

The Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon

675th Plenary Meeting

Culture House, No.2 Pery Square, Limerick

Tuesday, 23 September 2014 at 14:00

Present: Sheila Pratschke, *Chair*, Aibhlín McCrann, *Deputy Chair*, John Fanning, Monica Spencer, Éimear O'Connor, Mark O'Regan, John McAuliffe, Ciarán Walsh (via conference call from 2-2.30pm), Joan Sheehy.

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

Documents before the meeting

Agenda

Minutes of meeting held on 26 June

Directors Report

2015 Council Diary

Awards

Appeals Committee

Amendments to Financial Statements 2013 & related declaration

14 – 09 – 078 Apologies

Brian Maguire, John O'Donnell, Miriam Dunne, Judith Woodworth.

14 – 09 – 079 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. It was **noted** that members had already declared conflicts in respect of decisions before this meeting.

The Chair welcomed all members to the meeting and the start of a new term of work for the Council.

On the advocacy work conducted over the summer, the Chair highlighted numerous meetings with Ministers and Secretary Generals in particular meetings [REDACTED]

Members were informed that the executive were currently having to deal with a significant number of Freedom of Information requests and that the nature and focus of these requests was having an adverse effect on staff morale.

14 – 09 – 080 Minutes of the Plenary meetings: 26 June 2014

The minutes of the 26 June 2014 Plenary meeting were **approved**.

14 – 09 – 081 Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising from the Minutes.

14 – 09 – 082 Director's Report

HR Update

Interviews that took place over the summer were highlighted:-

- Arts Director- the appointment of Liz Meaney and her start date of 20 October was welcomed and **noted**.
- Head of Young People, Children and Education- process ongoing but to-date no appointment made.
- Head of Music and Opera- no candidate found. It was confirmed that a new interview process will be initiated in the coming months but that for now an interim solution will be put in place. Members noted the material nature of the music budget and asked whether sanction for an increased point on the scale for the position could be sought.

Members also took the opportunity to wish Imelda Dervin well in her new position.

Beyond Borders

The results of the Beyond Borders Programme 2014 were outlined confirming that ten applications were funded with two Ireland-led applications receiving funding and seven funded applications from other jurisdictions having an Irish involvement. Members **noted** the update.

Schedule of Meetings for September to December

It was confirmed that an additional Business and Finance meeting on 29 October from (10-5pm) has been scheduled to discuss budget strategy across arts teams for 2015.

With the Grants Committee now dissolved, a Plenary meeting will now take place on the 13 October and the meeting scheduled for the 17 November has been cancelled.

The North South meeting due in October has also to be rescheduled with no revised date yet agreed.

Members **noted** the revised schedule of meetings.

In relation to the Plenary Grants meeting in December the Chair confirmed that Aibhlín McCrann, Deputy Chair, will lead the discussion on the Grants agenda item.

Director's Diary Report

The Director highlighted a recent meeting with the Toscaireacht together with an IFACCA Chapter meeting in Vilnius for special mention. Members were also updated on ongoing discussions with Brendan Kenny, Assistant City Manager, Dublin City Council, in relation to the proposed wind down of Temple Bar Cultural Trust and the need to work together in relation to arts and cultural provision/matters in Temple Bar. The Director's Diary Report was **noted**.

The success of the Arts Council's Culture Night event was highlighted and Joe Stuart's contribution in managing the event was **noted**.

14 – 09 – 083 Reports

Policy & Strategy Meeting 23 September

Eimear O'Connor, Committee Chairman, briefed members on the meeting confirming the following:-

- Artists' Residencies-the policy and strategy committee proposed that Council allocate a sum of money to the reviewing of residencies using a template similar to that contained

in the tabled paper so as to inform the development of a flexible strategic approach to the support and promotion of artists' residencies.

- Audience Development- the proposal and outline terms of reference outlined in the paper were agreed. Further consideration to be given to the matter of consulting with arts organisations on the matter of audience development.
- Peer Panels- a further paper on this matter to be tabled at the October or subsequent meeting and to include proposals on the matters of panel formation; chairing of panels; and (rates) of payment.
- *Droit de Suite* / Artists' Re-sale Rights- the papers recommendations were agreed. Further research was required in respect of the use of orphan works.
- Income Averaging- research to be undertaken to address – in a solution-focused fashion – the points made by the Revenue Commissioners in 2006 as set out at 10.17 on p.3 of the tabled paper.

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

14 – 09 – 084 Council Diary 2015

The Council Diary January to December 2015 was discussed. Members sought clarity on whether Panels could be scheduled around existing Plenary / Committee meetings. It was **agreed** to include the dates in the Council Diary if possible. Members **agreed** to feedback to the Director on the Diary so that it could be approved at the next meeting.

14 – 09 – 085 Awards

Bursary Awards

The Bursary Awards were **noted**. A financial appendix is attached to the Minutes.

Members who chaired Panels commented positively on the professionalism of the panelists and the level of efficient administrative support provided to the Panels. Members acknowledged that the process is as good as it can be and rather the need is to focus on making the process more transparent.

14 – 09 – 086 Appeals Meeting

Suzanna Geraghty- Appeal not upheld. The panel found no failure in process. Members **agreed** the recommendation.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

14 – 09 – 087 Financial Statements 2013

The Finance Director and Company Secretary confirmed that the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) cleared the 2013 Financial Statements for signature on the 16 September subject to a number of descriptive and reporting amendments. Members considered and **approved** the amendments.

14 – 09 – 088 Strategic Review 2014

The Director made a presentation to members on the executive's first response to the Strategic Review 2014 in terms of implementation. The following matters were highlighted:-

- Begin to discuss 'points of entry' into the proposals
- Commitment to begin to develop a new strategy (10 years) with guiding instructions from SR 2014
- Identify key priority areas over next 3-5 years e.g. spatial, Local Government/venues (demographic and geographic), young people and children
- Begin to develop individual artform / practice priorities that would 'feed up' into a new overall strategy (engines to new strategy) in partnership with the sector
- Develop a new range of funding supports including a new 3 year funding programme
- Develop a Research and Information Programme and begin to build key relationships and strategic partnerships with the academic and wider research community
- Review current Communications / Public Affairs functions of the Arts Council. Develop a PR Strategy that specifically raises the profile of the Arts Council over the next 12 months
- Develop a 'programme of engagement' with the arts sector over the coming months based on the Strategic Review that strengthens and builds a more open relationship with the sector

Members welcomed the presentation and referenced the following additional matters for further consideration:-

- formally reference the individual artist and excellence in the highlighted matters
- ensure Arts Managers are properly briefed on what they communicate to the sector
- retain a funding stream for the Strategic Development Department

Members **agreed** to discuss the presentation further and bring their thinking to the next Plenary meeting on how best to progress implementation of the key proposals from the Strategic Review 2014. It was also **agreed** to upload the presentation onto Board Pad.

14 – 09 – 089 Any Other Business

Project Awards

Members **noted** the significant impact these once-off awards have for artists in the making of work and how vital it is that we continue to ensure that adequate levels of funding are available for independent practitioners.

Media Reviews

Members **noted** that no national media reviews take place for work outside Dublin other than through the main festivals.

Charities Regulatory Authority & the implementation of the Charities Act

Members were informed that the requirements of the Charities Act will become effective from the 16 October. The Finance Director confirmed that the Arts Council, as the holder of a CHY number, is currently taking legal advice on its own position as to whether or not the Arts Council should retain its charitable status. Members **noted** the update.

Mairtin McCullough's wife RIP

Members expressed their sympathy to Mairtín McCullough, former Chair of the Arts Council, on the death of his wife.

Summary of decisions/actions

1. The minutes of the 26 June 2014 Plenary meeting were **approved**.
2. *Policy & Strategy Meeting 23 September*- the report and recommendations of the Policy & Strategy Committee were **agreed**.
3. *Council Diary 2015*- it was **agreed** to include the Panel dates in the Council Diary if possible. Members **agreed** to feedback to the Director on the Diary so that it could be approved at the next meeting.
4. *Suzanna Geraghty- Appeal not upheld* -Members **agreed** the recommendation.

[REDACTED]

6. *Financial Statements 2013*- Members considered and **approved** the amendments.
7. *Strategic Review 2014 'first response' Presentation*- Members **agreed** to discuss the presentation further and bring their thinking to the next Plenary meeting on how best to progress implementation of the key proposals from the Strategic Review 2014. It was also **agreed** to upload the presentation onto Board Pad.