

Minute 6
2016/17

Exemptions

FOI Exemptions:

Section 5 – Page 2, Section 5.1 – Commercial Interests

Section 5 – Page 3, Section 5.2 – Commercial Interests

Section 5 – Page 3, Section 5.3 – Information intended for future publication

Section 5 – Page 4, Section 5.3 – Information intended for future publication

CONFIRMED



Minutes of the meeting of the Board of the Arts Council

Held at The Sidings, Lisburn on Wednesday 7 September 2016 at 5pm

1. ATTENDANCE

PRESENT

Bob Collins (Chair), Leon Litvack, Anna Carragher, Katy Radford, David Alderdice, Nisha Tandon, Paul Mullan, Conor Shields, Noelle McAlinden, Jarlath Kearney, Roisin Erskine.

IN ATTENDANCE

Roisin McDonough (Chief Executive)
Lorraine McDowell (Director of Operations)
Nick Livingston (Director of Strategic Development)
Geoffrey Troughton (Director of Finance and Corporate Services)
Noirin McKinney (Director of Arts Development)
Joanne Wright Assistant to the Board and Directors

APOLOGIES

Cian Smyth, Siún Hanrahan, Katherine McCloskey. Eibhlín Ní Dhochartaigh

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To be noted as they arose during the meeting.

3. PREVIOUS MEETING

3.1 Minutes of the previous meetings*

The minutes of the meetings held on 27 July 2016 were approved by the Board and signed by the Chair.

3.2 Matters Arising

In relation to a matter raised under AOB, the Chief Executive stated that the Executive had been in touch with Dominic Bryan, joint chair of the Commission on Flags, Identity, Culture, and Tradition. He envisaged the consultation opening in October 2016 until January 2017. He believes it may take the form of a two stage process: a general public consultation followed by a second stage, focusing on the key findings.

4. CHAIR’S REPORT

The Chair advised the Board that he had spoken at the Belfast Launch of the Ulster Bank International Arts Festival. He informed the Board that he and the Chief Executive had met, as arranged, with the Minister earlier that day. He reported that they had raised a number of issues/concerns, such as the importance of the Arts, the extent to which services had been curtailed as a result of funding reductions, the need to begin a process of budget restoration, the need for a capital budget, as well as highlighting key programmes, including the Arts and Older People Programme where re-engagement by the Department as a funding partner would be very important. They also sought the Minister's support for the Artist Recognition Scheme. The Chair stated the Minister had been open and interested, had affirmed his commitment to the arts as part of his portfolio and expressed a particular interest in renewing engagement with the Department of Education. He was also receptive to the proposal for a modest capital provision for the Arts Acquisitions Programme. He specifically noted that the Minister for Finance was very supportive of the Arts. In relation to the Musical Instruments for Bands programme, the Minister agreed that it would be worthwhile to examine the possibility of extending this funding to other areas of bands’ work. The Chair advised that the Council would respond in writing to recapitulate the issues raised at the meeting.

The Chair confirmed his term would come to the end on 7 October and that the next meeting on 5 October 2016 would be his final one. He understood the position of Chair would be advertised on 8 September; closing 30 September; with interviews planned for early November 2016 and an appointment made before the end of that month. These dates were inevitably susceptible to some change. In the interim, Vice-Chair Dr Katy Radford would discharge the responsibilities of the office.

5. CHIEF EXECUTIVE’S REPORT

5.1 Update on The Mac

[REDACTED]

5.2 Update on The Grand Opera House (Verbal)

The Chief Executive noted the Grand Opera House has appointed a new Chief Executive and an announcement will be made in due course. The Chief Executive also advised that a further announcement would be made shortly on a new Chair of the Opera House.

[REDACTED]

5.3 Update on Heaney Legacy - [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

5.5 Update on new premises

The Chief Executive reported Director of Finance and Corporate Services would cover this item in the Financial Update.

Additional Paper - A6 Petition (Verbal)

The Chief Executive reported that she had been contacted by Friends of the Earth regarding the A6 Petition recently featured in the media. As a public authority ACNI could not support the petition but brought it to the Board members attention as she had been requested. The Chair advised that it was a matter for individual Board members to determine whether any engagement with the campaign in their personal capacities was appropriate.

6. FINANCIAL UPDATE

6.1 Exchequer Report 2016/17

The Board noted the report.

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services reminded those present of the financial risks discussed at the previous Board meeting i.e. the costs associated of moving the IT infrastructure to ITAssist and the proposed relocation of Premises before February 2017. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services explained that the latter creates additional financial risk as any change near the end of the financial year is difficult to financially manage as there are fewer options to control financial pressures or easements. It was noted that Council's baseline Exchequer budget of £10.3M (16/17) represented a 5.7% cut on last year. The baseline budget was unchanged from the opening position previously notified to the Board.

Capital: The Director of Finance and Corporate Services advised that there had not been an opening Capital allocation however three in-year allocations had been advised by the Department of Communities i.e. (i) Musical instruments for Bands £200k; (ii) MAC capital up to £70k and (iii) IT Hardware (in-house) £18k.

6.2 Lottery Report 2016

The Board noted the report. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services advised that the overall income is down £557k compared to the same four months last year. The Board also noted that the Lottery budget was over-commitment as at 31 July 2016.

7. BUSINESS REPORTING

7.1 Annual Equality Report

The Director of Strategic Development presented the Annual Equality Report on the implementation of the Arts Council's equality and good relations statutory duties under S75, with a dedicated section regarding the implementation of S49A of the Disability Discrimination Act and the Equality Scheme Action Plan. He stated that the Report sets out how the Council is fully committed to promoting equality of opportunity and good relations through dedicated interventions such as Intercultural Arts and the Arts and Older People Programme, but more generally as they apply across all aspects of its work.

He answered members' questions and thanked the Art Form Officers, Ashleigh Lilley and the Chair for their input to complete the report in time for the Equality Commission's summer deadline - subject to Board approval. The Board approved the Annual Equality Report.

7.2 Board Work Plan

The Board noted the Work Plan. The Chief Executive highlighted the Annual Funding Review and advised it was currently being undertaken by SIB and that it intends to be returned with recommendations for discussion at the November meeting.

8. MATTERS TO NOTE

8.1 Committee Update – Grants Committee 28 June 2016

The Board noted the minutes of the meetings.

8.2 Delegated Decisions*

The Board noted the Delegated Decisions Report.

9. PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCY - CLIENT PRESENTATION

Mary Black presented to the Board on the work of the Agency and outlined the partnership programme on Young People and Wellbeing due to launch in October 2016.

Following a discussion of a range of matters raised by Board members, the Chair thanked Mary Black for attending the meeting and presenting to the Board.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Conor Shields advised that the Royal Exchange Scheme rephrasing and zoning public consultation would be closing on 13 September and asked the Executive to consider engaging with Belfast City Council as some of the previously discussed Arts spaces had not been present in the plans.

The Chief Executive reported that an Education Officer post would be taken forward.

The Chief Executive advised the Board that the Minister for Finance had asked that she Chair a time limited group which would look at the Executive's Art Collection to see what could be maximized from storage and if they should reinvest in acquisition. Other members of this group included Deidre Mackle, Dr Denise Ferran, Paul Terrington, Neil Shawcross and Paul Seawright.

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services asked the Board to be patient in the transition to IT Assist and advised the Board not to accept any updates on the ACNI iPads as this can render them unusable. The Board was advised that only the ACNI emails could be accessed on the devices and other accounts could not be added as IT assist have advised this would compromise the UK/NI System.

Jarlath Kearney referred to previous discussions and asked the Chair to set up a working group to discuss the decade of centenaries before his term of office ceased in October. The Chair agreed and advised that this group would report back to the Board at the October meeting.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 5 October 2016 at 5.00pm at The Sidings, Lisburn.

There being no further business, the Chair thanked everyone for attending, and the meeting concluded at 7.45pm.

Signed: 
Bob Collins

Date: 05/10/16
5 October 2016