

National Museums NI
Annual Report and Accounts
For the year ended 31 March 2025

Laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly

Under Article 10 (2) (c) and 11 of the Museums and Galleries (Northern Ireland) Order 1998

By the Department for Communities

On

15 October 2025

All enquiries related to this publication should be sent to us at National Museums NI, 153 Bangor Road, Cultra, Holywood, Co. Down, BT18 0EU or email: info@nationalmuseumsni.org.

CONTENTS

1. CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD	3
1.1 Chief Executive's Introduction	4
2. TRUSTEES' PERFORMANCE REPORT	5
2.1 Purpose, Objectives & Activities	5
2.2 Structure, Governance & Management	9
2.3 Performance Summary	12
2.4 Performance Analysis	13
2.5 Annual Review	19
2.6 Financial Review	32
2.7 Plans for Future Periods	33
3. ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT	35
3.1 Governance Statement	35
3.2 Remuneration and Staff Report	44
3.3 Statement of Trustees' & Chief Executive's Responsibilities	56
3.4 Assembly Accountability & Audit Report	57
3.5 The Certificate and Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General	58
4. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS	
4.1 Statement of Financial Activities	63
4.2 Balance Sheet	64
4.3 Cash Flow Statement	65
4.4 Notes to the Accounts	66

1. CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

It is with great pride that I introduce this Annual Review for the financial year 2024/25 - a year that reflects both the resilience and ambition of National Museums NI as we concluded our Corporate Strategy 2021–25.

Over the past year, our organisation has continued to evolve and respond to a changing world, while staying true to its purpose: to safeguard the National Collection, to share the stories it holds, and to make those stories accessible and meaningful to all.

As Chair of the Board of Trustees, I have seen first-hand the dedication and creativity of our staff, volunteers and partners across our four remarkable museums. Their work ensures that our collections remain not only preserved for future generations, but continually reimagined and reinterpreted.

This year's achievements - some of which are captured in the pages that follow - reflect our strategic commitment to inclusion, participation and innovation. From widening access and deepening community engagement, to enhancing research and embracing new programming, National Museums NI has taken significant steps to broaden its reach and relevance.

I also want to acknowledge the challenges we have faced, not least in the context of ongoing financial pressures and broader social change. It is a testament to the leadership of our Executive team, and the enduring support of our partners and funders, that we have navigated these complexities while continuing to deliver impact at scale.

As we look to the future, we have recently published our next Corporate Strategy for the organisation, and I am confident that National Museums NI will build on the strong foundations laid over the past five years. The Board of Trustees remains deeply committed to supporting this next phase - ensuring that our museums continue to inspire and celebrate the richness of our shared heritage.

On behalf of the Board, I extend our sincere thanks to all who have contributed to the success of 2024/25.



Gordon Milligan, OBE
Chairman

1.1 Chief Executive's Introduction

I am pleased to present the Annual Review for 2024/25, offering a snapshot of the breadth and impact of National Museums NI's work over the past year. This marks the final year of our current Corporate Strategy, a guiding framework that has delivered tangible progress across our mission areas over the past five years.

Despite a challenging financial environment, our performance has been exceptionally strong. This year our museums welcomed over 736,000 visitors, exceeding our target by 5%. Total engagements reached an impressive 1.5 million through avenues such as physical visits, digital platforms, research enquiries, collections stores access and volunteering. This reinforces the wide-reaching impact of our work across all four museum sites.

Our wider public and community engagement efforts continue to grow. This year, we delivered programmes for nearly 50,000 schoolchildren and saw over 22,000 volunteer hours contributed - further evidence of deepening engagement. As well as an increase in admissions and educational visits, we performed strongly in generating income through tourism, corporate events and weddings - reflecting the collective contribution of our dedicated teams.

A major highlight this year was Caravaggio in Belfast at the Ulster Museum. This was part of the 'National Treasures' project from the National Gallery in London and reunited two masterpieces rarely seen together since the 17th century. It was also supported by the National Gallery of Ireland, who generously facilitated the loan from the Jesuit Community in Dublin. As well as exemplifying our ability to share world-class art with local audiences, the exhibition represented a wonderful example of bringing together strong East/West and North/South partnerships at the same time.

We have placed greater emphasis on communicating the value and relevance of our work both locally and internationally. In March, I attended a symposium at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History in Washington DC on the subject of 'Divided Communities: Difficult Histories'. I had the privilege of sharing some of our peacebuilding work and the role of museums in this space - demonstrated across our projects such as The Troubles and Beyond, Inclusive Global Histories and Languages of Ulster.

We welcomed the announcement by Minister for Communities, Gordon Lyons, of £750,000 funding for the Ulster American Folk Park. This crucial investment will allow us to advance our capital plans, laying the groundwork to unlock the ambitious £20 million investment as part of the Mid-South West Region Deal. We are calling this project 'The Journey Ahead' - a name that reflects both the historical journeys the museum tells and its exciting journey of transformation ahead.

I would like to highlight the final feature project in this Review, which showcases some of the progress made across our sites toward fulfilling our commitment to building the museum infrastructure of the future, as outlined in the 2021–2025 Corporate Strategy. We take great pride in reflecting on the achievements realised to date and acknowledging the strong foundations which have been laid on which to move forward.

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to our Minister and the Department for Communities for their continued support, and to all our funders, partners, donors, members, and every individual who engaged with our museums this year. Your continued support drives our progress.

Finally, my deepest thanks and admiration goes to all of my colleagues. Without their hard work, creativity, passion and commitment, none of our success would be possible.


Kathryn Thomson
Chief Executive

2. TRUSTEES' PERFORMANCE REPORT

2.1 Purpose, Objectives & Activities

The Museums and Galleries (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 (the "Order") established a Board of Trustees for National Museums NI and provided that all property, rights and liabilities of the Trustees of the Ulster Museum and the Trustees of the Ulster Folk & Transport Museum would transfer to this Board. It repealed previous legislation affecting the Ulster Museum and the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum. The Trustees of the Ulster Museum and the Trustees of the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum were thereby abolished. National Museums NI assumed responsibility for the Ulster American Folk Park from October 1998.

A subsidiary company, National Museums Northern Ireland Enterprises Limited, was incorporated in 2008 for the purposes of carrying on non-primary purpose trading activity ancillary to the core objectives and activities of the parent charity. The company is currently non-trading.

The Order requires the Trustees to:

- care for, preserve and add to the collections;
- ensure that the collections are available to the public through exhibitions, effective interpretation and availability for research and study; and
- promote the awareness, appreciation and understanding of:
 - art, history and science;
 - the way of life and traditions of people; and
 - the migration and settlement of people;

with particular reference to the heritage of Northern Ireland.

In setting the objectives and planning the activities for the year, the Trustees have given careful consideration to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's guidance on public benefit to ensure that the activities have helped to achieve the charity's purposes and provide a benefit to the beneficiaries.

The requirements of the Order meet the following charitable purposes as defined by the Charities Commission:

- The advancement of the arts, culture, heritage and science; and
- The advancement of education.

National Museums NI: Who We Are

National Museums and Galleries of Northern Ireland has adopted the operating name of National Museums NI. This operating name has been adopted and used throughout the Annual Report and Accounts.

National Museums NI comprises four museums and serves as a custodian of the National Collection of 1.4 million objects which are multidisciplinary, diverse and span all time periods, referencing Northern Ireland within, and to, the wider world.

Ulster Museum

The Ulster Museum is Northern Ireland's treasure house of the past and the present – home to rich collections of art, history and natural sciences. It is a vibrant place where friends and family enjoy knowledge and stories drawn from local and global culture. It is a place of awe and wonder, but also a safe and trusted space which allows diverse voices to be heard and difficult questions to be explored.

Ulster Folk Museum

The Ulster Folk Museum is an open-air museum – rolling hills of countryside and a bustling town filled with authentic period buildings, meticulously transported from their original settings. The Museum reveals how we have shaped our natural environment over time creating a cultural landscape rich in traditions and diversity. Its commitment to preserving and interpreting our way of life from the early 1900s connects us with values, skills and customs that would otherwise be lost.

Ulster Transport Museum

The Ulster Transport Museum tells the story of transport and social change in this part of the world since the birth of the modern era. It is the journey of tenacious, local people finding more efficient ways to travel and to transport the essentials of daily life. It is a place to discover that story and offer inspiration for the designers, engineers and adventurers of the future.

Ulster American Folk Park

Embark on an epic journey across the centuries, and the vast Atlantic Ocean, as you recreate the story of Irish emigration. The Ulster American Folk Park is a place that preserves the importance of Ulster people's contribution to establishing modern North America and tells compelling stories of Irish emigration. It seeks to alter people's perceptions about emigration through personal stories of discovery.

Our Role and Purpose

National Museums NI's role is to work with the public to explore and share compelling stories about real objects and collections in unique settings that enable all of us to gain new knowledge and understanding.

We are passionate about playing a vital role at the heart of our community, making a difference to the lives of many individuals as well as contributing to the development of a vibrant society. The collections are at the centre of everything we do, and we are committed to working in partnership with people, local communities and organisations that share our aspirations. We want to ensure that the widest possible audience has access to our national collections.

We operate for the public and national benefit, not just for this generation but for future generations and for all visitors to Northern Ireland. We facilitate a better understanding of our collective heritage and foster dialogue, curiosity and self-reflection.

Our Vision:

Celebrate who we are: telling the stories of our past, challenging our present and shaping our future.

Our Mission:

- Develop, manage and care for our Collections to benefit current and future generations.
- Make our Collections accessible to the widest possible audiences.
- Play a leading role in the economic and social wellbeing and future of this place.
- Build an organisation where people feel valued.

Our Values:

- Striving for excellence – being the best we can be in everything we do; delivering excellent customer service internally and externally; and sharing our expertise.
- Being authentic – being true to our Collections; having integrity in everything we do; and creating unique experiences.
- Working together – promoting teamwork; building mutually beneficial partnerships; and being receptive to others and their ideas.
- Showing respect – valuing everyone; supporting diversity; and respecting the Collections.
- Being courageous – being ambitious in programming; embracing change; being brave and creative in the stories we tell; and empowering our people.

Our Journey:

In recent years, spurred by our passion for our museums and collections, National Museums NI has embarked on an ambitious programme of transformation to ensure that we achieve the maximum public benefit through everything we do.

Through our transformative agenda we are actively rethinking the role of museums in our society. We want to connect people to their interests and ambitions in a deeper way. But we also recognise that societal norms are changing in terms of lifestyle, identity, the climate emergency and the economy; and that this requires us to change too.

We believe that our museums can set an example in adapting to change, encouraging debate, promoting reconciliation and supporting diversity and sustainability. We need to be able to react as well as reflect.

Public Benefit Statement

Everything we do as an organisation is measured against the benefits we aspire to bring to the users of our Museums. The direct public benefit of National Museums NI is that people, individually and collectively, better understand the art, history, science and culture of Northern Ireland and its significance and relevance in wider national and global contexts. This is evidenced through the data we hold in relation to:

- visitor numbers and usage of our sites;
- the demographic profile of visitors;
- digital engagements;
- details of engagement and programmes with diverse community groups;
- specific learning programmes for formal learners, lifelong learners and communities;
- the diversity and scale of our exhibitions and public programming;
- evaluations, feedback and customer satisfaction rating of our programmes, events and exhibitions;
- membership;
- the extent of public access to our stores; and
- partnerships with academic and higher education institutions.

Beneficiaries include the people of Northern Ireland and people from outside the area who visit the museums, as well as online users of nationalmuseumsni.org

2.2 Structure, Governance & Management

As a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) accountable to the Northern Ireland Assembly through the Department for Communities (DfC), National Museums NI has a public duty to meet the highest standards of corporate governance.

Under Article 10(2) of The Museums and Galleries (Northern Ireland) Order 1998, the organisation is required to prepare a statement of accounts for each financial year in the form and on the basis determined by DfC with the approval of the Department of Finance. The financial statements for National Museums NI are required to be audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General for Northern Ireland.

Under Article 11 of The Museums and Galleries (Northern Ireland) Order 1998, the Board is required to prepare an Annual Report for DfC and lay this before the Northern Ireland Assembly.

The Annual Report and Accounts have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in Note 1 to the accounts, and complies with the Charities SORP (FRS 102), certain aspects of HM Treasury Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) in relation to the Annual Report and the disclosure requirements issued by the Department of Finance.

National Museums NI is governed by a Board of up to 15 Members who are appointed by the DfC Minister.

Appointment to the Board is by open competition with Members appointed for a term of up to five years. Members can additionally serve subsequent terms of up to a maximum of eight years subject to the approval of the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland (CPANI).

There was one sub-committee of the Board during the year, the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

Following appointment, all Members attend public accountability training to support the discharge of their responsibilities for corporate governance and accountability.

Board of Trustees

During the year the following individuals served on the Board:

Mr Gordon Milligan (Chairman)
Miss Charlotte Jess (Vice Chair)
Mr William Duddy*
Dr Robert Whan
Mr William McMullan
Mr Keith Charlton
Mr Mark Walker
Mr Ryan Cornett
Dr Sally Montgomery OBE
Ms Therese Rafferty
Ms Fiona Ryan
Mr Shane Quinn**

** Term completed on 30 June 2024*

*** Appointed on 1 July 2024*

Responsibility and delegated authority for the management of National Museums NI rests with the Executive Team, under the leadership of the Chief Executive, who is appointed by the Board of Trustees.

During the year the members of the Executive Team comprised:

- Chief Executive and Accounting Officer: Kathryn Thomson
- Director of Collections: William Blair
- Chief Operating Officer: Colin Catney
- Director of Public Engagement: Aaron Ward

Reference and Administrative Details

Name

The charity is registered under the name National Museums and Galleries of Northern Ireland. The charity has adopted the operating name National Museums NI.

Charity Number

NIC103729

Principal Address

National Museums NI, Cultra, Holywood, Co Down, Northern Ireland, BT18 0EU.

Bankers

Danske Bank Limited
Donegal Square West
Belfast
BT1 6JS

External Auditors

Northern Ireland Audit Office
106 University Street
Belfast
BT7 1EU

Internal Auditors

Ernst & Young LLP
22 Bedford Street
Belfast
BT2 7DT

Solicitors

Cleaver Fulton Rankin
50 Bedford Street
Belfast
BT2 7FW

2.3 Performance Summary

Key Performance Indicators – Overview

The following section provides a headline overview of our Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), as set out in our 2024/25 business plan, and is followed by a narrative round up of achievements in the year under each theme.

Theme	KPI	Target 2024/25	Actual 2024/25	Actual 2023/24
Engagement (Growth) Indicators	First time and lapsed audiences	40% of total visitors	55%	51%
	Diversity measures	*C2DE 26% Disability 10% Minority Ethnic Group 4%	C2DE 28% Disability 5% Minority Ethnic Group 2%	C2DE 29% Disability 6% Minority Ethnic Group 4%
	Total engagements	1,000,000	1,171,027	962,614
	Tourism – out of state visitors	200,000	228,326	195,549
Engagement (Quality) Indicators	Net Promoter Score (+/-) 100	> ALVA** Benchmark (+74)	+78	+78 (+6 above benchmark)
	Composite Visitor Engagement Score (out of 10)	> ALVA Benchmark (9.06)	9.16	9.20 (+0.19 above benchmark)
Engagement (Depth) Indicators	Composite Engagement Score (out of 10)	> ALVA Benchmark = 8.73	8.81	8.82 (+0.2 below benchmark)
Collections	Records to Full Spectrum Standard	27%	24%	24%
	Specimens on collection database	78%	77.5%	77%
Environmental sustainability	Carbon emissions	1,804 tCO ₂ e	1,611 tCO ₂ e	2,010 tCO ₂ e
Volunteering	Volunteer hours	21,000 hours	22,302 hours	21,011 hours
	Volunteer Net Promoter Score (+/-) 100	+72	+75.8	Not measured
Learning	Quality of formal education experience (out of 10)	9.2	9.7	9.62
Income	Non Grant in Aid income	£3.59m	£4.36m	£4.0m
Staff Engagement	Staff Engagement score	76.0%	74.0%	77.1%

* C2DE is a National Readership Survey demographic class grading.

** Association of Leading Visitor Attractions

2.4 Performance Analysis

This annual Performance Report charts quarterly progress against our 2024/25 Business Plan.

The plan was developed by National Museums NI Senior Management, approved by the Board of Trustees in March 2024, and then approved by the Minister for Communities on 10 September 2024.

The KPIs were established in direct support of the stated aims within the Corporate Strategy for 2021–2025. The Senior Management of National Museums NI opted for key measurements that would be instructive of strategic progress, good management, ethical decision making and positive social impact.

We have set out below an evaluation of our performance during 2024/25 under nine main themes:

Engagement (Growth), Engagement (Quality), Engagement (Depth), Our Collections, Environmental Sustainability, Volunteering, Learning, Income and Staff Engagement.

Engagement (Growth)

It was encouraging to see further improvement in first time and long lapsed visitors as a proportion of total visitors.

The Diversity Measures metric is intended to provide an indication of our reach across diverse audiences, however we recognise that terms such as C2DE have become outdated since the outset of the Corporate Strategy 2021-2025. We are engaged with museums across the sector to establish a more meaningful method of measuring diversity, however it remains a challenge for all museums to appropriately measure social impact. The underperformance of the disability metric should be noted, however it is an issue that needs to be tackled through sustained investment in improving accessibility standards as well as targeted community projects. The low level for minority ethnic groups refers to NI audiences only, and there is an increasing percentage of visitors who respond 'prefer not to say' when asked this question.

The Total Engagements target was reduced since 2023/24 to align with the implementation of a new, robust, and pragmatic measurement system that focuses solely on meaningful online interactions, and excludes more transient digital metrics (e.g. reach). The target of 1 million engagements was established following 2023/24 outcomes which marked the first full year of utilising a new digital measurement approach. This approach provided a foundation for establishing more realistic targets for 2024/25. We note that there are numerous other supporting indicators, that highlight the success of our digital engagement efforts, that are not captured in this KPI.

We have generated a total of 1,171,027 engagements this financial year through a wide range of activities. Of these engagements, 702,543 were visitors to our museums, as shown in the table below. This wider view of engagements shows the range of museum services and the impact we create.

Method of Engagement	Total 2024/25
General Admissions to Events & Exhibitions	702,543
Collections Online	394,194
Schools Programme	46,687
Accessing Collections and Expertise	9,933
Volunteering or Participatory Programme	6,369
Attendance at Corporate Functions / Weddings	11,301
Total	1,171,027

Included within these admissions is a strong out-of-state tourism performance with 228,326 visits across our museums during the year (33% of visitors).

Engagement (Quality)

The Net Promoter Score (NPS) is based on the likelihood of our visitors to recommend a visit to others and is widely used across various industries as a measure of customer experience. We benchmark our NPS performance against other museums and attractions throughout the UK using research undertaken by the Association of Leading Visitor Attractions (ALVA).

Our Net Promoter Score this year was 78 which is 4 points ahead of the ALVA benchmark. Our Composite Visitor Engagement Score, which measures various functional elements of our visitor experience (facilities, cleanliness, customer service, etc) was 9.16, which is also above benchmark of 9.06.

Both Net Promoter Score and the Depth of Engagement Score represent strong permanent and temporary exhibition engagement approach with compelling content and interpretation.

Engagement (Depth)

The Composite Engagement Score is designed to measure depth of engagement and includes more emotional-and learning-based outcomes. Our score for the year on this measure was 8.81, which is above the ALVA benchmark, a considerable achievement considering the constrained funding climate.

Collections

The KPI's for Records to Full Spectrum Standard and Specimens on a Collections Database only recorded small incremental increases which keeps them at approximately 24%, and 77.5% respectively.

Whilst progress against our KPI's appears limited, a huge volume of work has underpinned this successful system upgrade. It is important to note that each percentage point in these indicators equates to 14,000 specimens.

Work has focused on preparing selected collections for their move to new and improved storage. This workflow provides improved access, in every respect, to collections not on public display which will be the focus of a new performance measure from next year onwards, during the life of the next Corporate Strategy.

Our priorities in 2024/25 were the NI Prison Service Collection and the Folk Textile collection, which are moving to the Ballycultra Store, and the Glass and Ceramics collection, which are moving to the Ulster Museum.

It is important to highlight the integrated nature of this work, involving teams across Collections Services and Curatorial.

Looking ahead, the appointment of an Entomology Curator will enable a new programme of activity focused on this extensive collection within Natural Sciences.

Environmental Sustainability

The 2024/25 carbon emissions audit was completed in Quarter 3 with a headline result of 1,611 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO_{2e}), surpassing the target set for the year.

A cross departmental Energy Monitoring Group has been working to identify opportunities to drive energy efficiency.

A Solar PV feasibility study has been tendered and is due for evaluation in Quarter 1 of 2025/26. It is expected this study will identify opportunities for investment in this technology which could achieve significant emission reductions and cost savings in future years.

Volunteering

Volunteer involvement remained a vital part of our strategic commitment to create more ways for people to get involved.

We continued to see growth in volunteer engagement across our outdoor sites but one of the highlights of this year was the establishment of volunteering as a regular offer at the Ulster Museum. Partly spurred on by the prototype 'Bout Ye?' project, where volunteers played a key role.

The momentum generated by this initiative has continued, with volunteers actively contributing to follow-up events such as *Keep 'er Lit* and the popular *Late Late Love Lab* as well as continuing to support the visitor experience in our Discovery Centres and gathering vital visitor feedback.

In a partnership with Queen's University Belfast, an archaeological dig at the Ulster American Folk Park engaged nearly 60 volunteers. It was especially encouraging to see many of these individuals sign up to our volunteer platform to stay informed about future opportunities.

As part of a wider review of how we deliver volunteer induction and training, we introduced our first Start of Season training session in January. Hosted at Ulster Museum, this event provided a comprehensive overview of key topics including safeguarding, health and safety, and our organisational vision, mission and values.

We are proud to report that we exceeded our key performance indicator (KPI) for volunteer hours, with over 22,000 hours contributed across the organisation. This year, we also introduced a new KPI focused on measuring the quality of the volunteer experience. Our target was to achieve a Net Promoter Score (NPS) of 72 for the statement: "*I would recommend volunteering with National Museums NI to a friend.*" We are delighted to have surpassed this, achieving an NPS score of 75.8 in our Volunteer Pulse Survey.

Additionally, 97.4% of volunteers agreed they were likely to volunteer with us again, with 74.8% strongly agreeing. Evidence of high satisfaction and continued commitment within our volunteer community.

Learning

This has been another successful year for National Museum's NI's education programmes, with the KPI target exceeded and a strong Net Promoter Score of 95%.

Exciting new opportunities we have been working on include Teachers' Professional Learning Thursdays, with the Education Authority. Through this initiative we have engaged directly with 90 teachers and the presentations about our education offer continue to be accessed online.

Our *Museum on the Move* programme continues to be over-subscribed, and we are now actively targeting schools that have been ranked as the most deprived in terms of allocated free school meals, as well as schools from geographical areas that the programme is yet to reach.

Income (Non Grant in Aid)

It was a positive commercial year for National Museums NI Non Grant in Aid, with £4.29m recorded between April 2024 and March 2025, exceeding the 12 month annual target of £3.6m.

Our Non Grant in Aid income is broadly comprised of revenue from (i) visitors and commercial customers (unrestricted income) and (ii) income from grant funded projects (restricted income).

See below reconciliation of the income KPI to the Statement of Financial Activity (SoFA).

Income Source	£m
Total reported income per SoFA	25.53
Less Grant in Aid (Capital & Revenue)	(19.08)
Less Donated Gifts in Kind	<u>(2.16)</u>
Total Non Grant in Aid Income	<u>4.29</u>

(i) Income from Visitors & Commercial Customers (£4.29m actual vs £3.6m target)

This positive performance was achieved across each of the Self-Generated Income streams as per our highlights below.

Admissions, Events and Memberships (£1.45m actual vs £1.42m target)

With visitor numbers reaching 736,534, Admissions income to the three pay-for-entry museums was achieved through our strong programming offer attracting new and repeat customers. This programming included the delivery of Major Events of Summer Programmes, *Independence Weekend*, *Bluegrass Omagh*, *Making Festival*, *Christmas* and *Halloween* activation, creating strong Admissions income with secondary trading spend.

Building in tailored pricing for significant event days further supported the achievement of the admissions growth budget. The installation of a new admissions system, Digitickets, has underpinned all admissions revenue, whilst enabling simpler completion of Gift on Entry for all potential donors. The new ticketing system supports prebooking of all major events and every day admissions, progressing our organisational e-commerce journey. Further benefit from *Lavery on Location* pay-for-entry exhibition at the Ulster Museum was a successful strategy contributing to Admissions revenue. Price increases to general admissions was extremely limited in the context of the cost-of-living crisis our audiences faced during the financial year.

With 1,686 memberships across all our Museums, we know that our visitor motivators of value for money combined with support for our charitable purposes is a strong factor in membership retention. All members were transitioned to the new membership management system within Digitickets.

Retail (£1.0m actual vs £0.87m target)

Retail reached £1.0m turnover for the first time reflecting excellent ranging and strong selling approach by the retail team across all the museums. The retail ranging is carefully aligned to the Commercial Strategy Principles, with increased stock of sustainability products with ethical sourcing and environmental credential ranges, whilst focused on alignment with our national collections.

The significant exhibitions of Caravaggio and Lavery on Location contributed to successful retail ranging. Significant response to our retail range from visitors during event day programming continues to drive excellent conversion rates in retail.

Space Hire (£0.26m actual vs £0.2m target)

Space hire performed in excess of budget with the continuation of large events hire such as *Cultra Hill Climb* and additional space hire requirements around major programming events including *Caravaggio*. Significant hire events with major Corporates saw 500 plus person events taking place in the grounds of Cultra Manor and the hosting of the celebration of the Grand Central Station opening at the Ulster Transport Museum.

The Ulster Museum has experienced an upsurge in viewings and bookings, in particular by the wedding sector. With seasonal rates introduced for lower occupancy months, this has supported the over delivery on budget.

Catering (£0.17m actual vs £0.13m target)

With strong visitor numbers, catering has performed well in response. With cost-of-living crisis for our audiences, we have been cautious in achieving a balanced pricing approach for all visitors to our catering offer. Innovation in the programming such as *Keep 'Er Lit* at the Ulster Museum saw contemporary street food and cocktail bars creating strong visitor demand, impacting strongly on our catering return. With stability in the contract with our two contract caterers, we have been able to ensure over delivery on target. The completion of the Ulster Museum with a full kitchen refurbishment has been a strong investment in the future of the catering infrastructure.

Cash Donations & Gift Aid (£0.12m actual vs £0.08m target)

With a fresh focus on the financial opportunity from Donations and Gift Aid on Entry, an increased number of contactless donation units were placed in high footfall areas with further expansion plans. The contactless systems supports the increased move away from the use of cash by the public. Training of the teams on how to optimise Gift Aid on Entry and Donations has been complemented with the introduction of the new Ticketing System which has enabled a seamless donation and Gift Aid on Entry gifting online.

Picture Library (£0.04m actual vs £0.03m Target)

Photographic print sales from our Picture Library totalled £35k for the year, exceeding our annual target of £30k.

(ii) 3rd Party Revenue Grant Projects (£1.01m Actual vs Target £0.8m)

Our revenue grant income was above target this year primarily due to the expansion of work carried out progressing our sole recurring grant funded programme CeDAR (Centre for Environmental Data and Recording), working in partnership with the Northern Ireland Environment Agency and the local recording community.

Staff Engagement

- As part of our commitment to staff engagement and organisational development, we conducted our 'Pulse Survey' in October. Overall our composite agreement score decreased from 77.1% to 74%.
- Whilst it was disappointing to see it reduce, we have had consistent positive growth over the previous four pulse surveys and are still well ahead of our opening position of 67.3%.
- Senior Management has met to establish an action plan for the year ahead which will focus on the following areas:
 - Internal communication and collaboration
 - Visibility and connection of Management and Senior Management
 - Staff wellbeing
 - Facilities, maintenance and resources

2.5 Annual Review

Welcome to our Annual Review for the financial year 2024/25.

This publication reflects the breadth and impact of the work delivered by National Museums NI over the past year. As the organisation responsible for four distinct museums – the Ulster Museum, Ulster Folk Museum, Ulster Transport Museum and Ulster American Folk Park – we are proud to care for the National Collection: over 1.4 million objects spanning the millennia and representing stories from Northern Ireland and around the world.

Our vision is to celebrate our shared heritage by telling the stories of our past, challenging the present and shaping the future. Guided by our founding legislation, we are committed to caring for, interpreting and making accessible Northern Ireland's rich heritage – across art, history, natural science, culture and migration. We ensure public access through dynamic exhibitions and programming; enabling opportunities for learning, research and engagement.

This year marks the conclusion of our Corporate Strategy 2021–25, which focused on four key priorities:

- Championing inclusion, diversity, and accessibility;
- Creating more ways to get involved;
- Extending the impact of our collections; and
- Building the museum infrastructure of the future.

Throughout this review, we reflect on how these priorities have guided our work and highlight the achievements that have defined the year ending 31 March 2025.

Developing the Collections

Developing and caring for the national collection remains a core responsibility for National Museums NI. In 2024/25, our work in this area continued to be shaped by our statutory obligations, and the requirements for maintaining Museum Accreditation. At the heart of our approach is a commitment to ensuring that the collection remains relevant, representative and accessible to the public - now and for future generations.

Despite the ongoing challenge of limited acquisition budgets, we successfully pursued opportunities through external funding, strategic partnerships, cultural tax schemes and the generosity of donors and bequests. These resources enabled us to acquire works of exceptional significance, support our vibrant and dynamic exhibition programme, and grow our collections in ways that reflect both the richness of our heritage and environment, and the evolving stories of our society. For many contemporary artists, the climate emergency is a theme reflected in their work. During the year we acquired Interval V by Irish artist Ailbhe Ní Bhriain. It was put on display, along with works from the Ulster Museum's Post-war and Contemporary Art Collection, in The Enemy is Time exhibition which explores the threats posed by the global climate emergency.

We were honoured to receive a landmark donation of early needlework from renowned antiques dealer, textiles expert and author Lanto Synge, through the UK Government's Cultural Gifts Scheme. Comprising around 250 artworks, primarily English textiles from the 16th to 19th centuries, this exceptional gift significantly enhances our national collection. It will be housed at the Ulster Museum, with highlights featured in the upcoming Ashes to Fashion exhibition in 2026. Such donations are vital in shaping and strengthening our cultural heritage.

We are most grateful to these funders and donors for their vital support: Department for Communities, Art Fund, Acceptance in Lieu and Cultural Gifts schemes, Esme Mitchell Trust, Friends of the Ulster Museum and Kennedy Ting.

In parallel, we continued our careful stewardship of the existing collection, undertaking responsible disposals where appropriate, and working with communities and stakeholders to ensure transparency, accountability and alignment with national and local priorities.

With Board approval, following productive consultation and community engagement throughout the process, we advanced plans for the deconstruction of the Mary Joseph, a vessel with no viable preservation route. During the year, we supported the potential return of the historic vessel The Result to Carrickfergus through a new partnership with Result Carrickfergus Ltd. This initiative is gathering momentum with backing from local councils and community stakeholders.

Belfast Trolleybus 98, which remained in service until 1963, was previously donated to us by the Belfast Corporation Transport Committee. Due to its poor condition, the trolleybus required significant and costly conservation work. Given that we already have a Belfast trolleybus on display at the Ulster Transport Museum, we could not justify the expense. Wherever possible, museums aim to rehome objects through transfer to other organisations. We were therefore pleased to facilitate the transfer of the vehicle to the National Trolleybus Association, who will oversee its restoration with the goal of eventually making it accessible to the public once more.

This year's acquisitions and disposals demonstrate not only the resilience of our collections' strategy, but also its capacity to drive public engagement, scholarship and cultural leadership.

1. Ailbhe Ní Bhriain (born 1978) Interval V, 2023 Jacquard tapestry, cotton, wool, silk, Lurex, Edition 1 of 3 plus 2 AP. Ailbhe Ní Bhriain (b. 1978) is one of the most outstanding Irish artists of her generation. Interval V (2023) is one of three large-scale Jacquard tapestries which formed part of the artist's recent exhibition Interval Two (Dream Pool), Kerlin Gallery, Dublin, 2023/24. The title refers to the 'Dream Pool Essays', 1088, by Chinese writer and polymath Shen Kuo (1031-95), now considered to be the first printed reference to climate change. In Interval V, Ní Bhriain links prophetic fears contained in Shen Kuo's writings to contemporary crises of climate emergency and the displacement of peoples. The tapestry is currently on display in the exhibition The Enemy is Time.
2. William Orr Chair. This chair has come from the ancestral home of William Orr. Orr was wrongly accused, arrested in 1796, held in prison for a year and executed in 1797. A passionate member of the United Irishmen, he truly believed all Irishmen should be equal. He was a popular man and it was widely known he was falsely accused; he became a scapegoat for the government. Despite a 'selected' jury and guilty verdict, they requested mercy for Orr. On the day of the execution, many shops and businesses in Carrickfergus closed up in protest and extra militia were deployed, expecting civil unrest.
3. Ichneumon primatorius, wasp specimen. This is the first record in Ireland of Ichneumon primatorius, a parasitoid wasp which feeds on the larvae of wood wasps. There are only ten records known in the UK. Identification was confirmed by the British Ichneumonoidea group. It is important that National Museums NI collections reflect these first-recorded specimens, as voucher material provides physical evidence supporting a new record, allowing future comparisons with other material. Not only do specimen collections records support population studies such as changes in distribution over time, but also the long-term nature of voucher specimens can lead to unexpected discoveries, such as species becoming smaller over time, or having particular nuances from different regions.

4. Signage from Great Victoria Street Station. Before its closure in 2024, National Museums NI collected signage from Belfast's Great Victoria Street Station for the Ulster Transport Museum collections. There has been a consistent approach from the Museum capturing objects and images of Belfast stations before they close. As this is the most recent station closure, it is important to collect these contemporary objects and preserve some of those signs that have become a familiar everyday sight for passengers on both the buses and trains coming into Belfast.
5. Hyejeong Ko, *Song of Pebbles*, 2024. Hyejeong Ko is an accomplished metal sculptor from South Korea. To craft her complex pieces, her artistic process involves meticulous observation of nature, which she then recreates in metal using techniques like micro-welding. Hyejeong handcrafts intricate metalwork sculptures that capture botanical forms and she adopts an eco-conscious approach which shapes her creative process. *Song of Pebbles* is currently on display in *Art of the Possible: Ten Years of Collecting International Applied Art* at the Ulster Museum.
6. Jacquard coverlet. This bedcover was made by Peter Lorenz in 1840. Peter was born in France. He emigrated to the United States of America and lived in Germantown, Ohio. He worked as a jacquard weaver, making decorative woven bedcovers. Jacquard bedcovers like these were popular in the United States of America from the 1830s to the 1850s. This was collected for the Ulster American Folk Park due to its strong emigrant story. Ulster emigrants also brought weaving skills, and lived amongst other migrant communities.
7. Sir William Orpen, R.A., R.H.A. (1878-1931) *German Bomb-fire at Picardy*. Orpen has long represented one of the most serious gaps in the Ulster Museum collection. Born in 1878, he was the most outstanding and talented Irish artist of his generation. Based in London, he kept close links with Ireland, and returned each year to paint and to teach at the Metropolitan School in Dublin. At the initiation of the War Artist's Scheme, Orpen was, in April 1917, one of the first artists to arrive at the Western Front. On reaching the banks of the Somme, he described 'nothing but mud, water, crosses and broken tanks: miles and miles of it'. Orpen's work has come to define and challenge the role of the war artist. This painting was acquired through the Acceptance in Lieu Scheme.
8. Anti-racism placards. Between 30 July and 10 August 2024, an estimated 29 anti-immigration demonstrations and riots took place across 27 towns and cities in the UK. In Northern Ireland, the first organised demonstration was held at Belfast City Hall on 3 August, which was also attended by counter protesters. Disorder occurred primarily in the south of the city for the next week. These placards were collected from participants in rallies organised by United Against Racism, and demonstrate their strong feeling of support for migrant communities.
9. Collection of photographs by Evelyn Hofer. *The Eye of the Storm*, 1974, © Estate of Evelyn Hofer, Courtesy Galerie, Duisburg, Germany. Evelyn Hofer is one of few women to have focused on the conflict in Northern Ireland. Unlike almost all her fellow photographers, Hofer focuses on the people and not on the signs of violence between the parties to the conflict. The majority of the series consists of portraits of the local community. Hofer photographs people in their everyday surroundings and in public places such as the market square, the pub or the church. She places a special focus on children and families. The surrounding landscape can also be seen - in pictures showing the landscape or the location of the settlement, and as a background in some portraits.

10. National Museums NI received a landmark donation of early needlework from renowned textiles expert and author Lanto Synge. The donation was made possible through the UK Government's Cultural Gifts Scheme. Recognised as one of the most significant private collections of its kind, the gift comprises around 250 artworks, primarily English textiles from the 16th to 19th centuries, and represents a transformational addition to Northern Ireland's cultural heritage.

Collections Services – Stores, Collections Care and Access

National Museums NI remains committed to increasing access and engagement with the national collection. This is achieved through strategic investment in storage infrastructure, enhancements to the Collections Services team, the continual refinement of management processes and the development of digital access initiatives.

Stores and Storage Infrastructure

Over the past year, significant strides were made in upgrading collections storage and equipment. New storage containers were installed for the Folk Collection, the Spirit Collection, as well as a new Natural Sciences laboratory. At the Transport and Industry Museum Store (TIMS), new shelving was introduced to house small objects from the Transport and Industry collections.

The Collections Operations team undertook a major racking upgrade, replacing outdated racking with modern, safer alternatives. This complex task required meticulous planning, including the temporary relocation and reinstatement of collection objects.

Progress also continued on the redevelopment of the Ulster Museum Collections Store, supported by enabling works such as the completion of a new floor and ongoing installation of ducting. Within the Ulster Museum, the Picture Store was successfully redeveloped and the collection was reinstalled in a more stable and controlled environment.

Led by collection-specific project teams, preparations for the relocation of collections to the Ulster Museum Collections Store and Ballycultra Store at the Ulster Folk Museum have continued. These moves - set to begin in the 2025/26 financial year - will be transformative, vastly improving access for research, exhibitions and public programming, and opening up the collections to a wider array of users.

Collections Management and Access

Now in its second year, the CollectionsIndex+ system continues to evolve, with recent upgrades including new conservation and hazard management modules. The Collections Information team is actively migrating legacy data, such as records from the Natural Science collections, into this system to enhance accessibility and data integrity.

The Collections Online portal now hosts over 47,300 records, serving as an essential resource for both public users and researchers.

Public access events continued to thrive. During the 2024 European Heritage Open Weekend hosted a self-guided open day that drew more than 400 attendees - thanks to the invaluable support of 12 volunteers.

In the Library and Archives, ongoing cataloguing and reorganisation efforts, supported by a committed team of volunteers, have broadened access for students and researchers, with many benefiting from facilitated use of the resources over the past year.

The Collections Services team has also continued to update management processes, introducing new operating standards, including updated hazard management procedures, ensuring continued safe and sustainable access to the collections.

We remain dedicated to advancing our collections care and management practices, while expanding and improving our storage facilities. Through ongoing investment in conservation, management and infrastructure, National Museums NI is safeguarding the national collection for future generations.

New Exhibitions

Drawing Support: Murals, Memory and Identity

Drawing Support: Murals, Memory and Identity exhibition showcased the work of Belfast-born mural photographer, Bill Rolston. It featured almost 50 murals that Rolston has documented over the last 40 years, and highlighted the importance of artistic expression to communities in conflict, whilst also exploring the themes of identity, cultural expression and conflict legacy.

The exhibition explored murals painted by activists from a range of backgrounds including republican and loyalist communities, across Northern Ireland from 1981 to the present day.

National Treasures: Caravaggio in Belfast

Two Caravaggio masterpieces, rarely seen together since the 17th century, were reunited in this extraordinary exhibition at the Ulster Museum which welcomed over 83,000 visitors.

As part of the National Treasures project – part of the National Gallery in London's bicentenary celebrations – the National Gallery lent Caravaggio's *The Supper at Emmaus* (1601). Additionally, the Jesuit Community in Dublin, with the support of the National Gallery of Ireland, generously facilitated the loan of Caravaggio's *The Taking of Christ* (1602).

Not only did this exhibition represent a unique moment in Northern Ireland's cultural history, but it also represented a successful collaboration and partnership between the three national galleries in Belfast, Dublin and London.

Threads of Empowerment: Conflict Textiles' International Journey

This exhibition, which featured in the Belfast International Arts Festival, displayed 29 textiles from the Conflict Textiles collection, and created by individuals and communities across the world who have experienced violence and conflict, human rights violations, poverty, oppression and environmental issues. The artworks highlighted how important a resource artistic expression can be with each piece based on personal and poignant testimonies.

Conflict Textiles is home to a large collection of international textiles, exhibitions and associated events, all of which focus on elements of conflict and human rights abuses. The works included in this exhibition spanned a broad range of locations including Chile, Peru, Argentina, Mexico, Zimbabwe and Germany. Many were arpilleras – appliquéd picture textiles that are hand sewn from scraps of materials onto a hessian backing – a practice which originated in Chile during the Pinochet regime (1973-1990) when women came together to voice their experiences of the repressive dictatorship.

BEUYS 50 Years Later: Action, Society, Performance and Change

On the 18th November 1974, the German artist Joseph Beuys gave a performance lecture, or 'Action', in the Ulster Museum. As was his practice, he illustrated the lecture on blackboards that have been in the museum's collection since that day.

Beuys proposed the idea of art and creativity being at the centre of all aspects of society. Presenting this as his concept of 'social sculpture' and inciting the potential for mass societal change through creative thinking. The lecture became a key moment in the history of Belfast art.

This exhibition gave an opportunity to look at the ideas discussed then and their impact on the creative community of Belfast over the last 50 years.

143rd Royal Ulster Academy Annual Exhibition

The Royal Ulster Academy's annual exhibition is the most eagerly anticipated exhibition in the Northern Irish cultural calendar. The exhibition provides a unique platform for acclaimed artists and emerging talent to showcase their artwork in the prestigious galleries at the Ulster Museum. The full range of visual arts was represented including painting, sculpture, audio visual, ceramics, textiles and mixed media. Alongside artworks by the RUA Academicians, the exhibition included work by 200 artists from all over the world, selected through an open submission.

Wild Ireland: Past, Present and Future

This striking exhibition celebrating Ireland's wildlife - past and present - brings together over 60 original paintings by renowned wildlife artist Julian Friers PPRUA, alongside a fascinating display which includes fossils and zoology specimens from the Natural Sciences collection.

This powerful fusion of art and science immerses visitors in the rich biodiversity of Ireland, from long-extinct 'lost monsters' to the flora and fauna that inhabit our landscapes today. Featuring breath-taking artwork of Irish dinosaurs, woolly mammoths and giant deer, as well as paintings depicting wildlife in iconic local landscapes like Cave Hill, the exhibition explores the evolution of life on the island of Ireland and the urgent need for conservation action to protect it today and for the future.

Alongside the paintings, carefully curated fossils and zoology specimens from Ulster Museum's collections, with supporting loans from the National Museum of Ireland, offer an additional layer of insight into the life forms that once roamed here and the challenges faced by species today. By blending artistic interpretation with scientific research, the exhibition demonstrates how visual storytelling can engage audiences and promote awareness about our natural world.

The Enemy is Time

Drawn from the Ulster Museum's Post-war and Contemporary art collection, The Enemy is Time focuses on the frailty of human existence and the threats posed by the global climate emergency.

During the 1950s and 1960s, artists experimented with new ways of making art in a world profoundly altered by the previously unimaginable losses and devastation of the Second World War. Two of the most important paintings in the Ulster Museum collection; Head II (1949) by Francis Bacon and Golden Age (1958) by Morris Louis respond in different ways to the uncertainties of the new Anthropocene era, an age dominated by the activities of man.

For many contemporary artists, the vulnerability of the natural world and the preciousness of human memory and experience have become dominant themes. Two recent acquisitions *Blue Sky Thinking* (2019) by Patrick Goddard and *Interval V* (2023) by Ailbhe Ni Bhriain, reflect the alarming speed and immensity of loss associated with unchecked climate change.

Ancient Egypt Gallery

Like many museums across the world, in recent years we have been reviewing our Decolonisation and Human Remains policies. The display of human remains in museums is an ethical issue which National Museums NI follows sectoral guidance and direction on. We participate in research and development initiatives and gather feedback and perspectives from a wide range of stakeholders and audiences. We welcome open and respectful dialogue with communities from which the human remains in our collection originated.

National Museums NI is custodian for around 500 objects from ancient Egypt including jewellery and makeup accessories, jars and pots, religious items, pottery, textiles, various tools and weaponry, as well as funerary objects. The collection also includes human remains, including that of Takabuti, the mummified woman from Thebes who is on display in the 'Life and Death in Ancient Egypt' exhibition at Ulster Museum. Visiting Takabuti has been a much-loved part of the Ulster Museum experience since it opened its doors in 1929, originally as the Belfast Museum & Art Gallery. The Ancient Egypt gallery contains material of artistic, historical and cultural importance to understanding and learning about the ancient Egyptian civilization, as well as its connections to Northern Ireland and Egypt today.

This exhibition is part of a wider initiative at National Museums NI called 'Inclusive Global Histories' which is a programme of work centring on decolonisation, inclusion and diversity. Our Inclusive Global Histories approach extends across collections management, development, care, research, interpretation and display.

As a result, we have been rethinking how to ethically curate and care for human remains in our World Cultures collections. This has resulted in a number of changes to the Ancient Egypt gallery this year. We have delivered these changes in partnership with others, with a focus on respect, and with reverence and dignity. We have established an Egypt Consultation group made up of communities and experts from across the UK and Egypt, who have helped us shape the Ancient Egypt gallery that visitors see today. Changes have included new interpretation that explores ideas of dignity and respect, as well as highlighting the absence of the voices of the mummified people in our care. A video has been created to help visitors better understand different perspectives on the ethical treatment of human remains from ancient Egypt. New interactive elements such as a touch and smell station have been added. A new wall has been installed in the gallery to allow visitors the choice of whether they want to view the mummified remains of Takabuti or not. This wall also provides a more private and respectful visiting experience. In addition, we actively encourage visitors to leave their thoughts in a specially created feedback area within the gallery.

Our approach to caring for and interpreting Takabuti and her story will continue to evolve, with the priorities being sensitivity, respect and ethical alignment.

"We're committed to open and respectful conversations with communities and experts from both the UK and Egypt, whose contributions have helped shape the Ancient Egypt gallery as visitors experience it today. We invite everyone to share their thoughts and reflections in the gallery's feedback area. Our care for Takabuti and the way we tell her story will continue to grow and evolve - with sensitivity, respect and strong ethical values at the heart of everything we do."

Hannah Crowdy, Head of Curatorial at National Museums NI

Languages of Ulster

From its foundation over six decades ago, Ulster Folk Museum has been the leading centre of preservation and research into the languages and dialects of Ulster and Ireland - notably, Hiberno English, Irish and Ulster Scots - and their connections in Great Britain, surrounding islands and Europe.

In May we launched an educational trail entitled Rhymin Rab's Ramble. The trail, co-authored by Dr Frank Ferguson, the Director of the Centre for Irish and Scottish Studies at Ulster University, is part of National Museums NI's 'Languages of Ulster' programme designed to deepen public engagement with the rich linguistic and cultural traditions of the region, offering visitors fresh opportunities to explore Ulster's multifaceted language heritage.

Languages of Ulster exemplifies National Museums NI's commitment to support public policy initiatives regarding language, identity and cultural expression by using the collections to foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of both shared heritage and the value of cultural difference. The trail draws heavily on the manuscripts of Ulster-Scot's writer Robert Huddleston (1814–1887), whose writings provided an invaluable resource for the development of this Ulster-Scots experience. It complements Cúl Trá-il, a self-guided Irish language trail named after the Irish place name for Cultra (Baile Chúl Trá), which was successfully introduced at the museum in 2022.

The Robert Huddleston papers form part of the Ulster Language and Dialect Archive, which is housed at National Museums NI Library & Archives, Cultra. This archive contains thousands of manuscript documents relating to native forms of speech in Ulster, including word-lists, maps, and pioneering research notes and correspondence.

Both trails allow visitors to explore the diversity of local languages and dialects as part of the museum experience. They underscore a key message: that language, in all its forms, is a shared cultural resource - one in which everyone, regardless of background or tradition, has a stake.

To coincide with European Languages Day in September, a symposium was held to celebrate the 60-year legacy of the Ulster Language and Dialect Archive. Significantly, Ulster Dialects (1964), the museum's very first publication, served as a foundational charter for its commitment to linguistic research and preservation. Today, these unique language archives continue to serve as a valuable public resource offering insight into the vibrant heritage, complexity and interconnectedness of linguistic diversity in Ulster.

"Ulster Folk Museum, from before its opening in 1964, has been the region's leading centre of preservation and research into the languages and dialects of Ulster including Ulster Scots, Hiberno-English or 'Irish English' and Irish (Gaelic). Our self-guided trails, Rhymin Rab's Ramble and Cúl Trá-il, enrich the museum experience not only by illuminating the linguistic diversity of this place, but by revealing how central language is in exploring heritage, identity and enabling cultural expression."

Donal McAnallen, Library & Archives Manager at National Museums NI

Troubles and Beyond

The history of Northern Ireland from the late 1960s to the present day has been dominated by the civil and political conflict known as 'the Troubles.' The events that took place here after 1968 have impacted not just the people of Northern Ireland, but people across the world. Ulster Museum's Troubles collection covers themes of politics and conflict, and the impact of both on everyday life, people and communities.

During the year we launched a new digital exhibition 'The Troubles and Beyond' which is available on the Ulster Museum's website. It allows people to explore the collections and deeper layers of content associated with this period in our history, offering a comprehensive look at the decades spanning conflict to peace.

Featured in the digital exhibition is Voices of '74, a powerful oral history project surrounding key events such as the Sunningdale Agreement and Ulster Workers Council Strike of 1974, which has formed part of our ongoing 'The Troubles and Beyond' programme. This project was a collaboration between National Museums NI and Nottingham Trent University. The oral histories presented in the online exhibition include varied memories, experiences and perspectives, from a diverse group of over 30 individual contributors who share their reflections on 1974 from the perspective of their lives both then and now.

The Troubles and Beyond online exhibition is enhanced with a digital collection of objects that reflect the polarisation and tensions of the time. These include a Unionist campaign poster proclaiming, 'Dublin is just a Sunningdale away' and a Republican poster stating that 1974 would be the 'Year of Liberty'. The collection also features a British Army communication from that year warning of the danger of booby-trapped cars, as well as a 'Sponger's Badge' which some Unionists wore in response to former Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, referring to them as spongers. The wider impact of the conflict on society is also illustrated through evocative photographs and archive film, drawn from a range of sources.

Through this digital exhibition and the wider 'The Troubles and Beyond' programme we are actively harnessing our collections to encourage discussion and debate, challenge perceptions and stereotypes and build greater empathy and understanding across all communities.

Bout Ye? – Reimagining Engagement at Ulster Museum

"Bout ye?" is a colloquial way to say "how are you?" in this part of the world – and that's exactly what the Ulster Museum wanted to know from visitors this year.

Bout Ye? was a dynamic pilot project aimed at deepening public engagement with Ulster Museum and kick-starting conversations with audiences, stakeholders and partners. The initiative explored how people currently connect with the museum and invited them to imagine new, more inclusive and innovative ways of engaging with it in the future.

Running from July to September, Bout Ye? served as a creative prototype for testing fresh approaches to programming and communication. The project introduced a more playful, approachable tone of voice and focused on both people - through a locally grounded lens - and the museum's collections.

Throughout the project, museum staff and visitors facilitated engagement through a series of interactive activations and a dedicated programme strand. Visitors encountered a range of pop-up experiences that were intentionally disruptive in the best sense – breaking with tradition and encouraging conversation. These interventions brought a lively and unexpected energy to the museum, reinforcing a sense of openness and inclusivity.

Over the six-week period, the museum felt transformed: vibrant, welcoming and responsive. The programming was deliberately diverse, ensuring that everyone had a space to participate and contribute.

A highlight of the programme was the late-night event Keep 'er Lit, which attracted significant interest and participation. Designed as a creative, hands-on gathering, the event provided a platform

to test new forms of engagement while also collecting valuable insights from visitors. Activities ranged from life drawing and VR experiences to Neolithic archaeology in Minecraft and live tattoo artistry - offering an eclectic mix that reflected the playfulness of the Bout Ye? concept.

Collaboration was central to the project. By working closely with community stakeholders and external partners, the museum expanded its outreach and strengthened relationships with a broader audience base. Feedback from staff, volunteers and the public has already begun to shape future programming, encouraging a culture of experimentation and audience-centred design.

Bout Ye? has reaffirmed the museum's commitment to being a space that is not only for everyone but shaped by everyone.

Mini Wonders at Ulster Museum

At National Museums NI, learning is at the heart of everything we do. As a key part of our mission, we are committed to engaging people of all ages through meaningful educational experiences. Our museums are uniquely positioned to spark curiosity, creativity and discovery from the earliest stages of life. Through programmes rooted in our rich collections, we provide children and their families with meaningful opportunities to explore, discover and learn together – helping to remove barriers and open doors to lifelong learning.

Across our museums we have a range of early years' engagement happening. Our Discovery Centres at the Ulster Museum are dedicated creative family learning spaces, where young children are supported by our Discovery team to explore objects and specimens and respond creatively to our collections. We offer a programme of 'Family Focus' sessions for parents and children to learn together. At our outdoor museums, engagement with under 5s focuses on sensory storytelling and imaginary play – such as Fireside Folktales at Ulster Folk Museum, and Spinning Yarns and Tall Tales as well as the very popular Pop to the Shops workshop at Ulster American Folk Park.

As a leader in early-years engagement in the cultural sector, Ulster Museum is one of eight UK museums and galleries taking part in two-year research and development programme for families with young children, led by Art Fund supported through a legacy grant from the Foyle Foundation, and Nesta, the UK's innovation agency for social good. Mini Wonders – Early Years Innovation in Museums, will encourage a wider range of families to use and visit museums more often and support early child development by enhancing parent-child interactions and support parents with their children's social-emotional development.

In 2024/25 the Education team delivered three 8-week programmes with a series of Mini Wonders workshops at the Ulster Museum, working with families from the Belfast regional area.

Using the experience and learnings the Education team gains from this project, the aim is to maximise opportunities for early years to engage with the collections at the Ulster Museum through the development of programming in the Discovery Centres and interventions throughout the museum.

"Our museums and galleries are magical places, especially for young children, and they offer unique opportunities for joy, learning and creativity – it is essential that all children have these opportunities and get to benefit from the enriching experiences cultural institutions offer. This programme will combine expertise in child development, learning and creativity, drawing on the unique potential of museum collections and spaces, to support parents and their young children to learn, develop and thrive."

Ravi Gurumurthy, Chief Executive of Nesta

Building Museums of the Future: 5-Year View

Over the past five years, National Museums NI has pursued an organisation-wide ambition: to build museums of the future – museums that are more open, relevant and resilient.

Each of our museums has made real, measurable progress – not only through capital and curatorial development, but in how they engage with audiences and respond to changing needs and opportunities. With the foundations of change now firmly in place, each museum stands at the threshold of its next phase – more focused, more confident, and ready to grow as part of the next Corporate Strategy 2025–2030.

Ulster American Folk Park

The Ulster American Folk Park has been undertaking a purposeful change journey – one that began with a mission to Develop the Narrative and has since evolved into a site-wide reimagining of purpose and potential.

At the heart of this transformation has been a commitment to expand and deepen the stories the museum tells. Through extensive curatorial research, collecting and interpretation, the museum has embraced broader and more inclusive narratives of migration – including voices historically absent from its exhibitions. These include Indigenous peoples, enslaved individuals, women, post-Famine migrants and those who moved from urban settings.

The Bad Bridget exhibition, launched in 2022, was a landmark outcome of this work. Drawing on new academic research and delivered in partnership, it gave visibility to the experiences of Irish women who faced hardship and criminalisation abroad. The exhibition resonated strongly with audiences and set a new creative benchmark for storytelling at the museum.

This renewed clarity of purpose is now being matched by major capital investment. With over £20 million secured through the Mid-South West Region Growth Deal, the Folk Park is poised to enter a transformational phase. The Journey Ahead will establish the museum as a leading heritage and tourism destination – a centre for learning, cultural exchange and social connection.

The project will deliver new infrastructure, immersive interpretation and significant community benefit – creating jobs, supporting wellbeing, and driving inclusive economic growth.

Announced in March 2025 at the Smithsonian in Washington, the Department for Communities' commitment of £750,000 will unlock the Growth Deal funding and move the project into its delivery phase. With 2026 marking both the museum's 50th anniversary and the 250th anniversary of the US Declaration of Independence, the next chapter in the Folk Park's journey is rich with opportunity.

Ulster Folk Museum

The Ulster Folk Museum has undergone a thoughtful and ambitious transformation through 'Reawakening the Ulster Folk Museum' – a strategic initiative launched in 2021 to reimagine its role and relevance in the 21st century.

This programme has positioned the museum at the intersection of heritage, environment and community – redefining it as a dynamic cultural and ecological resource. Central to this has been a drive to open up the museum's landscape, buildings and stories to a wider range of audiences – not simply as visitors, but as participants, makers, volunteers and co-creators.

Over the past five years, the museum has developed a compelling and fully costed investment plan, supported by a development grant from The National Lottery Heritage Fund. This includes new infrastructure to improve access, orientation and capacity, and to enable new forms of engagement – from flexible learning spaces to increased access to significant collections currently held in storage.

Just as importantly, this physical renewal has been matched by cultural and creative reactivation. A fresh engagement model – spanning maker workshops, biodiversity walks, Green Gyms and language trails – has invited visitors to connect with heritage in meaningful and contemporary ways. Audiences have responded with enthusiasm, embracing the opportunity to engage through hands-on activity, creativity and community participation.

Now standing with renewed momentum and a powerful case for long-term investment, the Ulster Folk Museum is ready for its next stage of development – as a place of shared memory, environmental stewardship and collective cultural energy.

Ulster Museum

Ulster Museum has had a strong five years – delivering headline exhibitions and high visitor numbers while also redefining its role as a civic space for dialogue, connection and change.

It has become a more open and inclusive institution, committed to exploring contested histories, amplifying underrepresented voices and building deeper trust with its audiences.

The Troubles and Beyond has been a central pillar of this evolution – establishing a permanent space for shared exploration of our most complex and sensitive history, and a platform for ongoing programming and public engagement. Over the past five years, the museum has continued to refine its approach to curating conflict – foregrounding participation, critical thinking and emotional nuance.

In parallel, Inclusive Global Histories has taken strong root – opening vital conversations around provenance, representation and building greater learnings from the World Cultures collection.

Through events, co-creation, collection development and community-led activity, the project is nurturing empathy, intercultural understanding and mutual respect.

This year, the Bout Ye? project explored new ways of listening and responding to audiences – sparking a six-week period of experimentation, creativity and conversation. Events such as Keep 'er Lit brought together VR, archaeology, tattoo artistry and art-making – creating an open, surprising and energetic space for engagement.

More than a programme, Bout Ye? served as a prototype for the future – testing new approaches to co-creation, playfulness and inclusive design. Its insights will be invaluable as Ulster Museum continues to evolve – responsive to audience needs, ambitious in outlook and rooted in shared purpose.

Ulster Transport Museum

The Ulster Transport Museum has undergone a period of significant renewal – driven by a commitment to STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts & Mathematics) education, interactivity and relevance.

A key milestone was the completion of the Transport & Industry Museum Store (TIMS) – a purpose-built facility that has transformed collections care and significantly enhanced public access. More than a behind-the-scenes space, TIMS is a public-facing asset that allows visitors to experience the scale and richness of the transport collection in new ways.

In 2021, the museum launched Museum of Innovation – a dynamic new gallery celebrating Northern Ireland’s pioneering inventors and engineers. With state-of-the-art interpretation and a strong focus on interactive learning, the gallery highlights local ingenuity in a global context – from DeLorean’s iconic car to Professor Frank Pantridge’s world-changing defibrillator to the addition of the revolutionary Ferguson Black tractor this year.

This reflects a broader ambition to position the museum as a hub for STEAM-based learning and skills development – linking historic achievement to future potential. The gallery has been especially effective in engaging schools, educators and families, offering a compelling way into science, technology and engineering through human stories.

Beyond the gallery walls, the museum has invested in its outdoor setting. The arrival of Our Place in Space – a sculpture trail developed with Oliver Jeffers and Nerve Centre – brought a fresh dimension to the site. Blending art, science and storytelling, it captivated audiences. Over four weeks, nearly 20,000 people journeyed through the solar system on the museum grounds – supported by new access routes, signage and interpretation.

This success has laid the groundwork for further development of the Cultra estate – unlocking the museum’s landscape potential and enhancing the full visitor experience. The Ulster Transport Museum is now a more imaginative, outward-facing institution – well placed to grow and evolve in the years ahead.

Thank You

As we reflect on the achievements and milestones of the past year, we extend our sincere gratitude to all those who make our work possible.

We sincerely thank all our funding partners, with particular appreciation for our principal supporter, the Department for Communities. We are deeply grateful to our stakeholders, partners, board members, dedicated staff, members and volunteers.

And to our visitors – thank you for your curiosity, enthusiasm and for making our museums vibrant, inclusive spaces for all.

2.6 Financial Review

Financial Objective

National Museums NI's financial objective is to achieve a sustainable financial position at year end.

Going Concern

The Board is satisfied that the organisation is a going concern on the basis that it has a reasonable expectation that it will continue in operation for the foreseeable future. The financial statements are therefore prepared on a going concern basis.

Financial Results

In the financial year to 31 March 2025, National Museums NI reported net expenditure of £2.1m (2023/24: reported net expenditure £1.1m).

The total income for the year was £25.5m, an increase of £1.5m from 2023/24 (£24.0m). This includes £1.0m of capital funding.

Total expenditure was £27.6m compared to £25.1m in the prior year.

Depreciation and amortisation of £4.6m was charged in the 2024/25 year (2023/24: £4.3m), an increase resulting from an increased asset base.

The organisation retains significant reliance on Grant in Aid for its principal source of funding, largely from recurrent grants. In 2024/25, the Department for Communities provided 75% of the total income through allocated recurrent and capital grants (2023/24: 77%).

Reserves

National Museums NI has accumulated reserves of £104.4m (2023/24: £104.9m). The policy on reserves is included in Note 1, Accounting Policies, to the accounts. Restricted reserves total £25.4m (2023/24: £24.0m) and unrestricted reserves total £27.5m (2023/24: £30.8m). Revaluation reserves totalling £51.5m (2023/24: £50.1m) have accumulated through revaluations on land and buildings.

Within unrestricted reserves, National Museums NI has two designated funds, the Board reserve and the Board Capital reserve with funds totalling £1.7m at 31 March 2025 (2023/24: £1.0m). The funds have been designated for purposes that are for the public benefit and related to either the advancement of education, the advancement of the arts, culture, heritage or science or a combination of both. The reserves total at 31 March 2025 after taking out designated and restricted reserves was £77.3m (2023/24: £79.9m). The organisation had cash balances totalling £2.2m at the year end (2023/24: £3.0m).

Liquidity & Credit Risk

In 2024/25, £19.1m (75%) of National Museums NI gross income derived from funding received from the Department for Communities (2023/24: 77%).

The remaining non-Departmental operating expenditure was financed from self-generated income, which tends to be more seasonal in nature compared to Grant in Aid. National Museums NI is therefore exposed to some liquidity risk.

National Museums NI has credit policies and procedures in place and currently does not extend material credit facilities. National Museums NI is not therefore exposed to any material credit risk.

Payment Performance

The Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998, which came into force on 1 November 1998, requires organisations, in the absence of agreement to the contrary, to make payments to suppliers within 30 days of either the provision of goods and services or the date on which the invoice was received. The target set by the Treasury for payment to suppliers within 30 days is 95%.

During the accounting period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, National Museums NI paid 95% of its invoices within 30 days (2023/24: 96%). The organisation incurred no interest charges in respect of late payment for this period.

The Northern Ireland Executive is committed to paying suppliers as quickly as possible, within 10 working days. During the accounting period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, National Museums NI paid 75% of its invoices within 10 days (77% in 2023/24).

The decline in prompt payment performance is on account of the revision and enhancement of procedures following the implementation of a new Finance System, with Accounts Payable adopting a stricter approach to documentation and billing references, to ensure best practice is embedded from the outset, and in support of longer-term efficiency for the Accounts Payable function.

Land and Buildings

Land and buildings were subject to a full valuation by Land and Property Services (LPS) on 31 March 2025.

National Museums NI's estate as at 31 March 2025 consists of land and buildings valued at £74.7m (2023/24: £75.5m).

A cleared site of approximately 0.25 acres located at Landseer Street, Belfast was sold in July 2024 for £550,000, following an open market process which commenced in September 2023.

Financial

Net assets at 31 March 2025 were £104.4m (2023/24: £104.9m).

2.7 Plans for Future Periods

The Corporate Strategy (2025-30) was developed during 2024/25 and was launched in April 2025.

It sets out a desire to reframe how we want people to think about museums and also lays down a new vision for museums in which they are dynamic institutions in the service of society.

The strategy is focused on four key impact areas, that directly support the missions laid out within the Northern Ireland Executive's Programme for Government (2024-2027). These four impact areas are as follows:

1. Identity: Championing diversity & respect
2. Peacebuilding: Facilitating understanding & reconciliation
3. Environment: Addressing the climate emergency
4. Innovation: Supporting sustainable economic growth

In delivering actions against these priorities, our museums will be a dynamic forum for open-minded and innovative discussion, a confident voice for equality, reconciliation and sustainability, and a powerful catalyst for positive change in society.

Our new Corporate Strategy officially received Ministerial support and approval on 15 April 2025.



G Milligan
Chairman of the Board of Trustees
Date: 16 September 2025



K Thomson
Chief Executive
Date: 16 September 2025

3 ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

The purpose of the accountability section of the annual report is to meet key accountability requirements to the Assembly. The requirements of the Accountability Report are based on the matters required to be dealt with in a Directors' Report, as set out in Chapter 5 of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 and Schedule 7 of SI 2008 No 410 and in a Remuneration Report, as set out in Chapter 6 of the Companies Act 2006 and SI 2013 No. 1981. The requirements of the Companies Act are adapted for the public sector.

3.1 Governance Statement for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

Governance Framework

National Museums NI is a Non-Departmental Public Body established under the Museums and Galleries (NI) Order 1998 and sponsored by the Department for Communities (DfC).

National Museums NI is governed by a Board of up to 15 Members and sub-committees that report to the Board. Members are appointed by the Minister. The Board has ultimate responsibility for directing the affairs of National Museums NI and for fulfilling the functions set out in the Museums and Galleries (NI) Order 1998.

The Accounting Officer is designated by DfC's Accounting Officer and has responsibility for the day-to-day management of National Museums NI and is supported and challenged by the Board.

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a satisfactory level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives; it can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an on-going process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of National Museums NI's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and their impact should they be realised and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically. The system of internal control has been in place in National Museums NI for the year ended 31 March 2025 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and accounts and accords with Department of Finance (DoF) guidance.

The governance framework also includes a number of additional elements that contribute to the effective governance of the organisation. These comprise:

- Board Standing Orders;
- Board Operating Framework;
- Terms of Reference for Committees;
- Partnership Agreement between DfC and National Museums NI;
- The Corporate Plan 2021-25 and Business Plan 2024/25;
- The Corporate Plan 2025-30 and Business Plan 2025/26;
- The Performance Excellence Framework;
- The Risk Management Framework;
- Raising Concerns (Whistleblowing) Policy; and
- Anti-Fraud Policy and Fraud Response Plan.

Compliance with Corporate Governance Code

National Museums NI, in so far as it is relevant for a Non-Departmental Public Body, complies with the Corporate Governance Code.

Process for Identifying and Managing Conflicts of Interests

National Museums NI has a 'Managing Conflicts of Interest and Representation on Outside Bodies Policy'. The purpose of the policy document is to set out the principles for minimising and managing potential conflicts of interest and, in so doing, provide protection to National Museums NI and its staff from reputational damage and other liabilities. Board Members and employees of National Museums NI are required to disclose areas of actual, potential or perceived conflict with the interests of National Museums NI. There are codes of conduct for both employees and Board Members which require adherence to the Seven Principles of Public Life as defined by the Committee of Standards in Public Life.

A Register of Interests is maintained for Board members and the Executive Team and is available for inspection at the principal address and on the National Museums NI website nationalmuseumsni.org. Appropriate action is taken in line with the policy where any conflicts or perceived conflict arise.

Related party transactions are disclosed in note 22 of the financial accounts.

Review of Effectiveness

Accounting Officer

As Accounting Officer, I have responsibility for maintaining a sound system of internal governance that supports the achievement of the aims and objectives of the National Museums NI. I also have responsibility for the propriety and regularity of the public finances allocated to National Museums NI and for safeguarding public funds and assets, in accordance with the responsibilities assigned. As Accounting Officer, I have responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness of the system of internal control. My review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control is informed by the work of the Internal Auditors; the managers within National Museums NI who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework; and, comments made by the External Auditors in their management letter and other reports. I have been advised on the implications of the result of my review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control by the Board and the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, and plan to address weaknesses and ensure continuous improvement of the system is in place.

In my role as Accounting Officer, I function with the support of the Board of the National Museums NI ("the Board"). This includes highlighting to the Board specific business risks and, where appropriate, the measures that could be employed to manage these risks.

At meetings of the Board the following standing agenda items are addressed (either directly or through reporting from one of the sub-committees):

- Minutes of Previous Meeting;
- Strategic Priorities;
- Chief Executive Update;
- Progress Against Budget;
- Progress against business and corporate plan and risks in achieving stated objectives; and
- Risk Management.

The Board operates as a collegiate forum under the leadership of the Chair. It ensures that the appropriate strategic planning processes are in place and that there is effective operational management of their implementation. Day-to-day operational matters are my responsibility and that of senior colleagues. Each Board Member participates in the high-level corporate decision-making process as a member of the Board; contributes to the operation of corporate governance arrangements within the organisation; and, supports me in my roles of Chief Executive and Accounting Officer.

As Chief Executive, I am responsible for agreeing the agenda for Board meetings with the Chair and ensuring the Chair and Board Members are provided with timely information to support full discussion and decision-making at each meeting. The Board receives written reports on key strategic areas and on the status of delivery against Business Plan objectives. The quality and timeliness of the information and reports has been acceptable to the Board.

I meet formally with our Sponsor Branch in the Department for Communities quarterly. At these meetings National Museums NI is assessed against its delivery of the Ministerial and Departmental priorities as agreed in the Corporate Strategy and Museums Policy as well as the review of the management of risk within National Museums NI.

The Board

The Board takes an objective long-term view of the business of the organisation, leading its strategic planning process and supporting and challenging the Chief Executive as Accounting Officer in setting and meeting its corporate aims and objectives.

The key aspects of the Board's role include:

- Setting the strategic direction for the organisation, including its vision, values and strategic objectives;
- Overseeing the implementation of its Corporate and Business Plans, monitoring performance against objectives and supervising its budget;
- Leading and overseeing the process of change and encouraging innovation, to enhance the organisation's capability to deliver;
- Overseeing the strategic management of staff, finance, information and physical resources, including setting training and health and safety priorities; and
- Establishing and overseeing the implementation of the corporate governance arrangements including risk management.

The Board has delegated to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee responsibility for an assessment of the effectiveness of the system of internal control.

As part of their induction, all Board Members attend training in respect of their responsibilities for corporate governance and accountability of the organisation.

In order to manage any conflicts or potential conflicts of interest the Chairman asks those present at the start of each meeting if they are conflicted with any of the agenda items.

For further information on any actual or potential conflicts arising at National Museums NI board meetings, minutes are available for review on the National Museums NI website nationalmuseumsni.org.

Board Membership and Attendance

During 2024/25 the following served as Board Members:

	Attendance at Board meetings	Maximum Possible in Year	Percentage Attendance
Mr Gordon Milligan (Chairman)	8	8	100%
Miss Charlotte Jess (Vice Chair)	7	8	88%
Mr William Duddy*	2	2	100%
Dr Robert Whan	7	8	88%
Mr William McMullan	8	8	100%
Mr Keith Charlton	8	8	100%
Mr Mark Walker	8	8	100%
Mr Ryan Cornett	6	8	75%
Dr Sally Montgomery OBE	7	8	88%
Ms Therese Rafferty	7	8	88%
Ms Fiona Ryan	5	8	63%
Mr Peter Osborne	7	8	88%
Mr Shane Quinn**	6	6	100%

* Term completed on 30 June 2024

** Appointed on 1 July 2024

The Board receives reports covering key performance indicators, business plan performance, financial performance, capital programme activity, loans (to and from the organisation) for agreement and minutes from each of the sub-committees. The Board has assessed its effectiveness and has identified areas where it can improve. These areas include induction for new Board Members, committee membership, advocacy and conduct at meetings.

Appointments to the Board are for a period of up to five years.

Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) met three times during the year to review reports on risk management, the control environment, matters arising from internal and external audits, progress on the implementation of audit recommendations, and to review and endorse the Annual Report and Accounts to the Board to approve.

The Committee discharged its oversight responsibilities in accordance with the Terms of Reference and it has the requisite skills (including governance, financial reporting, risk management, auditing, strategic planning and understanding the core functions of the organisation) to discharge its responsibilities effectively.

During the year the following Members attended meetings of the ARAC as follows:

	Attendance at ARAC meetings	Maximum Possible in Year	Percentage Attendance
Mr Mark Walker*	5	5	100%
Mr William McMullan**	5	5	100%
Mr William Duddy***	1	1	100%
Mr Keith Charlton	4	5	80%
Mr Ryan Cornett	4	5	80%
Dr Sally Montgomery	4	5	80%
Mr Shane Quinn****	1	2	50%

* Appointed Chair on 5 November 2024

** Resigned as Chair October 2024

***Term completed on 30 June 2024

**** Appointed to ARAC on 5 November 2024

In addition to its members, the following normally attend the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee:

- The Accounting Officer
- The Chief Operating Officer
- The Director of Collections
- The Head of Finance & Governance
- Representative(s) from the NI Audit Office
- Representative from the Department for Communities
- Internal Audit

Business Planning and Risk Management

Business Plan

The 2024/25 Business Plan was approved by Trustees at the March 2024 Board meeting.

Risk Management

The Risk Management Framework sets out the process whereby the National Museums NI methodically identifies, assesses and responds to the risks attached to its activities. It assigns responsibility and accountability for risk management; defines the processes for risk review and reporting; describes a format for the organisation's corporate risk register; and explains the organisation's approach to training in risk management.

Each risk is allocated a risk rating based on an evaluation of its impact and likelihood in two stages:

1. Assessment of inherent risk before any controls are identified.
2. Assessment of residual risk taking account of current risk response and controls and the required action plan.

Residual risk ratings are compared to the risk appetite and if the controls are judged to be inadequate to manage risk within the risk appetite, then further action is identified to strengthen these controls.

Any strategic and/or key risks are escalated and included within the Corporate Risk Register. The Corporate Risk Register identifies risks and agreed actions and allocates responsibility for those to a risk owner. The Register is reviewed regularly by the Executive and Senior Management Team and quarterly by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and reported to the Board at each meeting.

In addition to the Corporate Risk Register, Internal Project Boards have developed project risk registers with project Senior Responsible Owners responsible for risk management. The Senior Management Team are fully involved in the continual review and management of risks and are trained and equipped to manage risk in a way appropriate to their authority and duties. The Internal Auditors provide advice and guidance on good practice in the management of risk throughout the audit process. Changes in the risk environment during the year have been dealt with by considering the impact of the risks assessed and taking action to manage the risks.

During the year the following key strategic risks relating to business objectives were identified, and presentations made to Trustees to provide context and greater understanding of specific emerging risks:

1. The external macro environment creates significant uncertainty, volatility & inertia;
2. Fulfilment of Statutory Obligations are placed at risk due to unaddressed structural underfunding;
3. Our public engagement does not offer equal opportunities (risk level now changed to operational);
4. The organisational systems and processes do not support the business need (risk level now changed to operational);
5. Approval and investment is not secured to deliver the major capital programme;
6. A cybersecurity event occurs on National Museums NI systems which allows exposure or loss of data;
7. Lack of agility and flexibility within public sector systems and processes inhibits business responsiveness and effectiveness;
8. Inability to recruit and retain key Finance, IT & HR staff to fulfil statutory obligations;
9. Necessary investment and approvals are not secured to deliver the annual capital programme;
10. Carbon reduction targets and sustainability action plan actions are not delivered;
11. A breach in security leads to a loss or damage to collections and reputation;
12. Injury and illness from exposure to collections hazards;
13. The conservation heritage of our built estate is not addressed effectively to prevent further deterioration; and
14. Decline in visitors to paid entry sites.

In 2024/25 there were no instances where the Committee determined that risk(s) lay outside the organisation's risk appetite and were thus unacceptable. The Board continue to review corporate risks and provide their views on a quarterly basis.

Fraud Risk and Information Risk

The management and control of the risk of fraud is set out in the Anti-Fraud Policy and Fraud Response Plan. Further related guidance is provided in the Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy, the Conflicts of Interest Policy, the Staff Code of Conduct and the Raising Concerns Policy.

The Anti-Fraud Policy and Fraud Response Plan were updated in March 2024 to continue promotion of a culture within the organisation which raises awareness of the risks and consequences of fraud, and incorporates all relevant fraud related guidance and good practice. The plan is reviewed every three years.

There were no gifts provided to any parties during the year.

There were no personal data related incidents during the year.

There were no fraud incidents or attempts during the year.

Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2022

National Museums NI, has continued to comply with guidelines and principles of the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland (CCNI) and will comply with the resultant Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2022.

Disclosure of Audit Information

So far as the Accounting Officer is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the Board's auditors are unaware. The Accounting Officer has taken all necessary steps to make herself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the Board's auditors are aware of that information.

Important events since the end of the financial year

There were no events since the end of the financial year requiring disclosure.

Northern Ireland Audit Office

The Northern Ireland Audit Office will complete the audit of the 2024/25 financial statements in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs) issued by the Financial Reporting Council; with Practice Note 10 'Audit of Financial Statements of Public Sector Entities in the United Kingdom'; and with the Audit Strategy presented to the Audit Committee in March 2025. The 2023/24 financial statement received an unqualified audit opinion, without modification from NIAO.

Sources of Independent Assurance

National Museums NI draws assurance on its system of internal control and governance arrangements from independent sources, in particular:

Internal Audit

The primary objective of internal audit is to provide an independent and objective opinion to the Board and Audit and Risk Assurance Committee on the adequacy and effectiveness of the system of internal control. The work of internal audit is informed by an analysis of the risks to which National Museums NI is exposed.

**NATIONAL MUSEUMS NI
ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

National Museums NI and the Board contracts out its internal audit services. The appointed firm of Internal Auditors operates to Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS). The Internal Audit Plan 2024/25 was approved by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee in September 2024. The Committee considered reports on the following audits performed in 2024/25:

AUDIT ASSIGNMENT	ASSURANCE OPINION
Review of Core HR Operations	Satisfactory
Review of Collection Security: Storage and Access	Satisfactory
Review of Business Continuity Planning	Satisfactory
Review of IT & Cyber Security Arrangements	Satisfactory
Review of Procurement and Contract Management	Satisfactory
Review of Collections Hazards	Limited

During 2024/25 the Internal Auditors identified two Priority 1 issues. These issues were:

- Collections Hazards – Clarity of Roles and Responsibilities
- Collections Hazards – Formalisation of Programme of Work to Completion

Both of these issues have been accepted by National Museums NI and a management action plan is in place to address the findings.

For the 12 months ended 31 March 2025, the Head of Internal Audit opinion for National Museums NI is as follows:

“On the basis of the programme of work undertaken during the 2024/25 financial year, we can conclude that the National Museums NI has established a framework of controls that provides Satisfactory assurance regarding the effective and efficient achievement of its objectives, and the management of key risks.”

Financial Management

Responsibility for ensuring that an effective system of internal financial control is maintained and operated rests with the Accounting Officer supported by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. The systems of internal financial control provide reasonable but not absolute assurance that assets are safeguarded, that transactions are authorised and properly recorded, and that material errors or irregularities are either prevented or will be detected within a timely period.

Internal financial control is based on a framework of management information, financial regulations and administrative procedures, which include the segregation of duties, management supervision and a system of delegation and accountability.

National Museums NI has established Financial Policies and Procedures that address areas of risk as well as operational efficiency and effectiveness. These documents act as a reference point detailing all Financial Policies and Procedures that have been approved by the Board of National Museums NI.

All staff are briefed on these policies during their induction and at regular staff meetings. Any needs identified are addressed through the National Museums NI annual training and development plan.

Internal Governance Divergences

During the year there were two Priority One recommendations which have been described in the statement by the Head of Internal Audit.

It should be further noted that no 'ministerial directions' have been issued to the National Museums NI and there have been no reported lapses of protective security.

Conclusion

As Accounting Officer, I am satisfied that an appropriate system of internal governance is in place within National Museums NI.



Kathryn Thomson
Chief Executive
Date: 16 September 2025

3.2 Remuneration and Staff Report

Remuneration Policy

The Chairman of the Board is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the performance of the Chief Executive in accordance with the Senior Civil Service Pay Strategy.

The Chief Executive is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the performance of the Executive Team of National Museums NI in accordance with the SCS Pay Strategy (for those Directors employed under SCS terms) and in accordance with the Northern Ireland Civil Service Pay Strategy for other Directors.

The pay of National Museums NI staff is based on the NICS 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. NI public sector pay policy guidance was published on 26th March 2025. The pay award for National Museums NI staff, including SCS, for 2024/25 has been finalised and was paid in June 2025.

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.

Policy on duration of contracts, notice periods and termination payments

Senior staff, including the Chief Executive, are permanent employees of National Museums NI. The notice period for senior staff is three months. Termination payments are in accordance with contractual terms and those of the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (NI).

Remuneration (including salary) and pension entitlements

The following sections provide details of the remuneration and pension interests of the most senior management (i.e., Directors) of National Museums NI.

Senior Management Total Remuneration (Audited Information)

	Salary £'000		Pension Benefits ¹ (to nearest £1,000)		Total £'000	
	2024/25	2023/24	2024/25	2023/24 ²	2024/25	2023/24
K Thomson Chief Executive	115-120	110-115	55,000	56,000	170-175	165-170
C Catney Chief Operating Officer	55-60	85-90	25,000	33,000	80-85	120-125
W Blair Director of Collections	90-95	85-90	47,000	(12,000)	135-140	70-75
A Ward Director of Public Engagement (From 1 December 2023)	80-85	25-30 (75-80 full year equivalent)	50,000	10,000	130-135	35-40 (85-90 full year equivalent)

Salary

Salary includes gross salary; overtime; reserved rights to London weighting or London allowances; recruitment and retention allowances; private office allowances and any other allowance 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 National Museums NI 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 provided during the financial year (2023/24: £nil).

Pension Benefits

Benefits are shown in real terms and outcomes are dependent on the pension scheme each employee belongs to. Please see below to explanation for any negative outcomes:

- In some cases, the real increase in CETV and the pension benefits accrued for the single total figure of remuneration can be negative – that is, there can be a real decrease. This is particularly likely to happen during periods of pay restraint and/or where inflation is higher than pay increases.

¹ The value of pension benefits accrued during the year is calculated as (the real increase in pension multiplied by 20) plus (the real increase in any lump sum) less (the contributions made by the individual). The real increases exclude increases due to inflation or any increases or decreases due to a transfer of pension rights.

² 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.

- The final salary pension of a person in employment is calculated by reference to their pay and length of service. The pension will increase from one year to the next by virtue of a member having an extra year’s service and by virtue of any pay rise during the year. Where there is no pay rise, the increase in pension due to extra service may not be sufficient to offset the inflation increase – that is, in real terms, the pension value can reduce, hence the negative values.
- For example, this is particularly likely to happen for members in the ‘Classic Plus’ scheme where no service after 30 September 2002 counts towards the calculation of the lump sum.

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 director in National Museums NI in the financial year 2024/25 was £115,001 - £120,000 (2023/24: £110,001 - £115,000). The relationship between the mid-point of this band and the remuneration of the organisation’s workforce is disclosed below.

2024/25	25th Percentile	Median	75th Percentile
Total Remuneration (£)	£23,349	£23,919	£32,168
Pay Ratio	5.03:1	4.91:1	3.65:1

2023/24	25th Percentile	Median	75th Percentile
Total Remuneration (£)	£21,933	£24,692	£34,462
Pay Ratio	5.13:1	4.56:1	3.26:1

The 25th percentile, median and 75th percentile remuneration figures are based on annualised salaries for the last month of the financial year, adjusted for any non-consolidated payments made to staff during the year.

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

The values for the salary component of remuneration for the 25th percentile, median and 75th percentile were £23,349 (2023/24: £21,933), £23,919 (2023/24: £24,692) and £32,168 (2023/24: £34,462) respectively.

In 2024/25 and 2023/24, no employees received remuneration in excess of the highest-paid director.

Remuneration ranged from £23,177 to £117,500 (2023/24: £21,053 to £112,500).

Changes in the pay ratios in 2024/25 compared to 2023/24 were as a result of how the pay award impacts the grades throughout the staffing structure as well as the impact of progression through the salary points.

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 National Museums NI 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	+0.79%	+9.35%
Highest paid director's salary and allowances	+4.44%	+9.76%

No performance pay or bonuses were payable in these years.

Remuneration of Board Members

No emoluments were paid to members of the Board for the year ended 31 March 2025 except for an honorarium to the Chairman (appointed 1 October 2023) amounting to £10,500 (2023/24: £2,500).

Pensions of Senior Management (Audited Information)

	Accrued pension at pension age as at 31/3/25 and related lump sum	Real increase in pension and related lump sum at pension age	CETV at 31/3/25	CETV at 31/3/24³	Real increase in CETV
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
K Thomson Chief Executive	50-55	2.5-5	817	732	37
C Catney Chief Operating Officer	15-20	0-2.5	264	222	20
W Blair Director of Collections	45-50	2.5-5	753	670	33
A Ward Director of Public Engagement	10-15	2.5-5	126	87	26

³ The pension benefits of any members affected by the [Public Service Pensions Remedy](#) which were reported in 2022-23 based on alpha membership for the period between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022 have been reported since 2023-24 based on PCSPS(NI) membership for the same period.

Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) Pension Arrangements

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 old (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 Report and Accounts | Department of Finance \(finance-ni.gov.uk\)](https://finance-ni.gov.uk).

As part of the remedy involves 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 accrue 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 accrue 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 \(NI\) | Department of Finance \(finance-ni.gov.uk\)](https://www.civilservicepensions.gov.uk/).

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 period covering 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025 and 1 April 2025 – 30 June 2025 are as follows⁴:

Annualised Rate of Pensionable Earning (Salary Bands) 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025		Annualised Rate of Pensionable Earning (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	4.60%
£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%
£160,965.00 and above		£165,794.00 and above		8.05%

⁴ Rates are expected to change mid-year as a result of the outcome of the [consultation on Scheme Yield and Member Contributions](#)

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 \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/basis-for-setting-the-discount-rates-for-calculating-cash-equivalent-transfer-values-payable-by-public-service-pension-schemes). 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 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 information)

No compensation for loss of office was payable in the year.

Staff report

Total Staff Costs (Audited Information)

Staff Cost	Permanently employed staff	Others	2025	2024
	£	£	£	£
Salaries and wages (includes temporary non-payroll staff)	9,768,289	258,675	10,026,964	9,745,318
Social security costs	901,929	-	901,929	888,252
Pension costs	3,173,959	-	3,173,959	2,524,346
Apprenticeship levy	36,881	-	36,881	29,106
Other staff costs	-	-	-	10,798
Release of Historic Payroll Provision	-	-	-	(812,575)
Total	13,881,058	258,675	14,139,733	12,385,245

The Northern Ireland Civil Service main pension schemes are unfunded multi-employer defined benefit schemes but National Museums NI 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 FD (DoF) 02/25 - Appendix A.2 22 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>

For 2024/25, employers' contributions of £3,184,437 (including £16,940 of capitalised contributions) were payable to the NICS pension arrangements at a flat rate of 34.25% of pensionable pay, for all salaries (2023/24: £2,519,397 at one of three rates in the range 28.7% to 34.2%).

**NATIONAL MUSEUMS NI
ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

Employees can opt to open a partnership pension account, a stakeholder pension with an employer contribution. Employers' contributions of £6,237 (2023/24: £4,749) were paid to one or more of the panel of three appointed stakeholder pension providers. 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 £225, 0.5% (2023/24 £200, 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 (2023/24: £Nil). Contributions prepaid at that date were £Nil (2023/24: £Nil).

No persons (2023/24: None) retired early on ill-health grounds; the total additional accrued pension liabilities in the year amounted to £Nil (2023/24: £Nil).

Staff costs apportioned by activity (Audited Information)

Activity area	2025	2024
	£	£
Trading (Primary & Non Primary)	409,681	594,432
Collection Services	1,931,232	2,604,607
Curatorial & Education	2,615,859	1,771,513
Experience & Enterprise	6,499,596	4,781,985
Audience Development	1,294,801	1,010,701
Operations	1,388,564	1,622,007
Total	<u>14,139,733</u>	<u>12,385,245</u>

The average number of persons employed (Audited Information)

The average number of full-time equivalent employees employed during the year analysed by category of staff was as follows:

	Permanently employed staff	Others	2025 Total	2024 Total
Experience & Enterprise Development	109	7	116	99
Collection Services	42	-	42	42
Operations	31	-	31	34
Curatorial and Education	33	7	40	35
Audience Development	22	1	23	25
Support	20	3	23	25
Trading	6	-	6	8
Chief Executive's Office	<u>5</u>	-	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>
	<u>268</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>286</u>	<u>273</u>

Further analysis of full-time equivalent employees at 31 March is as follows:

	2025		2024	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Chief Executive	-	1	-	1
Directors	3	-	3	-
Employees	<u>124</u>	<u>154</u>	<u>108</u>	<u>144</u>
Total	<u>127</u>	<u>155</u>	<u>111</u>	<u>145</u>

Other Disclosures

- Staff Turnover Percentage was 9.23% for the year (2023/24: 10.81 %).
- Per our Staff Pulse survey in November 2024, the composite staff engagement score was 74% (2023/24: 77.1%).
- There were no off-payroll arrangements with any individuals during the year (2023/24: £nil).
- There was £nil expenditure on external consultancy during the year (2023/24: £nil).
- Travel expenses of £2,172 were reimbursed to nine Trustees (2023/24: £616).
- Further information on staff costs is contained in note 6 of the financial statements.

Sickness Absence

National Museums NI employed 286 staff (expressed as full-time equivalents). Overall staff absenteeism for the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 was 4.45% (2023/24: 4.58%), which equates to an average per FTE of 6.01 days (2023/24: 6.33 days).

The majority of sickness absence continues to be attributable to staff on long term sickness.

Staff Policies

As an equal opportunities employer, National Museums NI do not discriminate against staff or applicants for posts on any grounds, including disability. Care is taken to ensure the needs of disabled applicants are considered in the recruitment and promotion processes. National Museums NI also considers and introduces reasonable adjustments to support the employment of people with disabilities and to support the continuing employment of staff who have a disability.

National Museums NI is committed to the priorities as set out in legislation on equality, disability discrimination, dispute resolutions, health and safety, safeguarding, data protection and freedom of information.

In line with our corporate commitment to champion inclusion, diversity and accessibility we developed a new Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility Policy which was approved by the Board in March 2022.

Within the policy, we have outlined specific initial priority outcomes, including workplace culture which we shall continue to monitor and improve throughout the period of our Corporate Plan 2025-30.

Reporting of Civil Service and other compensation schemes – exit packages (Audited Information)

Exit package Cost Band	Number of compulsory redundancies		Number of other departures agreed		Total number of exit packages by cost band	
	2024/25	2023/24	2024/25	2023/24	2024/25	2023/24
<£10,000	-	-	-	-	-	-
£10,000-£25,000	-	-	-	1	-	1
£25,000-£50,000	-	-	-	-	-	-
£50,000-£100,000	-	-	-	-	-	-
£100,000-£150,000	-	-	-	-	-	-
£150,000-£200,000	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total number of exit packages	-	-	-	1	-	1
Total resource cost (£)	-	-	-	£10,798	-	£10,798

Redundancy and other departure costs have been paid in accordance with the provisions of the Civil Service Compensation Scheme (Northern Ireland), a statutory scheme made under the Superannuation (Northern Ireland) Order 1972. Exit costs are accounted for in the year in which the relevant exit packages are agreed.

There were no exit packages agreed in 2024/25.

Any ill-health retirement costs are met by the pension scheme and are not included in the table.



K Thomson
 Chief Executive
 Date: 16 September 2025

3.3 Statement of Trustees' and Chief Executive's Responsibilities for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

Under Article 10(2) of the Museums and Galleries (NI) Order 1998 the National Museums NI is required to prepare a statement of accounts for each financial year in the form and on the basis determined by the Department for Communities with the approval of the Department of Finance. The accounts are prepared on an accruals basis and must give a true and fair view of National Museums NI's state of affairs at the year end and of its financial activities and cash flows for the financial year.

In preparing the accounts the Board are required to:

- observe the accounts direction issued by the Department for Communities, including relevant accounting and disclosure requirements, and apply suitable accounting policies on a consistent basis;
- make judgements and estimates on a reasonable basis;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed and disclose and explain any material departures in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis, unless it is inappropriate to presume that National Museums NI will continue in operation; and
- ensure 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 Accounting Officer for the Department for Communities has designated the Chief Executive as the Accounting Officer for National Museums NI. The relevant responsibilities of an Accounting Officer, including the responsibility for the propriety and regularity of the public finances for which the Accounting Officer is answerable, for keeping of proper records and for safeguarding National Museums NI's assets, are set out in the Managing Public Money NI, issued by the Department of Finance. As Accounting Officer, I can confirm:

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 National Museums NI'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.

3.4 Assembly Accountability & Audit Report (Audited Information)

Losses and Special Payments

There were no special payments or losses made in the financial year (2023/24: £1,862.32).

Remote Contingent Liabilities

National Museums NI has one remote contingent liability as detailed in Note 24 (2023/24: one).

The matter has not been agreed and as such, no provision has been made.

Regularity of Expenditure

National Museums NI noted no issues with regularity of expenditure during the financial year.



Kathryn Thomson
Chief Executive
Date: 16 September 2025

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 National Museums Northern Ireland for the year ended 31 March 2025 under the Museums and Galleries (Northern Ireland) Order 1998. 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 United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

I have also audited the information in the Accountability Report that is described in that report as having been audited.

In my opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of National Museums Northern Ireland'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 the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102); and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the Museums and Galleries (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 and Department for Communities directions issued thereunder.

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 opinions

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 this certificate.

My staff and I are independent of National Museums Northern Ireland 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 opinions.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, I have concluded that National Museums Northern Ireland'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 disclosed in the financial statements any identified any material uncertainties that relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt about on the National Museums Northern Ireland'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 National Museums Northern Ireland is adopted in consideration of the requirements set out in the Government 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 Trustees and the Chief Executive with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other Information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements, the parts of the Accountability Report described in that report as having been audited, and my audit certificate and report. The Trustees and the Chief Executive 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 report, 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 Accountability Report to be audited have been properly prepared in accordance with Department for Communities directions made under the Museums and Galleries (Northern Ireland) Order 1998; and
- the information given in the Performance and Accountability Reports for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements.

Matters on which I report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the National Museums Northern Ireland and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, I have not identified material misstatements in the Performance Report and Accountability Report.

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 Accountability Report to be audited are not in agreement with the accounting records; or
- certain disclosures of remuneration specified by the Government Financial Report Manual 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 Trustees and Accounting Officer for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of the Trustees and Chief Executive's Responsibilities, the Trustees and the Chief Executive as Accounting Officer are responsible for:

- the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view;
- such internal controls as the Trustees and Accounting Officer determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error; and
- assessing the National Museums Northern Ireland'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 Trustees and Accounting Officer anticipates that the services provided by National Museums Northern Ireland 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 Museum and Galleries (Northern Ireland) Order 1998.

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 ISA's (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 National Museums Northern Ireland through discussion with management and application of extensive public sector accountability knowledge. The key laws and regulations I considered included Museum and Galleries (Northern Ireland) Order 1998;
- making enquires of management and those charged with governance on National Museums Northern Ireland's compliance with laws and regulations;

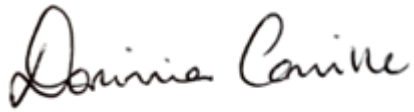
- making enquiries of internal audit, management and those charged with governance as to susceptibility to irregularity and fraud, their assessment of the risk of material misstatement due to fraud and irregularity, and their knowledge of actual, suspected and alleged fraud and irregularity;
- completing risk assessment procedures to assess the susceptibility of National Museums Northern Ireland'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: management override of controls through the posting of unusual journals, revenue recognition, and the extent of management bias within key accounting estimates;
- 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;
- 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

25 September 2025

NATIONAL MUSEUMS NI
ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

	Note	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2025 £	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2024 £
Income from:							
<i>Donations and Legacies</i>							
Donations	2	5,000	117,622	122,622	-	105,115	105,115
Gifts in kind	2	2,160,447	-	2,160,447	1,027,890	-	1,027,890
<i>Charitable activities</i>							
Grant-in-aid	3	1,037,000	18,047,000	19,084,000	2,152,000	16,320,000	18,472,000
Admissions	3	-	1,327,993	1,327,993	-	1,294,665	1,294,665
Other grants	3	1,041,978	52,729	1,094,707	1,350,015	-	1,350,015
<i>Other trading activities</i>							
Sponsorships	4	16,000	-	16,000	-	-	-
Trading	4	-	1,582,348	1,582,348	-	1,400,954	1,400,954
Investment income		-	59,766	59,766	-	46,065	46,065
Other income	5	-	81,640	81,640	-	280,080	280,080
Total income		4,260,425	21,269,098	25,529,523	4,529,905	19,446,879	23,976,784
Expenditure on:							
<i>Raising funds</i>							
Trading	6	16,593	1,260,848	1,277,441	54,787	1,506,496	1,561,283
<i>Charitable activities</i>							
Collection Services	6	40,988	2,853,397	2,894,385	260,771	3,520,947	3,781,718
Curatorial & Education	6	980,270	3,593,931	4,574,201	771,990	2,453,815	3,225,805
Experience & Enterprise	6	182,213	9,498,974	9,681,187	516,161	6,999,905	7,516,066
Audience Development	6	53,866	2,152,327	2,206,193	131,318	1,784,021	1,915,339
Operations	6	83,746	6,877,791	6,961,537	237,553	6,811,324	7,048,877
		1,357,676	26,237,268	27,594,944	1,972,580	23,076,508	25,049,088
Net income/(expenditure) before tax		2,902,749	(4,968,170)	(2,065,421)	2,557,325	(3,629,629)	(1,072,304)
Tax credit	8	-	70,836	70,836	-	-	-
Net income/(expenditure) after tax		2,902,749	(4,897,334)	(1,994,585)	2,557,325	(3,629,629)	(1,072,304)
Transfers between funds		(1,417,335)	1,417,335	-	(1,057,947)	1,057,947	-
Other recognised gains/(losses)							
Gains on revaluation of fixed assets	9	-	1,552,367	1,552,367	-	1,322,186	1,322,186
Net movement in funds		1,485,414	(1,927,632)	(442,218)	1,499,378	(1,249,496)	249,882
Reconciliation of funds:							
Total funds brought forward		23,955,558	80,914,595	104,870,153	22,456,180	82,164,091	104,620,271
Total funds carried forward		25,440,972	78,986,963	104,427,935	23,955,558	80,914,595	104,870,153

**NATIONAL MUSEUMS NI
ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

**BALANCE SHEET
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

	Note	2025 £	2024 £
Fixed Assets			
Tangible assets	9	87,743,221	89,716,041
Heritage assets	9	16,210,318	13,902,708
Intangible assets	11	370,034	885,677
Investment in subsidiary	12	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>
		104,323,575	104,504,428
Current Assets			
Stock	13	333,263	299,052
Debtors	14	1,309,653	1,650,339
Cash at bank and in hand	15	<u>2,239,286</u>	<u>3,023,058</u>
		3,882,202	4,972,449
Liabilities			
Creditors - amounts falling due within one year	16	<u>(3,327,921)</u>	<u>(4,606,724)</u>
Net current assets		<u>554,281</u>	<u>365,725</u>
Total assets less current liabilities		104,877,856	104,870,153
Provision for liabilities and charges	17	<u>(449,921)</u>	<u>-</u>
Total Net Assets		<u><u>104,427,935</u></u>	<u><u>104,870,153</u></u>
Represented by:			
Restricted funds	18	25,440,972	23,955,558
Unrestricted funds	18	27,473,274	30,846,774
Revaluation reserve	18	<u>51,513,689</u>	<u>50,067,821</u>
		<u><u>104,427,935</u></u>	<u><u>104,870,153</u></u>

The notes on pages 66 to 80 form part of these accounts.

The accounts on pages 63 to 80 were approved by the Board of Trustees of National Museums NI on 16 September 2025 and are signed on its behalf



G Milligan
Chairman of The Board of Trustees



K Thomson
Chief Executive

**NATIONAL MUSEUMS NI
ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

**STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

	Note	2025 £	2024 £
Cash flows from operating activities:			
Net cash provided by operating activities	21	<u>380,924</u>	<u>2,106,144</u>
Cash flows from investing activities:			
Interest received		59,766	46,065
Proceeds from the sale of property, plant and equipment		543,555	-
Purchase of intangible fixed assets		(117,885)	(299,565)
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		<u>(1,650,132)</u>	<u>(2,403,505)</u>
Net cash used by investing activities		<u>(1,164,696)</u>	<u>(2,657,005)</u>
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period		(783,772)	(550,861)
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 April 2024	21	<u>3,023,058</u>	<u>3,573,919</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at 31 March 2025	21	<u><u>2,239,286</u></u>	<u><u>3,023,058</u></u>

Further detail to this cash flow statement is reported in Note 21.
The notes on pages 66 to 80 form part of these accounts.

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of accounting

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the historical cost convention as modified by the revaluation of certain assets. The accounts are presented in the functional currency, pounds sterling, and in whole pounds. Non-functional currency transactions are translated at the prevailing rate at the transaction date.

Without limiting the information given, the accounts meet the accounting and disclosure requirements of the Companies Act 2006, the accounting standards issued or adopted by the Accounting Standards Board and disclosure requirements issued by the Department of Finance in so far as those requirements are appropriate. They also comply with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) (2019).

The charity is a public benefit entity.

There are no material uncertainties related to events or conditions that cast significant doubt on the ability of National Museums NI to continue as a going concern.

The principal policies which have been adopted in the preparation of these accounts are as follows:

Incoming resources

Grant income from the Department for Communities is shown in the Statement of Financial Activities in the year in which it is received. Undrawn grant-in-aid is not available to be carried forward from one year to the next.

Other grant income is recognised as and when the conditions for its receipt have been met.

Deferred income will be matched and released as and when the conditions for its application have been met.

Gifts in kind donated, where a third party is bearing the cost, are included at the cost to the third party.

Admissions income, trading income and donations are accounted for on an accruals basis.

No amounts are included in the accounts for services donated by volunteers.

Resources expended

Resources expended are accounted for on an accruals basis. Expenditure is classified under principal charitable activities or costs of generating funds in order to provide more useful information to the users of the accounts.

Expenditure is classified to be in furtherance of charity objectives when it is directly attributable to the projects undertaken. All other expenditure is allocated either to support costs or costs of generating funds, as appropriate. Support costs comprise the costs of the Chief Executive's Office, Human Resources, Finance and Governance costs and are allocated to the charitable activities on a basis consistent with the use of the resources. The support costs are allocated according to the number of full time equivalent staff employed in each activity. Governance costs are the costs incurred to ensure proper standards of public accountability within National Museums NI and are made up of internal audit, external audit and professional fees associated with governance.

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

Tangible Assets and Depreciation

Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost or valuation.

Depreciation is provided on all tangible fixed assets, other than land, assets under construction and heritage assets, at rates calculated to write off the cost or valuation, less estimated residual value, on a straight line basis for each asset over its expected useful life as follows:

Buildings	2% - 5%	per annum
Permanent exhibitions	2% - 20%	per annum
Computer equipment	5% - 20%	per annum
Fixtures and equipment	5% - 20%	per annum
Plant and machinery	5% - 15%	per annum
Motor vehicles	7% - 15%	per annum

Land and buildings are professionally revalued every year. With the exception of permanent exhibitions, the cost of all other fixed assets are restated annually to reflect their current value using the relevant price indices at the year end and to identify any impairment of value. The revaluation surplus or loss, net of the corresponding adjustment to accumulated depreciation, is credited to the revaluation reserve.

The assets' residual values and useful lives are reviewed, and adjusted, if appropriate, at the end of each reporting period.

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

Heritage Assets

Objects purchased since 1 April 2001 are included in the balance sheet at cost. Depreciation is not charged and the objects are not revalued.

Objects donated since 1 April 2001 are included at valuation based on the amount paid by the donor or an estimate of fair value based on the opinion of National Museums NI's specialist staff. Where obtaining a value is not practicable, donated heritage assets are not recognised in the accounts.

Collections acquired before 1 April 2001 are assets of historical and scientific importance held to advance National Museums NI's educational and cultural objectives. These assets were not capitalised in past accounting periods as reliable cost information was not available and a reliable valuation approach was not considered to be commensurate with the benefits to users of the financial statements.

Nature & scale of heritage assets

The collections of National Museums NI are multidisciplinary, diverse and span all time periods, referencing Northern Ireland within, and to, the wider world. Historically, they have grown on the site-based framework of the Ulster Museum, the Ulster Folk & Transport Museums and the Ulster American Folk Park. However, since similar collection types can relate to more than one site, they are more appropriately classified within six broad and complementary subject areas. National Museums NI will continue to collect within these subject areas and the time periods and geographic areas to which they relate:

1. Art;
2. Emigration;
3. Folk Life and Agriculture;
4. Human History;
5. Natural Sciences; and
6. Transport, Industry and Technology.

Policy on acquisition and disposal of Heritage Assets

National Museums NI has a Collections Development Policy in place. This policy provides further information on the nature of heritage assets held. It is available online at www.nationalmuseumsni.org.

Policy on management and preservation of heritage assets

Three policies outline National Museums NI's intent towards the development, management, care, conservation of, and access to the collections: the Collections Development Policy; the Collections Care and Conservation Policy; and the Collections Information and Access Policy. These policies were developed as part of National Museums NI's successful application renewal for Museum Accreditation in 2015, approved by the Board of Trustees in March 2015 and it is currently being reassessed and reviewed. In addition, a National Museums NI Collections Documentation Plan exists which outlines the tasks required to progress the management of the collections in alignment with the minimum industry standard known as SPECTRUM.

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

Intangible assets

Intangible assets are stated at cost less accumulated amortisation and accumulated impairment losses. Amortisation is calculated, using the straight-line method, to allocate the depreciable amount of the assets to their residual values over their estimated useful lives, as follows:

Software	4 - 5 years
On-Trade License	10 years

Development costs that are directly attributable to the design and testing of identifiable and unique software products controlled by National Museums NI are recognised as intangible assets when the following criteria are met:

- it is technically feasible to complete the software so that it will be available for use;
- management intends to complete and use it;
- it can be demonstrated how the software will generate probable future economic benefits;
- adequate technical, financial and other resources to complete the development and to use the software are available; and
- the expenditure attributable to the software during its development can be reliably measured.

Other development expenditures that do not meet these criteria are recognised as an expense as incurred.

The minimum level for capitalising intangible fixed assets is £1,000, although lower valued items may be pooled and capitalised where they constitute a unit or group.

Investment in subsidiaries

Investment in subsidiaries are valued at book value, less any provision for material impairment.

Stocks

Stocks have been valued at the lower of cost and estimated net realisable value.

Creditors

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the net amount prepaid.

Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and in hand include deposits held at call with banks and petty cash and float balances.

Liabilities

Liabilities are recognised as resources expended as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing National Museums NI to expenditure.

Provisions

Provisions are recognised where there is a legal or constructive obligation of uncertain timing or amount committing National Museums NI to expenditure on the basis of the best estimate of the expenditure required to settle the obligation where this can be determined. Where the effect if time value of money is significant, the estimated cash flows have been discounted using appropriate rates.

Taxation

All income and expenditure is stated exclusive of VAT, which is fully recoverable. VAT assets and liabilities are netted due to legal right of offset and a single recoverable or payable position disclosed.

National Museums NI has been granted charitable status by HM Revenue & Customs.

Corporation tax applies to all chargeable gains relating to the non-primary purpose trading activities of National Museums NI.

Given the nature of its activities, National Museums NI is able to access the Museums & Galleries Exhibition Tax Relief scheme.

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

Reserves Policy

National Museums NI forecasts to operate on an annual basis within a balanced funding formula of grant-in-aid, sponsorship and donations, and self-generated income. Annual operating surpluses (or deficits) are kept to a minimum and are transferred to the Unrestricted General Reserve at 31 March each year.

The Charities SORP requires capital grants to be included within the Statement of Financial Activities in the year in which they are receivable. The only expenditure against this is depreciation. Therefore during periods of high capital investment, surpluses will arise on the Statement of Financial Activities.

The balance on the Restricted General Fund available at 31 March 2025 was £26.3m. The Trustees consider that sufficient funds are held in an appropriate form to enable funds to be applied in accordance with any restriction imposed. The balance on the Unrestricted General Fund, together with this policy, is reviewed on an annual basis.

National Museums NI receives various types of funding which require separate disclosure. These are differentiated between restricted and unrestricted funds.

Restricted Funds

Restricted funds are those funds which are subject to specific restriction imposed by the donor, by the purpose of an appeal or are received for a specified purpose. They comprise the following:

Collection acquisition fund - this fund represents the value of heritage assets funded by restricted donations and grant-in-aid since April 2001.

Government grant for fixed assets - this fund represents funding from the Department for the acquisition of fixed assets which following acquisition have no restriction on use and therefore transfer to the unrestricted funds.

Exhibition fund - this fund represents the net book value of National Museums NI's permanent exhibitions.

The Art Fund - the 2010 Art Fund Prize fund, to be used on a curatorial programme.

Curatorial Projects fund - funds to be used on specific curatorial projects.

O.L. Nelson Legacy fund - donated to National Museums NI for the specific purpose to purchase prints and drawings.

Patrick Donald Legacy Fund - donated to National Museums NI for the specific purpose to purchase artefacts of Irish interest.

General fund - this fund is to enable National Museums NI to manage its working capital relating to restricted activities.

Unrestricted Funds

Unrestricted funds are those funds which are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of National Museums NI. They comprise the following:

Museums NI was established under the Museums and Galleries (Northern Ireland) Order 1998. This fund is reduced annually by depreciation.

Revaluation reserve - this fund represents the revaluation surplus or loss, net of the corresponding adjustment to accumulated depreciation on the revalued assets.

Government grant for fixed assets - this fund together with the capital fund and the revaluation reserve represents the net book value of all unrestricted assets, namely land and buildings, fixtures and equipment and motor vehicles.

General fund - this fund is to enable National Museums NI to manage its working capital relating to unrestricted activities.

Unrestricted Designated Fund

Board Reserve fund - donation monies set aside to fund future projects approved by the Trustees, in the furtherance of our general objectives.

Board Reserve capital fund - proceeds of sale of assets to re-invest in capital projects approved by the Trustees.

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

2. DONATIONS AND LEGACIES

	2025 £	2024 £
Donations:		
Gift Aid	36,907	30,156
Other donations	85,715	74,959
Total donations	<u>122,622</u>	<u>105,115</u>
Gifts in kind:		
Donated assets	2,160,447	1,027,890
Donated services	-	-
Total gifts in kind	<u>2,160,447</u>	<u>1,027,890</u>

Of the income from donations, £117,622 are unrestricted (2023/24: £105,115) and £5,000 was for a specific purpose and is considered restricted. Gifts in kind income at March 2025 comprises donations to the collections of £2,160,447 (2023/24: £1,027,890). In addition to above is the contribution made by volunteers. Volunteers make a significant and diverse contribution to the success of National Museums NI. They support us in many areas of the organisation, in roles ranging from assisting Curatorial staff, to assisting with Visitor Services and Education staff.

3. INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	2025 £	2024 £
Grant-in-aid from the Department for Communities		
Resource grant-in-aid (Unrestricted)	18,047,000	16,320,000
Capital grant (Restricted)	1,037,000	2,152,000
Total received	<u>19,084,000</u>	<u>18,472,000</u>
Admissions	<u>1,327,993</u>	<u>1,294,665</u>
Other grants		
Capital grants:		
The Art Fund	19,000	32,000
Friends of the Ulster Museum	13,000	-
Esmee Mitchell Trust	7,000	-
National History Museum	-	165,144
Total capital grants	<u>39,000</u>	<u>197,144</u>
Revenue grants:		
Northern Ireland Environment Agency	831,531	414,048
Department for Communities	40,577	-
National Lottery Heritage Fund	18,484	617,868
Other	48,109	33,436
The Art Fund	61,607	-
National Archives	21,750	19,856
Nottingham Trent University	20,075	-
National History Museum	11,824	6,257
Tate (British Art Network)	1,750	5,250
Esmee Fairbairn	-	51,133
National Portrait Gallery	-	5,000
Imperial War Museum	-	23
Total revenue grants	<u>1,055,707</u>	<u>1,152,871</u>
Total other grants	<u>1,094,707</u>	<u>1,350,015</u>

With the exception of resource grant-in-aid and the indirect fee element of the Northern Ireland Environment Agency revenue grant (£52,729), all of the grants are held in a restricted fund (further detail on restricted funds is provided in note 1).

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

4. INCOME FROM OTHER TRADING ACTIVITIES

	2025 £	2024 £
Sponsorships	<u>16,000</u>	<u>-</u>
Trading:		
Retail	1,003,814	862,608
Hire of facilities	256,837	231,841
Consultancy fees	2,003	42,934
Photographic sales	34,927	29,888
Events income	117,598	83,105
Franchise income	<u>167,169</u>	<u>150,578</u>
Total trading income	<u>1,582,348</u>	<u>1,400,954</u>

Sponsorship income relates to specific programmes and events and is restricted. Trading income is unrestricted.

5. OTHER INCOME

	2025 £	2024 £
Other Income	<u>81,640</u>	<u>280,080</u>

Other income relates to income not readily categorised by the existing splits including, but not limited to, income associated with data and information requests and reimbursement of costs from third parties, which are not grant income in nature.

6. EXPENDITURE

	Staff costs £	Other direct costs £	Indirect costs £	Depreciation & impairment £	2025 Total £	2024 Total £
Trading	409,681	596,029	60,587	211,144	1,277,441	1,561,283
Collections Services	1,931,232	87,588	397,162	478,403	2,894,385	3,781,718
Curatorial & Education	2,615,859	831,132	371,156	756,054	4,574,201	3,225,805
Experience & Enterprise Development	6,499,596	490,003	1,091,417	1,600,171	9,681,187	7,516,066
Audience Development	1,294,801	330,772	215,966	364,654	2,206,193	1,915,339
Operations	<u>1,388,564</u>	<u>4,126,643</u>	<u>295,681</u>	<u>1,150,649</u>	<u>6,961,537</u>	<u>7,048,877</u>
	<u>14,139,733</u>	<u>6,462,167</u>	<u>2,431,969</u>	<u>4,561,075</u>	<u>27,594,944</u>	<u>25,049,088</u>

Expenditure on charitable activities was £27,594,944 (2023/24: £25,049,088) of which £1,357,676 was restricted (2023/24: £1,972,580).

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

6. EXPENDITURE (continued)

Staff costs

	Incurred costs £	Capitalised costs £	2025 Total £	2024 Total £
Salaries and wages (includes temporary non-payroll staff)	10,074,953	(47,989)	10,026,964	9,745,318
Social security costs	907,140	(5,211)	901,929	888,252
Pension costs	3,190,899	(16,940)	3,173,959	2,524,346
Apprenticeship levy	36,881	-	36,881	29,106
Other staff costs	-	-	-	10,798
Release of Historic Payroll Provision	-	-	-	(812,575)
Total staff costs	14,209,873	(70,140)	14,139,733	12,385,245

Included in the above costs is £264,699 (2023/24: £416,779) paid in respect of employment agency staff. The other staff costs in 2023/24 were redundancy costs.

Staff costs of £70,140 (2023/24: £319,770) have been capitalised in relation to capital project management time and are not included in resources expended.

Further information on staff costs is contained within the Remuneration and Staff Report.

Support costs

	Curatorial Experience & Audience						2025	2024
	Trading	Collections	Education	Enterprise	Development	Operations	Total	Total
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Finance/CEO Office/ Human Resources	104,120	682,530	637,838	1,875,618	371,141	508,133	4,179,380	3,601,290
Governance - included in above	21,415	140,377	131,185	385,762	76,333	104,508	859,580	188,626

Governance costs

	Total £	Total £
Audit and accountancy fees	75,300	75,135
Other governance costs	784,280	113,491
	859,580	188,626

7. NET INCOMING RESOURCES

Net incoming resources is stated after charging:

	Total £	Total £
Auditors' remuneration:		
in respect of external audit services	29,800	29,100
in respect of internal audit	45,500	46,035
in respect of other non-audit services	1,382	-
Stock expensed	421,540	504,012
Depreciation	4,021,652	3,852,184
Amortisation	539,423	436,646
Impairment reversal	-	(67,600)
Loss on disposal of fixed assets	14,337	1,066

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

8. TAXATION

Tax included in Statement of Financial Activities

	2025	2024
	Total	Total
	£	£
Current tax charge/(credit)		
UK Corporation tax on profits for the year	-	-
Adjustment in respect of prior periods	(70,836)	-
	<u>(70,836)</u>	<u>-</u>

Reconciliation of tax

Tax assessed for the year is lower (2023/24: lower) than the standard rate of corporation tax in the UK for the year ended 31 March 2025 of 25% (2023/24: 25%). The differences are explained below:

	2025	2024
	Total	Total
	£	£
Net expenditure before tax	<u>(2,065,421)</u>	<u>(1,072,304)</u>
Net expenditure before tax multiplied by the standard rate of rate in the UK of 25% (2023/24: 25%)	(516,355)	(268,076)
Effects of:		
Income not subject to tax	(6,010,893)	(5,649,614)
Expenditure not deductible for tax purposes	6,534,794	5,881,754
Losses surrendered for creatives exhibition tax credit	-	35,936
Creatives tax credit	-	(71,872)
Prior period adjustment	(70,836)	1,036
Timing difference	63,290	70,836
	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

9. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Land and Buildings £	Permanent Exhibitions £	Fixtures and Equipment £	Motor Vehicles £	Sub Total £	Heritage Assets £	Total £
Cost or valuation							
At 1 April 2024	75,487,745	13,623,316	17,135,658	548,305	106,795,024	13,902,708	120,697,732
Additions	711,080	23,939	319,338	-	1,054,357	2,307,610	3,361,967
Disposals	(550,000)	-	(108,269)	-	(658,269)	-	(658,269)
Impairment	-	-	(2,605)	(2,345)	(4,950)	-	(4,950)
Revaluation	(983,896)	-	492,692	3,497	(487,707)	-	(487,707)
At 31 March 2025	<u>74,664,929</u>	<u>13,647,255</u>	<u>17,836,814</u>	<u>549,457</u>	<u>106,698,455</u>	<u>16,210,318</u>	<u>122,908,773</u>
Accumulated depreciation							
At 1 April 2024	10,080	4,739,435	11,949,324	380,144	17,078,983	-	17,078,983
Depreciation	2,430,762	341,366	1,212,348	37,176	4,021,652	-	4,021,652
Impairment Charges	-	-	(2,605)	(2,345)	(4,950)	-	(4,950)
Disposals	-	-	(100,377)	-	(100,377)	-	(100,377)
Revaluation	(2,428,768)	-	381,416	7,278	(2,040,074)	-	(2,040,074)
At 31 March 2025	<u>12,074</u>	<u>5,080,801</u>	<u>13,440,106</u>	<u>422,253</u>	<u>18,955,234</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>18,955,234</u>
Net book value							
At 31 March 2025	<u>74,652,855</u>	<u>8,566,454</u>	<u>4,396,708</u>	<u>127,204</u>	<u>87,743,221</u>	<u>16,210,318</u>	<u>103,953,539</u>
At 31 March 2024	<u>75,477,665</u>	<u>8,883,881</u>	<u>5,186,334</u>	<u>168,161</u>	<u>89,716,041</u>	<u>13,902,708</u>	<u>103,618,749</u>

Land and buildings at net book value comprise:

	2025 £	2024 £
Leasehold Improvements	-	1,995
Long leaseholds	<u>74,652,855</u>	<u>75,475,671</u>
	<u>74,652,855</u>	<u>75,477,666</u>

A cleared site of approximately 0.25 acres located at Landseer Street, Belfast was sold in July 2024 for £550,000.

A full valuation for all land and buildings was carried out by Land and Property Services (LPS) at 31 March 2025. The valuations and basis of valuation, across all sites were as follows:

Property	Basis of Valuation	Value £
Ulster Museum	Land at existing use value and buildings at depreciated replacement cost	27,472,043
Ulster Folk Museum	Land at existing use value and buildings at depreciated replacement cost	14,327,752
Ulster Transport Museum	Land at existing use value and buildings at depreciated replacement cost	19,202,916
Ulster American Folk Park	Land at existing use value and buildings at depreciated replacement cost	5,263,220
Residential Centre	Land at existing use value and buildings at depreciated replacement cost	1,636,924
Stores	Land and buildings at existing use value	<u>6,750,000</u>
		<u>74,652,855</u>

All other assets of National Museums NI were revalued in line with appropriate indices, though at the time of accounts preparation, the latest Producer Price Indices available from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) were those for January 2025. ONS issued a statement in March 2025, noting they had identified a problem with the chain-linking methods used to calculate their Producer Price Indices, affecting the years from 2008 onwards, and that they would consequently be pausing publication of the data while the issue is rectified. While it has not been possible to ascertain the potential impact of this issue, given the value of the assets potentially affected, National Museums NI does not expect an adjustment to indexation to have a material impact on the 2024-25 accounts. It is anticipated that ONS will recommence publication of the Producer Price Indices at some point during the 2025-26 financial year and the indexation of impacted assets will be brought up to date in the 2025-26 accounts.

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

9. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS (continued)

Heritage assets acquired since 1 April 2001 have been capitalised at either purchase cost or at a valuation based on the amount paid by the donor or an estimate of fair value based on the opinion of National Museums NI's specialist staff. The analysis of additions between purchases and donations for the current year and the preceeding four years are summarised below. No assets have been disposed of, depreciated or impaired.

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021
	£	£	£	£	£
Acquisitions at cost	147,163	203,786	500,851	623,075	418,234
Donated assets at valuation	<u>2,160,447</u>	<u>1,027,890</u>	<u>99,725</u>	<u>442,670</u>	<u>865,782</u>
	<u>2,307,610</u>	<u>1,231,676</u>	<u>600,576</u>	<u>1,065,745</u>	<u>1,284,016</u>

10. OPERATING LEASES

Financial commitments under operating leases:

	2025	2024
	£	£
Buildings:		
Not later than one year	37,781	22,000
Later than one year and not later than five years	144,844	-
Later than five years	-	-
	<u>182,625</u>	<u>22,000</u>
Other:		
Not later than one year	12,796	4,459
Later than one year and not later than five years	33,255	3,716
Later than five years	593	-
	<u>46,644</u>	<u>8,175</u>
Total commitments under operating leases	<u>229,269</u>	<u>30,175</u>

The total expenditure relating to operating leases recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities during 2024/25 is £40,391 (2023/24: £39,536).

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

11. INTANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

Cost or valuation	Computer software £	On-trade licence £	Total £
At 1 April 2024	1,362,802	199,588	1,562,390
Additions	23,780	-	23,780
Disposals	-	-	-
At 31 March 2025	<u>1,386,582</u>	<u>199,588</u>	<u>1,586,170</u>
Amortisation			
At 1 April 2024	651,580	25,133	676,713
Charge for year	517,616	21,807	539,423
Disposals	-	-	-
At 31 March 2025	<u>1,169,196</u>	<u>46,940</u>	<u>1,216,136</u>
Net book value			
At 31 March 2025	<u>217,386</u>	<u>152,648</u>	<u>370,034</u>
At 31 March 2024	<u>711,222</u>	<u>174,455</u>	<u>885,677</u>

12. INVESTMENTS

	2025 £	2024 £
Investment in Subsidiary - National Museums Northern Ireland Enterprises Limited	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>

National Museums NI owns the whole of the issued share capital of National Museums Northern Ireland Enterprises Limited (NMNIEL), a registered company. The registered office of NMNIEL is Administration Office, Ulster Folk Museum, Bangor Road, Holywood, Northern Ireland, BT18 0EY. At 31 March 2025, NMNIEL had net assets totalling £2.

13. STOCK

	2025 £	2024 £
Shop goods for resale	257,566	233,499
Academic publications for resale	16,549	19,625
Maintenance materials and consumables	30,416	27,249
Farm stock	<u>28,732</u>	<u>18,679</u>
	<u>333,263</u>	<u>299,052</u>

14. DEBTORS

	2025 £	2024 £
Trade debtors	410,546	243,799
Prepayments and accrued income	593,559	901,333
Other debtors	<u>305,548</u>	<u>505,207</u>
	<u>1,309,653</u>	<u>1,650,339</u>

**NATIONAL MUSEUMS NI
ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

15. CASH AT BANK AND IN HAND

	2025 £	2024 £
Cash at bank and in hand	<u>2,239,286</u>	<u>3,023,058</u>

16. CREDITORS (amounts falling due within one year)

	2025 £	2024 £
Trade creditors	814,272	1,067,931
Other taxes and social security	199,522	191,289
Accruals	2,196,532	3,171,006
Deferred income	117,593	173,611
Other creditors	<u>2</u>	<u>2,887</u>
	<u>3,327,921</u>	<u>4,606,724</u>

Included within the accruals balance is £155,068 for the expected financial outlay following final judgement in the (PSNI v Agnew) legal case in the Supreme Court, and legal advice sought by National Museums NI. This was included in the 2023/24 financial year and remains outstanding at 31 March 2025. The funding of this expected outlay has been provided by the Department for Communities.

Movement on deferred income

	Contract/grant £	Event deposit £	Advance admin charge £	Total £
Balance as at 1 April 2024	85,776	84,085	3,750	173,611
Amounts released from previous years	(51,986)	(76,668)	(3,750)	(132,404)
Incoming resources deferred in the current year	-	72,636	3,750	76,386
Balance as at 31 March 2025	<u>33,790</u>	<u>80,053</u>	<u>3,750</u>	<u>117,593</u>

Deferred income will be matched and released as and when the contractual obligations have been discharged.

17. PROVISIONS FOR LIABILITIES AND CHARGES

	Total £
Balance as at 1 April 2024	-
Provided in year	<u>449,921</u>
Balance as at 31 March 2025	<u>449,921</u>

At the financial year end, a provision has been made in respect of a position with Civil Service Pensions in relation to a claim made against them by a former employee of National Museums NI. Uncertainty over the timing of this settlement has given rise to a provision.

Analysis of expected timing of discounted flows

	Total £
Less than one year	19,791
Later than one year and not later than five years	75,600
Later than 5 years	<u>354,530</u>
Balance as at 31 March 2025	<u>449,921</u>

**NATIONAL MUSEUMS NI
ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

18. STATEMENT OF FUNDS

	At 1 April 2024 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Revaluation £	Transfers £	At 31 March 2025 £
Restricted Funds						
Collection acquisition fund	13,902,708	2,245,974	-	-	61,636	16,210,318
Government grant for fixed assets	108,436	932,534	-	-	(1,054,198)	(13,228)
Exhibition fund	8,883,881	23,939	(341,366)	-	-	8,566,454
Voluntary Exit Scheme fund	9,484	-	-	-	(5,697)	3,787
Payroll Provision	(155,068)	-	-	-	155,068	-
Curatorial Projects Fund	8,099	-	-	-	(8,099)	-
O.L. Nelson Legacy	411,117	-	-	-	(17,000)	394,117
P Donald Legacy	271,156	-	-	-	(33,300)	237,856
General fund	515,745	1,057,978	(1,016,310)	-	(515,745)	41,668
	<u>23,955,558</u>	<u>4,260,425</u>	<u>(1,357,676)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(1,417,335)</u>	<u>25,440,972</u>
Unrestricted Funds						
Designated fund:						
Board Reserve fund	332,077	117,622	-	-	(11,336)	438,363
Board Reserve capital fund	700,719	-	-	-	514,163	1,214,882
Undesignated funds:						
Capital reserve	1,369,579	-	(508,156)	-	-	861,423
Revaluation reserve	50,067,821	-	(106,698)	1,552,367	199	51,513,689
Government grant for fixed assets	30,280,437	-	(3,604,855)	-	496,107	27,171,689
General fund	(1,836,038)	21,151,476	(21,946,723)	-	418,202	(2,213,083)
	<u>80,914,595</u>	<u>21,269,098</u>	<u>(26,166,432)</u>	<u>1,552,367</u>	<u>1,417,335</u>	<u>78,986,963</u>
Total Funds	<u>104,870,153</u>	<u>25,529,523</u>	<u>(27,524,108)</u>	<u>1,552,367</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>104,427,935</u>

The transfer of £1,054,198 from Restricted Funds: Government grant for fixed assets, represents the acquisition of assets during the year which have no restrictions on use.

Remaining transfers of restricted funds represent utilisation of funds which fulfil the restricted criteria.

**NATIONAL MUSEUMS NI
ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

19. ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2025 Total £	2024 Total £
Fixed Assets	24,776,772	79,546,803	104,323,575	104,504,428
Current Assets	2,678,720	1,203,482	3,882,202	4,972,449
Liabilities	<u>(1,662,251)</u>	<u>(2,115,591)</u>	<u>(3,777,842)</u>	<u>(4,606,724)</u>
Total Net Assets	<u>25,793,241</u>	<u>78,634,694</u>	<u>104,427,935</u>	<u>104,870,153</u>

20. CAPITAL COMMITMENTS

There were no capital commitments at 31 March 2025 (2023/24: £nil) relating to multi-year capital projects.

21. NOTES TO CASHFLOW

Reconciliation of net expenditure to net cash provided by operating activities

	2025 £	2024 £
Net expenditure for the reporting period as per the statement of financial activities	(1,994,585)	(1,072,304)
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation	4,021,652	3,852,184
Amortisation	539,423	436,646
Impairment reversal	-	(67,600)
Loss on disposal of fixed assets	14,337	1,066
Donated assets	(2,160,447)	(1,027,890)
Increase in stock	(34,211)	(22,935)
Decrease/(increase) in debtors	340,686	(399,586)
(Decrease)/increase in creditors	(736,086)	1,283,127
Increase/(decrease) in provision	449,921	(832,576)
Deposit interest receivable	(59,766)	(46,065)
Loss on derecognition of right of use assets	<u>-</u>	<u>2,077</u>
Net cash provided by operating activities	<u>380,924</u>	<u>2,106,144</u>

Analysis of cash and cash equivalents

	2025 £	2024 £
Cash at bank and in hand	<u>2,239,286</u>	<u>3,023,058</u>

Analysis of change in net debt

	At 1 April 2024 £	Cash flows £	At 31 March 2025 £
Cash	<u>3,023,058</u>	<u>(783,772)</u>	<u>2,239,286</u>

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

22. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

National Museums NI is a Non-Departmental Public Body funded by the Department for Communities.

The Chief Executive is a non-executive director of Strategic Investment Board (SIB). During the year £60,463 was paid to SIB for secondee services to provide Asset Management support (2023/24: £50,464). No money was received from SIB during the year (2023/24: £nil). The Chief Executive is a non executive director of Tourism Ireland. During the year nothing was paid to Tourism Ireland (2023/24: £nil) and £2,721 was received as a donation (2023/24: £2,720).

The Director of Public Engagement is a director of the Association of Leading Visitor Attractions (ALVA). During the year, the annual membership fee of £4,284 was paid to ALVA. In the prior financial year, £5,624 was paid to ALVA for membership fees (£4,160) and financial benchmarking (£1,464). No money was received from ALVA during the year (2023/24: £nil).

One of the Trustees is a Northern Ireland committee member for National Lottery Heritage Fund. During the year, £18,484 was received in grant income and £195 was received for space hire (2023/24: £617,868 was received in grant income). No money was paid to National Lottery Heritage Fund (2023/24: £nil).

National Museums NI has had a number of transactions with other Government Departments and other Central Government Bodies. These have been mainly with Central Procurement Directorate and Civil Service Pensions Branch within the Department of Finance and Personnel.

23. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

National Museums NI's resources are met through grant-in-aid funding received from the Department for Communities and also through grant funding from other sources and from income generated through admissions, trading activities and donations. National Museums NI does not hold any complex financial instruments. The only financial instruments included in the accounts are receivables and payables, cash and short term investments. Trade receivables are recognised at fair value less a provision for impairment (bad debt). The provision is made when the National Museums NI is of the view that the debt may not be collectable in full, or in part, in accordance with the terms. The organisation has no borrowings and relies primarily on departmental grants for its cash requirements. Other than the financial assets and liabilities which are generated by day to day operational activities, National Museums NI holds no financial instruments.

Liquidity Risk

National Museums NI secures funding for inescapable core activities in advance of expenditure being committed. National Museums NI however relies on Self-Generated Income to discharge its full statutory obligations therefore is exposed to some liquidity risk.

Credit Risk

National Museums NI have credit policies and procedures in place and currently do not extend material credit facilities. National Museums NI is not therefore exposed to any material credit risk.

24. CONTINGENT LIABILITIES

With regards to the (PSNI v Agnew) legal case referred to in Note 16, uncertainty exists in relation to whether interest or any other uplift will become payable on the sums due to the Claimants to reflect the passing of time. As this matter is not agreed, no provision has been made, however a contingent liability is being disclosed in the event that the position changes during the remaining course of settlement proceedings.

25. EVENTS AFTER THE REPORTING DATE

There were no events since the end of the financial year requiring disclosure.

The Accounting Officer authorised these financial statements for issue on 25 September 2025.