

# The Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon

## 673<sup>rd</sup> Plenary Meeting

Castletown House, Celbridge, Co Kildare  
Tuesday 17 and Wednesday 18 June 2014 at 11:00

**Present:** Sheila Pratschke, *Chair*, Aibhlín McCrann, *Deputy Chair*, Joan Sheehy, John Fanning, Brian Maguire, Monica Spencer, Éimear O'Connor, John O'Donnell, Mark O'Regan, Miriam Dunne, John McAuliffe, Ciarán Walsh, Judith Woodworth

**In attendance:** Orlaith McBride *Director*, Stephanie O'Callaghan *Arts Director*, Aidan Burke *Operations Director*, Sean MacCarthaigh *Public Relations Director*, Martin Drury *Strategic Development Director*, Martin O'Sullivan *Finance Director & Company Secretary*.

### **Documents before the meeting**

Agenda  
Chairman's Report  
Minutes of meeting held on 19 May 2014  
Director's Report  
New Music Dublin Report  
Grants Committee Terms of Reference  
Delegated Authority for 2015 Grants, Schemes & Awards  
Travel & Training Awards  
Theatre Schemes  
Youth Ensemble Scheme 2014  
Dance Scheme 2014  
Aosdána Cnuas  
ACE/ACNI Commemoration Proposal  
Strategic Review 2014- Report

### **14 – 06 – 054 Apologies**

There were none.

### **14 – 06 – 055 Chairman's Introduction**

The Chairman confirmed that Anne Connolly will join the meeting on 18 June to facilitate a Council workshop on the outputs from the Strategic Review Group. In welcoming the Group's Report the Chair confirmed that decisions on how to progress/implement matters would be for Council to decide.

#### *Conflicts of Interest*

The Chairman 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. It was **noted** that members had already declared conflicts in respect of decisions before this meeting.

### **14 – 06 – 056 Minutes of the Plenary meetings: 19 May 2014**

*Minute 14-05-053 -National Irish Visual Artists Library-Edward Murphy RIP*

It was **agreed** that the minute should now read 'Éimear O'Connor asked members to **note**, with regret, the passing of Edward Murphy RIP who was the founder of the library at the National College of Arts and Design and note his overall contribution to the arts'. However the members recognised that in normal circumstances minutes would not name specific members unless it was specifically requested.

The minutes of the Plenary meeting held on 19 May 2014 were considered and **approved**.

#### **14 – 06 – 057 Matters arising from the minutes**

##### *Cork Midsummer Festival*

It was **agreed** that an update on Cork Midsummer will be brought to a meeting in the autumn.

#### **14 – 06 – 058 Director's Report**

##### *University Residencies -Literature and Traditional Arts*

Éimear O'Connor and Judith Woodworth declared an interest and left the meeting.

Stephanie O'Callaghan, Arts Director, briefed members on the paper confirming that the Council's current university partnerships are designed to enable the writer to concentrate on his or her own practice, while also allowing a community of students to engage with a professional writer in a meaningful way. In order to expand the number of opportunities for writers, and to extend the Arts Council's reach, it is recommended that the Council agrees to co-fund two further residencies in 2015 at NUI Galway and University of Limerick. It is recommended therefore to extend the writer in residence budget to €60,000 for 2015 to allow for support of six writer residencies, in the following universities:

- University College Dublin
- Trinity College Dublin
- St Patrick's College, Drumcondra
- University College Cork
- University of Limerick
- NUI Galway

Members highlighted how creative writing has flourished and that the residency programme is really working well referencing benefits accruing to a number of universities.

Members referenced the need for it to be extended outside the university sector and hoped that the Strategic Review might allow for this.

Members also referenced the planned overview of the Arts Councils residency programme confirming the need for a cohesive policy across all residencies.

Following a detailed discussion, members **agreed** to a budget of €60,000 for 2015.

##### *University Residencies - Traditional Arts*

Stephanie O'Callaghan, Arts Director, briefed members confirming that it is proposed that the Arts Council would build upon the success of the one-year Traditional Artist in Residence pilot and enter into a further partnership with UCC, co-funded by the university and the Arts Council.

Members **agreed** to offer €10,000 from the Traditional Arts budget towards the proposed residency, subject to satisfactory agreement of the roles/duties of the traditional artist.

*Trinity College Dublin: board nomination*

[REDACTED]

Members highlighted their general preference for new perspectives being brought to university governing structures through regular renewal and refreshment in terms of nominations, however on this occasion Trinity College's particular request was noted.

[REDACTED]

*Laureate for Irish Fiction – Update*

Stephanie O'Callaghan, Arts Director, briefed members confirming that Jen Coppinger had recently been appointed as project manager for the Laureate for Irish Fiction. It was confirmed that the nomination process will begin in early July culminating with the announcement of the first Laureate at a public event in January 2015.

Members **noted** the update.

*Members' Website*

Members were informed that with the introduction of BoardPad the old members' website which has been inactive for some time will no longer be available.

Members **noted** the update.

*Adviser Procurement*

Members were updated on the public tender process which resulted in the appointment of six new advisers for the following art form/practice areas Arts Participation, Dance, Literature (English & Irish), Visual Arts and YPCE.

Members sought clarity on the number of advisers being reappointed. Members acknowledged that the fully transparent tenders procurement process had resulted in the best advisers being appointed from the tenders received.

Members **noted** the update.

*Value for Money Policy Review (VFMPR) Update*

The Finance Director & Company Secretary updated members confirming that the VFMPR Review is progressing well and that the Steering Group plan to have the final draft of the VFMPR Report ready for submission to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform by the end of the first week in September.

Additionally members were asked to note that the Chairman, John O'Hagan and a delegation from the Steering Group are to meet with members in July however the date and time are yet to be finalised. It was **agreed** that members would be circulated to confirm their availability for the meeting.

*Director's Diary Report*

Members asked for an update on the National Cultural Strategy. The Director confirmed that a paper outlining a proposed process had been submitted to the Minister for Arts, Heritage and

the Gaeltacht and current indications are that a memo will be brought to Government before the summer recess on the matter. The intention is that if agreed, the Strategy will be launched in Easter 2016.

The Director's Diary Report was **noted**.

#### **14 – 06 – 059 Recommendations Grants Committee meetings 16 June 2014**

##### *Grants Committee meetings 16 June 2014*

The Committee Chairman briefed members on the meeting as follows:

Minutes of 19 May meeting were agreed.

*Touring-Round 1 2015*- Members agreed the recommendations. It was agreed that the project from Idan Meir should also be funded from contingency. A Financial Appendix is attached to the Minutes.

##### *Touring Scheme-Scoring*

Members were briefed on a proposed scoring system to be introduced for the Touring Scheme. The scheme is modelled on the ACNI system but is adapted to include a numerical score as well as a rating to give greater clarity and ensure a more robust outcome.

Assessment is made on the basis of three sets of existing criteria. The criteria have been amended to clarify them for the purposes of the scoring system and to reflect the setting of Arts Council's strategic priorities.

- Artistic merit
- Meeting the objectives and priorities of the award
- Feasibility

The basis for the scoring system is that a numerical score is assigned to each criterion by the assessor. To support the 'score', a short piece of text (or 'evidence') is written.

The assessment takes place over three stages:

- Stage 1- Assessors complete the scoring template, having considered secondary assessments. This is done without budgetary considerations;
- Stage 2- Applications are divided into three ratings of *Fund*, *Possibly Fund*, *Do Not Fund* on the basis of average scores. Average scores are formulated as High, Medium and Low;
- Stage 3- The assessor assigns a recommended amount. If this differs from the requested amount, a reason must be given

The recommendations then go before the Grants Committee. If a change is made to a recommendation a revised score(s) must be recorded. If a change is made to recommended amount, a reason for this is recorded.

Following discussion on the weightings of the criteria, it was agreed that a description of what constitutes a score would be clearly defined in each artform (similar to the current ACNI

process) and that consideration would be given to changing the scoring from 1-3 to 1-7. The members **agreed** to the proposal to introduce this system for Touring Round 2 2015.

Cork Midsummer Festival – it was confirmed that the Arthur Lappin report had been received but it has yet to be reviewed by the executive. A report will be brought to a later meeting.

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

#### **14 – 06 – 060 Reports**

*North/South Plenary meeting 20 May 2014*

The Chair briefed members on the meeting as follows:

- An update on North/South Touring was presented  
[REDACTED]
- A joint conference/symposium

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

#### **14 – 06 – 061 New Music Dublin Report 2014**

Imelda Dervin, Acting Head of Music, joined the meeting and briefed members on 1) the background to the initiative, 2) the agreed delivery structure, 3) the 2013 and 2014 festivals (including financial performance) and 4) an overview on the proposed approach for the 2015 festival.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Following a detailed discussion, members **agreed** the 2015 allocation of €100k and indicated that in principle it would also remain open to providing further funding for 2016 and 2017 subject to a review of the partnership agreement and 2015 festival performance. It was also **agreed** that a progress update (including the 2015 marketing plan) should be brought to Policy & Strategy meeting in the autumn.

#### **14 – 06 – 062 Abbey Theatre Review**

David Parnell, Head of Theatre, joined the meeting.

Members were informed of the Abbey's positive response to the report and its findings including acceptance of the implications of implementation.

Members were also informed that the Abbey Board has signed off on the Report.

In terms of publication, it was confirmed that the Arts Council will publish, on its website, a redacted version of the Report, in late June, together with an accompanying statement from both the Chair of the Arts Council and the Abbey Theatre. The statement will welcome the review and confirm that both organisations are now working together on implementation. The

Chair confirmed that apart from the initial press statement both Directors will handle all further media queries.

It was confirmed that a plan in terms of redactions in the report is to be agreed between the Arts Council and the Abbey in advance of publication. Members **agreed** that the redacted Report should be published.

In relation to monitoring and evaluation, it was accepted that this needs to be streamlined and simplified. It was also confirmed that the Abbey is very happy with the proposed Scottish monitoring model. Furthermore members were asked to acknowledge that in future once the Abbey programme has been agreed with the Arts Council they should then be allowed to proceed with its delivery. Monitoring must be lighter touch and at a higher level to build corporate trust.

Members noted that there is general acceptance that using a panel of independent assessors is valuable but also recognition that the panel needs to be broadened and the process formalised to include an annual review meeting between the Arts Council, Abbey and assessors. It was further clarified that Freedom of Information would apply to the annual review meeting only and that the Arts Council would in any case publish the annual assessment reports on its website.

Members welcomed and **noted** the update.

#### **14 – 06 – 063 Grants Committee Terms of Reference**

The Finance Director & Company Secretary briefed members on proposed Terms of Reference for the Grants Committee.

Members were unanimous that grant decisions were the responsibility of the full Council and following detailed discussion, the members **agreed** to dissolve the Grants Committee in favour of the full Council determining grant decisions. In future grant decisions will be considered at a specially convened Plenary meeting.

#### **14 – 06 – 064 Delegated Authority for 2015 Schemes and Awards**

The Director briefed members on the Paper. Members **agreed** the Delegated Authority List for 2015 Grants, Schemes and Awards and an appendix is attached to the Minutes. Members **noted** the Regularly Funded Organisations delegation limit as €30k and not €35k as listed in the paper.

#### **14 – 06 – 065 Awards**

##### *Travel and Training Awards*

Travel and Training awards were **noted** by members. A financial appendix is attached to the minutes.

##### *Theatre Schemes 2014*

Theatre Schemes 2014 awards were **noted** by members. A financial appendix is attached to the minutes.

##### *YES 2014*

YES 2014 awards were **noted** by members. A financial appendix is attached to the minutes.

##### *Dance Schemes 2014*

Dance Schemes 2014 awards were **noted** by members. A financial appendix is attached to the minutes.

#### 14 – 06 – 066 Aosdána Cnuas

Members **agreed** the cnuas recommendations as follows:

- Cecily Brennan- Visual Arts- Renewed;
- Mary Dorcey- Literature- Renewed subject to conditions;
- Christine Dwyer-Hickey- Literature- Renewed;
- Alice Maher- Visual Arts-Renewed;
- Kathy Prendergast- Visual Arts-
- Maurice Scully- Literature- Renewed;
- Louis Stewart- Music- Renewed.

#### 14 – 06 – 067 Proposal on joint ACE/ACNI Commemoration Proposal

#### 14 – 06 – 068 Strategic Review 2014

Terence O'Rourke, Chairman of the strategic review steering group, together with external members Brid Horan, Anne Connolly, Shane Molloy and Michael McLoone joined the meeting.

The Chair welcomed Terence O'Rourke and the other external members and thanked all Members of the Steering Group for their Report, and their input and commitment to the Committee.

The Chair then invited Mr O'Rourke to make a presentation. Mr O'Rourke briefed members on the SR14 process including 1) reminding members of the Terms of Reference; 2) detailing the propositions posed; 3) detailing the comprehensive dialogue and communications undertaken; 5) outlining the findings of the strategic review; 6) including a summary of the outputs from the research undertaken as part of the review: the international comparative study and the public discussion groups. The reflection, analysis, dialogue with stakeholders, and research had led the steering group to make six key proposals in its report to the Arts Council. These were that the Arts Council should:

1. Be a development agency for the arts focussed on the public good;
2. Make policies and strategies that are explicit and connected;
3. Change its investment strategies and behaviours;
4. Be well-informed and evidence-based;
5. Strengthen its own capability and that of the arts sector;

6. Engage widely and communicate openly.

Members welcomed the presentation following which a detailed questions and answer session followed and **agreed** that there would be further discussion and consideration of its proposals and findings.

#### **14 – 06 – 069 Any other business**

##### *Board Pad – large documents*

On an exceptional basis it was **agreed** that large documents would also be sent by email to Members.

##### *Estimates Process*

Members asked for an update on advocacy plan for Budget 2016. The Chair confirmed that key individuals are/will be actively engaged with over the summer period confirming that events such as the MacGill Summer School will be key advocacy opportunities. The Chair confirmed that rather than convening an ad hoc working group that a more targeted approach was preferred. Members **noted** the update.

#### Summary of decisions/actions

1. *Minute 14-05-053 -National Irish Visual Artists Library-Edward Murphy RIP-* It was **agreed** that the minute should now read 'Éimear O'Connor asked members to **note**, with regret, the passing of Edward Murphy RIP who was the founder of the library at the National College of Arts and Design and note his overall contribution to the arts'. However the members recognised that in normal circumstances minutes would not name specific members unless it was specifically requested;
2. The minutes of the Plenary meeting held on 19 May 2014 were considered and approved;
3. *Cork Midsummer Festival* - It was **agreed** that an update on Cork Midsummer will be brought to a meeting in the autumn;
4. *University Residencies -Literature and Traditional Arts-*Following a detailed discussion, members **agreed** to a budget of €60,000 for 2015;
5. *University Residencies - Traditional Arts-* Members **agreed** to offer €10,000 from the Traditional Arts budget towards the proposed residency, subject to satisfactory agreement of the roles/duties of the traditional artist;
6. *Trinity College Dublin: board nomination-* [REDACTED]
7. *Value for Money Policy Review (VFMPR) Update-* Members were asked to note that the Chairman, John O'Hagan and a delegation from the Steering Group are to meet with members in July however the date and time are yet to be finalised. It was **agreed** that members would be circulated to confirm their availability for the meeting;
8. The report and recommendations of the Grants Committee were **agreed**;
9. The report and recommendations of the North/South Plenary meeting were **agreed**;

10. *New Music Dublin Report 2014*- Members **agreed** the 2015 allocation of €100k and indicated that in principle it would also remain open to providing further funding for 2016 and 2017 subject to a review of the partnership agreement and 2015 festival performance. It was also **agreed** that a progress update (including the 2015 marketing plan) should be brought to Policy & Strategy meeting in the autumn;
11. *Abbey Theatre Review*-Members **agreed** that the redacted Report should be published;
12. *Grants Committee Terms of Reference*- Members **agreed** to dissolve the Grants Committee in favour of the full Council determining grant decisions. In future grant decisions will be considered at a specially convened Plenary meeting;
13. *Delegated Authority for 2015 Schemes and Awards*- Members **agreed** the Delegated Authority List for 2015 Grants, Schemes and Awards;
14. *Aosdána Cnuas*- Members **agreed** the cnuas recommendations;
15. *Proposal on joint ACE/ACNI Commemoration Proposal*- [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]
16. *Board Pad – large documents*- it was **agreed** that large documents would also be sent by email to Members;