

**Tha Boord o Ulster-Scotch
80th Board Meeting
25th July 2008
Everglades Hotel, Londonderry**

Present;	Mr Mark Thompson
	Mr William Humphrey
	Mr William Leathem
	Mrs Angela Graham
	Mrs Jackie Reed
	Dr William Roulston
	Dr Aileen Douglas
	Dr Ian Adamson
In attendance;	Mr George Patton
	Mr Michael McCullough
Recording Secretary;	Ms Lyndsey Hanna

1. Welcome from the Chairman

Mr Thompson welcomed everyone to the Board Meeting.

2. Apologies

The meeting was in full attendance.

3. Minutes of the last meeting (13.06.08)

The Board accepted the minutes of the previous meeting with some minor amendments;

Proposed and agreed: that the minute be accepted.

4. Matters arising

Single Tender Projects

Mr Patton stated that he had been advised by DCAL that the single tender submitted by the Ulster Historical Foundation could not proceed. It would need to be tendered for open competition.

The joint project for the American Drama being produced by Jonathan Burgess will not proceed this year. Funding is not yet in place.

Action: Agency will revisit this project in 2009 with a view to give the level of support originally received.

Press Complaints

Mr Thompson again approached the Press Complaints Commission. They advised him that he is to consider with the Agency Board what they agree to be deemed as an acceptable apology. The Board were in agreement that a front page apology is to be requested once again.

Action: Mr Thompson to circular response when received.

Milwaukee Irish Fest

Mr Patton advised that arrangements had been made for Mr Alistair McReynolds to speak at the summer school at this event. Mr McReynolds fee will reduce by the level of funding he receives from Irish Fest.

Action: Executive will update the Board at the meeting re: cost,

Language Diversity in Schools Programme

This agenda item will forward to the next meeting.

David Healy Day 2008

The David Healy day took place and showed value for money due to the educational aspect for the children who attended and the positive PR the Agency received in the local and National papers.

IUSS

This item has been moved to AOB.

Sailing Project

This agenda item will forward to the next meeting.

5. Audit Committee

All Board members received by email a copy of the Action Plan by 20th June 2008 as requested at the last meeting. The Board thanked Mr Patton for his working in completing this in the deadline given.

Under “Staff Review”, Mr Patton advised that DCAL would prefer that a Strategic Organisational Review take place instead. The proposed timescale would be as follows:

Tender Advertised: 8th August 2008
Tender Awarded: 5th September 2008
Tender in Progress: Early October 2008

Proposed and Agreed.

The Agency is currently working with Central Procurement to follow the process to secure a new Finance and Grants Package at the Agency.

The Executive were able to identify the root cause of the shortfalls in “Monitoring Checks”. Development Officers were trying to monitor all events rather than 10%. This is the reason the Agency are not meeting the requirements

KPMG have been appointed to draw up terms of reference for the strategic review. They have been allocation 10 working days to create a draft report that will be presented to the Board at the next meeting on 5th September 2008.

All staff will have received procurement training by the end of August 2008. The Board members proposed that the procurement training become compulsory for all new staff joining the Agency.

Proposed and Agreed.

Mr Leathem asked that the thanks of the Board be noted for the work of Mr Patton in completing this paper.

Action: Mr Patton to circular all related papers to the Board.

6. Chairman’s Report

The Chairman listed the events he had attended and the organisations he had been in contact with since the last meeting.

- On 17 June 2008 Mr Thompson attended a North South Ministerial Council evening meeting re: Workshop for Chairs & Vice Chairs and St Andrew’s Review of NS Bodies.
- On 20 June Mr Thompson met with the First Derry Presbyterian / Derry County Council / NI Tourist Board meeting Re: First Derry refurbishment.
- On 23 June Mr Thompson attended a meeting in Trinity College Dublin with William Humphrey, Board member. This was an introductory meeting, set up by Dr Crawford Gribben and 6 staff from the University.
- On 4 July Mr Thompson attended a meeting with NSMC re: Joint Communiqué
- On 24 July he attended a meeting at DCAL with Permanent Secretary, Linda Wilson (policy) and new Director of Finance.

7. Executive Report

Copies of this report were tabled.

The Board were in agreement that the Agency should host a showcase night of Ulster-Scots to students coming to Belfast from Maryville College, East Tennessee. The Board agreed to set aside £2,500 for this project.

As outlined in the report, the IFA have invited the Agency to participate where the International Team will be playing during the next World Cup qualifying games. On 20th August 2008 they will be playing at George Square, Glasgow. The Board collectively agreed that the Agency proceed to showcase Ulster-Scots at this event with a budget of £5,000.

Mr Leathem proposed that Mr Humphrey attended the Trade Mission Convention in Virginia on 15th September 2008 to represent the Ulster-Scots Agency. The Board collectively approved this.

The Board also collectively agreed that Agency staff should work with all interested parties involved in the project to create an “Out-reach Centre” in Ballymoney for Ulster-Scots.

8. Budget & Business Plan Progress

The Budget Report is to be circulated by email.

9. Revised Financial Assistance Scheme

The Draft Financial Assistance Scheme will not be approved until the next NSMC meeting which will take place in November 2008.

The Board collectively agreed this paper.

10. Grants

(1) Irish and Scottish Covenanters

Proposal:	€4,528 of €4,528
	This is a 12-month research project to employ a research assistant within the Centre for Irish-Scottish and Comparative Studies at Trinity College Dublin. The project focuses on the production of a monograph study of Presbyterian polity, perceptions of ecclesiastical separation and attitudes towards toleration in Ireland and Scotland during the Interregnum.

Dr Douglas left the meeting at this point.

The Board were in agreement that this application is beneficial to the Ulster-Scots story. However, until the Agency receives clear direction from DCAL of the position of USAIG, the Agency cannot support application for funding from academics.

The Board were in agreement that future projects of this standard should be by tender by the Agency giving all academics the opportunity to carry out this kind of work on the Agency's behalf. This allows the Agency to follow its Corporate Governance Policy.

Dr Douglas returned to the meeting.

(2) Bushmills Ulster Scots Heritage Group

Proposal:	£48,675 of £48,675
	This application relates to project work the group would hope to pursue over the next year building on the work already commenced.

The Board were in agreement to offer this group £30,000 funding for this project.
Proposed and Agreed.

(3) IUSS

Mrs Reed left the meeting at this point.

Mr Patton tabled a late application received from the IUSS. The Board were in agreement that they could not fund this application at present due to the earlier decision made regarding applications from academics.

Mrs Reed returned to the meeting.

(4) Ulster-Scots Folk Orchestra

The application re: the Youth Project was tabled last year to the Agency for joint funding with the Arts Council. Although the Arts Council could not fund this project then, they are now in a position to proceed with the application.

The Board collectively agreed to further consider at the next meeting this application.

11. 2009 Business Plan

Ideas for the Business Plan were welcomed from the Board.

12. Staffing

Mr Patton informed the Board that the Finance and Administration Manager has resigned. DCAL have suggested that the Agency recruit a Finance Manager from a recruitment Agency. As finance is only part of the job it was noted that the Agency also need an Office Manager. It was suggested that this be filled temporarily through an internal trawl.

Proposed and Agreed.

If this was to happen then the Agency would need to provide cover for the appointed staff member.

The Executive suggested that the Agency may need to look into a HR Consultant to put together staff contracts and deal with other HR issues as they arise. The Board collectively agreed that the Agency tender to recruit for the consultant.

13. AOB

SEUPB Project Update

This project has been extended for a further two months until the end of September 2008 for one member of staff.

This is to allow the project to interact more with the schools in the South as their Schools closed earlier for summer holidays than in the north.

A consultant has been recruited to review this project now it is almost completed.

Office Accommodation

Although staff have moved into the new premises work is still in progress to finish the offices.

Institute of Ulster-Scots Studies

Mr Thompson tabled a paper on the status to date on the relationship between IUSS and the Ulster-Scots Agency.

As requested the Executive are to provide a list of outputs from the Institute to date. This will be discussed further at the next meeting when information has been received.

Two reviews for the work of the Institute in 2006 and 2007 are to be requested by Mr Millar on his return from annual leave.

Mrs Reed agreed to sit on the Management Board of the IUSS.

Proposed and Agreed.

Young Ambassadors

The twelve candidates arrived on the 14th July 2008. Four with Ulster-Scots interested have assigned to the Agency to follow Ulster-Scots activities. They have visited the Summer Schools, Fuse FM, Ulster-Scots festivals, met the First minister, Deputy First Minister not to mention other events.

TV Programme

Mr Patton advised the Board upon viewing the Rushes he felt that the DVD did not meet the brief given.

Action: Mr Millar will provide an update at the next meeting.

Summer Schools

Thirty seven summer schools are running at present.

After-Schools Clubs

Twenty two after-School clubs have been piloted and a further twenty will take place in September 2008. Evaluation is to be completed and tabled at the next Board meeting.

The Executive feel that the next step on these projects is to arrange urgent meetings with the Departments of Education in the North and South to seek other financial assistance to take these projects forward.

Independence Quality -Assurance Checks

Mr Thompson requested that all material created by the Agency is to have Independent Quality-Assurance Checks before being published. This Policy is to be adhered to for all future work.

Agency “New” Website

A progress paper prepared by Ms Gilmore is to be forwarded on to the Board members. The site is to be live before Christmas.

PR and Marketing

The Board were in agreement that PR and Marketing is to be a permanent item on the Agenda for each meeting.

Database

All Board members details are to be added to the database to receive copies of the Ulster-Scot.

14. Date and Venue of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on 5th September 2008. The venue is to be confirmed but possibly in the new offices.

Signed:

Dates: