

**The Board of Ulster-Scots
The Ulster-Scots Agency Board Meeting
25th January 2007
Holiday Inn,
Belfast**

Present: Mr Jim Devenney
Dr Linde Lunney
Mr Pat Wall
Mr Alistair Simpson
Mr Bob Stoker

In attendance: Mr George Patton
Mr Michael McCullough
Mr Derek Reaney

Recording Secretary: Miss Lyndsey Hanna

1. Welcome from the Chairman

The Vice Chairman Mr Devenney welcomed the Board to the 63rd meeting at the Holiday Inn, Belfast, the first meeting of 2007.

2. Apologies

Apologies were accepted on behalf of Dr Adamson, Mr Thompson and Mr O'Donnell.

Mr Patton also tendered apologies on behalf of Mrs Wilson, Director of Culture and Mr Millar, Director of Language and Education who were both off work ill at present.

3. Minutes of Meeting 3rd November 2006

The minutes were adopted by the Board
Proposed: The Board accepted the minute.

4. Matters Arising

Letter to Ms Flora Montgomery

Executive informed the Board that as requested he sent a letter to Ms Montgomery thanking her for the positive television documentary shown on BBC re: Hamilton and Montgomery 1606. Ms Montgomery has responded positively.

Membership to Committees

Executive informed the Board that they had taken up this issue with DCAL at the Board's request. Board members can serve on any committee as individuals but cannot represent the Agency on committees unless as part of the Agency's work.

Television Programme Proposal

Executive informed the Board that Mr Millar and Ms Deirdre Davitt from Foras na Gaeilge have had meetings to discuss this project. Ms Davitt has been assisting Mr Millar to ensure that the Agency is safe guarded in this project, and has already provided guidance on criteria to be met once a decision has been taken to go ahead with the programme.

To date she has outlined criteria subject to the project going ahead.

Monreagh

Executive informed the Board that the Agency had written to Minister O'Cuiv with proposals as outlined by the Board. A response was received from DCRGA and a meeting will take place with representatives of the Monreagh Management Committee and Minister O'Cuiv on Monday 12th February 2007 to discuss this issue.

Archive Project

There has been little progress on this issue due to Mr Thompson's illness. This item will forward to the next meeting.

Burns Night

Executive thanked all the Board members who represented the Agency at the Burns Supper the previous evening. It had been a great opportunity for the Agency to network.

5. Chairman's Report

Mr Devenney reflected back on the work of the Agency in 2006. He said that 2007 was a year to focus on the needs of the community and deliver accordingly.

Mr Devenney thanked Mr Reaney and Mr Hanna for their work to date and commented how the Agency were fortunate to have an excellent staff structure in place.

He emphasised that this was the year for the Agency to focus on language.

6. Chief Executive's Report

Mr Patton highlighted a few items on his report:

- Item I – Mr Patton met with Mr Alistair McReynolds to discuss his ideas relative to connections in North East America and Maine Ulster-Scots Association. He also made a proposal for the Agency to organise a literature

symposium. Dr Lunney is keen to meet with Mr McReynolds to discuss these ideas.

- Item B – Meeting with DCAL representatives. DCAL wanted to know if more resources became available after the St Andrew's Agreement what the Agency would intend to spend it on.

Report from Derek Reaney, Development Worker, (West)

Mr Reaney informed the Board that he had met with representatives from the Maiden City Festival. Their proposal for 2007 was the same as 2006 but they are applying for more funding. They will not be approaching the Community Festival Fund with an application for the 2007 festival.

The Board were in agreement that they would like to see this event take place in 2007 but after discussion with Mr Reaney they felt that a grant application should be made to the Agency rather than a Sponsorship application. The Agency would consider potential funding up to £50,000 for an appropriate application.

Action: Mr Reaney is meeting the festival committee that evening and will propose these changes.

Mr Reaney informed the Board that at present he is searching for representatives to deliver Ulster-Scots language classes throughout the province. To date this is proving difficult.

Action: Feedback to the Board on this issue at next meeting.

7. Budget and Business Plan 2006/7

The Board were informed that the accounts for 2006 were closed. In 2007 the Agency will be using accrual accounting procedures.

It was also highlighted that some application forms from 2006 had yet to be claimed but the staff are working on getting them closed.

The Board were told that the Agency needed to review the Financial Assistance Scheme to encourage more Ulster-Scots activity. The Executive came up with the follow proposal:

- The Agency will still to provide 75% of eligible costs of Ulster-Scot Events.
- Funding of 100% of Ulster-Scots elements up to 75% of total costs.
- Language financial assistance will be up to 100% to increase this activity.

Proposed: The Board were in agreement to these proposals.

The Board queried what ASLC's were on the Agency budget. Executive informed the Board that this was staff pension contributions that goes to DCAL and that the Agency do not draw down from.

£14,000 professional fees were also queried by Board members. Executive advised that these were fees the Agency were charged by NIAO for them to carryout an Agency Audit each year.

8. Grants

(1) Maguiresbridge Scottish and Country Highland Dancing Group

Proposal:	£8,000 from a total of £8,560
Reason:	This application is to run dance tuition classes.

Proposed: The Board were in agreement to fund £7,275 for this event.

(2) Coleraine Festival Committee

Proposal:	£6,530 from at total of £36,154
Reason:	The Festival will run from 7 th to 11 th July. It is not an Ulster Scots Festival but has a significant Ulster Scots content and the other activities may in themselves help to attract people to the Festival and the Ulster Scots elements will benefit.

Proposed: The Board were in agreement to fund £6,530 for this event.

(3) Blue Eagle Productions

Proposal:	£14,515 from a total of £96,530
Reason:	This project is receiving support from the Arts Council, Derry City Council, The Honourable the Irish Society and the University of Ulster. The project meets a desire expressed in the 2007 Business Plan to increase awareness of drama.

The Board were in agreement to fund this as a Sponsorship application in order for the Agency to receive full advertising at this event. It was stipulated that local actors were to be involved in this drama.

Proposed: The Board agreed as outlined above.

SPONSORSHIP

(1) The Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association, NI Branch

Proposal:	£50,000 from total of £102,700
Reason:	RSPBA are possibly the largest stakeholder group that the Agency would deal with and are very keen to widen the events and competitions they organise to more fully demonstrate a variety of Ulster Scots activity. In return for this sponsorship which guarantees a number of Ulster Scots activities, promotional opportunities such as signage at each event, advertising in brochures etc we would reserve the right to have an Agency presence at each event.

Proposed: The Board were in agreement to fund this sponsorship application.

**Proposal of Project -
Agency working in conjunction with Cairncastle Ulster-Scots Group.**

(1) Carincastle Ulster-Scots Group

Proposal:	£28,800
Reason:	<p>This is not yet a formal application but because of time constraints it is being brought to the Board for advice and guidance.</p> <p>Cairncastle consistently deliver a programme of Ulster Scots events with their annual Festival being a highlight attracting a significant attendance including visitors from Scotland and elsewhere. Larne Borough Council considers it to be a major attraction in the area.</p> <p>This is a “pure” Ulster Scots festival and worthy of support. It is anticipated that the Council and the Community Festival Fund will as in previous years offer financial support.</p>

Proposed: The Board gave the Executive approval to negotiate up to £15,000 and continue discussions with a view to a proposal being presented to the Board.

9. Language Issues

Mr Patton informed the Board that he wrote to NSMC as directed by the Board regarding the language issues with USAIG. He will meet with Ms Bunting and Mr Hanney on 26th January 2007 and feedback to the Board.

Action: Mr Patton to feedback to the Board members on the outcome of the meeting.

After general discussion the Board members agreed to have a special meeting for the Board members on Friday 16th February 2007 to discuss language issues.

Proposed: Special Meeting of the Board.

Dr Lunney will give a fifteen minute presentation to the Board on linguistic development.

Action: It was suggested that members of DCAL be invited to receive a presentation on the language at a future date.

GOML

As Mr Millar was not in attendance at this meeting this item will move forward to the next meeting.

10 Community Radio Station

Executive informed the Board that the Agency would like to consider running six pilot radio stations, one in the South and the other five in the North called FUSE fm (For Ulster-Scots Enthusiasts). The stations will cover a 20/30 mile radius.

It will cost the Agency £10,000 per two week radio station but some of the cost will be recouped by selling radio advertising space.

It will be launched in the Newtownards area. An article will run in the next Ulster-Scot encouraging community groups to volunteer and get involved.

The Agency are at present compiling 200hours of material which will be needed to air the show. There is a consultant working with the Agency 2 days per week to assist in the organising of this project.

Proposed: The Board agreed to support this project that the Executive will be organising to promote Ulster-Scots.

11 New Agency Logo

Executive presented the Board with a paper containing a proposal for a new Agency logo.

Board members felt that if something wasn't broken, there was no need to fix it. After general discussion the Board felt that there was a need for a new logo but would wish to consider this further.

Action: The Board are to valuate and feedback to the Executive before the next meeting.

12 Internal Audit Committee

The next Audit Committee meeting will take place on Friday 23rd February 2007.

13 Corporate Plan 2008-2010

Executive informed the Board that dates and venues had been established for consultation meetings with communities.

Action: Information to be forward to the Board

14 Staffing

Executive gave an update of staffing issues to the Board.

The three posts for the SEUPB project had been advertised and closing date is 26th February 2007.

From Monday 5th February 2007 two new members of staff will commence at the Agency. Ms Glenda Gaston will take the post of Administration Officer, Ms Michelle Johnston will take up post of Finance Officer and Paul Cassidy will become the Finance and Administration Manager.

The Administration Officer post at the Raphoe Office will go to the press next week.

The post of Information and Communication Manager is advertised in the papers on today (25/01/07) and tomorrow, Friday 26th January 2007. Closing date will be 12th February 2007.

The post for Language and Education Officer still has some final issues on the job description before going to the press.

15 AOB

Board members requested that the Executive liaise with Educational bodies in the North and South. Suggestions that Stranmillis staff could deliver a presentation on the Primary Schools Project to key stakeholders in the Southern Education Boards were proposed.

Action: Executive

Board representative from the South are keen to arrange an Ulster-Scots Public Awareness Day in Dublin.

Action: Members to liaise with Foras na Gaeilge on a possible joint venture. Contact will also be made with St Lawrence O'Toole Pipe Band to participate at the event.

Executive informed the Board that the Agency is working with the Irish Peace Institute, Limerick.

Board were advised that work was in progress to finalise the Primary Schools Website to deliver a showcase event.

IUSS

Executive told the Board that the Agency has received a report from Prof Jayne Ohlmeyer who had carried out an audit of the work at the Institute of Ulster-Scots Studies. It stated that the Institute met all the Agency criteria for further funding to be released.

Action: Mr Patton to arrange for letter of offer to be sent to IUSS.

Robert the Bruce

Executive will be meeting with community groups in the North Antrim area to progress this festival on 12th February 2007.

Arts Council

Foras na Gaeilge have agreed to joint funding this new language office post. A few meetings have been missed due to staff illness but Mr Millar will be taking this issue forward on his return.

Mr Devenney informed the Board that he had been invited to an America/Ireland Gala Ball. He asked the Executive to take note of this event so the Agency could plan for it in 2008.

Seminars coming up at University College, Dublin were highlighted to Board members.

It was suggested that a provisional list of up coming events be inserted into the Ulster-Scot Newspaper.

Action: Executive to look at this.

16. Date and Venue of Next Meeting

Friday 2nd March 2007 was agreed for the next Board meeting in Monaghan. A venue is to be confirmed.

It was decided that the next Board meeting should take place in Ayr, Scotland. This will involve a Thursday and Friday night stay over on 29th and 30th March 2007.

Also agreed was a special meeting to address language issues on Friday 16th February 2007 from 11.00am to 15.30pm in Belfast at the Agency premises.

SIGNED:

DATED: