

The Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon

701st Plenary Meeting

70 Merrion Square, Dublin

22 February 2017

Present:

Sheila Pratschke, *Chair*, John McAuliffe, *Deputy Chair*, Brian Maguire, Joan Sheehy, Eimear O'Connor, Miriam Dunne, Monica Spencer, Martina Moloney, Damien Downes, Loughlin Deegan, Paddy Glackin, Pádraig Ó Duínnín, Helen Shaw.

In attendance:

Orlaith McBride *Director*.

Documents before the meeting

Agenda

Conflicts of Interest Declarations

Minutes of the Plenary Meeting held on 16 & 17 November 2016

Director's Report

Touring Recommendations

Abbey Theatre Funding 2018-2020

Travel and Training Awards

Artists' Exemption Recommendations

Programme Activity Fund Awards

Cnuas Recommendations

17 – 02 – 001 Apologies

No apologies.

17 – 02 – 002 Chair's Introduction

The Chair welcomed members to the first meeting of a new Council, the 701st meeting of An Chomhairle Ealaíon.

The Chair reminded everybody that in their role as Council members there would be many sensitive matters for discussion. She read out Section 20 of the Arts Act 2003 which describes the legal obligations to observe confidentiality in relation to all Council discussions.

The Chair reported that the presentation by John Concannon on Creative Ireland had been deferred to the March meeting.

The Chair also informed the members that she had received a request from Mary McCarthy, Chair of the Expert Advisory Committee of Culture Ireland to meet with the Council. It was agreed to facilitate this request at a future meeting.

Conflicts of Interest- The Chair noted declared conflicts and requested members to declare any additional 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.

17 – 02 – 003 Minutes of the Plenary Meeting 12 December

The Minutes of the 12 of December Plenary Meeting were **approved** with one amendment – that Miriam Dunne had declared a conflict with Waterford County Council and Kilkenny County Council.

17 – 02– 004 Matters Arising

The Chair reported that both she and the Director had met with the new Secretary General of the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Katherine Licken and the Assistant Secretary, Feargal O Coighligh, to discuss a range of matters including our partnership with Local Government, Funding 2018, Creative Ireland and possible areas for collaboration, review of venues, the emerging international focus of our work, Galway 2020, workforce planning and our internal resourcing.

There were no other matters arising.

17 – 02– 005 Director's Report

Invitation to Collaboration Delegated Authority

For governance and internal control purposes a minute number is required for the Invitation to Collaboration 2017 scheme to be managed and approved under delegated authority to an assessment panel. Members **agreed** to delegated authority to a panel for this scheme for 2017.

Abbey Working Group / AC members

As part of the Arts Councils on-going relationship management with the Abbey Theatre and in the context of ensuring strategic communication between both institutions, a joint working group was established following the commissioning of the Bonnar Keenlyside Report in 2014.

The membership of this working group comprises the Chair and one board member from both institutions as well as members of both executives.

It was **agreed** that Council members interested in sitting on this working group would make their interest known to the Chair.

Date for AC/ACNI Working Group

As part of the on-going relationship with Arts Council Northern Ireland, a joint working group exists to guide specific areas of joint interest as well as ensuring issues/matters of common concern are discussed outside of the annual Joint Plenary meeting.

Council members **agreed** to indicate their interest in sitting on this working group to the Chair.

Reel Art

At the plenary meeting of 20 April 2016, Council agreed to allocate €33K to non-recurring funding in film (Budget Savings 2016 proposal). Following consideration of gaps in existing supports, it was decided some of this funding could be strategically used to provide exhibition support on a pilot basis to Reel Art projects (an identified need in the environmental analysis for film in 2015). Given the production time-line of Reel Art, funding was held over as restricted savings from 2016 to support this pilot initiative. It is proposed to invite proposals from the two successful films (the Piano Lesson and Photo City – both will be screened in the IFI as part of the ADIFF 2017 programme) for exhibition support in order to ensure they reach audiences nationally and enable the artists to work in an international context. Council **agreed** to provide up to €12,500 per project with a report being brought to Council following evaluation of the pilot.

Laureate for Irish Fiction – the next phase

The inaugural Laureate for Irish Fiction, Anne Enright, will complete her term in January 2018. The process for selecting the second Laureate for Irish fiction is due to commence in 2017, with a view to announcing the Laureate in January/February 2018. To this end, the Head of Literature and the Laureate for Irish Fiction project manager, Jen Coppinger, have begun to plan the nomination process, shortlisting process and assembling an international selection panel for the Laureate.

The process will follow the same pattern as was applied in 2014, with a small number of improvements.

In order to maintain consistency and apply the learning from the previous process Paul Muldoon has agreed to chair the international selection panel for the Laureate for Irish Fiction, 2018 – 2021.

As in the previous selection panel, the Arts Council convenes the panel with a view to including expertise from a range of different perspectives, along the lines as proposed below:

- an internationally recognised critic of literary fiction [REDACTED]
- an Irish children's author of international reputation [REDACTED]
- an Irish poet of international reputation [REDACTED]
- an Anglophone writer of fiction and/or other forms [REDACTED]
- a non-Anglophone writer of international reputation [REDACTED]

FOI Act 2014 Confidential information

Provision for the selection process for the second Laureate for Irish Fiction is not provided within the 2017 budget (as agreed by Council in 2013 to cover costs for the inaugural Laureateship). It was **agreed** that the Council would provide an additional €25,000 to the 2017 Laureate budget for this purpose.

Tradition Now – Partnership with the NCH

The Arts Council has worked in recent years with the National Concert Hall (NCH) to deliver two editions of *Tradition Now*: one in 2014 featuring the Gloaming and a second in 2015, which had a thematic emphasis on the link between Irish traditional artists and the folk traditions in the US, particularly the folk revival of the 1960s. These were successful in terms of a relatively simple focus of broadening the audience and creating greater visibility for the traditional arts.

In 2016 the partnership was suspended due to other commitments by both the Arts Council and the NCH which addressed the traditional arts through the 2016 commemorative programme.

The development of *Making Great Art Work Three-Year Plan 2017-2019*, now enables the Council to frame the relationship with the NCH on a more strategic basis with particular emphasis on the key priority areas of artists and public engagement, which also providing a new framework to evaluate the partnership as contributing to the delivery of the strategy. It is within this context that it is proposed to renew the Arts Council's partnership with the NCH for the delivery of Tradition Now.

The partnership will deliver its original objective of bringing highly creative and ambitious music from the Irish tradition and beyond to existing and new and audiences. Tradition Now will also focus on a new basis for partnership:

- the creation of a high profile, national platform for traditional artists.
- showcasing unique artistic practice.
- presenting a diverse range of original work and interesting methods of transmission.

It is envisaged that Tradition Now would promote and celebrate the successes evident in Arts Council investment in the traditional arts in recent years and which is a strategic objective of *Making Great Art Work*.

The Council **agreed** to invest €40,000 in *Tradition Now*, which has been allocated from within the 2017 Traditional Arts budget.

Gate Theatre Review

In offering funding to The Gate Theatre in 2016 Council attached the condition that the Gate Theatre would commission a review of its operating model and governance.

The report, which was undertaken by Bonnar Keenlyside, was completed and forwarded to the Arts Council in January 2017.

The Arts Council awaits the Gate's response to the review and will update Council when this has been received.

Update on Panel List Process

Council was updated on the implementation of the peer panel process changes agreed at the Council Plenary meeting of the 25 October 2016.

It was further **agreed** by Council that:

- Council members will not chair in their area of primary interest or expertise which members will be asked to declare annually.
- Advisers do not need to be present at the panel meeting but should be available in the building, if required.
- Allocations of chairs to panels will be made 48 hours after the initial call out rather than on a first come basis. Allocation of chairs to panels will be based on ensuring that members chair a range of different panels annually.

Director's Diary Report

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

17 – 02– 006 Reports

ARC Meeting 21 February 2017

The report and recommendations of the ARC were **agreed**.

Business & Finance Meeting 21 February 2017

Miriam Dunne, Committee Chairman, updated Members highlighting the following:-

The report and recommendations of the Business & Finance Committee were **agreed**.

Policy & Strategy Meeting 22 February 2017

John McAuliffe, Committee Chairman, updated Members highlighting the following:-

- The Funding Review document was presented to the Committee and discussed. The final document will come to the March Policy & Strategy meeting.

- A new Policy Framework was discussed and agreed. This will now be used by the Arts Managers for all policies across artforms and areas of arts practice for final presentation to the June Policy meeting.
- A report on the Festival and Events Scheme was presented as background to the review of the scheme which is on-going.

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

17 – 02– 007 Touring Round 2 2017 & Advance Panning 2018

Val Balance and Liz Meaney joined the meeting.

Val introduced the context note and the approach used in strategic budgeting.

In discussing the applications a number of issues emerged in terms of the scoring process and the alignment and consistency across artforms, between the numerical score used and the textual descriptions used as well as how the Arts Councils own strategic priorities can be realised via this process.

There was also much discussion in relation to the scoring applied to artistic quality and that of feasibility. It was **agreed** that a comprehensive review of the scoring process is required in advance of the next round and in the context of the funding review. It was also recommended that individual score descriptors be developed to ensure more consistent application in the future.

All the recommendations presented were **agreed**.

17 – 02– 008 Abbey Theatre 2018 – 2020

Liz Meaney and Rachel West joined the meeting.

The paper was presented to the members for discussion on a new proposed envelope of funding for the Abbey Theatre 2018-2020.

It was confirmed that despite the Abbey Theatre being a National Cultural Institution under legislation that the Arts Council is independent in how it funds the Abbey.

It was confirmed that since 2008 that the Arts Council had entered into a three-year funding agreement with the Abbey Theatre with a new approach in recent years whereby it is given an indicative three-year funding amount and asked to respond with a programme.

There was much discussion in relation to staffing and FTE's particularly in relation to the balance between creative and other staff, touring, the ratio of funding to the Abbey theatre and the Arts Councils overall budgetary allocation to theatre as well as the direction proposed by the new Directors.

It was agreed to discuss further at the next plenary meeting.

17 – 02– 009 Awards

Travel and Training

Members **noted** the decisions.

Programme Activity Fund – Young People, Children and Education

Members **noted** the decisions.

17 – 02– 010 Aosdána Cnuas

Members considered the recommendations and **agreed** all recommendations. An appendix is attached to the Minutes.

In relation to one cnuas application under review, the Council **agreed** that it was not appropriate to discuss this or any application for an award or grant with individuals other than the applicant.

FOI Act 2014 Section 30

17 – 02– 011 Appeals Panel

Members **agreed** the recommendations.

17 – 02– 012 Artists' Exemption

Members **noted** the opinion of the Revenue Commissioners.

17 – 02– 13 Any Other Business

The following committee membership was confirmed:

Audit and Risk Committee: Martina Moloney.

Policy and Strategy Committee: Pádraig Ó'Duinnín, Loughlin Deegan and Helen Shaw.

Business and Finance: Paddy Glackin and Damien Downes.

There were no other matters for consideration.