

The Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon

683rd Plenary Meeting

70 Merrion Square

Wednesday 20 May 2015 at 14.00-17.30

Present:

Sheila Pratschke Chairman, Aibhlín McCrann, Deputy Chairman, Ciarán Walsh, Judith Woodworth, Mark O'Regan, Joan Sheehy, Miriam Dunne, John Fanning, Brian Maguire (until 15.30), Monica Spencer.

In attendance:

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

Documents before the meeting

Agenda

Minutes of Meeting held on 15 April 2015

Opera Production Awards 2016

Peer Panel Review

Director's Report

Music Commissions 2015

Bursaries (Round 1) 2015

Festivals & Events (Round 2) 2015

Aosdána Cnuas Recommendations

15 – 05 – 041 Apologies

John McAuliffe, Eimear O'Connor, John O'Donnell.

15 – 05 – 042 Chairman's Introduction

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.

Report on the Harping Tradition in Ireland

Members **agreed** to defer discussion on the Report until June Plenary meeting.

15 – 05 – 043 Minutes of the Plenary Meeting: 15 April 2015

The Minutes of the 15 April Plenary meeting were **approved**.

15 – 05 – 044 Matters Arising

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

15 – 05 – 045 Opera Production Award 2016

Liz Meaney, Arts Director, and Randall Shannon, Opera Adviser, joined the meeting. Members were informed that Niall Doyle, new Head of Music and Opera, had declared a number of conflicts and as a result would not be attending.

Separately the Arts Director confirmed that the new Head of Music had made a detailed submission in relation to possible conflict of interest matters related to his new role and that an agreed approach, in relation to working through these matters, had been put in place.

Members were briefed on the recommended and short-listed applications. Following a detailed discussion Members **agreed** that Wide Open Opera, Opera Theatre Company and Meta should be funded. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] A financial appendix, showing the agreed financial commitments, is attached to the Minutes.

Members **agreed** that future grant recommendations should have a budget included.

Notwithstanding the requirement to fund applications that best addressed a scheme's criteria, Members **noted** the ongoing need to nurture talented individuals, who hadn't been awarded funding, and how best to support them in the future. Members **agreed** that applicants should be offered some type of support to assist with making more effective applications. It was agreed that these high level concerns in relation to nurturing talent in Opera would be considered in the new Opera Policy.

15 – 05 – 046 Peer Panel Review

Members **agreed** to defer discussion on the recommendations until the June Plenary meeting.

15 – 05 – 047 Director's Report

Memo of Understanding - Arts Council and City and County Management Associations (CCMA)

Liz Meaney, Arts Director, and Monica Corcoran, Manager, joined the meeting.

Members were updated on the recommended draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Arts Council and the CCMA. Members were informed that the intention of the MOU is to achieve communication at a higher level with Local Authorities and that the new MOU will help to refocus, reengineer and rethink the Arts Council's relationship with Local Authorities. Members referenced the need for the 'individual artist' to be included under 'principles' of the MOU.

Following a detailed discussion Members **agreed** the MOU in principle subject to greater focus on the individual artist in the final text of the agreement.

Changes to the Funding Year

Members **agreed** to the cessation of the current Funding Year (April to March) for recurring funding grants and to plan for the re-introduction of fiscal year grant funding from 2017 with a transitional nine month funding period to apply for April to December 2016. Members also **agreed** to consider moving the Grants Meeting from December to October starting with 2017 applications.

16 x 16 Individual Bursary Awards Panel

Members were informed that the closing date of applications is 16 July and that a selection panel will meet in September.

Members **agreed** that the Panel should be structured as follows:-

- Three Members of Council- Members to confirm their interest to Chair;
- Three external Members, one to be nominated by the Toscaireacht of Aosdána

Funding Applications – Members' Interests

Members welcomed the update and it was **agreed**, where variations are made to already agreed decision making structures (e.g. 2016 Open Call Panel), that the possible impact on

Council Members would be discussed prior to agreement so that Members understood any possible consequences for them in relation to Conflict of Interest.

Aosdána new members

Members **noted** the new Aosdána Members.

Director's Diary Report

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

15 – 05 – 048 Reports

Policy & Strategy Committee Meeting 19 May 2015

In the absence of the Committee Chair, the Director updated Members on the meeting and in particular highlighted the following actions agreed in relation to Strategy 2015:-

- The broad sequence of an agreed framework for the strategy to be concluded in June 2015, further detailed during the summer and approved by Council and then published in early September was agreed. Accompanying that would be the preparation of profile papers on each arts area (with appropriate linking and overlapping). These too would be issued in September and be the basis for dialogue with stakeholders, partners and the arts sector during the autumn.
- Following the series of four meetings exploring issues and options, the next meeting on 3 June will focus on decision-making. The intention is to confirm those elements (of content and structure) where there is emerging consensus and establish agreement where possible on the strategic priorities and goals for the next Arts Council strategy.
- In preparation for this, members will revisit all the strategic issues identified so far (e.g. the artist; spatial planning; engaging people not currently engaged with the arts etc.), and also reflect on the 'key questions' contained in the presentations made at previous meetings.
- Members were invited to contact the Council Chair and the Committee Chair to indicate their individual perspectives on the degree of change which the new strategy should be designed to deliver.

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

North South Plenary Meeting 20 May 2015

Members were updated on the meeting as follows.

- The Chair of An Chomhairle Ealaíon, commented on the Arts Councils current strategy process arising out of the 2014 Strategic Review, the changing financial landscape for the arts in the context of the public finances and the Councils 2016 Programme as part of *Ireland 2016*.
- The Chair of ACNI referenced the nature and impact of ongoing budget cuts. An update was given in relation to the Ulster Orchestra as well as the new local authority changes in NI and the hope that the change would lead to a new focus of engagement for the arts within local government. Confirmation was also given that a new department will be setup in NI from April 2016 with the result that DCAL will merge with Department of Community. The Chair of ACNI stressed the importance of the arts

retaining a high focus and not having to compete with such items as Housing and Welfare which will also form part of the Department.

Both Directors expanded on several points raised by the respective Chairs.

- The Minutes of the May 2014 meeting were adopted and there were no matters arising.
- A report was given on the work of the North South Working Group.
- The review of jointly funded organisations was discussed.
- North South Touring- Val Ballance, gave an update on the North South joint touring initiative which continues to work well but highlighted the need for a more strategic approach to budget setting and more support for marketing to improve attendance levels.

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The report and recommendations of the North South Plenary Meeting were **agreed**.

15 – 05 – 049 Update Presentation on Value for Money Policy Review of Arts Council

Members **agreed** to defer the presentation and that it should now be made instead to the June 3 Policy & Strategy Committee Meeting.

15 – 05 – 050 Awards

Music Commissions 2015

Members **noted** the Music Commission 2015 awards. A financial appendix is attached to the Minutes.

Bursaries (Round 1) 2015

Members **noted** the Bursaries Round 1 2015 awards. A financial appendix is attached to the Minutes.

Members **noted** that Brian Maguire chaired the Literature Bursary Panel and not Aibhlín McCrann as recorded. It was **agreed** that the record of the meeting should be corrected.

Festivals & Events (Round 2) 2015

Members **noted** the Festivals & Events (Round 2) 2015 awards. A financial appendix is attached to the Minutes.

Members **agreed** to discuss the current shortlisting approach and see how it can be improved.

15 – 05 – 051 Aosdana Cnuas

Members **agreed** the Cnuas recommendations. A financial appendix is attached to the Minutes.

15 – 05 – 052 Appeals Panel

Applicant : Niall Byrne- Funding Programme: Music Bursary Award – Round 1 2015

Members were briefed on the recommendation of the Appeals Panel that the appeal be upheld with a proposed remedy being that the application be shortlisted for the next round of Music Bursary (R1 2016) and that the matter be drawn to the attention of the Music Bursary (Round 1) 2016 panel when it meets.

Members **agreed** the recommendation of the Appeals Panel.

15 – 05 – 053 Any Other Business

Members **noted** that there were no further matters for discussion.

The meeting closed.

Summary of decisions/actions

- *Report on the Harping Tradition in Ireland*- Members **agreed** to defer discussion on the Report until June Plenary meeting;
- *Minutes of the Plenary Meeting: 15 April 2015*- the Minutes of the 15 April Plenary meeting were **approved**;
- *Opera Production Award 2016*- Members **agreed** that Wide Open Opera, Opera Theatre Company and Meta should be funded. Members also **agreed** that future grant recommendations should have a budget included. Additionally Members **agreed** that applicants should be offered some type of support to assist with making more effective applications and that that these high level concerns in relation to nurturing talent in Opera would be considered in the new Opera Policy;
- *Peer Panel Review*- Members **agreed** to defer discussion on the recommendations until the June Plenary meeting;
- *Memo of Understanding - Arts Council and City and County Management Associations (CCMA)*-Members **agreed** the MOU in principle subject to greater focus on the individual artist in the final text of the agreement;
- *Changes to the Funding Year*- Members **agreed** to the cessation of the current Funding Year (April to March) for recurring funding grants from 2017. Members also **agreed** to consider moving the Grants Meeting from December to October starting with 2017 applications;
- *16 x 16 Individual Bursary Awards Panel*- Members **agreed** that the Panel should be structured as follows:- Three Members of Council. Members **agreed** to confirm their interest to Chair. Three external Members, one to be nominated by the Toscaireacht of Aosdána;
- *Funding Applications – Members’ Interests*- Members agreed in the case of new initiatives or where variations are made to already agreed decision making structures, that discussion on the possible impact on members would be highlighted prior to agreement on such variations so that members could assess any possible consequences in relation to Conflict of Interest
- *Policy & Strategy Committee Meeting 19 May 2015*- the report and recommendations of the Policy & Strategy Committee were **agreed**;
- *North South Plenary Meeting 20 May 2015*- the report and recommendations of the North South Plenary Meeting were **agreed**;
- *Presentation on Value for Money Policy Review of Arts Council*- Members **agreed** to defer the presentation;
- *Aosdana Cnuas*- Members **agreed** the Cnuas recommendations;
- *Appeals Panel*- Members **agreed** the recommendation of the Appeals Panel.