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The Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon

749th Plenary Meeting

27 January 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, 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 9 December 2020

Director’s Report

Proposal around one off Covid support for Voluntary Sector

Digital Policy Update

Presentation on Arts & Health Working Group 2021-2022

Communication around 2021 funding schemes

Cnuas Recommendations

Awards & Schemes

Approved Minutes from Committee Meetings

Risk Register

21– 01– 001 Apologies

Melatu Uchenna Okorie, Pádraig Ó Duinnín.

21 –01– 002 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.

Chair noted the changed Covid-19 restrictions since the previous Plenary meeting in December 2020 and repeated remark from Oireachtas Committee meeting that the arts sector would be dealing with the Covid crisis through all of 2021 and into 2020. He stressed the importance of the increased Arts Council budget and the need to ensure galleries and arts centres were included in the first round of re-opening when the latest restrictions were eased.

Chair and Director Meeting with Minister 28 January - Members **noted** an upcoming meeting with the Minister to discuss Arts Council plans for 2021 as well as initial discussions on budget for 2022.

21 – 01– 003 Minutes of Plenary Meeting held on 9 December 2020

The Minutes of the 9 December Plenary Meeting were **agreed**.

21 – 01– 004 Matters Arising

Members **noted** the action tracker update. Members **agreed** 1) that completed actions should be excluded and 2) that o/s actions should be time lined.

There were no other matters arising.

21 – 01– 005 Director's Report

International Art Exhibition, Venice Biennale

Following the rescheduling of the 2021 Biennale, Members **agreed** a renewed commitment to support Ireland's representation at the Venice Biennale 2022 at an increased level of €100,000.

Separately, Members suggested that it would now be timely to also progress planning for future Biennales and that other matters such as related touring and budget setting should also be reviewed. Members **agreed** that an update paper should be brought to the June 2021 Plenary.

Arts Council Collection: Summary report 2020 and Acquisitions Committee update

Members welcomed and **noted** the report. Members **noted** that the Collections Acquisition Committee is a Council Committee operating under its approved terms of reference. Members agreed that the Acquisitions Committee should meet to discuss the proposed review as well as the sourcing of new external Committee Members.

Both matters would be discussed at the March Plenary. In relation to new external Members, it was agreed that the Committee would consider the Arts Council's conflict of interest policy to ensure it wasn't restrictive in considering potential external members.

Separately, it was **agreed** 1) that the Collection portal should be updated with the latest acquisitions and 2) that site specific public spaces should be identified to best share the Collection with the public.

Commemorations

Members **noted** and welcomed confirmation of discussions with the Department of Culture around upcoming commemorative collaborations and how an expanded Open Call Award may be used to facilitate such engagement.

Codes of Behaviour

Members **noted** various positive initiatives being progressed for the arts sector, and committed to facilitating and assisting these developments.

Allocation of additional €1.9 million for 2020

Members **noted** and welcomed the additional grant of €1.9m to help provide support to individual artists' supports across all art forms. Members also **agreed** that the funding would be directed towards Bursaries and the Agility Award.

Director's Diary

Members **noted** the diary.

21 – 01– 006 Budget Priority / Rebalancing

Liz Meaney, Arts Director and Stephanie O'Callaghan, Arts Director, joined for this and subsequent agenda items.

Members were updated on a recommended budgetary rebalancing and prioritisation approach for both 1) Circus, Street Arts and Spectacle and 2) Festivals. Following discussion Members **agreed** that an additional €160,000 be allocated to support / meet the needs of critical strategic infrastructure across both art forms.

In wider terms, Members noted the need to ensure the principles underpinning expenditure allocations were clearly understood and that as part of the grant funding meeting in February they would seek further information on overall allocations and rebalancing across art forms in light of recent funding increases.

21 – 01– 007 One-off Covid support scheme to facilitate Professional Artists to work with voluntary arts organisations

Members were briefed on a recommendation to introduce a one-off scheme to facilitate professional artists working with voluntary arts organisations. Members **agreed** the recommendation and the allocation of €250k towards the initiative.

21 – 01– 008 Communications and Messaging January and February 2021

Members **noted** the proposed approach.

21 – 01– 009 Third Party Awards, Schemes and Initiatives 2021

Members **agreed** the 2021 awards, schemes and other initiatives delivered by third parties on behalf of the Arts Council.

21 – 01– 010 Presentation on Arts & Health Working Group 2021-2022

Ann O'Connor, Head of Arts Participation, joined the Meeting for this item and made a presentation to Members on the renewal of the Arts & Health Working Group, its whole of Government approach and agreed objectives for 2020 and 2021. Members **noted** and welcomed the update.

21 – 01– 011 Strategic and Arts Centre Funding 2021 Update

Members were updated on the proposed assessment and decision making process for 2021 Strategic and Arts Centre Funding recommendations. Members **noted** the briefing.

21 – 01– 012 Digital Policy Update

Members were updated on a number of matters including 1) progress to-date in procuring a digital adviser 2) update on recruitment of a digital manager and 3) various planned initiatives. Members **noted** the update.

21 – 01– 013 Cnuas Recommendations

Members **agreed** the Cnuas recommendations.

21 – 01– 014 Awards and Schemes

Invitation to Collaboration 2021 Panel

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

Music Project Award (2021)

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

Visual Arts Project Award (2021)

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

21 – 01– 015 Minutes and Risk Register for noting

Risk Register

Members **noted** the Risk Register.

Communications Report

Members **noted** the report.

21 – 01– 016 Any Other Business

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]