

Minutes of the UK Joint Forum on Museums, Archives and Libraries held in Aberystwyth on 17 June 2005

Present

Chair:	Linda Tomos (CyMAL)
CyMAL:	Jane Edmonds
MLA:	Fran Hegyi
	Sue Wilkinson
NIMC:	Chris Bailey
PRONI:	Gerry Slater
SMC:	Joanne Orr
	Carl Watt

Observers from CyMAL: Mary Ellis, Huw Evans, Lesley-Anne Kerr, Stephen Kingston
Alan Watkin (CyMAL Advisory Council)

1 Apologies

- 1.1 Apologies were received from: Julie Mapstone (DCALNI), Chris Batt (MLA), Emily Candler (NMDC), Irene O'Brien (Scottish Council on Archives), Elaine Fulton (SLIC).

2 Minutes of the last meeting on 3 December 2004

- 2.1 Some amendments to the minutes of the previous meeting were suggested. The final minutes were agreed as attached at Annex 1.

3. Country update reports

- 3.1 Update reports were submitted from each country prior to the meeting. Additional comments were as follows.
- 3.2 **CyMAL** confirmed that, since its establishment on 1 April, feedback from the sector had been very positive. @ Your Library, CyMAL's major strategic library development initiative for 2005-2007, had been launched with good co-operation from MLA on the marketing strand.
- 3.3 **MLA** reported that the Museums Association and the National Trust would be arranging a meeting during the summer to discuss the formation of a cultural heritage skills panel. A museums representative and a built heritage representative from each of the 4 countries would be invited.
- 3.4 A strategic and organisational review of **MLA** was underway. The relationship between central staff and the 9 regional agencies was being examined to develop a single strategy, ensure close co-operation and avoid duplication of effort. It was pointed out that there was currently a vacancy for a Scottish representative on the MLA Board and SMC agreed to take this forward.

ACTION: SMC

- 3.5 **SMC** reported that the Museums and Galleries Working Group had met with the Chairman of the Cultural Commission, James Boyle. Discussion had focused on how funding might be structured in the future. The Commission's report was expected the following week. In addition, SMC was moving forward on cultural rights and entitlements with Museums and Galleries for Every School, a model which will look at free transport for all school children to visit museums, and an adequacy model which would define adequate cultural provision and establish a standards

framework for museums. Copies of SMC's document Realising the True Impact of Museums and Galleries in Scottish Tourism: The Key Findings were provided. On a separate issue, interest was expressed in Scotland's Public Library Quality Improvement Matrix and its performance indicators and it was agreed that **SLIC** circulate further details to members.

ACTION: SLIC

- 3.6 **PRONI** identified the importance of increasing interest in archives by bringing the content to life. The diary of the Reverend Anthony McIntyre, a Unitarian missionary who worked among the destitute of Belfast between 1852 and 1856, had recently been re-enacted, and in the longer term PRONI was looking to use archives as a starting point for others to produce works of art.
- 3.7 Chris Bailey explained that **NIMC** had not contributed a written report prior to the meeting, but that considerable activity had taken place. A consultation exercise on the structure of public administration in Northern Ireland was being undertaken, with a proposal to reduce the number of local councils and public bodies where there was seen to be duplication and where efficiency savings could be made. Options for NIMC were that it might remain as it was, transfer into a Government Department, or expand its remit. Change for public bodies was likely to take place within two years, and for local government by 2009. NIMC had also carried out an audit of registered museum collections. It had surveyed all museums to identify good practice with regard to access, and on cultural diversity had created an exhibition on incomers from 9,000 BC onwards. Their Past Your Future had been successful in involving the community in World War 2 events and developing oral history.

4 Review of Joint Forum

- 4.1 CyMAL circulated a discussion paper as attached at Annex 2. It was agreed that the Joint Forum was a useful structure and a good mechanism for exchanging information and ideas at a high level. However, the Forum should also undertake partnership projects and ensure interaction at other levels of the respective organisations. Working together in this way would provide added value and improve the work we do.
- 4.2 It was discussed that there were a number of bodies with which the Forum needed to share information, but which did not need to be represented on the Forum itself, such as the Inter-Departmental Archives Committee. It was agreed that all members would consider whether there were any other UK bodies with which the Forum should also engage and inform Jane Edmonds **by the end of July**.

ACTION: All Members

- 4.3 It was agreed that members would report back to their respective Government executives. In particular, Scotland and Northern Ireland attendees would aim to provide coverage at Forum meetings for the three domains of museums, archives and libraries; and they would also check whether or not representatives from their Government executives wished to attend Forum meetings.

ACTION: SMC, PRONI

- 4.4 It was agreed that each country would continue to host the Forum in turn, and that the host country would also provide the Secretariat, organise the papers and domestic arrangements, and take the minutes. Draft minutes, including identified action points, would be circulated for comment shortly after each meeting.
- 4.5 It was agreed that the Forum would produce a joint report each year, the first report being available in draft for the Forum meeting in June 2006. The report could be used to inform Ministers, and subsequently circulated more widely. The suggestion

of a joint Ministerial meeting in 2006 was discussed, which might be linked to the Celtic Libraries Conference in May 2006.

- 4.6 There was considerable discussion about the partnership projects which would make up the Forum's future Work Programme. Formation of the following Groups was agreed:

2005/06	Workforce Development	Lead: England
2005/06	Collections	Lead: Scotland
2006/07	Marketing	Lead: Wales
2006/07	Gathering Evidence	Lead: Northern Ireland

- 4.7 The Gathering Evidence project would include identifying what statistics were already being collected in each country and developing consistent standard data. Partnership working on International issues would require further discussion at a future meeting. It was agreed that **by the end of July** each country would identify at least one representative for each of the above 4 Groups. The country co-ordinators (Jane Edmonds, Fran Hegyi, Joanne Orr and Gerry Slater) would send the names and contact details to Jane Edmonds copying to the other country co-ordinators. The first meetings of the 2005/06 Groups would be planned to take place in **September**. Someone from each of the 4 countries would need to attend every meeting.

ACTION: All Members

5. Communication

- 5.1 Communication between Forum members would take place at Forum Meetings, and at Group Meetings once the Groups had been established as previously agreed. If MLA, or any other Forum member, sent out a request for information or for comment on behalf of a third party, then it would be up to individual members whether or not they responded and when.

6. ICT Diploma for public library services (SLIC)

- 6.1 The Forum congratulated SLIC. If members had any specific comments they should send them directly to SLIC.

7. New directions in social policy programme (MLA)

- 7.1 MLA reported that they were aiming to connect their access programme with high level policy to gain influence and resources for the sector. They planned to develop evidence of impact, partnerships and advocacy. There was an open invitation for Forum members to attend meetings of MLA's Learning and Access Forum.

8. Museums Association Conference presentation on 25 October 2005

- 8.1 Organised by Joanne Orr, the presentation would cover the ways in which cultural provision was being delivered for museums in the 4 UK countries and would last about one hour 15 minutes. The names of speakers and the outline content of the presentation were discussed. It was agreed that each of the 4 speakers should send a copy of their draft speech, in advance, to the country co-ordinators (as at 4.7

above).

ACTION: 4 Speakers

9. Any other business

- 9.1 Museums Documentation Association (MDA) – MLA explained that they provided £237,000 a year as core funding to MDA to undertake work and provide advice to museums in England. CyMAL responded that they could not revenue fund, but were looking to identify project funding. NIMC was in the same position as CyMAL. SMC had given some £7,000 this year tied to a service level agreement.

- 9.2 Institute of Conservation – MLA agreed to inform other members about representation.

ACTION: MLA

- 9.3 Ask a Librarian and People's Network Enquire – CyMAL pointed out that there was a bilingual service in Wales during office hours called Ask Cymru and that this was the way forward for Wales. Other members could respond, as appropriate, to Susi Woodhouse regarding MLA's e-mail of 31 May.

ACTION: As appropriate

10. Dates of next meetings

- 10.1 6 and 7 December 2005 hosted by MLA in London. 15 and 16 June 2006 in Northern Ireland.

Minutes of the UK Joint Forum on Museums, Archives and Libraries

3rd December 2004

Present

Chair:	Graeme Roberts (SMC board)
CyMAL:	Linda Tomos
DCAL:	Phillips Wilson
MLA:	Chris Batt
	Fran Hegyi
	Gina Lane
PRONI:	Valerie Adams
SLIC:	Elaine Fulton
	Rhona Arthur
SMC:	Joanne Orr
	Jane Robinson
	Carl Watt
Scottish Council on Archives	Irene O'Brien
Observer:	George Mackenzie, Keeper of Public Records of Scotland

1 Apologies

- 1.1 Apologies were received from: Jane Edmonds (CyMAL); Sue Wilkinson (MLA).

2 Country update reports

- 2.1 Update reports were submitted from each country prior to the meeting.
- 2.2 **Scotland** reported on recent developments in the Cultural Commission's review of Culture, which aims to identify cultural rights and entitlements for citizens and to recommend appropriate infrastructure to support their delivery by June 2005. The Commission is now embarking on its second phase of consultation. A Museums and Galleries Working Group has been established to inform the Commission, and discussions are becoming sector-wide between agencies. SLIC has had a number of meetings with the Commissioner, James Boyle.
- 2.3 Initiatives in progress in Scotland include two proposed conferences bringing museums and tourism together; the Their Past Your Future (TPYF) collaborative project between SLIC, SMC and Learning and Teaching Scotland; and SLIC's development of standards for libraries. SLIC also reported on use of NOF Residue Funding. SCA reported on the Scottish Executive's consultation on its proposed Public Records Strategy and progress with electronic access to Archives.
- 2.4 As a result of the Scottish update on TPYF, Joint Forum members agreed that it would be beneficial to have UK-wide protocols to help the countries form consistent working relationships with UK-wide agencies. *To be discussed at the next meeting.*
- 2.5 **MLA** updated on the proposed outcome of the Goodison Review, which will transfer functions from DCMS to MLA. Devolved administrations have been, or are due to be, consulted on the planned changes.
- 2.6 **Northern Ireland** (PRONI) reported on the consultation on the Archives Policy for Northern Ireland and progress with the Electronic Documents Record Management programme. DCAL reported that the Review of Public Administration in Northern Ireland, which may result in fragmentation of library service delivery by transfer to

between 7 and up to 15 local authorities. Current initiatives supported by DCAL include a project to encourage premises-sharing between libraries and post offices; and a mobile library project which will utilise the ILFA evaluation framework.

- 2.7 Linda Tomos updated for **Wales** on progress with CyMAL's establishment of staff and programmes. These include grants schemes for museums, libraries and archives; standards for public libraries; and advice and support functions. The Welsh Assembly Government's 'Making the Connections' policy will enable Welsh public services to be delivered in partnership across the public sector.

3. Workforce Development

- 3.1 Gina Lane reported that MLA's Workforce Development Strategy will be published on 6 December. It has been informed by extensive consultation and defines priority actions for MLA over the next two years. Initiatives will include a tender for researching barriers to a diverse workforce at point of entry; support for positive action traineeships; reviewing the demographic survey of volunteering; leadership and management programmes; advocacy and research.
- 3.2 MLA asked whether the other administrations might collaborate on implementing initiatives under the strategy. In Wales and Scotland, it was felt that it might be possible to sign up to the principles, share research and use ILFA as a common framework. However there was discussion about being able to joint-work because of the very different contexts in which each administration operates.
- 3.3 There are existing initiatives in Scotland where positive action traineeships and a leadership programme (funded by the strategic change fund) are already under way for museums.
- 3.4 Forum members shared information on skills gaps in their countries. The following issues were identified: the balance between academic qualifications and vocational skills; expected shortages of record managers; the need to develop 'soft' non-traditional skills such as communicating and information management; the need to develop leaders with cross-domain experience; the opportunities offered by the tourism sector to develop customer service skills.

4 Culture 2000

- 4.1 MLA led the discussion, asking whether responding to the European Culture programme might be co-ordinated on a UK basis, and in particular whether the UK administrations might work together to lobby for less opaque processes. It was suggested that the Forum should consider the wider matter of who represents the UK internationally, as international profile can be an issue of the highest political importance in the devolved administrations.
- 4.2 There is much confusion even within the country administrations and a need for clearer understanding of who represents the UK internationally at all levels. The Forum agreed this is an obstacle and needs further discussion. Linda Tomos will raise the subject with DCMS and report back to the next meeting.
- 4.3 Key barriers to European working are capacity and confidence to participate in European projects. In the climate of stronger competition in Europe it would be helpful for the Joint Forum to work together, perhaps on capacity building, sharing project ideas to increase the number of applications, and sharing the UK lead between countries.

- 4.5 Elaine Fulton agreed to prepare draft parameters and processes with a view to establishing protocols for communication and acceptable timeframes on how the administrations can work together. *To be returned to at the next meeting.*

5. Cultural Entitlement (presentations and discussion)

- 5.1 SMC, SLIC and NAS gave short presentations on their work in the area of cultural entitlement.
- 5.2 SMC has commissioned research into definitions and possible models, which include an access model that might, for example, ensure all schoolchildren can visit museums, and an adequacy model, which would define and set standards for local service provision.
- 5.3 SLIC has taken a consultative approach to develop core principles for entitlement through libraries, and is developing their existing framework of standards for self-assessment and measurement to secure range and consistency of delivery.
- 5.4 The NAS is considering the issue of entitlement under Freedom of Information and linking it to the need to raise the quality of records management and to increase electronic availability.

6. 21st Century Skills for library staff (presentation by SLIC)

- 6.1 Rhona Arthur gave a presentation on SLIC's Information Handling Toolkit. The toolkit is presented as an interactive CD ROM, which uses scenarios to develop skills of librarians.
- 6.2 The Joint Forum endorsement was sought for developing the toolkit into a qualification, perhaps an advanced diploma in ICT skills for library staff, accredited under the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA). SLIC is prepared to bid to BIG Lottery for funding. Wales. Northern Ireland and MLA agreed to support the work and to contribute to the project so that the outcome is a UK-wide accredited qualification.

7. Date for next meeting

- 7.1 The next meeting is to be in Cardiff on 17th June 2005. This was subsequently amended to Aberystwyth.

UK Joint Forum Review Discussion Paper

1. Background

- 1.1 The UK Joint Forum was established in October 2003 as part of the implementation of the Ministerial Agreement on Museums, Archives and Libraries in the UK, signed by the relevant devolved Ministers. The Agreement is not legally binding.
- 1.2 The Agreement aimed to clarify the principles which should underpin relationships between the devolved administrations on issues which involved the sector. The UK Joint Forum was established as a mechanism to facilitate collaboration and the sharing of good practice between the devolved administrations including organisations which represented the sector. It was acknowledged that additional agreements were also likely to be identified between organisations in the home nations to support collaboration outside of the Agreement.
- 1.3 The period of the Agreement will initially be from 2003 to 2006 with an annual review carried out by the UK Joint forum.
- 1.4 The main areas of interest were identified as,
 - Communication and consultation
 - Co-operation
 - Exchange of information, statistics and research
 - Agreement on the confidentiality of information shared
 - Transparency, particularly in relation to FOI
 - International and EU relations
- 1.5 The UK Joint Forum has met on 3 occasions in London, Belfast and Edinburgh.

2. Terms of Reference UK Joint Forum (Summary)

- Identify and consider areas of joint responsibility
- Identify and consider appropriate partnership working
- Identify lead partners if relevant
- Identify and consider new areas of sectoral interest
- Review the operation of the Agreement
- Consider disputes between members

3. Review Issues

3.1 Administration

- Do we still need the UK Joint Forum to underpin the Agreement or are there other mechanisms to implement the aims and objectives?
- Do we need to clarify the membership?

- Should we still rotate the Chair (or should the Chair serve for a period of 1 year as indicated in the Agreement)?
- Should we continue with existing arrangements for the secretariat?
- Should we involve Ministers at some point e.g. on the model of the UK Sports Cabinet or use the Council of the Islands?

3.2 Areas of Interest

- Are the areas noted in the Agreement still the key areas of interest for joint responsibility?
- Should we agree an annual Work Programme?
- Should we consider all, or some, of the following at meetings under specific agenda items to provide useful parameters for the Forum's work?
 - Communication and consultation
 - Co-operation
 - Exchange of information, statistics and research
 - Confidentiality of information shared
 - Transparency, particularly in relation to FOI
 - International and EU relations
- How should we progress partnership agreements on specific areas?

3.3 Other Players

- How should we summarise and publicise our activities to the sector?
- How should we report to the Executive in each of the devolved administrations (separately, jointly?)
- How should we communicate with other UK bodies e.g. IDAC (Inter-Departmental Archives Committee)? Via members who sit on both bodies? As the Forum?

3.4 Other Issues?