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The Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon

751st Plenary Meeting

18 March 2021

Kevin Rafter, Chair, Fearghus Ó Conchúir, Deputy Chair, Mark O’Kelly, Loughlin Deegan, Helen Shaw, Martina Moloney, Dónall Curtin, Jillian van Turnhout, Paddy Glackin, Melatu Uchenna Okorie, Pádraig Ó Duinnín, Teresa Buczkowska.

In attendance:

Maureen Kennelly, *Director*, Martin O’Sullivan, *Deputy Director & Company Secretary*, Ciara Branagan *Finance and Council Executive*.

Note: Meeting took place via Zoom video conference.

Documents before the meeting

Agenda

Minutes of Plenary Meeting held on 10 & 11 February 2021

Plenary Action Tracker

Director’s Report

Conflict of Interest Memorandum of Advice (Beauchamps)

Real Art Spend Presentation

Brightening Air Programme Update & Recommended Projects

Report on work undertaken for 2020 to review the effectiveness of the Arts Council’s system of internal control

Cnuas Recommendations

Awards and Schemes

For Information- agreed Committee Minutes, Risk Register & Comms Report

21– 03– 025 Apologies

None.

21 –03– 026 Chair’s Introduction

Conflicts of Interest- The Chair **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.

Abbey Working Group 19 February – The Chair provided a brief update on the recent Working Group meeting. Separately, Members noted the appointment of the Abbey’s new executive leadership team.

Meeting with ACNI- The Chair provided an update on a meeting attended by the Director and himself with their counterparts at ACNI following the appointment of a new ACNI Chair. Members **noted** that a further meeting is planned for May to agree a more in depth workplan.

The Ireland Chair of Poetry Trustees Meeting- Members **noted** that the AGM of the Trust had taken place and that the role of Chair of the Trust would revert to ACNI from the June Trust meeting.

[REDACTED]

Fishamble endorsement for ongoing work with migrant workers and disadvantaged groups – The Chair noted correspondence with Fishamble following recent social media postings. Members **noted** their support and endorsement of the ongoing work by Fishamble with under-represented groups and welcome the engagement of Arts Council staff with the company.

21 – 03– 027 Minutes of Plenary Meeting held on 10 & 11 February 2021

In relation to minute 21 – 02– 023 *Strategic and Arts Centre Funding 2021* Members asked that the meeting record [REDACTED] should be updated to confirm [REDACTED]

Subject to these amendments, the Minutes of the 10 & 11 Plenary Meeting were **agreed**.

21 – 03– 028 Matters Arising

Members **noted** the action tracker update.

Members **agreed** that an update to Council on art photography should be added to the tracker.

There were no other matters arising.

21 – 03– 029 Director's Report

Strategic Initiatives 2021: Tradition Now – Partnership with the NCH

Members **agreed** to invest an additional €40,000 towards the May edition of *Tradition Now* and a further €20,000 towards costs associated with the commemoration and celebration of Seán Ó Riada. Members **noted** that the additional financial support was one off and asked that the Arts Council's imprint around the extra resources should be clearly visible. In relation to the Seán Ó Riada commemoration. Members asked for it to be more reflective and critical as distinct from just congratulatory.

Open Call 2021: additional budget.

Members **noted** the Open Call decisions and the increased budget requirement to a total of €1.035m. Members also noted that the initial budget included €50k for marketing and communication supports and the request and need for it to be maintained in full. Members **agreed** an additional €35k from the 2021 budget for Open Call.

The Ireland Chair of Poetry

Members noted the inconsistency in the level of the stipend being offered to the Chair of Poetry when compared to other Laureate roles. Members **agreed** to increase the Arts Council's contribution to €17k. A more detailed paper will address this at a future meeting following consultation with ACNI and Poetry Ireland, which administers the Trust.

External members – Collections Acquisitions Committee

Members **agreed** that the following external Members should be nominated to sit on the Committee:- Bassam Al-Sabah, Caroline Crowley, Dragana Jurisic, Eoin Dara, Aideen Barry.

Director's Diary

Members **noted** the diary.

21 – 03– 030 Conflict of Interest

Mark-Pery-Knox-Gore, Beauchamps, joined the meeting for this agenda item.

Members took the Memorandum of Advice paper as read. The paper and its conclusions were welcomed. Members noted the risks in the current policy and asked for clarification on a number of points. Members **agreed** that the Arts Council's Conflict of Interest Policy should now be reviewed and updated and brought back to the May Plenary for approval.

21 – 03– 031 Committee Reports

Policy and Strategy Committee 17 February 2021

Loughlin Deegan, Committee Chairman, updated members on the key recommendations:-



- agreed Minutes 18 November;
- agreed protocol for Council & P&S engagement around major policy considerations;
- update provided on resource needs to implement 2021 w/plan;
- timeline agreed for policy presentations;
- update provided on proposed digital policy;
- update provided on proposed spatial policy;
- update on Irish Language Policy- identified as a key opportunity for the Arts Council;
- a report was provided on Culture Night;
- update provided on approach to advance the Music Policy during 2021- identified as a 2021 priority;

Members noted the report and **agreed** the recommendations of the Policy and Strategy Committee.

Business & Finance Committee 24 February 2021

Martina Moloney, Committee Chairman, updated members on the key recommendations:-


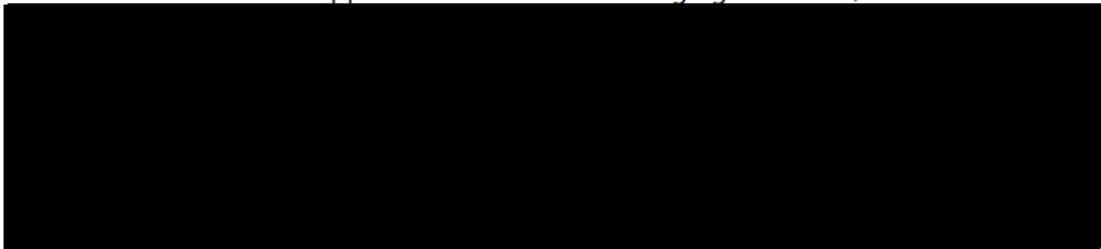
- Minutes of 3 Dec 2020- were agreed;
- Members agreed the 2020 Draft Management accounts;
- Members approved the Budget 2021 update;
- Members noted the Trusts Update;
- Review of Committee Performance for 2020- Members agreed the report;
- Committee Workplan 2021- Members agreed the 2021 workplan;

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- Members approved the Procurements for Services 2021 > €50k and above (excluding Vat).
 - Members noted the ICT report.
 - Members reviewed the HR Update.
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Members noted the report and **agreed** the recommendations of the Business & Finance Committee.

Audit & Risk Committee 24 February 2021

Dónall Curtin, Committee Chairman, updated members on the key recommendations:-

- Minutes of 3 December 2020- were approved.
- Committee Performance Review for 2020- Members agreed that it had satisfactorily reviewed its performance for 2020.
- Checklist for the Effectiveness of Audit and Risk Committee- Members agreed to consider a consolidated report of this at the next meeting.
- Internal Audit;
 - Follow-Up of Previous Internal Audit Recommendations- Members agreed the report and welcomed the implementation progress made. Members also noted that the follow up review for Cyber Security will be undertaken in March.
 - SIFC / ICQ Review- Members agreed and welcomed the report.
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 - In relation to assurance around internal controls for 2020 it was agreed that the Executive would specifically address the GDPR review recommendations in its report to the Committee.
 - In relation to current outstanding IA recommendations Members agreed that management will prepare an internal update tracker and present to the May ARC meeting.
 - Members agreed 1) the IA Plan for 2021 to be uploaded to the Reading Room and 2) that given the significant increase in funding that the Finance and Governance team should review its resourcing needs & report back to the Committee on its requirements.
- Risk Management Workshop- Members agreed the following;
 - An annual risk workshop should be scheduled as part of the ARC w/plan and an assessment of risk appetite should be a standing agenda item;

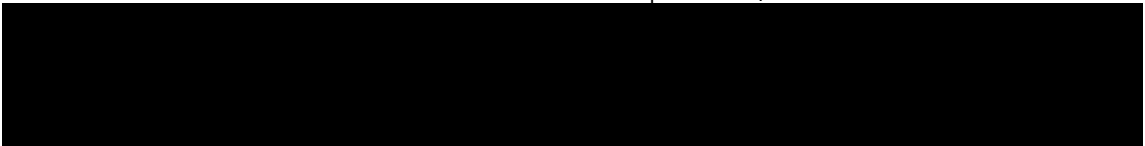
- Risk Register- Members noted the risk register.
- Any Other Business- Members noted that an additional meeting on 16 March 2021 has been scheduled to review the draft 2020 Annual Accounts and associated reports

Members noted the report and **agreed** the recommendations of the Audit & Risk Committee.

Audit & Risk Committee 16 March 2021

Dónall Curtin, Committee Chairman, updated members on the key recommendations:-

- Minutes of 24 February were agreed;
- agreed that Committee Chairman's notes from his review of the ARC Member evaluation checklist to be circulated to the members;
- *Draft 2020 Financial Statements*- Members agreed the draft accounts and agreed that the Financial Statements should now go forward to the C&AG for audit;
- *Internal Audit*- Members noted the assurance provided;

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- *Review and approve adequacy of Internal Controls for 2020*- Members approved the report and confirmed the adequacy of the internal controls for 2020;
 - *Review and approve Procurement Conformance Report for 2020*- Members discussed the report and agreed the recommendation;
 - *C&AG Letter of Engagement & Appendices*- Members noted the correspondence;

Members noted the report and **agreed** the recommendations of the Audit & Risk Committee.

Members **noted** their thanks to the Finance team for their work in bringing the 2020 Financial Statements to final draft pre-audit stage.

21 – 03– 032 Real Art Spend Presentation

Liz Meaney, Arts Director, Stephanie O'Callaghan, Arts Director and Ciara Scully, Data Manager joined the meeting for this agenda item.

Members noted and welcomed the presentation on spend by artform. Members **agreed** that a further update should be brought to the September Plenary meeting.

21 – 03– 033 Brightening Air Programme Update & Recommended Projects


Sinead O'Reilly, Head of Local, Place and Public Art, joined the meeting for this agenda item.

Members were given an overview of the Brightening Air Programme (formerly the Grand Stretch) including the curatorial approach adopted and provided a full update on the application and selection process for the recommended projects. Members **noted** all of the funding decisions. Members also **noted** the name change for the programme. Members warmly welcomed the range of projects and thanked Sinead O'Reilly for all of her oversight, structuring and development of this nationwide programme.

21 – 03– 034 Review of 2020 Internal Controls

Members using this Report and the separate assurances provided by the ARC Committee and from senior management **agreed** that a satisfactory review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control for 2020 had been completed and that it is also appropriate for the Chairman to sign the 'Statement on Internal Control' on behalf of the Arts Council in the 2020 financial statements.

21 – 03– 035



[REDACTED]

21 – 03– 036 Cnuas Recommendations

Members **agreed** the Cnuas Recommendations.

21 – 03– 037 Awards & Schemes

Festivals Investment Scheme 2021, Round 2

Members **noted** the panel decisions. [REDACTED]

Liam O'Flynn Award 2021

Members **noted** the panel decision. [REDACTED]

21 – 03– 038 For Information- Minutes, Risk Register & Comms Report

Approved Committee Minutes

Members **noted** the following Committee Minutes:-

- Policy & Strategy Minutes 18 November 2020;
- Audit & Risk Minutes 3 Dec 2020;
- Business & Finance Minutes 3 Dec 2020;

Risk Register

Members **noted** the Risk Register.

Public Affairs & Communications Report

Members **noted** the report. While acknowledging the improvements in the report Members **noted** the need for a more strategic approach to performance measurement over a defined period.

21 – 03– 039 Any Other Business

Arts Activity

Members **noted** the successful INO- La Bohème livestream event. Members also **noted** the extensive range of activity being successfully delivered during the pandemic by arts organisations throughout the country.

[REDACTED]