

The Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon

724th Plenary Meeting

70 Merrion Square, Dublin
17 April 2019

Fearghus Ó Conchúir *Deputy Chair*, Loughlin Deegan, Martina Moloney, Dónall Curtin, Helen Shaw, Mark O'Kelly, Pádraig Ó Duinnín, Paddy Glackin.

In attendance:

Orlaith McBride, *Director*, Martin O'Sullivan *Deputy Director & Company Secretary*, Liz Meaney, *Arts Director (for all items after the Director's Report)*.

Documents before the meeting

Agenda
Minutes of the Plenary meeting held on 20 March 2019
Director's Report
Strategic Funding Update
Special Initiatives Policy
Acknowledgement and Visibility Programme 2019-20
Awards for Noting

19 – 04– 039 Apologies

Sinead Moriarty.

19 – 04– 040 Chair's Introduction

Conflicts of Interest- The Deputy Chairman **noted** that members had already declared their conflicts and requested members to declare any further conflicts that they may have with the agenda items and reminded members to advise him of any conflicts that may arise during the course of the meeting.

Condolences- Members expressed their sympathy to Helen Shaw on the death of her brother.

Wexford Festival Opera Meeting- Members **noted** that the Chair of Wexford Festival Opera welcomed the suggestion of a meeting with the Council, to discuss the Mazars report and reassure the Council of their resolve in stabilising WFO. Members **agreed** that a small delegation of Council Members should attend the meeting.

Abbey 312 Meeting- Members **noted** that the group had now reverted with a series of dates for a proposed meeting. Members also **noted** that the meeting will focus on the Arts Councils Theatre policy and range of Arts Council supports to theatre practitioners. Members **agreed** that if possible Council Members on the Abbey Working should attend.

Chair's Appointment- Members **noted** that [REDACTED] had been received. Members also **noted** that the Public Appointments Service is due to convene a shortlisting panel after Easter.

Lughnasa FrielFest

Members **noted** that since the last Council Meeting, following publication of the December Minutes and an article in the Sunday Times, the Arts Council had been in discussions with the Lughnasa FrielFest in relation to the decision taken in December whereby none of the Arts Council's funding to Donegal County Council could be allocated to FrielFest.

An Arts Council delegation met with representatives from Lughnasa FrielFest to discuss the condition attaching to the funding. Following consideration Members **agreed** to remove the condition attaching to the funding offer to Donegal County Council to enable them to release monies to the Lughnasa FrielFest.

Members also **agreed** to review the approach to funding organisations via Local Authority Funding as part of the framework agreements.

19 – 04 – 041 Minutes of Plenary Meeting 20 March 2019

Members **agreed** the Minutes for the 20 March 2019 Meeting.

19 – 04– 042 Matters Arising

MOU with Galway 2020- Members were informed that a draft MOU was being worked on and that it would be finalised by early summer.

There were no other matters arising.

19 – 04 – 043 Director's Report

Arts and cultural participation among young people – additional research

Following detailed discussion members **agreed** to the extension of the Growing Up in Ireland research subject to cross checking that the proposed procurement approach is in order. Members noted and **agreed** that the additional funding required of €32,915 (inclusive of VAT) would come from a reallocation of funding from the Artist and Youth Work Residency Programme. Members also **agreed** that the remaining €7k from this programme should be retained within the YPCE budget for further policy development.

Members asked for a copy of the first 'Growing up in Ireland' report to be uploaded to the Reading Room.

Members asked for clarity on how the proposed additional research will fit in with the wider research work being undertaken by the Strategic Development Department.

Artists in Residence: Initial Teacher Education - Continuing Partnerships 2017-2020

Members **agreed** to continue its annual investment of €75,000 to enable the five residencies to continue for the third and final year of the current partnership.

Artists in Residence: Initial Teacher Education – New Partnership DCU Institute of Education 2019-2020

Members **agreed** to the proposed investment in the residency of €15,000 for 2019/20. Members **agreed** that the funding should initially come from contingency with the balance to come from reserves.

Ireland Chair of Poetry

Members **agreed** to the appointment of [REDACTED] as Ireland's next Professor of Poetry to succeed Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin. Members **noted** that the role will take effect from 1 September 2019 for three years. Members also **noted** that the nomination is to remain confidential as its announcement will not take place until either June or September.

Arts Grants Funding – forward commitment 2020 & 2021

Members **agreed** to a €6m budget for 2020. Members **noted** that the proposed increase in funding of €600k would be funded from either the 2020 Open Call or Projects' budgets as required.

Theatre Policy & Strategy Implementation Meetings

Members **noted** the suggested dates, with the sector, to discuss the implementation of key parts of the Theatre Policy & Strategy.

FRESH STREET#3 International Seminar

Members **noted** that the international seminar for the development of Street Arts will take place in Galway from 22 – 24th May 2019.

Director's Diary Report

Members **noted** the remainder of the Director's Diary Report.

19 – 04 – 044 Reports

Business and Finance Committee 17 April 2019

Martina Moloney, Committee Chairman, gave a report to members on the key recommendations:-

- *Minutes of 27 February 2019* - were agreed to be recommended to Council for approval;
- *2019 Qtr1 Management Accounts* - were agreed to be recommended to Council for approval. Members also agreed to recommend to Council for approval that €216k of identified savings should be transferred to Contingency;
- *Contracts over €50k* - Members agreed to recommend to Council that approval be provided to proceed with procurement of 3 years plus 1 year extension of the Private Investment services contract;
- *Draft Reserves Policy* - was agreed to be recommended to Council for approval with €1m to €1.25m to be retained in reserves;
- *Revised Committee Terms of Reference* - were agreed to be recommended to Council for approval;
- *Draft Trusts Usage Policy* - was agreed to be recommended to Council for approval. Members also sought that a new policy should be developed regarding any future Trusts that control of such Trusts should be vested solely with the Arts Council;
- *Property Update* - was noted. Members requested an overview should be presented to the next meeting however Members authorised the Executive to complete

- negotiations without recourse to the Committee should a reasonable rent be agreed;
- *FOI report* – was noted;
 - *Risk Register update* – was noted – Workshop to be provided in June for all Council Members and Executive with outside support;
 - *HR report* – was noted. Members requested that in future a high level numbers based report should be presented to every meeting;
 - *ICT Transformation Project report* – was noted as an ambitious programme with delivery planned by end 2020;
 - *ICT report* – was noted. Members noted the concerns regarding end of life equipment and software;
 - Next meeting June 26 – was agreed.

Members **agreed** the recommendations of the Business & Finance Committee.

Members **noted** the ICT report with concern. Members **agreed** the need for a unified approach to the management of both BAU and the transformation project requesting that a detailed project plan be brought to the next B&F Committee Meeting.

In relation to revised Committee Terms of Reference, it was **agreed** that members would consider further and confirm approval at the May Plenary Meeting.

In relation to the Draft Reserves Policy Members **agreed** that additional information on the level and timing of expenditure commitments should be brought to the next B&F meeting.

Policy and Strategy Meeting 17 April

Loughlin Deegan, Committee Chairman, gave a report to members on the key discussions:-

- Minutes of 13 February meeting were agreed;
- Update provided on Venues Review;
- Draft Arts Centre Investment Scheme discussed final draft to be brought back to the next P&S meeting;
- Update on Audience project provided;
- Discussion on Strategic funding lessons learned;
- Update on 3yr plan.

Members **agreed** the recommendations of the P&S Committee.

Abbey meeting with the Executive

Liz Meaney, Arts Director, joined the meeting and updated members on progress.

Members requested that all outstanding information should be available for the next Working Group Meeting.

19 – 04– 045 Strategic Funding Update

Liz Meaney, Arts Director, and Stephanie O'Callaghan, Arts Director, joined the meeting. Members were updated on the general reaction of the arts sector to the recent round of Strategic Funding decisions.

Following a detailed discussion Members **noted**:-

- challenges around application and compliance requirements for some art forms and smaller scale organisations;
- suggested consultation w/shop for organisations on funding agreements;
- guidance around reserves policy preparation would be welcome;
- that an update on partnership funding will be brought to the next meeting.

19 – 04– 046 Acknowledgement and Visibility Programme 2019-20

Sean MacCarthaigh, Director of Communications and PR, joined the meeting.

Members were briefed on an initiative to improve the level of acknowledgement of Arts Council funding by arts organisations and artists and increase public awareness of the Arts Council's role in funding and developing the arts over the next two years. Members noted that the proposal initially required the commissioning of a small piece of research, to better understand the nature of the challenges facing the Arts Council. Members were informed that the Arts Council's new design and branding company will undertake the research, the cost of which will be €8,500, and that the findings will be presented back to Council. Members **agreed** the recommendation.

Separately members **noted** that the Arts Council had not been sufficiently acknowledged in the branding of Arts Council's supported work on tour internationally. Members **agreed** this would be discussed with Culture Ireland at a meeting once the new Chair is appointed.

19 – 04– 047 Special Initiatives Policy

Members considered and **agreed** the Special Initiatives Policy subject to a slight redraft of the proposed wording. Members also **agreed** that the revised wording should be circulated, by email, for Members information.

19 – 04– 048 Awards

Young Ensemble Scheme 2019

Members **noted** the awards. A financial appendix is attached to the Minutes.

Members **noted** that the quality of young people on the panel was exceptional.

Anthony Cronin Award 2019

Members **noted** the award. A financial appendix is attached to the Minutes.

Dance Bursary Panel (2019, Round 1)

Members **noted** the awards. A financial appendix is attached to the Minutes.

Circus and Street Arts Bursary Panel (2019, Round 1)

Members **noted** the awards. A financial appendix is attached to the Minutes.

Film Bursary Panel (2019, Round 1)

Members **noted** the awards. A financial appendix is attached to the Minutes.

Arts Participation Bursary Panel (2019, Round 1)

Members **noted** the awards. A financial appendix is attached to the Minutes.

Theatre Bursary Panel (2019, Round 1)

Members **noted** the awards. A financial appendix is attached to the Minutes.

Members **noted** that panellist Monica Frawley expressed her thanks for being asked to sit on the panel.

Architecture Bursary Panel (2019, Round 1)

Members **noted** the awards. A financial appendix is attached to the Minutes.

Music and Opera Bursary (2019, Round 1)

Members **noted** the awards. A financial appendix is attached to the Minutes.

Literature Bursary Panel (2019, Round 1)

Members **noted** the awards. A financial appendix is attached to the Minutes.

Members **noted** the benefit of having an international panellist.

19 – 04– 049 Aosdána Working Group Update

Karen Hennessey, Aosdána Registrar, joined the meeting. Paddy Glackin, Working Group Chairman, updated members on matters such as 1) nominations process to Aosdána 2) issues around older artists and 3) ongoing discussions regarding the level of the Cnuas threshold. Members **noted** the update. Members **agreed** that Mark O’Kelly, Council Member, would join the Working Group.

19 – 04– 050 Any Other Business

Diversity Conference in Galway

Members **noted** the success of the conference. Members also **noted** that sanction is to be sought for a new role of Diversity Officer.

Internal Audit- Communications Review

Members **agreed** that the communications internal audit module should be progressed before the next ARC Meeting.

Diligent Transfer

Members expressed their thanks to Ciara Branagan, Council Executive, for coordinating the transfer from Board Pad to Diligent.

There were no other matters.