

**Tha Board O Ulster-Scotch
97th Board Meeting
31 March 2010
Ulster-Scots Agency Board Room
Belfast**

Present;	Mrs Angela Graham
	Dr Ian Adamson
	Mr William Humphrey
	Mr John Hunter
	Mr Tony Crooks
In attendance:	Mr Jim Millar
	Miss Hazel Campbell
	Mr Michael McCullough
Recording Secretary:	Ms 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 Mr Robert Campton, HR Consultant had been appointed to investigate the grievances raised by Mr George Patton. The investigation had commenced and was expected to be completed around the end of April 2010.
- 1.3 The Chairman indicated that he had met with staff following the last Board meeting to appraise them of the decisions regarding the Strategic Organisational Review. The transfer of the grants function has already taken place. The decision regarding new posts requires the approval of the North South Ministerial Council.
- 1.4 The Chairman reported on a meeting he had attended with the Minister on 23 March 2010 where he raised the Boards concerns on the Agency budget, the delay in the Language, Culture and Heritage Strategy and the position of the Ulster-Scots Academy Mr Hunter said that he was also seeking clarity on the Agency's relationship with the planned Ulster-Scots Cultural Centres which the Minister announced the following day.

- 1.5 At the meeting, the Minister clarified that when established, the Ulster-Scots Academy would be the guardian of the Ulster-Scots Language and would set standards. The Minister raised concerns over the quality of the 4 children's books that the Agency had published, particularly surrounding the language translations for the books. The Minister was still considering the issues and the Agency was asked not to distribute the books. The Chair was keen to find a resolution to this.
- 1.6 A reply is still outstanding from the Department on the budget issues. Mr Humphrey said he was concerned that the budget was still not confirmed. This made it difficult for the Executive to make recommendations to the Board.
- 1.7 The Chairman informed the Board that the new Minister for DCEGA was Mr Pat Carey, TD. The Board agreed that letters should be issued to both Minister Carey and Minister O'Cuiv welcoming both to their new positions.
- 1.8 **ACTION:** *Miss Campbell to issue letters.*

2. Apologies

- 2.1 Apologies were accepted on behalf of Mr William Leathem and Mrs Jacqui Reed.

3. Minutes of last Meeting

- 3.1 The minutes of the last Board meeting were tabled.
- 3.2 **Proposed and Agreed:** *that the minute be accepted after changes of minor typos.*

4. Matters Arising

- 4.1 Matters arising were covered in the interim CEO's report to the Board.

5. Verbal Report from the Audit Committee Chair

- 5.1 Mr Cooks, Chair of the Agency Audit Committee gave the Board members a verbal report of the Audit Committee meeting of 31 March 2010. The draft minutes would be circulated at the next Board meeting.

- 5.2 The meeting had full attendance with representatives of the NIAO, DCAL and Goldbalt McGuigan also present.
- 5.3 The Agency Board agreed to delegate responsibility for the Agency Risk Register to the Audit Committee.
- 5.4 ***Proposed and Agreed:*** that the Agency Audit Committee take responsibility for the Agency Risk Register.
- 5.5 The Board agreed to change the name of the Audit Committee to the “Audit and Risk Committee” due to the new added responsibility.
- 5.6 ***Proposed and Agreed:*** that the Agency Audit Committee change the name of the committee to “Audit and Risk Committee”.

6. Interim Chief Executive Officer’s Report

- 6.1 This report was tabled.
- 6.2 Miss Campbell gave a brief overview of the issues in her report.
- 6.3 **NSMC Meeting**
Mr Crooks suggested that the Southern representatives should send a note to DCRGA on key issues being progressed by the Agency from their perspective.
- 6.3 ***ACTION:*** Mr Crooks to discuss this with Mrs Reed and Mrs Graham.
- 6.4 **Pat and Plain Plays**
There are currently two plays from the Pat and Plain Series written by Dan Gordon being performed in schools. Miss Campbell attended the show ‘A Lemonde Bottle for Clabberin’ Hitler’ performed by Meadowbridge PS on Thursday 25 March 2010. Mr Humphrey attended the show ‘Kissing the Shuttle’ performed by Edenbrook PS on Wednesday 24 March 2010. The quality of the performances had been excellent and the positive impact in the schools was evident.
- 6.5 ***ACTION:*** Miss Campbell to write a letter of thanks to Mr Gordon for the great work he is doing on behalf of the Agency.
- 6.6 **Ulster-Scots Language Society**
Miss Campbell advised the Board that no letter of offer has been sent to the Ulster-Scots Language Society as the Agency is still waiting for their revised business plan.

- 6.7 Miss Campbell gave an up-date on the staffing issues at the Agency. She advised that she is hoping to get assistance from DCAL, for a DP to work primarily on updating Agency policies.

7. Finance Report

- 7.1 Mr Crooks raised concerns regarding the level of detailed information required for the monthly drawdown. Miss Campbell indicated that this was the process for all DCAL's arms lengths bodies.
- 7.2 Mr McCullough recommended that the Board note the finance report tabled.
- 7.3 The Board members noted the expenditure to date in 2010.

8. Ullans Speakers Association

- 8.1 Miss Campbell advised that a letter was received 11 March 2010 from the Ullans Speakers Association requesting an additional £5k during the period of their current funding agreement (which finishes in May 2010). The increase in funding required was due to the demands for their services being significantly greater than when they submitted their original Business Plan to the Agency. The Ullans Speakers Association are currently exceeding the targets in the plan. Examples of additional work delivered include requests for translation services that do not generate much revenue, significant demands for community language classes and one-off language sessions, travel costs which had not been planned for, requests to appear on radio and television and other additional requests for schools workshops as well as participating in language sessions organised by the Agency.
- 8.2 ***Proposed and Agreed:*** (a) that the additional £5k be awarded, and (b) that the Ullans Speakers Association be asked to submit a Business Plan for the period 1 June to end of December 2010

9. 2010 Festival Awards

- 9.1 Mr Millar recommended that the Board approve the outstanding festival grants as set out in the paper to the Board. The Board felt that they should also indicate a formal decision on the applications proposed for rejection.
- 9.2 The current budget for the scheme was £190k. The grant awards will amount to £195k.
- 9.3 ***Proposed and Agreed:*** all recommended and rejected applications as tabled.
- 9.4 *The Board requested details of the geographical locations to be indicated in future papers on grant awards.*
- 9.5 ***ACTION:*** Mr Millar

10. UTV Programme

- 10.1 The Agency had been approached by Lesley Black, Producer of Evergreen Media Limited to provide £17k financial support for a one hour documentary on UTV under the title “Plantation – The Truth and Legacy”. The programme has already been commissioned by UTV and is scheduled for transmission in the autumn.
- 10.2 The Producers are keen to produce a fair and balanced programme and while they retain editorial control, the Agency will have an opportunity to provide it’s views.
- 10.3 Some members were concerned over the risks posed by having no editorial input. It was agreed that the Agency will liaise closely with the producers during the planning and production.
- 10.4 ***Proposed and Agreed:*** (a) to allocate £17k towards the UTV Programme on the Plantation, and (b) payments should be made on phased basis on satisfactory delivery.

11. Working with Others

- 11.1 Two proposals were tabled under the “Working with Others Scheme”.
- 11.2 **Lisburn City Council**
Mr Millar recommended that the Agency provide funding of up to £5k towards an application submitted from Lisburn City Council for a Highland Games event

in June 2010. The requested funding was £7,500, however not all the project is Ulster-Scots related. A detailed budget has been submitted and the Executive have identified an appropriate contribution by the Agency would be up to a maximum of £5k.

11.3 *Proposed and Agreed:* the Board agreed to provide funding up to £5k.

11.4 Artists in Creative Enterprise (ACE)

Mr Millar recommended that the Agency provide funding of up to £3.5k towards an application submitted by the group Artists in Creative Enterprise (ACE) for their Wordland project. This project was initially costed at £20,000 with a request for support of £10,000 from the Agency. This application had previously been deferred by the Board until March 2010 when a reappraisal of available funds would be undertaken. All aspects of the project is Ulster Scots related. Match funding from local authorities is in place.

11.5 *Proposed and Agreed:* the Board agreed to provide funding up to £3.5k.

11.6 After a discussion the Board members agreed that the “Working with Others” scheme should close due to the Agency’s lack of funding in 2010. The Agency may find an opportunity to re-open it once budgets have been finalised and restrictions lifted. Notification of this would be put on the Agency website.

11.6 *Proposed and Agreed:* the Board agreed to close the scheme until further notice.

12. Marketing Budget

12.1 Publications Report

The Board agreed that a publications strategy should be developed. Dr Adamson felt that any attempt to standardise the language could alienate native speakers. He felt that different dialogues should continue to exist.

12.2 Dr Adamson offered to prepare an erratum to issue with the 4 children’s books explaining that the translations by the Ullans Speakers Association relates to the language as spoken in the North Antrim area..

12.3 The Chair was grateful for this suggestion which he would take to the Department seeking agreement to launch the books at the Balmoral Show, Belfast on 12 May 2010.

12.4 Promotional Activity

***Proposed and Agreed:** the Board agreed the promotional plans for April and May 2010 subject to approval of the business cases.*

13. Progress Report on 2010 Business Plan Targets

13.1 The Board noted the progress report tabled.

14. Correspondence from the Ulster-Scots Folk Orchestra

14.1 The Chairman referred to the correspondence received from the Ulster-Scots Folk Orchestra. Miss Campbell reported that she had met with Willie Drennan and other representatives from the Orchestra on 3 March 2010. She had asked Mr Alan Thompson, Internal Auditor to attend. The USFO claimed that they were still owed over £6k from the Agency for the Youth Project. The outcome of the meeting was that Goldbalt McGuigan would carry out a detailed audit of the Agency's files on the Youth project to determine if any outstanding grant was owed. Mr Humphrey said that he had been contacted by Mr Drennan as he had heard nothing further from the Agency. Miss Campbell explained that she had written to Mr Drennan following the meeting and indicated that the detailed investigation would take several weeks to complete.

14.2 The Board agreed that the USFO should receive a full response to their queries once the Audit was complete.

14.3 ***Proposed and Agreed:** Miss Campbell to make contact with the Ulster-Scots Folk Orchestra once audit is completed*

14.4 ***ACTION:** Miss Campbell to circulate the report once complete to all Board members.*

15. AOB

15.1 There were no issues

16. Dates for future Meetings

16.1 The next Board meeting will take place in the morning of 21 May 2010 followed by a Joint Language Body meeting with Foras na Gaeilge in the afternoon.

16.2 The June meeting will take place on 22 June 2010.

Signed:.....

Date:.....