

**Tha Board O Ulster-Scotch
99th Board Meeting
22 June 2010
Ulster-Scots Agency Board Room
Belfast**

Present;	Mr John Hunter
	Mrs Angela Graham
	Mrs Jacqui Reed
	Mr William Humphrey
	Dr Ian Adamson
	Mr Tony Crooks
In attendance:	Mr Jim Millar
	Miss Hazel Campbell
	Mr Michael McCullough
	Mrs Catherine Martin
Recording Secretary:	Mrs Lyndsey Hanna

1. Welcome from the Chairperson

- 1.1 The Chairman welcomed members of the Board to the meeting.
- 1.2 Mr Hunter advised members that he had attended the NSMC meeting of the Joint Language Body along with Hazel Campbell and Jim Millar. He had circulated a report on the meeting to Board members.
- 1.3 Mr Hunter reported that he would be meeting Mr Patton the next day (23 June 2010) to discuss the final report into the investigation of his complaints.
- 1.4 Mr Hunter attended the launch of the “Mill Worker” project jointly supported by the Agency and Belfast City Council. The launch was a huge success. Mr Humphrey commended Mr Hanna, Development Officer’s participation in the Steering Group.
- 1.5 Mr Hunter raised the issue of conflict of interest with specific reference to the presentation from FGS McClure Watters on the evaluation of core funded groups. Mr Hunter indicated that the presentation would cover general issues which all members could attend followed by more detailed analyses of the individual groups. At this point Mr Humphrey and Mrs Reed declared their interest. It was agreed that both could be present for the general presentation and both would leave the meeting for the more detailed presentation on the individual groups.

2. Apologies

- 2.1 Apologies were accepted on behalf of Mr Leathem and Mr McLoone.

3. Minutes of Last Meeting

- 3.1 *Proposed and Agreed: that the minute be accepted.*

4. Matters Arising

4.1 USFO

Mr Hunter advised that the Interim CEO had written to Mr Drennan following 21 May Board Meeting indicating that the Board had considered the Goldblatt McGuigan report and had accepted its content and conclusions. Following that Mr Hunter received a request from Mr Drennan seeking to make a presentation to the Board and claiming that the audit report was not independent. Mr Hunter had turned down this request and a copy of his reply issued to all Board members. Mr Drennan wrote to Mr Hunter again on 18 June 2010 complaining again about the audit process and how the Ulster-Scots Folk Orchestra had been treated by the Agency. Copies of the letter were circulated to the Board.

- 4.2 After discussion the Board agreed that Mr Hunter should offer Mr Drennan a further meeting, although on the understanding that the Board's decision on the matter remains unchanged from that taken at the previous meeting.

- 4.3 ACTION:** *Interim Chair and Interim CEO.*

5. Interim CEO Report

- 5.1 Miss Campbell's report was tabled and the Board accepted it.
- 5.2 Dr Adamson joined the meeting at this point.
- 5.3 Miss Campbell referred to the Board members Code of Conduct attached to her report. This had been developed by the North South Ministerial Council. Miss Campbell confirmed that she and Mr Crooks, Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee had considered the content of the Code. Mr Crooks confirmed to the Chair that he felt that the code was comprehensive and that the issue of conflicts of interest was adequately covered.
- 5.4 Mr Humphrey informed the Board that he would be bringing the Code of Conduct to the attention of the party who nominated him for consideration as a Board member in the first instance.

- 5.5 Mr Hunter advised the Board members that the Code of Conduct should be adopted as Agency policy.

6. Music and Dance Tuition – Draft Consultation Paper

- 6.1 Mr Millar gave an overview of the content of the draft consultation paper on options for the provision of music and dance tuition as discussed at the previous Board Meeting. He sought advice from the Board on the umbrella groups which should be consulted and the following groups were agreed:

- The Confederation of Ulster Bands
- North of Ireland Bands Association
- Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association
- The Royal Scottish Country Dance Society
- The Ulster-Scots Dance Alliance
- Border Counties Band Association

- 6.2 It was also agreed there should be consultation with staff in the Ulster-Scots Community Network.

- 6.3 The Board agreed that the consultation should be completed as soon possible and the results fed back to the Board to agree a way forward.

- 6.4 **ACTION:** Mr Millar

7 Festival Funding

- 7.1 The Board was asked to consider the options for reviewing the funding of festivals and advise the Executive of their preferred approach.

- 7.2 Mr Millar gave an overview of the issues and the options identified by the Executive.

These were:

- 7.2.1 Option 1: Do Nothing
- 7.2.2 Option 2: Apply amended criteria to support regional events including an annual Flag-ship event
- 7.2.3 Option 3: Apply amended criteria to support a smaller number of quality events at community level
- 7.2.4 Option 4: Allocation determined by available funds
- 7.2.5 Option 5: Develop a Two-tier System

- 7.3 The Board were attracted to the option of a two tier approach to funding to support the larger flagship festivals and a small grant scheme to support the smaller community festivals and the Ulster-Scots elements of wider festival programmes. The advantage of

- a two tier approach is that it would provide a “ladder of progression” for organisations to move from a small scale event to flagship festivals.
- 7.4 The Board indicated their desire to see a simple application process for the small grant scheme which would help to assist groups with low capacity.
- 7.5 Miss Campbell advised that the scope of changes proposed were likely to require an amendment to the Financial Assistance Scheme which in turn would require the approval of the Departments and North South Ministerial Council. This would prolong the timescale for getting new arrangements in place. She said that it was unlikely that the new arrangements would be in place in time for 2011 and that 2012 was more realistic.
- 7.6 The Board agreed that the Executive should prepare a draft consultation paper for consideration at the August board Meeting.
- 7.7 **ACTION:** *Jim Millar*

8. Corporate Plan 2011 – 2013

- 8.1 Miss Campbell introduced the discussion paper to assist the Board in identifying strategic priorities for the Agency’s new corporate plan for 2011-2013. The paper included an analysis of achievements against the 2008-2010 corporate plan. Miss Campbell also indicated that the Agency had a number of questions in the 2010 Omnibus Survey which would provide a measure of public awareness of Ulster-Scots and the results would be available in early July.
- 8.2 The Board discussed the paper and agreed that the plan should be developed along the following themes:- Education and Language Development, widening access to and appreciation of Ulster-Scots culture, arts and heritage including cultural tourism, supporting communities engaged in Ulster-Scots activities and developing partnerships with other statutory bodies and community organisations to optimise service delivery.
- 8.3 The Board were particularly enthused about the potential for Ulster-Scots history and culture to contribute to Cultural Tourism in Northern Ireland. Mr Humphrey referred to an important piece of work currently being done by North Down and Ards Councils to develop a Ulster-Scots tourism trail and he felt there was scope to extend this. Mrs Reed referred to the tourism development opportunities in the North West and the role of the Monreagh Centre in this.
- 8.4 There was some debate around the supporting communities theme. To ensure the Agency met its equality objectives, the Chair suggested that the Agency should be using its limited resources to “support Ulster-Scots Communities and those supporting Ulster-Scots activities”. This would not exclude anyone from applying to the Financial Assistance Scheme. The Chair commented that the Agency should be empowering communities to link with Ulster-Scots activities as it is the Ulster-Scots activities that

drive the communities. This would allow the Agency to develop more sustainable Ulster-Scots activities and raise the quality standards, and experience.

9. Review of Core Funded Groups – Presentation by FGS McClure Watters

- 9.1 The Chair welcomed Mrs Jenny Irwin to the meeting.
- 9.2 Mrs Irwin commenced the presentation by outlining the purpose of the review as set out in the Terms of Reference. She then outlined the agreed methodology and process for conducting the review.
- 9.3 Mrs Irwin gave a summary of the results from the stakeholder surveys and outlined some of the key issues emerging. She had also completed an analysis of each body's performance against the KPI's and targets set out in their respective business plans. She indicated that the work on evaluating the governance arrangements and value for money assessment had still to be completed.
- 9.4 Mr Humphrey and Mrs Reed then left the meeting before a more detailed analysis of each of the groups was presented. At that point Dr Adamson and Mrs Graham declared that while they were not directly involved in the groups concerned that they had adhoc links with the groups. The Chair determined that they could remain in the meeting. Mrs Irwin then gave a more detailed analysis of her findings to date and questions were invited prior to Mr Humphrey and Mrs Reed rejoining the meeting.
- 9.5 At that point the floor was open for general discussion. Mrs Reed felt that to date there had been inadequate contact between the consultants and the Monreagh Centre. Mrs Irwin explained that work had now commenced in relation to the Monreagh Centre but some aspects of the terms of reference would not be relevant e.g. analysis of past performance as the group had not previously been in receipt of core funding.
- 9.6 Board members wished to be assured that all material of a factual nature relating to the groups would be accurate and requested that this should be validated with the groups prior to completion of the report. Mrs Irwin agreed that this would be done.
- 9.7 This process and other issues would extend the completion date for the final report to mid July.
- 9.8 Mr Hunter concluded that the final report would be circulated to Board Members and to the Sponsor Departments. The focus at the next Board Meeting would be on the report's conclusion and recommendations.

10. Grant Awards

- 10.1 **10A – Altnaveigh House**
Mr Millar explained that the Agency had previously approved funding for this project but partnership funding had not been secured at the time to enable the project to

proceed. The organisation had now secured PEACE III funding and they were seeking confirmation from the Agency that it would uphold the original grant offer of £5,250.

10.2 The Board agreed to re-approve funding for this project subject to formal confirmation from the group on the scope and extent of the revised project. The funds would not be drawn down until January 2011.

10.3 **10B – Summer Schools**

The Board noted the information on the schedule of Summer Schools

10.4 **10C – Pat & Plain Drama Project with Lyric Theatre**

The Board accepted the recommendation to provide up to an additional £8,390.19 to the Lyric Theatre for the project deficit which was a result of the Arts Council not being in a position to support the project at this time.

11. Finance Report

11.1 Mr McCullough gave an update on the Agency financial position.

11.2 Mr Humphrey remained concerned about the lack of decision on the 2010 budget.

11.2 The Chair suggested that he would discuss with Mr Ó Maolmhichíl, Chair of Foras na Gaeilge whether they should issue a joint letter to the Departments to try to get this resolved.

11.3 ***ACTION: The Chair and Interim CEO***

12. Managing Fraud

12.1 The Board accepted and approved the new policy and noted that staff training would be undertaken.

12.2 ***ACTION: Interim CEO***

13. Marketing & Promotion Plans

13.1 The Board noted and approved the planned promotional activities for July and August 2010, which included showcasing at Castlewellan Agricultural Show, showcasing at the St Patrick's Centre Downpatrick and a showcase at Greencastle Co. Donegal and Lisnahally Co. Londonderry.

13.2 Mr McCullough reminded Board Members that the next meeting would be the 100th meeting of the Board. He suggested Parliament Buildings as a possible option for holding the meeting.

- 13.3 The Board were in agreement with this suggestion and were keen to invite additional guests to the lunch including the two Ministers, the two Permanent Secretaries, the Joint Secretaries of the North South Ministerial Council as well as all past Chairs and Board Members. Miss Campbell indicated that use of Parliament Buildings would require an MLA to sponsor the event and it would be preferable if this was the Minister. Mr Hunter agreed to write to the Minister regarding this matter.

13.4 ACTION: *Interim Chair*

14. Institute of Ulster-Scots Studies

- 14.1 Mrs Reed requested that the Board revisit the funding agreement between the Agency and the IUSS as she was concerned that the Institute would cease operating as of 30 June 2010 because no further funding has been secured.
- 14.2 Mrs Reed gave the Board an overview of the work completed by the IUSS to date with the funding the Agency had previously provided. She asked the Board why the funding has not been extended and expressed her view that the Agency had let the IUSS down.
- 14.3 At this point the Chair declared a conflict of interest as he is a member of the Council for University of Ulster as did Dr Adamson being a Committee Member of the University.
- 14.4 The Chair advised that no further application for funding had been received by the Agency and funding for 2010 was now fully committed. He said that developments in relation to the Ulster-Scots Academy would have a bearing on the future work of the IUSS.
- 14.5 The Chair suggested that he write a letter to the Institute expressing the Boards appreciation for the work they had carried out to date, and indicating that there may be further opportunities for partnership working when the uncertainties around the Academy, the Department's language strategy and future funding were resolved.

14.6 ACTION: *Interim Chair*

15. AOB

- 15.1 There was no further business for discussion.

16. Dates for future Meetings

- 16.1 The next Board meeting will take place during week commencing 16 August 2010, subject to availability of Parliament Buildings.

Signed:.....

Date:.....