

**Tha Boord o Ulster-Scotch
84th Board Meeting
15th December 2008,
Ulster-Scots Agency Board Room, Belfast.**

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

1. Welcome from the Chairman

Mr Thompson welcomed everyone to the 84th Board Meeting at the Agency Board Room, Belfast.

2. Apologies

The Board were informed that Mr Leathem would join the meeting in the afternoon.

3. Minutes of the last meeting (20th November 2008)

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

Proposed and agreed: that the minute be accepted.

Dr Adamson joined the meeting at this point.

4. Matters Arising

Language Diversity in Schools Programme

The project has been cancelled and will no longer proceed due to funding not being secured from Foras na Gaeilge.

TV Programme

Mr Millar met with Ms Deirdre Davitt of Foras na Gaeilge. They viewed the updated DVD. Once the voiceover is completed they will review it again. This should be completed by end of January 2008.

Report from Perth Conference

Mr Millar gave feedback on the Conference that himself and Mrs Reed had attended in Perth.

OFCOM Report

Mr Millar informed the Board that the Agency made a formal response to the OFCOM Report relating to Ulster-Scots Broadcasting.

5. Chairman's Report

The Chairman did not make a report at this meeting due to time constraints.

6. Report from Executive

The Executive tabled their report.

Mr Patton highlighted the meeting he attended regarding the 2009 Sister Cities Gala Ball. It was proposed that the Agency provide joint sponsorship for this event with Foras na Gaeilge. The Board collectively agreed to sponsor this event up to £10k.

Mr Millar reported that he had represented the Agency at a series of DCAL Sponsored Events relating to promoting Quality and Learning. A final document for use by the DCAL family has been approved for use by this group.

8. Budget & Business Plan Report

Copies of the Business Plan Progress Report were tabled. The Board thanked the Executive for the progress of the Agency outlined in the report.

Copies of the Budget Report were tabled.

The Agency is at present having a new finance package installed. This system will assist internally with budgeting and reporting in 2009. Finance staff will have better management of finance and will be able to identify issues quicker.

The Board accepted this report from the Executive.

Proposed and agreed.

11. Grants

(1) The Lyttle People ‘The Broken String Band’

Proposal:	
	This group are looking for a possible donation for the appearance of ‘The Broken String Band’ at the 2009 Moniaive Festival.

The Board collectively agreed that the Agency could not fund this application as it was outside the remit of the Agency. However, the Agency will provide the group with a fee of £300 to take Ulster-Scots literature to this event and distribute it on the Agency’s behalf.

Proposed and Agreed.

Mrs Reed left the meeting at this point. She had information to share with the Board on behalf of East Donegal Ulster-Scots Association but the Chair suggested the Board discuss the application before new evidence is provided.

(2) East Donegal Ulster Scots Association - Appeal

Proposal:	€2,000
	This group point out that the publication of the Genealogy booklets and Discover Donegal booklets have left their organisation with a deficit of approx €2,000. They would also like to be in the position to re-print these booklets in the New Year.

The Board discussed this application and agreed that there was no mechanism to provide additional finance. Further to this the Board were in agreement that any correspondence should be in writing from the group to the CEO and not presented to the Board via a Board member.

Mrs Reed returned to the Board. She was advised by the Chair that any relevant information should be put in writing by the group.

(3) Dr John McCavitt

Proposal:	£12990
	Dr John McCavitt wants the Agency to commission him to undertake work for a project entitled ‘General Ross and the second War of Independence’. Further outcomes from this work could include website work, a DVD as well as the basis for a major documentary.

The Board were in agreement to park this application until further clarification was received from the NIAO on new procedures for grants. This project may generate an income which is not inline with Agency funding, therefore, more clarity is needed before a decision can be made.

(4) Belfast Nashville Songwriters Festival

Proposal:	£15,000
	This group are requesting the Agency sponsor them with £15,000 towards a number of events, advertising and printing costs.

The Board were in agreement to fund this application for £5k.

Proposed and Agreed.

13. AOB

Office Accommodation

The Agency offices have had a major clean up. Progress on the Visitors Centre is continuing.

Summer Schools/Afterschools

Both projects have proven to be successful during 2008. Plans are under way to commence both in 2009. At present Mr Millar is progressing Child Protection for both projects.

PR/Marketing

The new Ulster-Scot magazine "Oot an about" was circulated along with copies of the Oul Han Book, Nursery Rhymes for Weens and a copy of the Ulster-Scot calendar.

Dr Adamson thanked those responsible on the staff who produced all these publications this year.

Community Conference

The resolutions of this conference are with ASM Horwath dealing with the Agency Organisational Review.

Burns Supper

The Agency Burns Supper will take place on Friday 16th January 2009 in conjunction with Newtownabbey Borough Council.

American Students

Students will be arriving on an educational programme in Belfast in January 2009. The Agency will assist in putting a programme together for these students. They will be invited to join the Agency Burns Supper whilst here.

BELB

Mr Thompson and Mr Patton met with representative of the BELB. They received a presentation on their plans to create a new cultural hub in Belfast with funding they had received.

They have invited the Agency to get involved in the planning of a document on this project. The Board were in agreement for the Agency to participate in this project.

Proposed and Agreed.

East Tennessee

Mr Humphrey suggested that the Agency have a presence at the Tourism “Pow Wow” in America in 2009. It was suggested that this item go forward for an item on the agenda for the Board meeting in January 2009.

Young Ambassadors Programme.

This programme will run again in 2009. Executive informed the Board that Foras na Gaeilge would be reducing their Sponsorship for this project in 2009 from £7k to £3k. The Executive recommended that the Agency follow their lead. The Board collectively agreed this change.

Proposed and agreed

10. Staffing

Mr Patton informed the Board that the Finance & Administration Manager has been appointed and the role commences on 12th January 2009.

9. Audit and Corporate Governance

The Progress Report was tabled and discussed. The Board highlighted all the main issues in the letter from Mr Stephen McCormick and the Executive provided detailed answers where necessary on these points.

12. Revised Financial Assistance Scheme

This item will carry over to the next meeting. The Chief Executive to circulate the scheme under written procedures.

7. Briefing from ASM Horwath (scheduled for 2.30pm)

All staff left the meeting at this point with the exemption of Mr Patton. The board had a constructive meeting with the representatives of ASM Horwath which will “feed into” their final report.

16. Date and Venue of next Meeting

The next Board meeting will take place on Friday 16th January 2009 at the Corr's Corner Hotel, Newtownabbey.

Signed:

Dates: