

Meeting date	1 September 2022
Agenda item	3
Subject	Co-Chairs Report
Author	Christian Baars, Catherine McDermott
Report	<p>In 2021 Tonya Nelson stepped down as Chair and Christian Baars and Catherine McDermott established a pilot to work as Co-Chairs to share the increasing workload brought about by Brexit and the pandemic. We feel that this model has proved productive and should be continued.</p> <p>2021/22 focussed on reviewing our basic functions as an organisation, such as the constitution and the website which we both completed. We used the Working Internationally conference to drive forward important work on Sustainability and Decolonisation. During 2022, activities responding to the situation in Ukraine took up time and resources, but resulted in closer liaison with our UK and international partners.</p> <p>In the Autumn of 2022, closely aligned with the new ICOM Strategy 2022-28, we plan a strategic review to plan and develop our activities over the next five years.</p> <p>ICOM UK</p> <p>We continued the work on our new constitution which be approved at the 2022 AGM. This will conclude the work on our governance review which started in 2019, delayed by Covid.</p> <p>We commissioned, developed and launched a new ICOM UK website with developers ‘WeDigMedia,’ delivered on budget and on time, launched on International Museum Day 2022. Special thanks to committee members Edmund Connolly, Arran Rees and Claire Messenger for their close involvement with this project.</p> <p>We contributed to the consultation on the ICOM External Review which was completed in June 2022 and planned for presentation at the Prague Conference.</p> <p>We contributed to four rounds of the museum definition consultation by involving our membership and voting for the final proposal to be ratified at the Prague Conference.</p> <p>Social media: our Facebook account now has 362 followers, Twitter 9,501 followers.</p> <p>With pandemic measures coming to an end, the bursary programme was able to successfully restart. Our remaining bursaries were ringfenced to support attendance at the 2022 Prague Conference.</p>

Membership numbers have recovered well against the 2021 numbers (1,720), with the latest (June 2022) indicating an increase to 2,110 members. This had a positive impact on our finances. We need to consider that contracts for paid roles are due for review and renewal, which will increase our expenditure going forward. Fundraising and membership recruitment remain a priority, as does increasing the diversity of our membership.

A **Committee Away Day** is planned in Liverpool for November, where we will develop the ICOM UK strategy for the next 5 years, to be aligned with the new 2022-28 ICOM Strategy.

Public Programme

With funding support by Welsh Government, a successful **2022 Working Internationally conference** was organised, which allowed us to provide added value to the conference, including Welsh translation and closed captions to increase accessibility. The conference title was: 'Cynefin – Museum Practice for Future Generations', delivered online due to Covid concerns. We are grateful for the strong support of our partners: National Museums Directors Council, British Council, Welsh Government, and the Federation of Museums and Art Galleries in Wales. The branding and marketing were supported by Barker Langham.

Session topics included:

- Climate Change
- Agents of Change
- Building a More Equitable Future
- Bridging Communities
- ICOM UK Grant Programmes
- New thinking around museum programming for people living with dementia
- Career challenges facing Students and Early Career Professionals in 2022
- Word of Mouth: Telling stories of identity in indigenous language
- Museum Practices and Refugees
- Protecting Cultural Heritage in Armed Conflict, as a late inclusion in response to the war in Ukraine

With a special focus on Welsh practice and projects, the sessions were presented as conversations between professionals, and welcomed leading international contributors from Australia, USA and Austria.

The committee plan is for each of the following three conferences focus on museum practice through the work of the home nations: 2023 in Scotland, 2024 in Northern Ireland, 2025 in England.

We organised three joint online workshops with the independent consultant Henry McGhie (Curating Tomorrow): '**Mobilising Museums for Climate Action.**' The successful workshops attracted over 125 live participants from UK, Europe, North America, South America, Middle East, and Asia. With each workshop, international participant numbers increased, indicating event series may be more popular than individual events.

The theme of the **International Museum Day 2022** was 'The Power of Museums'. Our placement student Yifei Pan (University College London) designed and ran a social media campaign which resulted in more than 45,000 Twitter impressions for May, a 134% increase on the previous month's figures, and a Twitter Takeover on International Museum Day 2022.

We were unsuccessful in our application for **Art Fund** funding for an Events Coordinator, which would have allowed us to organise a series of regular online events on topical issues in an international context, especially (but not exclusively) sustainability/climate change, and decolonisation. We plan to re-apply for funding across the sector in 2022/23.

Online Student Placements

ICOM UK continues with its strategic objective to support the future generation of museum professionals. The pandemic meant many universities pivoted to organising online placements for their students. As ICOM UK does not have a fixed office, the opportunity to host a student on remote placement provided a new and welcome opportunity for ICOM UK.

Amy Godin from the University of Manchester undertook a remote part-time placement February – March 2021. Her placement role was 2021 Working Internationally Conference Assistant.

Vereniki Vasileiadi from the University of Manchester undertook a remote part-time placement February – April 2021. Her placement role was Marketing & Communications Assistant.

Amie Kirby joined ICOM UK for a remote full-time placement via Arts Emergency. Amie's placement focussed on social media strategy and delivery, including a very successful Twitter takeover day on 3 August 2021.

Lin Xilin from Leicester University undertook a remote part-time placement July – September 2021. Her placement (organised at short notice because her original placement fell through) focussed on the website and social media.

Two students from the University of Manchester joined ICOM UK for their placements in January – April 2022. Chia-Min (April) Yang supported the 2022 Working Internationally Conference and Wanting Zhang contributed to the development of the new ICOM UK website.

Policy and Advocacy

We published a response on our website to the **Museum Association's decolonisation guidance**. We await publication of the ICOM Decolonisation Strategy to align our activities with the ICOM guidance.

We continued our **productive joint working and regular conversations with our various strategic partners**, including DMCS, British Council, Arts Council England, Blue Shield, Museums Association, and National Museums Directors Council. In addition, we collated information from our members about the effects of Covid and Brexit on museum operations across the UK

to inform DMCS and Arts Council England. We worked on a Memorandum of Understanding with **Barker Langham** to define the mutual benefits from this relationship which has been supporting our work for several years. Developing relevant and successful professional partnerships remains a key objective for ICOM UK.

We continued to publish on our website our popular series of interviews with a special focus on museum professionals from the **devolved nations**.

New talks were established with **DCMS** about sustainability in the museum sector; this is an active and ongoing conversation. We lobby DCMS on behalf of our members to assist with the recent energy price increases. We also inform DCMS of our activities in relation to Ukraine support, and assisting DCMS with other Ukraine-related projects.

Ukraine: We published a statement, condemning the war and highlighting the risks to cultural heritage. We communicated closely with our various European partners, ICOM National Committees, especially in Poland and Germany, ICOM Europe, and ICOM head office in Paris. We commissioned a 6-part series of articles by a Ukrainian heritage professional, Viktor Sobiianskyi, about the impact of the war on the Ukrainian heritage sector. We contributed to an Art Newspaper article about the museum community relief shipments to Ukraine. We played a leading part with the coordination of a shipment of conservation materials from the UK to Ukraine which arrived safely in Ukraine in early August 2022. We have commissioned a series of online events focussing on Ukraine to run in the Autumn of 2022.

Armed conflicts are not confined to Ukraine and pose an ongoing threat to global heritage. As a response to such conflicts, we will establish on the website a new section called 'Armed Conflict' which we will use to post key information on international projects undertaken by ICOM and Blue Shield.