

Minute 3
2020/21

Exemptions

FOI Exemptions:

Section 5, pages 2-3,	FOI Exemption Section 22
Section 5.1, page 3,	FOI Exemption Section 43
Section 5.4, page 4,	FOI Exemption Section 22
Section 6.1, page 4,	FOI Exemption Section 43
Section 6.3, page 5,	FOI Exemption Section 43
Section 9.1, page 6,	Data Protection Section 1.1

CONFIRMED



**Minutes of the meeting of the Board of the Arts Council
On Friday 26 June 2020 at 2.00pm
Held via Skype**

1. ATTENDANCE

PRESENT

John Edmund (Chair), Katy Radford (Vice Chair), Cian Smyth and Siun Hanrahan

IN ATTENDANCE

Roisin McDonough (Chief Executive)
Geoffrey Troughton (Director of Finance and Corporate Services)
Noirin McKinney (Director of Arts Development)
Paul Harron (Director of Operations)
Debbie McKibben (DfC, Head of Arts Branch)
Louise Hyland (DfC, Arts & Creativity Branch)
Diane Dillon (Assistant to the Board and Directors)

The Chair opened the meeting at 2.00pm and welcomed all.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No new conflicts of interest were declared.

3. PREVIOUS MEETINGS

3.1 Minutes – 9 April 2020

A minor amendment was agreed on page 7 paragraph 1 to change “...when staff return to work” to “...when staff return to the office”.

3.2 Minutes – 29 May 2020

Board members agreed that paragraphs 2 and 3 under Item 3.1 were unnecessary as the discussion was noted in the minutes of 9 April 2020.

Subject to the proposed changes, both sets of minutes were approved and signed by the Chair.

3.3 Matters Arising

The Chair advised that he had spoken to the Head of Culture, Derry City and Strabane DC who had expressed disappointment that funding for the Resilience Programme had been removed. Further, the information she provided appeared to

contradict the advice given to the Board at the May meeting. The Director of Arts Development provided a detailed update regarding the concerns raised and advised that the Arts and Culture Manager of Derry City and Strabane DC had written on 8 June 2020 asking that the Arts Council reconsider the proposal. The Director of Arts Development advised that the Arts Council are in discussion with DfC regarding potential funding for the programme.

The Chair asked if there were any issues regarding furloughed part-time posts which were supported by grant funding. The Director of Operations advised that it was a complicated issue, and provided an update regarding the Arts Council approach to the concerns raised.

4. CHAIR'S REPORT

4.1 New Board

The Chair advised that the Department had made eight offers, six of which have been accepted. Contact details for those appointed will be formally notified to ACNI on 1 July 2020 and the new members will attend the July Board meeting following a briefing ahead of that date. A detailed induction pack will be provided to new members.

The Chair expressed his thanks to the Vice Chair and the Board member who had accepted extensions to their terms until 30 December 2020 and noted that one Board member had decided to step down from 30 June 2020.

4.2 Coming out of Lockdown

The Chair mentioned the Arts Collaboration Network submission to the DfC Committee regarding the state of the NI arts and culture sector in the wake of COVID-19, and the challenges to recovery. The Chair said that it was important to get as much feedback from the sector as possible to start planning for phase 2 of recovery.

4.3 Things we have learned from the crisis

The Chair said that it would be important that the new Board members are aware of how the Arts Council have responded to COVID-19 to date and how the sector is preparing for coming out of lockdown. The Chief Executive said that she is happy to share the Board Strategic Intent paper (which was presented at the May Board) with the new members.

5. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

The Chief Executive shared details of a proposed bid [REDACTED] to the Department, which the team have been working extremely hard on over the past week; the final document will be shared with the Board as soon as the paperwork is concluded. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The Chief Executive said that the bid would be supported by a document that sets out rationale and need and would include levels of investment required in order to achieve parity with Arts Council Wales.

Board members were in agreement that this was a well-balanced, positive and much needed piece of work and were supportive of the bid being presented to DfC.

5.1 Research Update

The Chief Executive provided an overview of the surveys carried out [REDACTED] [REDACTED] which provided information on audience views during lockdown. The Board noted the document and said it would be helpful to continue to monitor this.

The Chief Executive advised of two surveys being undertaken in-house by the Research team which will hopefully get a better understanding of audience attitudes and dynamics; the information gathered will capture a wider range of information [REDACTED]

5.2 Black Lives Matter

The Chief Executive shared the correspondence received and her response, in order to establish the Board's perspective on whether or not a public statement should be made on the Art Council's website. Following a lengthy discussion, Board members were in agreement that the Chief Executive had provided an appropriate response and did not feel that a public statement was necessary at this time.

The Chief Executive advised that DfC had not given any particular guidance on the matter and noted that the correspondence was generic and not limited to ACNI. The Chief Executive advised that other Arts Council have not specifically endorsed the BLM campaign, and noted that all Arts Councils have a commitment to equality and diversity within the sector.

The Chief Executive suggested that a short statement be composed and included in a future staff newsletter; the Board agreed with this approach. The Chief Executive will draft a statement which will be circulated to the Board for approval.

5.3 Arts Programming Overview

The Chief Executive presented the report which provided an update on AFP client's alternative programming for 2020-21 in light of COVID-19. The report outlined the huge diversity, range and types of activities that clients are undertaking using a variety of online and media platforms.

Board members agreed that overall the report was very helpful; it clearly illustrates how mixed the picture is and highlights the fact that some clients are doing very little compared to other organisations.

Board members commented on the inventiveness, commitment and unstinting generosity of so many people and organisations and noted that there have been some amazing pieces of work, however concerns were expressed regarding quality control. The Chief Executive noted that there is a need to digitally up-skill the sector, and that this requirement would be included in the bid to the Department discussed

earlier in the meeting. The ability to monetise digital delivery and the challenge of developing an audience are clearly other elements of future digital delivery that need to be explored.

The Board noted the document.

5.4 Summary of Emergency Funding

The Director of Operations presented the report which provided an overview of the Artists Emergency Programme (AEP) awards offered and a breakdown by artform.

The Director of Operations advised that the Organisations Emergency Programme (OEP) had received 172 applications requesting approximately £3M; the budget for the programme is currently £500k. He advised that eligibility checks are currently underway and stated that he anticipates that assessments will begin from week commencing 29 June 2020.



The Chair, who had requested the report, thanked the Director of Operations for the very helpful overview; the Board noted the report.

5.5 Draft Five Year Strategic Framework

The Chief Executive advised that the framework document had been updated in light of COVID-19 and that the changes were highlighted in yellow for ease of reference.

The Board approved the revised document (subject to minor typos being corrected), which will be resubmitted to DfC for approval.

6. FINANCIAL UPDATE

6.1 Financial Report

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services provided a brief overview of the report to 31 May 2020 and highlighted the following:

Exchequer Resource

- Additional Exchequer pressures due to the reduced lottery recharge. This will be discussed at the monthly budget meetings.
- The opening budget was £10.197M.
- The Minister's additional £1M emergency funding has not yet been factored in.

Risks for 2020-21 include:

- 
- Sectoral pressure for financial assistance arising from COVID-19.

Exchequer Capital

- There is nil Capital budget.

Lottery

- Lottery NLDF was over committed at 31 May 2020.
- As demonstrated on the accompanying graph, it was noted that that actual Lottery income over the first two months of 2020-21 has been consistent at approximately 5% below budget.

The Board noted the report.

6.2 Draft Exchequer Accounts 2019/20

6.3 Draft Lottery Accounts 2019/20

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services advised that both sets of Accounts were reviewed at the Finance and Capital and Audit and Risk Committee meetings on 19 June 2020 and 26 June 2020 respectively. The Accounts are presented to the Board ahead of the audit which is due to commence in July 2020 and will be brought back to the Board in the autumn.

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services advised that the draft Accounts are very much a work in progress; comments and feedback received from the Chair have been considered and the master version of the Accounts updated.

The Vice Chair asked for clarification on several points to which the Director of Finance and Corporate Services responded. He reiterated that the Accounts are a living document and are updated during the audit and to completion to reflect post balance sheet events.

The Board noted both sets of Accounts.

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services advised the Board that due to a NAO glitch the C&AG omitted to sign the 2018-19 Lottery Accounts. As a result the Lottery Accounts need to be updated and re-signed.

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services advised that new internal auditors, [REDACTED] had attended the Audit and Risk Committee meeting on 26 June 2020 and presented the proposed audit strategy for 2020-23.

7. BUSINESS REPORTING

7.1 Lottery Project Funding Update

The Director of Operations advised that Lottery Project Funding moderation will be held on 29 June 2020, the outcome of which will be presented to the Grants Committee on 30 June 2020 for approval. There are 42 solicited applications based on standstill funding.

7.2 AFP Funding Reviews

The Director of Operations advised there had been no requests for funding reviews.

7.3 Communications Report 2019/20

The Director of Arts Development presented the report and highlighted a number of key national and international events held during the year. The Vice Chair asked if it was possible to include coverage of events held by international partners and

funded by the Arts Council. The Director of Arts Development said that this could be incorporated into the next report.

The report was noted.

7.4 HR/Communications COVID-19 Update

The Director of Arts Development presented the report which provided an update on all Communications and HR activities since the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Chair complimented the Communications team for composing and circulating the internal and external newsletters and the What's On guide, which he finds extremely useful.

The report was noted.

8. MATTERS TO NOTE

8.1 Committee minutes previously circulated

The item was noted.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

9.1 Recruitment of Director of Strategic Development & Partnerships

The Chief Executive advised that the job description had been agreed with DfC in March 2020 therefore HR will proceed to undertake the recruitment process. She advised that the job title had been amended as the role will involve undertaking a partnership element of work in order to reconnect further with Local Authorities, Education Authorities and other organisations such as the Barings Foundation.

The Chief Executive was seeking approval to constitute a selection/interview panel and suggested that the panel be made up of either the Chair or Vice Chair and a Board member; the Chief Executive will Chair the panel. Board member [REDACTED] was suggested due to his corporate knowledge of the organisation and time served on the Board.

Board members agreed that the recruitment process proceed. The Chief Executive will circulate the job description/job specification to panel members and dates for selection panel/interviews will be determined.

The Chair, on behalf of the Board, expressed thanks to Board member [REDACTED] for her dedication, commitment and valuable contribution to the Board over the past six years. The Executive team echoed the Board's sentiments.

[REDACTED] wished the Board well as it progresses to a new phase with new Board members and encouraged the Board and Executive team to keep up the good work that the Arts Council does for the sector.

There being no further business the Chair declared the meeting closed at 4.10pm.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 22 July 2020 at 2pm via Skype.

Signed: 
John Edmund (Chair)

Date: 22nd July 2020
22 July 2020