

The Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon

689th Plenary Meeting

70 Merrion Square

Tuesday 17 November 2015 at 14.00-17.00

Present:

Aibhlín McCrann, Deputy Chair, Ciarán Walsh, John McAuliffe, Judy Woodworth, Mark O'Regan, Brian Maguire Joan Sheehy, Miriam Dunne

In attendance:

Orlaith McBride *Director*, Martin O'Sullivan *Finance Director & Company Secretary*

Documents before the meeting

Agenda

Minutes of Meeting held on 20 October 2015

Directors Report

Arts Council Board Review

Travel & Training Awards

Aosdána Cnuas

15 – 11 – 111 Apologies

Sheila Pratschke, Chair, Eimear O'Connor, John O'Donnell, Monica Spencer

15 – 11 – 112 Chair's Introduction

Aibhlín McCrann, Deputy Chair, chaired the meeting on behalf of the Chair, Sheila Pratschke.

Conflicts of Interest- The Chair requested members to declare any conflicts that they may have with the agenda items and reminded members to advise her of any conflicts that may arise during the course of the meeting.

Condolences

The Council extended its sympathy to Judy Woodworth and to John O'Donnell on their recent bereavements.

Paris Victims

Members agreed that a letter of sympathy from the Chair on behalf of Arts Council should be sent to the French Ambassador.

15 – 11 – 113 Minutes of the Plenary Meeting: 20 October 2015

15 – 10 – 101 *Chairman's Introduction- Meeting with Public Appointments Service (PAS) on Council Membership*- should be corrected to read '-----upcoming six appointments or re-appointments to the Council----'

15 – 10 – 104 *Director's Report- A report on Harp Making in Ireland*- should be corrected to read '---of the Irish harp and access to quality Irish made instruments-----'

15 – 10 – 105 *Reports- Business & Finance Meeting 15 October Meeting*- typo corrected.

15 – 10 – 106 Budgetary approach for Local Arts and Ealaín na Gaeltachta- should be corrected to read '---a 3.8% increase to Ealaín na Gaeltachta for 2016, on the basis of matched funding being provided by Údarás na Gaeltachta---'

15 – 10 – 108 Awards- Opera Project Award (Round 1) 2016- should be corrected to read '---informed members that due to the 'open door policy' adopted by the Arts Council in opera as part of the 2011 Opera Policy, many new entrants were now being funded under Opera Projects and the Opera Production Award---.The panel had welcomed the variety of the applications'.

The Minutes of the 20 October Plenary meeting were **approved** including corrections as set out above.

15 – 11 – 114 Matters Arising

Review of Opera Production Award - Members **agreed** that the Review should be brought to the December Policy & Strategy Meeting for discussion.

Theatre Project Award (Round 1) 2016- it was **agreed** that details of the conflict declared by the Head of Theatre should be provided to Members.

There were no other matters arising other than those covered elsewhere on the agenda.

15 – 11 – 115 Director's Report

Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology

Members were informed that Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology had written to the Arts Council seeking nominations to its governing body. Members **agreed** to nominate [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].

· Section 37, FOI Act, Personal Information.

Abbey Theatre Update

Members were informed that the Abbey has been formally written to outlining the basis of the funding offer for 2017. Members were also updated on the newly revised evaluation process. Members **noted** the update.

Members raised the matter of the separate funding which the Abbey has secured for its 2016 Programme, from the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DAHG). Members expressed their concern in relation to the appropriateness of the DAHG decision.

Words Ireland Update

Members were updated on the independent evaluation undertaken to evaluate the effects / impacts of the 2015 initial investment. Members were informed that the model is clearly working well. Members welcomed the review findings. Members **noted** that a further provision of €50k has been provided in the literature budget for 2016 and **agreed** that it should now be committed to WORDS Ireland for 2016.

It was also **agreed** to put a copy of the evaluation Report in the Board Pad (reading room).

Culture 2025

Members were made aware that the previously circulated submission had now been submitted to the DAHG in response to its discussion document on a National Cultural Policy Culture 2025. Members commended the executive on the quality and clarity of the submission.

Director's Diary Report

2016 Choral Project partners meeting – Members were updated on the meeting. It was **agreed** that a list of the choirs involved should be circulated to Members.

With regard to the overall 2016 Programme it was **agreed** that a full report (including an update on the budget and Irish language aspect of *A Nations Voice*) would be brought to the December Plenary meeting.

Arts Council attendance at the Joint Oireachtas Committee hearing on the VFMPR Report- Members asked for an update from the Director on the Committee hearing. Members were informed that as it was the VFMPR, the invitation was extended to the DAHG only; the Arts Council was present at the Department's request in a support role. Members were provided with a summary of the main issues covered in the hearing. Members **noted** the update.

The other matters in the Director's Diary Report were **noted**.

15 – 11– 116 Reports

Audit Committee Meeting 28 October Meeting

Joan Sheehy, Committee Member, updated Members on the meeting highlighting the following:-

- *Minutes of meeting held 9 July 2015*- the Minutes of the 9 July meeting were agreed;
- *Draft Internal Audit High Level Review of the System of Internal Financial Control*- Members noted the Arts Council has well established and 'significantly improved' internal financial controls. Members agreed that the Management comments should now be finalised and agreed with the Committee Chairman;
- Members received progress updates regarding the implementation of 1) Arts Council Collection and 2) Grants approved by Panels internal audit recommendations;
- *ICT Security Audit*- it was agreed that the Audit Committee would write to Council on the matter;
- *Appointment of New Audit Committee Chairman*- Members agreed that the incoming Committee Chairman should be invited to attend at the close of the 30 November meeting.

The report and recommendations of the Audit Committee were **agreed**.

The Chair informed Members that the Committee Chairman had written to the Chair of the Arts Council. The Finance Director & Company Secretary read the content to Members. Members noted with concern the HR resourcing deficit in the ICT department and the increasing risk (both operational and reputational) which this poses for the Arts Council. Following detailed discussion, Members **agreed** that the matter should immediately be brought to the attention of DAHG.

Members also took the opportunity to extend their sincere thanks to Jimmy Murphy, Committee Chairman, whose term comes to an end on the 30 November 2015.

Policy & Strategy Committee 17 November Meeting

The Chair updated Members on the meeting highlighting the following:-

- *Implementation of Arts Council Strategy*- it was agreed that in advance of formal procurement of project management services to assist with the implementation of the strategy, it may be necessary in the immediate term to engage project management expertise to support the executive in the outline scoping of the 'strategy to plan' project

and specifically in the drawing up of the brief for RFT for the procurement of project management services.

- *The Five Considerations*-the briefing document (the final draft of which would be tabled at the December meeting of P&S) would be discussed with arts managers / advisers. When agreed in December it would be published online in late January welcoming response and feedback, and underlining that this would be a key document informing Council's shaping of its investment strategy during 2016 and informing funding decisions with effect from January 2017.

The report and recommendations of the Policy & Strategy Committee were **agreed**.

15 – 11 – 117 Council Evaluation Report

Members **agreed** to postpone discussion until the December Plenary.

15 – 11 – 118 Awards

Visual Arts Curator Residency Scheme (2015) Panel

Members **noted** the Visual Arts Curator Residency Scheme (2015) awards. A financial appendix is attached to the Minutes.

Travel & Training August –October 201 5- Members **noted** the awards. A Financial appendix is attached to the Minutes.

Title by Title Awards 2016 - Members **noted** the awards. A Financial appendix is attached to the Minutes.

The Deputy Chair, who chaired the Irish Titles Panel, highlighted the need for a closer working relationship between the Arts Council and Foras na Gaeilge, and that the panel had suggested that the Arts Council might consider hosting a symposium for Irish language publishers.

Ciaran Walsh, who chaired the English Titles Panel, highlighted the introduction of individual scoring of titles confirming that this approach was significantly more effective in terms of the panel process.

15 – 11 – 119 Cnuas Recommendations

Members **agreed** the recommendations made. A Financial appendix is attached to the Minutes.

15 – 11– 120 Any Other Business

RAISE Roundtable Event

John Fanning, Council Member, updated Members on a successful event attended by the RAISE organisations.

Members separately noted that the RAISE pilot is due to end in March 2016 (a final report will issue at the end of the pilot). Members also **noted** the positive endorsement of the initiative in the VFMPR Report and the recommendation that it be extended.

Members were informed that the Executive are looking to recruit (subject to approval) or procure a dedicated private investment resource to assist the further development of RAISE.

16x16 Bursaries launch date

Members were informed that 18 or 20 December are the current suggested dates for the launch to be hosted at Arás an Uachtaráin.

There were no other matters for consideration.

Summary of Decisions

- *Minutes of the Plenary Meeting: 20 October 2015*-the Minutes of the 20 October Plenary meeting were **approved** including corrections;
- *Review of Opera Production Award* - Members **agreed** that the Review should be brought to the December Policy & Strategy Meeting for discussion;
- *Theatre Project Award (Round 1) 2016*- it was **agreed** that details of the conflict declared by the Head of Theatre should be provided to Members;
- *Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology*- Members **agreed** to nominate [REDACTED] and [REDACTED];
- *Words Ireland Update*- Members **noted** that a further provision of €50k has been provided in the literature budget for 2016 and **agreed** that it should now be committed to WORDS Ireland for 2016;
- *Words Ireland Update*- it was also **agreed** to put a copy of the evaluation Report in the Board Pad (reading room);
- *2016 Choral Project partners meeting* – it was **agreed** that a list of the choirs involved should be circulated to Members;
- *2016 Programme*- it was **agreed** that a full report (including an update on the budget and Irish language aspect of *A Nations Voice*) would be brought to the December Plenary meeting;
- *Audit Committee Meeting 28 October Meeting*- the report and recommendations of the Audit Committee were **agreed**;
- *Letter from Audit Committee Chairman on HR resourcing deficit in ICT*-Members **agreed** that the matter should immediately be brought to the attention of DAHG;
- *Policy & Strategy Committee 17 November Meeting*- the report and recommendations of the Policy & Strategy Committee were **agreed**;
- *Council Evaluation Report*- Members **agreed** to postpone discussion until the December Plenary;
- *Cnuas Recommendations*- Members **agreed** the recommendations made;

