

Tha Board O Ulster-Scotch
92nd Board Meeting
25th September 2009
Ulster-Scots Agency Board Room

Present;	Mrs Angela Graham
	Mr William Leathem
	Mr William Humphrey
	Dr William Roulston
	Dr Ian Adamson
	Mrs Jacqui Reed
In Attendance:	Mr George Patton
	Mr Michael McCullough
	Mr Jim Millar
Recording Secretary;	Miss Siobhan McNally

1) Welcome From Chairperson - remarks

Mrs Graham welcomed and thanked Board members for attending the 92nd Board Meeting in the Ulster-Scots Agency offices. Mrs Graham outlined some procedural issues in relation to the meeting.

The Ulster-Scots Agency registered for the Macmillan's World's Biggest Coffee Morning. As the official date of this was 25th September, staff at the Agency decided that this would be a great opportunity for the staff and Board to support such a good cause on the morning of the Board meeting.

2) Apologies

Apologies were tabled on behalf of Mrs Douglas who was unable to attend this months meeting. Dr Adamson would also be leaving the meeting early.

3) Minutes of last Meeting

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

Proposed and Agreed: that the minute be accepted.

4) Matters Arising

First Derry Presbyterian Church

A meeting with The Northern Ireland Tourist Board has been requested, a date is yet to be set.

Dr Adamson and Mr McCullough left the meeting at this point.

TV Programme

Mr Millar explained to the Board that the process is ongoing. Editing is taking place and hopefully a broadcast date will follow.

Mr McCullough returned to the meeting.

CEO Targets

The Board await a response from DCAL in relation to 07/08 and the 09 targets.

Agency Information Centre

It was decided at a previous Board Meeting to open the centre for a trial run for a few weeks, but this had not been possible due to staffing resource issues. The Board discussed this and decided to go ahead with the business plan.

Proposed and Agreed.

Plantation Project

A draft outline business case had been sent to the Departments who had advised that an economic appraisal was requested combining all proposal Plantation Events. Concern was raised at this and the Board collectively agreed that it would be beneficial for the Board to meet with the Minister to discuss the project, prior to the next Board Meeting.

Mr Patton thanked Dr Roulston for his work around the Plantation.

5) Audit Update

Minutes from the last Audit Committee Meeting were tabled together with an update on Audit recommendations.

One outstanding issue impacting on the procurement recommendation was the un-tendered services around the Ulster-Scots float. Coleraine Festival take ownership for the float and they will be receiving it on the 6th October.

6) Report from Executive

Copies of this report were tabled and discussed.

Proposed and Agreed: The Board accepted the report.

7) Budget and Business Plan Progress

Papers were tabled and discussed. Amendments will be made to the business plan dependant on issues raised with the Minister. In the interim any further comments were to be advised to the Executive.

The Board adjourned for lunch.

8) Grants and Appeals

Artists in Creative Enterprise

Project: Wordland-A creative writing and spoken word cross border cultural project

Amount of grant being sought from the Ulster-Scots Agency: £10,000

The Board collectively agreed that they needed more clarification for funding, therefore couldn't approve the application at this point. Mr Millar was asked to contact the group with a view to present a Revised Application for the next Meeting.

Proposed and Agreed.

Happenstance Theatre Company

Project: All the Queens Men

Amount of grant being sought from the Ulster-Scots Agency: £7,500

The Board approved the level of funding requested.

Proposed and Agreed.

Blue Eagle Productions

Project: Fair Fa Yee USA

Amount of grant being sought from the Ulster-Scots Agency: £31,665

It was proposed that the total budget be funded 50/50 from Tourism Ireland and The Ulster-Scots Agency, each giving a contribution of £31,665. The Board felt they needed more clarification for funding and a letter of commitment from Tourism Ireland. Mr Patton will follow up on this.

Proposed and Agreed.

Blue Eagle Productions

Project: The Ulster-Scots Writing Project

Amount of grant being sought from the Ulster-Scots Agency: £21,025

The Board felt they needed more clarification for funding. Mr Patton will discuss with the Artistic Director of the project-Mr Jonathan Burgess he will also speak with the Arts council regarding their approval. This will be brought back at the next Board Meeting.

Proposed and Agreed.

Mid Armagh Community Network

Amount of grant being sought from the Ulster-Scots Agency: £20,847.50

This application was from a community group who could not receive funding under the FAS tuition scheme because of the high level of activity delivered. Mr Humphrey

commented on his knowledge of the group and the need for this stream of funding to be accessible. The Board approved the level of funding requested.

Proposed and Agreed.

Appeal from Corbet Accordion Band

The CEO advised that Corbet Accordion Band made application for financial assistance for tuition in June 2007 and were awarded a grant totalling £2,400. Payment was scheduled to be made in two stages. Application for the first period was received and paid in January 2008. The second and final claim was not received by the date due-16th April 2008. On 27th August 2009 a letter was sent to the group advising that the file had been closed some 16 months after the claim should have been made.

The Board collectively agreed that this appeal could not be upheld as the claim refers to a financial year which is past and the conditions of the letter of offer have not been met with the time delay being such that there is no room for flexibility.

Community Workers Scheme

Mr Patton and Mrs Reid left the meeting at this point having declared a conflict of interest.

A panel met on Tuesday 22nd September to make recommendations for the Community Workers Scheme applications. The Board accepted these recommendations and Mrs Graham thanked the panel for their help.

Mr Patton and Mrs Reid returned to the meeting.

9) Language Strategy

A paper was tabled and discussed.

The proposed strategy is designed to ensure a systematic approach to the work of the Agency in terms of its commitment to the Ulster-Scots language.

The adoption of the strategy in full will impact upon the available financial resources. There will also be consequences to the wider Ulster-Scots community. Funds normally destined for other projects will have to be redirected.

It was agreed by the Board that the paper will be brought back to the October Board Meeting after seeking guidance from the department and the Minister.

Proposed and Agreed.

10) Community Development Strategy

The draft discussion paper was re-tabled and discussed.

The Board collectively agreed to process the strategy.

2010 Business Plan

A paper on the Agency's 2010 Business Plan was tabled and discussed. Mr Patton asked Board members to read over and have comments in for the following week. The final draft needs to be in place by October's Board Meeting.

11) Staffing

A paper was tabled and discussed. The paper sets out the Executive Team's response to the recommendations made by ASM Horwath.

The CEO reiterated his concerns about the lack of staff resources.

The Board accepted the paper and agreed that a member of the Board will speak with Agency staff regarding any concerns they have, preferably at the next staff meeting.

The Board discussed the role of Agency Accountant and agreed that the position needs to be filled urgently.

Music Tutors

Music Tutor contracts terminate at the end of October. A business case has been sent to the Department and options are to be considered for any gaps in provision. The Board approved a course of action to continue some music tuition through the workshop budget until the end of the year.

Mr Leathem left the meeting at this point.

12) A.O.B

Institute of Ulster-Scots Studies

A new date is required for a presentation and it was suggested that this take place at the November Meeting.

Co. Antrim Historical Ethnology Project

The Board received an update on the current situation. The CEO expressed concern that the advice received from the Department would take this project over the delegated limits and was contrary to the action recommended to the board at the last meeting.

Stone Mountain Games

Mrs Reid and Dr Adamson will be travelling to Atlanta on the 15th October to attend the event.

Launch of the Agency Website

The new Ulster-Scots website will be officially launched on Thursday 15th October.

13) Date and Venue of Next Meeting

The next Board Meeting will take place on 16th October 2009 in the Agency offices, Belfast and will be followed by a meeting of the Language Body.

Signed

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Date

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