reports as having been audited.

In my opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of NIMC's affairs as at 31 March 2025 and of its total incoming resources and expenditure of resources for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 2006.

Opinion on regularity

In my opinion, in all material respects the expenditure and income recorded in the financial statements have been applied to the purposes intended by the Assembly and the financial transactions recorded in the financial statements conform to the authorities which govern them.

Basis for opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (ISAs) (UK), applicable law and Practice Note 10 'Audit of Financial Statements and Regularity of Public Sector Bodies in the United Kingdom'. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of my certificate.

My staff and I are independent of NIMC in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard, and have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

I believe that the audit evidence obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, I have concluded that NIMC's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work I have performed, I have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the NIMC's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

The going concern basis of accounting for NIMC is adopted in consideration of the requirements set out in the Government Financial Reporting Manual, which require entities to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements where it anticipated that the services which they provide will continue into the future.

My responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Directors and the Accounting Officer with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this certificate.

**THE CERTIFICATE AND REPORT OF THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL TO
THE NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY**

Other Information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements, the parts of the Remuneration and Staffing Report, and Accountability Report described in these reports as having been audited, and my audit certificate and report. The Directors and the Accounting Officer are responsible for the other information included in the annual report. My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in my certificate, I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

My responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or my knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If I identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, I am required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact.

I have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinion on other matters

In my opinion based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the parts of the Remuneration and Staffing Report, and Accountability Report to be audited have been properly prepared in accordance with the Government Financial Reporting Manual;
- the information given in the Report of the Directors for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the Report of the Directors has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which I report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the NIMC and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, I have not identified material misstatements in the Report of the Directors.

I have nothing to report in respect of the following matters which I report to you if, in my opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements and the parts of the Remuneration and Staffing Report, and Accountability Report to be audited are not in agreement with the accounting records; or
- certain disclosures of remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- I have not received all of the information and explanations I require for my audit; or
- the Governance Statement does not reflect compliance with the Department of Finance's guidance.

Responsibilities of the Directors and Accounting Officer for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of Directors' and Accounting Officer's Responsibilities, the Directors and the Accounting Officer are responsible for:

**THE CERTIFICATE AND REPORT OF THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL TO
THE NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY**

- preparing the annual report, which includes the Remuneration and Staff Report, in accordance with the Companies Act 2006;
- the preparation of the financial statements, in accordance with the Companies Act 2006, and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view;
- ensuring such internal controls are in place as deemed necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements to be free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error;
- assessing the NIMC's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Accounting Officer anticipates that the services provided by NIMC will not continue to be provided in the future.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

My responsibility is to examine, certify and report on the financial statements in accordance with the Companies (Public Sector Audit) Order (Northern Ireland) 2013.

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error and to issue a certificate that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

I design procedures in line with my responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of non-compliance with laws and regulation, including fraud.

My procedures included:

- obtaining an understanding of the legal and regulatory framework applicable to the NIMC through discussion with management and application of extensive public sector accountability knowledge. The key laws and regulations I considered included the Companies Act 2006 and any other relevant laws and regulations identified;
 - making enquires of management and those charged with governance on NIMC's compliance with laws and regulations;
 - making enquiries of internal audit, management and those charged with governance as to susceptibility to irregularity and fraud, their assessment of the risk of material misstatement due to fraud and irregularity, and their knowledge of actual, suspected and alleged fraud and irregularity;
 - completing risk assessment procedures to assess the susceptibility of NIMC's financial statements to material misstatement, including how fraud might occur. This included, but was not limited to, an engagement director led engagement team discussion on fraud to identify particular areas, transaction streams and business practices that may be susceptible to material misstatement due to fraud. As part of this discussion, I identified potential for fraud in the following areas: revenue recognition, expenditure recognition and posting of unusual journals;
 - engagement director oversight to ensure the engagement team collectively had the appropriate competence, capabilities and skills to identify or recognise non-compliance with the applicable legal and regulatory framework throughout the audit;
-

**THE CERTIFICATE AND REPORT OF THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL TO
THE NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY**

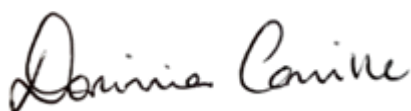
- documenting and evaluating the design and implementation of internal controls in place to mitigate risk of material misstatement due to fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations;
- designing audit procedures to address specific laws and regulations which the engagement team considered to have a direct material effect on the financial statements in terms of misstatement and irregularity, including fraud. These audit procedures included, but were not limited to, reading board and committee minutes, and agreeing financial statement disclosures to underlying supporting documentation and approvals as appropriate; and
- addressing the risk of fraud as a result of management override of controls by:
 - performing analytical procedures to identify unusual or unexpected relationships or movements;
 - testing journal entries to identify potential anomalies, and inappropriate or unauthorised adjustments;
 - assessing whether judgements and other assumptions made in determining accounting estimates were indicative of potential bias; and
 - investigating significant or unusual transactions made outside of the normal course of business.

A further description of my responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of my certificate.

In addition, I am required to obtain evidence sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the expenditure and income recorded in the financial statements have been applied to the purposes intended by the Assembly and the financial transactions recorded in the financial statements conform to the authorities which govern them.

Report

I have no observations to make on these financial statements.



Dorinnia Carville
Comptroller and Auditor General
Northern Ireland Audit Office
106 University Street
BELFAST
BT7 1EU
8 September 2025

Statement of Financial Activities

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2025 £	Total Funds 2024 £
INCOME & ENDOWMENTS FROM:					
Donations & legacies	3	264,000	5,000	269,000	303,135
Charitable activities	4	1,613	-	1,613	3,217
Other trading activities	5	<u>53,376</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>53,376</u>	<u>13,743</u>
TOTAL INCOME		<u>318,989</u>	<u>5,000</u>	<u>323,989</u>	<u>320,095</u>
EXPENDITURE ON:					
Charitable activities	6	<u>(321,784)</u>	<u>(10,963)</u>	<u>(332,747)</u>	<u>(354,710)</u>
Total Expenditure		<u>(321,784)</u>	<u>(10,963)</u>	<u>(332,747)</u>	<u>(354,710)</u>
NET INCOME/ (EXPENDITURE)	9	(2,795)	(5,963)	(8,758)	(34,615)
TRANSFERS BETWEEN FUNDS		119	(119)	-	-
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		<u>6,270</u>	<u>12,378</u>	<u>18,648</u>	<u>53,263</u>
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		<u>3,594</u>	<u>6,296</u>	<u>9,890</u>	<u>18,648</u>

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses in the year and therefore a statement of total recognised gains and losses has not been prepared.

All of the above amounts relate to continuing activities.

Balance sheet

	Note	2025 £	2024 £
Fixed assets:			
Intangible assets	12	6,210	12,358
Tangible assets	13	1,387	4,367
Current assets			
Debtors	14	12,351	23,992
Cash at bank		<u>59,251</u>	<u>51,874</u>
Total current assets		71,602	75,866
Liabilities			
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	15	(69,309)	(73,943)
Net current assets		<u>2,293</u>	<u>1,923</u>
Total assets less current liabilities		<u>9,980</u>	<u>18,648</u>
Total net assets		<u>9,890</u>	<u>18,648</u>
The funds of the charity			
Restricted income funds	16	6,296	12,378
Unrestricted funds	17	<u>3,594</u>	<u>6,270</u>
Total charity funds		<u>9,890</u>	<u>18,648</u>

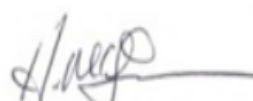
It is the view of the Board that an exemption from the audit requirements of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006 is available under section 482 of that Act, since the company meets the DoF's definition of a non-profit making company and is subject to a public sector audit under the Companies (Public Sector Audit) (Northern Ireland) Order 2013, being an order issued under Article 5(3) of the Audit and Accountability (Northern Ireland) Order 2003. The Board therefore claims this exemption.

The Board of Directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 with respect to accounting records and preparation of accounts.

These financial statements have been approved by the Board of Directors on 28 August 2025 and signed on its behalf by:



Nora Douds
Chair



Heather McGuicken
Director

Company registration: NI027735

Statement of Cash Flows

	Note	2025 £	2024 £
NET CASH INFLOW/ (OUTFLOW) FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES	23	7,377	(29,210)
CAPITAL EXPENDITURE			
Payments to acquire tangible fixed assets		-	-
Payments to acquire intangible fixed assets		<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Net cash outflow from capital expenditure		<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
INCREASE / (DECREASE) IN CASH	24	<u>7,377</u>	<u>(29,210)</u>

The notes on pages 50 to 63 form part of these financial statements

Notes to the financial statements

1. NATURE OF ORGANISATION

The principal activity of the Museums Council is to support local museums in Northern Ireland. The Museums Council is a company limited by guarantee incorporated in Northern Ireland. The Museums Council's place of business is its registered office at 153 Bangor Road, Holywood, Co Down, BT18 0EU.

2. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy notes.

The financial statements also meet the disclosure requirements of the Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) and those issued by the DoF in so far as those requirements are appropriate.

Incoming resources

Income is recognised when the charity is legally entitled to, the income after any performance conditions have been met, the amounts can be measured reliably, and it is probable that income will be received.

Income from government and other grants, whether 'capital' grants or 'resource' grants, is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the grants have been met, it is probable that the income will be received, and the amount can be measured reliably and is not deferred.

Income received in advance of the provision of a specific service is deferred until the criteria for income recognition are met.

Resources expended

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to the category. Expenditure is recognised where there is a legal or constructive obligation to make payments to third parties, it is probable that the settlement will be required, and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

Expenditure on charitable activities includes costs undertaken to further the purposes of the charity. Support costs are those functions that assist the work of the charity but do not directly undertake charitable activities. Support costs include back-office costs and travel expenses which support the charity's activities. These costs have been allocated to expenditure on charitable activities. The basis on which support costs have been allocated are set out in the notes to the accounts.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

2. ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

Governance costs include those incurred in the governance of NIMC and are primarily associated with constitutional, statutory requirements and strategic matters such as audit and accountancy, board expenses and printing financial statements. The salary and related overhead costs pertaining to the Accounting Officer and finance staff are apportioned between charitable activities and governance costs at a rate of 95% and 5% respectively.

Fund accounting

NIMC receives various types of funding which require separate disclosure. These are as follows:

- (a) unrestricted funds: funds which may be expended at the discretion of management in furtherance of the objects of NIMC; and
- (b) restricted funds: funds which are earmarked by the donor for specific purposes.

Designated funds

Within unrestricted funds NIMC may designate a part of its reserves for particular purposes. Designated funds relate to incoming resources in the current and previous years, which are allocated to fund specific activities in future accounting periods.

Intangible fixed assets

Intangible fixed assets are stated at cost and are subsequently measured at cost less accumulated amortisation and accumulated impairment losses.

Amortisation is recognised so as to write off the cost or valuation of assets less their residual values over their useful lives on the following bases:

Website	- Amortised over 3 years
---------	--------------------------

Fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are stated at valuation.

The costs of all fixed assets of NIMC are restated annually to reflect their current value using the relevant price indices at the year-end (where material). Any revaluation surplus or loss, net of the corresponding adjustment to accumulated depreciation, is credited to the revaluation reserve. However, due to the immaterial nature of the amounts involved no revaluation has been recognised.

NIMC has a minimum level for capitalising tangible fixed assets of £1,000, although lower valued items may be pooled and capitalised where they constitute a unit or group.

Depreciation is calculated so as to write off the cost of an asset, less its estimated residual value, over the useful economic life of that asset as follows:

Computer equipment	- 33% Straight line
Office equipment	- 15% Straight line
Furniture	- 10% Straight line

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

2. ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

Operating lease agreements

Costs in respect of operating leases are charged on a straight-line basis over the lease term.

Pension scheme arrangements

Past and present staff of the Museums Council are members of the PCSPS (NI), as set out in Note 10. The scheme is an unfunded, multi-employer, defined benefit scheme. All contributions are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities ("SoFA") as incurred.

Reserves

The Museums Council receives various types of funding which require separate disclosure. These are differentiated between restricted and unrestricted reserves. Unrestricted reserves represent retained amounts available for discretionary spend on the Council's objectives. Restricted reserves represent retained amounts available for specific projects.

Holiday Pay

A liability is recognised to the extent of any unused holiday pay entitlement which is accrued at the Balance Sheet date carried forward to future periods. This is measured at the undiscounted salary cost of future holiday entitlement so accrued as of the Balance Sheet date.

3. DONATIONS & LEGACIES

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2025 £	Total Funds 2024 £
Grants receivable				
DFC grant-in-aid	264,000	-	264,000	226,000
DFC Access & Inclusion	-	-	-	68,854
Museum Development UK	-	5,000	5,000	4,881
Wild Escape	-	-	-	2,400
Thrive	-	-	-	1,000
	<u>264,000</u>	<u>5,000</u>	<u>269,000</u>	<u>303,135</u>
Total 2024	<u>227,000</u>	<u>76,135</u>	<u>303,135</u>	

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

4. CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2025 £	Total Funds 2024 £
Training income	<u>1,613</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,613</u>	<u>3,217</u>
	<u>1,613</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,613</u>	<u>3,217</u>
Total 2024	<u>3,217</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>3,217</u>	

5. OTHER TRADING ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2025 £	Total Funds 2024 £
Memberships	14,147	-	14,147	13,410
Other income	<u>39,229</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>39,229</u>	<u>333</u>
	<u>53,376</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>53,376</u>	<u>13,743</u>
Total 2024	<u>13,743</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>13,743</u>	

6. COSTS OF CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES BY FUND TYPE

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2025 £	Total Funds 2024 £
Grants awarded	-	4,815	4,815	80,292
Project costs	22,952	-	22,952	3,840
Training costs	2,493	-	2,493	3,654
Membership fees	903	-	903	1,059
Staff training	830	-	830	300
Wages and salaries	148,345	-	148,345	147,497
Employer's N.I. Contributions	11,042	-	11,042	9,376
Staff pension costs	51,915	-	51,915	43,597
Support costs (Note 7)	20,595	6,148	26,743	27,062
Governance costs (Note 8)	<u>62,709</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>62,709</u>	<u>38,033</u>
	<u>321,784</u>	<u>10,963</u>	<u>332,747</u>	<u>354,710</u>
Total 2024	<u>263,856</u>	<u>90,854</u>	<u>354,710</u>	

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

7. SUPPORT COSTS

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2025 £	Total Funds 2024 £
Insurance	667	-	667	620
Telephone	556	-	556	571
Computer and software	12,127	-	12,127	8,414
Printing and stationery	828	-	828	8
Travel and subsistence	1,411	-	1,411	430
Bank charges	11	-	11	(24)
Sundry expenses	-	-	-	599
Depreciation and amortisation	2,980	6,148	9,128	10,150
Professional fees	<u>2,015</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,015</u>	<u>6,294</u>
	<u>20,595</u>	<u>6,148</u>	<u>26,743</u>	<u>27,062</u>
Total 2024	<u>18,900</u>	<u>8,162</u>	<u>27,062</u>	

8. GOVERNANCE COSTS

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2025 £	Total Funds 2024 £
Staff costs	7,970	-	7,970	6,235
Accountancy fees and internal audit	20,044	-	20,044	11,500
Audit fees	29,400	-	29,400	20,300
Board meeting & member expenses	684	-	684	105
Company governance costs	2,134	-	2,134	-
Secondment	2,477	-	2,477	-
Design of annual report	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(107)</u>
	<u>62,709</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>62,709</u>	<u>38,033</u>
Total 2024	<u>38,033</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>38,033</u>	

9. NET INCOME

This is stated after charging:

	2025 £	2024 £
Staff pension contributions	53,654	44,873
Depreciation and amortisation	9,128	10,150
Auditors' remuneration: - audit of the financial statements	<u>29,400</u>	<u>20,300</u>

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

10. STAFF COSTS

Total staff costs were as follows:

	2025 £	2024 £
Wages and salaries	153,990	152,008
Social security costs	11,628	9,825
Other pension costs	<u>53,654</u>	<u>44,873</u>
	<u>219,272</u>	<u>206,706</u>

No remuneration was paid to the Directors of the company. The total of Directors' expenses reimbursed by the company during the year was £112 (2024 – £105).

The Northern Ireland Civil Service main pension schemes are unfunded multi-employer defined benefit schemes, but NIMC is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities.

The Public Service Pensions Act (NI) 2014 provides the legal framework for regular actuarial valuations of the public service pension schemes to measure the costs of the benefits being provided. These valuations inform the future contribution rates to be paid into the schemes by employers every four years following the scheme valuation. The Act also provides for the establishment of an employer cost cap mechanism to ensure that the costs of the pension schemes remain sustainable in future.

The Government Actuary's Department (GAD) is responsible for carrying out scheme valuations. The Actuary reviews employer contributions every four years following the scheme valuation. The 2020 scheme valuation was completed by GAD in October 2023. The outcome of this valuation was used to set the level of contributions for employers from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2027.

The Cost Cap Mechanism (CCM) is a measure of scheme costs and determines whether member costs or scheme benefits require adjustment to maintain costs within a set corridor. Reforms were made to the CCM which was applied to the 2020 scheme valuations and included the introduction of a reformed-scheme-only cost control mechanism which assesses just the costs relating to reformed schemes (alpha for the NICS) and introduced an economic check. Prior to the cost control mechanism reforms, legacy scheme (PCSPS(NI)) costs associated with active members were also captured in the mechanism. The reformed-scheme-only design and the economic check were applied to the 2020 scheme valuations for the devolved public sector pension schemes, including the NICS pension scheme. The 2020 scheme valuation outcome was that the core cost cap cost of the scheme lies within the 3% cost cap corridor. As there is no breach of the cost control mechanism, there is no requirement for the Department of Finance to consult on changes to the scheme. Further information can be found on the Department of Finance website <https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/articles/northern-ireland-civil-service-pension-scheme-valuations>.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

10. STAFF COSTS (continued)

For 2024-25 employers' contributions of £53,654 were payable to the NICS pension arrangements flat rate of 34.25% of pensionable pay, for all salaries (2023-24: £44,873 at one of three rates in the range 28.7% to 34.2%)

Employees can opt to open a partnership pension account, a stakeholder pension with an employer contribution. Employers' contributions of £nil were paid to one or more of the panel of two appointed stakeholder pension providers (2023-24: £nil). Employer contributions are age-related and range from 8% to 14.75% (2023-24, 8% to 14.75%) of pensionable pay.

The partnership pension account offers the member the opportunity of having a 'free' pension. The employer will pay the age-related contribution and if the member does contribute, the employer will pay an additional amount to match member contributions up to 3% of pensionable earnings.

Employer contributions of £nil, 0.5% (2023-24 £nil, 0.5%) of pensionable pay, were payable to the NICS Pension schemes to cover the cost of the future provision of lump sum benefits on death in service and ill health retirement of these employees. Contributions due to the partnership pension providers at the reporting period date were £nil. Contributions prepaid at that date were £nil.

No persons in the current and prior year retired early on ill-health grounds; the total additional accrued pension liabilities in the year amounted to £nil (2023-24: £nil).

Particulars of employees:

The average number of persons employed during the year was as follows:

	2025 No	2024 No
Number of staff	4	4

One employee received remuneration of more than £60,000 during the year (2023-24 – nil).

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

11. TAXATION

The Museums Council is exempt from income tax and capital gains tax to the extent that its income and gains are applied for charitable purposes. No tax charge has arisen in the year.

The Museums Council is not registered for VAT.

12. INTANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Computer Software £
VALUATION	
At 1 April 2024	18,445
Additions	-
Disposals	-
At 31 March 2025	-
AMORTISATION	
At 1 April 2024	6,087
Amortisation charge for the year	6,148
Eliminated on disposal	-
At 31 March 2025	<u>12,235</u>
NET BOOK VALUE	
At 31 March 2025	<u>6,210</u>
At 31 March 2024	<u>12,358</u>

13. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Computer Equipment £	Office Equipment £	Furniture £	Total £
VALUATION				
At 1 April 2024	29,256	40	6,484	35,780
Additions	-	-	-	-
Disposals	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2025	<u>29,256</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>6,484</u>	<u>35,780</u>
DEPRECIATION				
At 1 April 2024	24,889	40	6,484	31,413
Charge for the year	2,980	-	-	2,980
Eliminated on disposal	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2025	<u>27,869</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>6,484</u>	<u>34,393</u>
NET BOOK VALUE				
At 31 March 2025	<u>1,387</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,387</u>
At 31 March 2024	<u>4,367</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>4,367</u>

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

14. DEBTORS

	2025 £	2024 £
Trade debtors	9,900	551
Accrued income	23	20,728
Prepayments	<u>2,428</u>	<u>2,713</u>
	<u>12,351</u>	<u>23,992</u>

15. CREDITORS: Amounts falling due within one year

	2025 £	2024 £
Trade creditors	5,827	3,936
Short-term compensated absences (holiday pay)	5,015	4,286
Taxation and social security	19	3,449
Other creditors	724	464
Deferred income	185	22,657
Accruals	<u>57,539</u>	<u>39,151</u>
	<u>69,309</u>	<u>73,943</u>

16. RESTRICTED INCOME FUNDS

	Balance at 1 April 2024 £	Incoming Resources £	Outgoing Resources £	Transfer between funds £	Balance at 31 March 2025 £
Esme Mitchell Trust	7	-	-	-	7
Museum	13	5,000	(4,815)	(119)	79
Development UK					
DFC Capital –	<u>12,358</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(6,148)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>6,210</u>
Website					
	<u>12,378</u>	<u>5,000</u>	<u>(10,963)</u>	<u>(119)</u>	<u>6,296</u>

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

16. RESTRICTED INCOME FUNDS

	Balance at 1 April 2023 £	Incoming Resources £	Outgoing Resources £	Transfer between funds £	Balance at 31 March 2024 £
Esme Mitchell Trust Museum	1,607	-	(1,600)	-	7
Development UK	-	4,881	(4,868)	-	13
Wild Escape	-	2,400	(2,400)	-	-
Capital Fund	1,171	-	(2,075)	904	-
DFC Capital – Website	25,000	-	(6,087)	(6,555)	12,358
DFC Access & Inclusion	-	68,854	(68,854)	-	-
NLHF – Climate Change Initiative	<u>4,688</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(4,970)</u>	<u>282</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>32,466</u>	<u>76,135</u>	<u>(90,854)</u>	<u>(5,369)</u>	<u>12,378</u>

17. UNRESTRICTED INCOME FUNDS

	Balance at 1 April 2024 £	Incoming Resources £	Outgoing Resources £	Transfer between funds £	Balance at 31 March 2025 £
Unrestricted income funds	<u>6,270</u>	<u>318,989</u>	<u>(321,784)</u>	<u>119</u>	<u>3,594</u>

	Balance at 1 April 2023 £	Incoming Resources £	Outgoing Resources £	Transfer between funds £	Balance at 31 March 2024 £
Unrestricted income funds	<u>20,797</u>	<u>243,960</u>	<u>(263,856)</u>	<u>5,369</u>	<u>6,270</u>

18. ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2025 £	Total Funds 2024 £
Intangible assets	-	6,210	6,210	12,358
Tangible assets	1,387	-	1,387	4,367
Net current assets/(liabilities)	<u>2,207</u>	<u>86</u>	<u>2,293</u>	<u>1,923</u>
	<u>3,594</u>	<u>6,296</u>	<u>9,890</u>	<u>18,648</u>

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

19. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

NIMC's resources are met through grant-in-aid funding received from the DfC and through grant funding from other sources and from income generated through membership fees and training. NIMC does not hold any complex financial instruments. The organisation has no borrowings and relies primarily on DfC grants for its cash requirements. Other than the financial assets and liabilities which are generated by day-to-day operational activities, the Museums Council holds no financial instruments.

Liquidity Risk

NIMC secures funding for all activities in advance of expenditure being committed and it is not therefore exposed to material liquidity risks.

Credit Risk

NIMC is not exposed to any material credit risk.

20. GUARANTOR

NIMC is a company limited by guarantee and it does not have share capital. The liability of the member is limited to £1 in the event of the company being wound up.

21. ULTIMATE CONTROLLING PARTY

The Board of Directors of NIMC Limited is the ultimate controlling party of the company.

22. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

NIMC is a NDPB of the DfC from whom it received funding. The DfC is regarded as a related party. During the year, NIMC received a £5,000 grant from MDUK Art Fund for Playful Museums Grants. Nine grants of up to £500 were handed out and one grant of £90 was handed out for membership to the Play Resource Centre.

Grants were awarded to a range of bodies that are represented on NIMC's Board of Directors. These can be summarised as follows:

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

22. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS (continued)

Playful Museums Grant (supported by MDUK Art Fund)				
Grant Applicant	Project	Amount Awarded	Declared Interest of Board Member	Associated Organisation
Tower Museum	Living Art - meet the stories behind the art	£500.00		
Mid-Antrim Museum	Deadly dragons at Ballymena Castle	£443.00		
Coleraine Museum	On the Farm	£500.00	Sarah Carson	Causeway Coast & Glens Council
Armagh Robinson Library & No5 Vicar's Hill	Under a Tree	£462.90		
Linen Hall Library	Rita agus an Dineasár - an 'imagination workout' with Máire Zepf	£500.00		
Fermanagh County Museum	Play Days	£490.00	Cllr. John McClaughry	Fermanagh & Omagh District Council
Ballymoney Museum	Wee Critters on Safari	£500.00	Sarah Carson	Causeway Coast & Glens Council
Railway Preservation Society NI	Choo Choo time with Moo Music	£500.00		
Armagh County Museum	Art, Rhythm and Rhyme for Under 5's	£500.00	Sean Barden and Alderman Paul Greenfield	Armagh, Banbridge Craigavon Council
NI War Memorial	Play Resource Membership	£90		
			TOTAL	£4,485.90

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

23. RECONCILIATION OF NET INCOMING RESOURCES TO NET CASH OUTFLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES

	2025 £	2024 £
Net incoming resources before transfers	(8,758)	(34,615)
Depreciation and amortisation	9,128	10,150
Decrease/(increase) in debtors	11,641	(16,972)
(Decrease)/increase in creditors	<u>(4,634)</u>	<u>12,227</u>
Net cash outflow from operating activities	<u>7,377</u>	<u>(29,210)</u>

24. RECONCILIATION OF NET CASH FLOW MOVEMENT TO MOVEMENT IN NET FUNDS

	2025 £	2024 £
(Decrease)/increase in cash in the period	<u>7,377</u>	<u>(29,210)</u>
Change in net funds	7,377	(29,210)
Net funds at 1 April 2024	<u>51,874</u>	<u>81,084</u>
Net funds at 31 March 2025	<u>59,251</u>	<u>51,874</u>

25. ANALYSIS OF CHANGES IN NET FUNDS

	1 April 2024 £	Cash flows £	31 March 2025 £
Cash at bank	<u>51,874</u>	<u>7,377</u>	<u>59,251</u>

26. LOSSES AND SPECIAL PAYMENTS

	2025 £	2024 £
Bad debt/membership income written off in current year	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>

27. CONTINGENT LIABILITIES

NIMC is a named respondent in an employment tribunal claim where a liability has not yet been established and cannot be quantified.

28. GOING CONCERN

DfC has provided an indicative resource budget allocation for NIMC for 2025-2026 of £279,000 with an additional capital funding allocation of £110,000 for a Local Museums Collections Fund and a Local Museums Small Capital Grants Programme. There is no longer a going concern that NIMC will not be able to meet operational costs in the upcoming financial year. The funding concern is that this additional resource is non-recurrent. In light of the factors, these accounts have been prepared on a going concern basis as, in the opinion of the Board of Directors, NIMC will continue to operate for the foreseeable future.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

In light of the factors, these accounts have been prepared on a going concern basis as, in the opinion of the Board of Directors, NIMC will continue to operate for the foreseeable future.

ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES REQUIRED BY FReM

NIMC, as a charitable arm's length body, is required to account for grants-in-aid received under the Charities SORP and accordingly include it within incoming resources in the Statement of Financial Activities.

For all other ALB's, the FReM requires grants-in-aid to be regarded as contributions from controlling parties giving rise to a financial interest in the residual interest of the body and hence accounted for as financing i.e. by crediting them to the income and expenditure reserve.

In addition, FReM requires grant-in-aid to be accounted for on a cash basis.

Were NIMC to prepare its accounts on these bases, the results would be as follows:

Statement of Financial Activities prepared under FReM

	2025 £	2024 £
Income and endowments from:		
Donations & legacies	5,000	77,135
Charitable activities	1,613	3,217
Other trading activities	<u>53,376</u>	<u>13,743</u>
Total incoming resources	<u>59,989</u>	<u>94,095</u>
Resources expended:		
Charitable activities	<u>332,747</u>	<u>354,710</u>
Total resources expended	<u>332,747</u>	<u>354,710</u>
Amount transferred to reserves	(272,758)	(260,615)
Analysis of Reserves prepared under FReM		
Balance at 1 April 2024	18,648	53,263
Grant in aid received in year	264,000	226,000
Net operating cost for year	<u>(272,758)</u>	<u>(260,615)</u>
Balance at 31 March 2025	<u>9,890</u>	<u>18,648</u>



NI Museums Council
153 Bangor Road, Holywood,
Co. Down, BT18 0EU

Tel: +44(0)2890 550 215
Email: info@nimc.co.uk

*Cover image: Exhibition at
Fermanagh County Museum.
Photograph by Neil Keery
(2023)*

