



**Minutes of the meeting of the Board of the Arts Council  
held at Tyrone Guthrie Centre, Newbliss, Co Monaghan on  
Saturday 13 March 2010 at 9.00am**

**PRESENT**

Rosemary Kelly (Chairman), Raymond Fullerton, David Irvine, Tony Kennedy,  
Bill Montgomery, Paul Seawright, Brian Sore, Janine Walker .

**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), Eithne Benson, Kate Bond, Ian Montgomery,  
Sharon O'Connor, Joe Rice, Peter Spratt.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Brian Sore, RSUA and PLACE

**1 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**1.1 20 January 2010**

The minute of the February ASOP meeting was accepted as true and accurate record and was signed by the Chairman.

**1.2 Matters Arising**

None.

**1.3 Action List**

The updated action list was noted. No issues arose.

**1.4 Chairman's Report**

The Chairman advised of the Minister Nelson McCausland's reply to the Board's response to the CAL Committee report on the Inquiry into the Arts in Northern Ireland. The Minister had thanked the Board for its work and noted its support of some of the recommendations; he had also accepted the presence of some inaccuracies within the report, and recognised that a number of the recommendations had already been put in place. He noted that the Board's views would be reflected in his formal response on the Inquiry.

A further letter from the Minister with regard to a National Gallery had been received. The Minister had agreed to discuss the issue at the next bilateral meeting with the Chairman and Chief Executive.

Since the last Board meeting the Chairman had spoken at an Arts & Business celebration of the Young Professionals and Business Professional on Arts Board initiatives; spoken at the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the Marketplace Theatre in Armagh; attended a performance of the The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui at the Mill Theatre and visited the Play Resource Centre with Gavin O'Connor, Arts Development Officer. She had also chaired a meeting of the Policy and Planning Committee and attended a meeting of the Board's Review of Grants Group to finalise the McClure Watters report.

Along with the Chief Executive, the Chairman had met with the Minister, his Special Advisor, Stephen Brimstone and DCAL Head of Arts & Creativity, Joanna McConway to discuss the 2010/11 budget. The Arts Council's response to the reduced budget was acknowledged and the potential difficulties were outlined and discussed in detail. The need for extra attention in the area of community arts was noted and an Arts in the Assembly day was raised.

The Chairman, Chief Executive and Director of Strategic Development, Nick Livingston had attended a meeting with the Permanent Secretary, Rosalie Flannagan, Director of Culture, Arthur Scott and Head of Arts & Creativity, Joanna McConway. The purpose of the meeting was to fulfil the obligation, as set out in the Business Process Map agreed with the Department in May 2009, to consider and approve the Arts Council Business Plan for 2010/11. The Business Plan had been forwarded to the Department by the agreed date of 31 January 2010. During discussion the Department had declared its discontent with presentational aspects of the document and the 2010/11 Business Plan had not been formally approved. The Board and Executive reflected on difficulties in the past year and expressed grave concern at the possibility of similar delays in finalising the Business Plan and consequently the Budget for 2010/11. The Board urged swift action on this and the Chief Executive noted that she had agreed to examine the current document with regard to issues raised by the Department.

The Chairman had also taken the opportunity to highlight the Board's ongoing concern at the inherent Risks entailed in the lack of clarity around roles and responsibilities particularly with regard to Capital Projects. She had also raised the suggestion of a Memorandum of Understanding between NDPBs and the Department.

The Board was made aware of a celebratory event for the artist, T P Flannagan which had been arranged at short notice for 23 March 2010. The Chairman advised that she was unable to attend. Noirin McKinney, Director of Arts Development indicated that every effort was made to notify Board members of events well in advance, but in some cases this was outside the Arts Council's control.

## **2 ITEMS FOR APPROVAL**

### **2.1 International Options Report\***

The Chairman referred to the discussion of the International Options report at the previous day's meeting and reiterated the Board's recommendation to continue to represent Northern Ireland at the Venice Biennale in 2011. Members present for the discussion were Rosemary Kelly (Chairman), Damien Coyle (Vice Chairman), Eithne Benson, Raymond Fullerton, David Irvine, Tony Kennedy, Bill Montgomery, Ian Montgomery, Paul Seawright, Brian Sore, Janine Walker.

**The Board approved representation at the 2011 Venice Biennale with a multi-artist exhibition.**

## **2.2 RPA Response to DCAL\***

The Board's response to the Minister on the Transfer of Funding for Local Arts to District Councils had been considered by the Policy and Planning Committee at its most recent meeting. The Committee's recommendation was accepted and **the Board approved the response.**

## **2.3 Capital Working Group Report\***

The Chief Executive referred to the report circulated which had been produced by DCAL and indicated that despite consultation the issues had not been resolved.

### **2.4.1 Board's Review of Grant Distribution Processes\***

The Chairman thanked members of the Board and Executive involved with the working group; Eithne Benson, Kate Bond, Paul Seawright, Tony Kennedy, Lorraine McDowell and Nick Livingston and said that, despite an initial misunderstanding of the assignment by the consultant, a satisfactory end product had been achieved. She indicated that the working group had finalised the report at its last meeting in February and had recommended its approval to the Board. Nick Livingston, Director of Strategic Development advised that he would write to David Gray, senior partner with FGS McClure Watters and thank him for his timely intervention in the project.

**Following a brief discussion the Final Report on the Board's Review of Grant Distribution Processes was approved.**

### **2.4.2 Grants Review Implementation Plan\***

The Board noted the implementation plan circulated; discussed the need for a steering group to advise on the implementation of recommendations; accepted the importance of having the main recommendations in place for the 2010/11 ASOP round in October 2010 and acknowledged the increased workload at executive level that would result in order to deliver on this.

**A working group made up of Board members and the Director of Operations was approved.**

The Board recognised that members of the Lottery and Grants Committee were best placed to sit on the working group and accepted the Chairman's comments regarding the Committee's already demanding workload. The Chairman would speak to committee members initially and feedback to the Board on group membership as soon as possible. It was agreed that as the first business of the working group would be to consider and approve the implementation plan, a meeting date would be put in place at the earliest convenience.

## **2.5 Guidelines for Board Preparation for ASOP\***

The guidelines prepared by the Chairman in consultation with the Chief Executive were discussed. Board members welcomed the proposals and sought clarification on advance contact with officers and raising queries within areas outside designated artform. A standard template detailing areas to be reported on at the meeting was also requested. The Chief Executive undertook to draft this template.

The Board discussed the importance of maintaining constructive relationships with officers and suggested introducing periodic presentation to the Board on a similar basis as currently undertaken by clients. The Chief Executive agreed to identify options to improve Board/Officer contact and return to the Board with proposals.

**Guidelines to streamline Board preparation for ASOP were approved and would be appended to the Standing Orders.**

## **2.6 Exchequer and Lottery Budgets 2010/11\***

Lorraine McDowell, Director of Operations advised that the 2010/11 budgets had been considered by the Lottery and Grants Committee at the beginning of March. She outlined changes made to the SIAP budget since the meeting highlighting that the reduction [£521,735 to £478,135] had resulted in light of an overspend on ASOP.

A brief discussion of capital projects followed. The Board noted that a £1.9m commitment to capital projects would have to be found from the 2010/11 budget, and final outturn spend of capital before the year-end might make additional funds available for the coming year.

Lorraine McDowell, Director of Operations also highlighted that, as funds were limited, only £100k had been available for a new programme. The Committee had considered options and decided to recommend a Musical Instruments for Bands programme with a restricted budget of £75k.

The Board was advised that any changes to the forecast were likely to be minimal and if different at year end would be brought to its attention.

**The Board accepted the recommendations of the Lottery and Grants Committee and approved the budgets as presented.**

In response to a query regarding NI Screen the Chief Executive clarified that funding had been ringfenced for a number of years, with the final year being 2010/11. Support for film would have to be continued but no discussions had yet taken place on how this would happen. The Chief Executive indicated that a paper would be presented to the Board at an appropriate stage during the year.

## **2.7 Capital Project Application**

Brian Sore, Chairman of the Finance and Capital Committee drew attention to a special meeting of the Committee held the previous evening, Friday 12 March, to consider an urgent application for funding from An Culturlann. He outlined the project, the circumstances behind the timing of the application, the reduced level of funding requested, and reminded the Board that funding had already been agreed in principle last year. He also noted that the reduced figure had been accepted by the other funders involved.

**The Board considered the information presented and accepted the recommendation of the Committee to approval funding of £308k to An Culturlann.**

## **3 ITEMS TO NOTE**

### **3.1 Artform & Specialist Reports\***

The Chairman extended thanks to the Arts Development Officers for the excellent reports circulated to the Board. Board members agreed that the information provided was very useful. A request for the inclusion of any issues which may be of importance to the Board in its decision making, in future reports was noted.

Brian Sore left the meeting during a brief discussion on PLACE. Issues surrounding a potential break from RSUA were clarified and checks would be made on a proposed move from current premises. An update on these issues would be brought to the Board.

The situation and future of the Engine Room was noted. Concern was raised about the future of the venue on the retirement of Cliff Brookes. Lorraine McDowell, Director of Operations indicated that contact would be made with the client.

### **3.2 Executive Summary – Older People’s Strategy\***

The Board concurred with the decision of the Policy and Planning Committee and accepted the Executive Summary to the Older People’s Strategy.

Bill Montgomery congratulated the Chief Executive and Director of Strategic Planning on securing the partnership of Atlantic Philanthropies. The Chief Executive confirmed that AP had outlined specific requirements in its letter of offer with regard to PR opportunities and that work in this area was underway. Details would be presented to the Board at a later stage.

### **3.3 Review of Premises Update**

The Chairman advised that the working group had discussed the premises situation in considerable detail and noted that difficulties had been experienced working through the review as all the necessary information had not initially been provided in the options paper prepared. She stated that the review process had been lengthy and challenging however savings had been achieved and in light of this, the working group had at its meeting in February accepted that the organisation remain at MacNeice House for the remaining six years of the current lease.

**The Board agreed with the recommendation to remain at MacNeice House until the end of the current contract in 2016.**

## **4 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

## **5 PRESENTATION – CREATIVE INDUSTRIES INNOVATION FUND (CIIF)**

Lorraine McDowell, Director of Operations made a presentation to the Board on the CIIF programme which the Arts Council had undertaken to manage for a three year period commencing in October 2008. She highlighted the programme objectives; the artform areas targeted; membership of the consortium put in place to implement the programme; the breakdown of the £5m funding allocated; details and statistical analysis of awards made and information on the steering group set up to monitor and evaluate the programme.

The success of the initial rounds had been due to support provided by Arts Council officers in inputting and assessing applications. The Board also noted that of the 13 areas targeted only 4 had not received funding; that the Arts Council only administered the programme with all decisions being made by the consortium; that all the funds had been allocated at this point, with the remainder of the year being used to monitor the projects. An interim evaluation report was imminent and the midterm evaluation was scheduled for June 2010. The Communications team would prepare a press statement following the evaluation. Several projects which had received funding were highlighted.

The Chairman thanked Lorraine McDowell for the presentation and commended the work of those involved in making the programme happen, particularly in light of the difficulties experienced in initial implementation of the programme. The Board agreed that the presentation had been extremely interesting and commented on the benefits of the programme. Dismay was noted with regard to the uncertainty of the future of the programme under the current financial restrictions. It was suggested that details of all recipients be placed on the website along with statement supporting the programme.

In conclusion the Chairman stressed the importance of Board members fulfilling their obligation to the Board in attending the annual Performance Review meeting and thanked those members who had attended. She also thanked the Executive for being present and for their preparation and participation in a very worthwhile event.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 11.30am.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Rosemary Kelly**  
**(Chairman)**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**14 April 2010**