



**Minutes of the meeting of the Board of the Arts Council
held at MacNeice House on
Wednesday 14 April 2010 at 5.00pm**

PRESENT

Rosemary Kelly (Chairman), Eithne Benson, Kate Bond, Raymond Fullerton, David Irvine, Tony Kennedy, Bill Montgomery, Ian Montgomery, Joe Rice, Brian Sore Peter Spratt

IN ATTENDANCE

Roisin McDonough	(Chief Executive)
Nick Livingston	(Director of Strategic Development)
Lorraine McDowell	(Director of Operations)
Noirin McKinney	(Director of Arts Development)
Geoffrey Troughton	(Director of Finance) item only
Claire Robinson	(Executive Assistant to the Board)

APOLOGIES

Damien Coyle (Vice Chairman), Sharon O'Connor, Paul Seawright, Janine Walker

1 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

1.1 Minute - 12 March 2010

The minute of the Performance Review meeting was accepted and signed by the Chairman.

1.2 Minute - 13 March 2010

The minute of the Business meeting held at Tyrone Guthrie Centre was accepted as a true and accurate record and was signed by the Chairman.

1.3 Matters Arising

12 March 2010

None.

13 March 2010

Page 5, Item 3.1 – No further information was available regarding PLACE and the Engine Room Gallery. Noirin McKinney, Director of Arts Development advised that Officers would provide updates in the Artform reports due in June.

1.4 Action List

The Chairman referred to the updated action list and noted that she and the Chief Executive had met with the Minister to discuss the 2010/11 budget. She also said that arrangements for the meeting with Dan Harvey, Chairman and Tim Cooke, Chief Executive of National Museums NI, was underway. Bill Montgomery would be invited to attend. She also confirmed that the Lottery & Grants Committee and Tony Kennedy had agreed to advise on the implementation of the recommendations from the Board's Review of Grants Distribution. Kate Bond would Chair the work group.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

With the Board's approval the Chairman said that items 5.6, Internal Audit Report and the tabled Shared Internal Audit Proposal would be taken at this point in the meeting.

5.6 Internal Audit Report – Works of Art

FOI Exemption Section 22

Response to DCAL Shared Internal Audit Proposal

The Chairman referred to the tabled paper which had been discussed by the Board at its private session prior to the main meeting. The paper had been prepared by the executive following discussion at the Audit Committee of a DCAL proposal for a departmental shared internal audit service. The Audit Committee's opinion was outlined and supported by the discussion that followed. The Board expressed reservations with regard to the apparent disregard for best practice, lack of attention to potential costs and available resources and the need for the provision of an independent view.

A draft response would be prepared for the Chairman.

3 CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

3.1 Chairman's Report

Since the last meeting the Chairman had been out of the country but had on her return spoken at the launch of Belfast Children's Festival at the University of Ulster, Belfast Campus.

The Chairman advised she had received an email from Joanna McConway, Head of Arts Branch at DCAL thanking the Board for its response on the Transfer of Funding for Local Arts to District Councils. The email had indicated that all the comments and issues raised by the Arts Council and other respondents would be taken into account before the transfer was finalised. The Chief Executive confirmed there had been no further updates on the situation.

The Board was also asked to note changes to the membership of the CAL Committee, Declan O'Loan had become Deputy Chair and David McClarty had also joined the Committee.

The Chairman had also received correspondence from Pat Moylan, Chairman of An Chomhairle Ealaíon and also the Ireland Chair of Poetry Committee in relation to the forthcoming selection in May, of the next Professor of Poetry. The Board was asked to forward any views on the matter to the Chairman before the 30 April 2010.

The Chairman drew attention to an invitation to an 'in conversation' event with Aosdana on 15 April 2010 in Armagh which had been circulated to all Board members.

In addition she advised that MacNeice House would be open to the public on 11 September 2010 as part of the Heritage Open Days programme. She thanked Suzanne Lyle, Head of Visual Arts for organising the event and reminded Board members that their presence as volunteers on the day would be very much appreciated.

In conclusion the Chairman requested Board members commitment to attend the June Board meeting and client reception which would be held at An Gaelaras in Derry/Londonderry.

3.2 Meetings and Events to 12 May 2010*

The Chairman advised that the Finance and Capital Committee meeting scheduled for 29 April 2010 would be rescheduled to a date in May in order to accommodate completion of year end accounts. She also requested Board members support for the annual North/South Plenary meeting with An Chomhairle Ealaíon on 28 April 2010, which would be held at the Crescent Arts Centre. Agenda and paperwork for this meeting would be circulated within the week.

3.3 Attendance Records*

The attendance record for 2009/10 was noted.

3.4 Board Workplan 2009/10*

The updated workplan was noted.

3.5 Complaints and Reviews Update*

Lorraine McDowell, Director of Operations satisfied queries regarding review and complaints received since the last meeting. The Board noted that the additional correspondence received regarding Eden Place Arts Centre and Youth Arts had been considered as complaints and had been acknowledged.

3.6 Freedom of Information (Fol) Update*

Fol requests received since the last meeting were noted. No issues arose.

3.7 Register of Hospitality and Events*

The Chairman asked Board members to continue to return completed forms to the Executive Assistant.

3.8 Chairman's Priorities

The Chairman highlighted her priorities for the meeting as the tabled item on a Shared Internal Audit Service which had been already addressed.

4 FINANCIAL UPDATE

Geoffrey Troughton, Director of Finance and Corporate Services provided an update on the period up to 28 February 2010. He reported that cash drawdown was managed on the basis of need and the full cash allocation would be drawn down for the 09/10 year. The final balance including accruals and retentions would be received after the financial year end. It was anticipated from the draft exchequer accounts that expenditure would remain within budget. Capital expenditure, although profiled as back-loaded to year end, had on the whole had been paid out. Lottery expenditure was as anticipated, with no issues arising. IFRS shadow accounts for 2008/09 Exchequer and Lottery had been audited by NIAO and had received a clean bill of health with the exception of Heritage Assets. Discussion regarding the inclusion of these assets in the Statement of Financial Position was ongoing with NIAO. Brain Sore, Chairman of Finance and Capital Committee reported that Board expenditure had been revised to £17.6k and remained on track to be within budget.

The Board noted that the 2010/11 budget had not yet been approved by the Assembly but an interim budget had been agreed by the Department. The Chief Executive advised that as the budget and business plan were not linked, the difficulties experienced during 2009/10 would not be repeated. She referred to the update on the 2010/11 Business Plan in her report.

The Chairman thanked the Director of Finance and Corporate Services for the report.

5 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

The Chief Executive referred to the report circulated and provided updates on the following items.

5.1 Employee Pension

The Chief Executive summarised the position regarding employee pensions to date and drew attention to DCAL's recommendation not to implement the proposal previously approved by the Board until DFP endorsement had been received. She advised that ASM Horwath had still to report on its investigation on National Insurance implications and was hopeful the process would not be delayed for long, as the organisation would be in breach of NILGOSC requirements. The Board would be kept informed.

5.2 Grand Opera House

FOI Exemption Section 43

5.3 Ormeau Baths Gallery

FOI Exemption Section 43

5.4 Capital Working Group

The Board noted that the Chief Executive awaited a reply to her letter to Arthur Scott, Director of Culture at DCAL (appendix 1), in response to the report by the Capital Working Group. The Chief Executive and Director of Operations would be attending a meeting of the group shortly and would report back to the Board on any references made.

The Chairman reiterated the Board's frustration with the Capital Projects situation as well as highlighting again the Board's concern regarding Risk. She indicated that she had also written to Arthur Scott on behalf of the Board. A copy of this letter would be circulated to Board members.

5.5 2010/11 Business Plan

The Chief Executive referred to appendix 2 of her report and reported that, following the early March meeting with DCAL, she and Nick Livingston, Director of Strategic Development had highlighted as requested, several high level key performance indicators from the overall Business Plan, which would be reviewed at the quarterly accountability meetings. The Department had since indicated its satisfaction with the indicators and she was hopeful that the Business Plan would be finalised within the next few weeks.. The Board also noted that discussions on the amendment of PSA targets would continue, and reporting on the full Business Plan would continue on a quarterly basis to the Policy & Planning Committee and the Board.

5.6 Internal Audit Report on Works of Arts

As discussed earlier in the meeting.

The Chief Executive reported that Kate Keys, Sector Business Development Manager had resigned. The Board noted her departure with regret, acknowledged her outstanding achievements and wished her future success.

The Chief Executive advised that following consultation with the Chairman and with Board approval it was her intention to advertise for a replacement officer for a further three years.

The Board approved the proposal to appoint a Sector Business Development Manager for a three year period.

Opera Update

Noirin McKinney provided an update on the new company, Opera Company Northern Ireland. She said progress had generally been positive with the first production anticipated for June 2010. The position of Opera in the south of Ireland was not entirely clear but she was optimistic there would be cooperation between the two companies.

6 ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

6.1 Response to DETI draft Tourism Strategy*

Nick Livingston, Director of Strategic Development outlined the situation with regard to the draft strategy and the Arts Council's response. He reported that the Policy and Planning Committee had considered the document in detail at its most recent meeting and advised the Board of remarks and recommendations made. Further discussion ensued and additional comments from Board members were noted. The final response would be posted on the Council website and clients would be directed to this when preparing their own individual responses.

The Board commended Nick Livingston on the eloquent response which he would refine prior to despatch.

The Board approved the response to the draft Tourism Strategy. A letter to accompany the response would be drafted for the Chairman to send to Minister Foster.

6.2 North/South Protocol Paper*

Noirin McKinney, Director of Arts Development advised that, following a review by the Board of An Chomhairle Ealaíon, a number of amendments had been proposed to the strategy document, previously approved by ACNI Board at its December 2009 meeting. She

indicated that the amended document was on the agenda for consideration at the joint plenary meeting on the 28 April 2010. All changes were accepted.

The revised North/South Protocol was recommended for approval by the both Boards at the Joint plenary meeting.

Noirin McKinney advised that communication with officers in An Chomhairle Ealaíon was ongoing, and the Board was assured that the agenda and paperwork for the meeting would be circulated well in advance of the joint meeting.

6.3 2010/11 Business Plan

The Chief Executive reiterated that the 2010/11 Business Plan had not yet been approved by the Department and referred back to discussion earlier in the meeting.

Bill Montgomery left the meeting.

7 ITEMS TO NOTE

7.1 Delegated Decisions*

The report on delegated decisions made in March for the Small Grants programme was considered. Lorraine McDowell, Director of Operations clarified decisions taken not to fund several clients.

7.2 Complaints/Reviews Annual Report 2009/10*

Lorraine McDowell, Director of Operations outlined the purpose of the standard report circulated and corrected the mean score relating to client satisfaction with the Council's performance, in response to unsuccessful applications. The Board noted this lower score reflected an improvement on previous years.

7.3 2009/10 Business Plan Update [4th Q]

Nick Livingston, Director of Strategic Development reported that following discussion at the Policy and Planning Committee one change had been made to the Business Plan. The Board noted that the figure quoted for funding to projects in disadvantaged areas included all capital projects. This would be re-profiled to give a more accurate comparison to the target set.

Noirin McKinney, Director of Arts Development said the Communications department were currently working on an advocacy card for National Gallery.

7.4 Communications Report [4th Q]

The final quarter update for 2009/10 was noted. The Board acknowledged the excellent work carried out by the Communications team and expressed its appreciation. Thanks would be conveyed to the officers

7.5 Annual Report on Use of Consultants*

Nick Livingston, Director of Strategic Development referred to the updated report which had been circulated prior to the meeting and reflected amendments suggested by the Policy and Planning Committee. The changes made were highlighted and the Board accepted the report.

7.6 RFO Survey Overview*

The Chairman thanked Nick Livingston, Director of Strategic Development for the useful paper produced to outline how the client RFO survey was a key strategic tool for Council.

7.7 Legacy Trust/Cultural Olympiad Update*

The Board noted the report and extended thanks to Cian Smyth, Creative Programmer and Marian Clarke de Monreal, Programme Coordinator for the exemplary work being done.

The Chief Executive reported that she and Lorraine McDowell, Director of Operations had recently met with Mike Corry, and Lorraine Conlon at DCAL to discuss achievements to date work through issues. She referred to Northern Ireland's success and its growing recognition within the wider UK Cultural Olympiad Programme. She also confirmed that the communications strategy previously developed would be reviewed again and that there was a built in evaluation process.

7.8 Digest of Arts Statistics

Nick Livingston, Director of Strategic Development referred to the report circulated, stating that it was a major piece of work which had been compiled from analysis of previous research and would have a number of uses. It had been well received by the members of the Policy and Planning Committee, who had, following discussion, suggested that it would benefit from the inclusion of a short summary as an introduction to the report. The short shelf life of the report had also been noted and it was agreed that on completion of a number of minor refinements the report would be placed in the public domain. An accompanying messaging opportunity would also be provided and work on this would be initiated.

The Board noted the importance it attached to work of this kind and commended its author Tony Dignan. It would be specifically useful in the preparation for the next CSR, and the Board would also wish to see potent messages issuing from it in the updating of advocacy cards.

Nick Livingston indicated that he would also draw on information within the report when preparing the response to the DETI draft Tourism Strategy.

Peter Spratt left the meeting.

8 COMMITTEES

8.1 Audit Verbal Update 22/3/10

All items had been addressed earlier in the meeting.

8.2 Policy & Planning Verbal Update – 1/4/10

All items had been dealt with during the meeting.

8.3 Committee Minutes*

Minutes of meetings of the Acquisitions Committee, 18/9/09; Audit Committee, 22/12/09; Lottery & Grants Committee, 1/12/09; Policy & Planning Committee, 25/2/10; and Finance & Capital Committee, 30/12/09, 29/10/09, 26/11/10 were ratified by the Board. The minute of the Policy & Planning meeting of the 14/1/10 would be re-distributed as an incomplete copy had been mistakenly circulated.

9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

10 PRESENTATION – NEW LODGE ARTS

Geraldine Wilkins, Chairman and Katrina Newell, Co-ordinator of New Lodge Arts were welcomed to the meeting. They thanked the Board for the opportunity to highlight the work undertaken with the young people within the North Belfast community.

A brief history of the organisation was outlined along with details of main funders and a summary of income and expenditure. Core aims and how they reflected ACNI objectives were highlighted. Reference was made to projects and activities; partnership work with other organisations and areas for future development. The challenges associated with attracting additional sponsorship; working to change the perception of arts amongst young people, adults and the community as a whole; improving audiences and opportunities for exposure for the young people under limited capacity and resources were also detailed.

In response to questions raised the Board noted the small number of staff employed; the organisation's dependency on volunteers to assist with projects; the work involved in securing and training these volunteers; the need for development of areas such as marketing, branding and private sponsorship and for additional resources/capacity to permit this.

The Chairman concurred with tributes expressed by Board members and congratulated Geraldine Wilkins and Katrina Newell on their vision and successes. She thanked them for the inspirational presentation and offered best wishes for future projects.

