

**Tha Boord o Ulster-Scotch
76th Board Meeting
28th March 2008
Tourism Ireland Board Room, Dublin**

Present

Chairman; Mr Mark Thompson
Mr William Humphrey
Mr William Leathem
Dr William Roulston
Ms Angela Graham
Ms Jacqui Reed
Dr Aileen Douglas
Dr Ian Adamson

In attendance

Mr George Patton
Mr Michael McCullough
Mr Jim Millar

Recording Secretary

Lyndsey Hanna

1. Welcome from the Chairman

Mr Thompson welcomed everyone to the 76th Meeting of the Board at the offices of Tourism Ireland, Dublin.

2. Apologies

There were no apologies.

3. Minutes of last meeting 16.02.08

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

Proposed and agreed; that the minute be accepted.

Dr Roulston informed the Board that he had met with Dr Latimer re: the Walled City and work is scheduled to commence soon.

It was agreed that Mr Patton and Miss Hanna propose a template for future Board minutes. Dr Roulston and Dr Douglas will help approve the structure. Mr Patton is to circulate template.

Proposed and agreed.

4. Matters Arising

Straightforward Productions Sponsorship

Executive gave the Board an update on this matter. They were advised that by providing sponsorship for this project, the Agency would in return receive the "Copyrights" to the series of programmes produced.

Proposed and agreed.

Corporate Identity

This item has been forwarded to the next meeting.

Dan Gordon Plays

Executive informed the Board that a Contact has been signed for the 1st play. The play will be published into books and CD's. Belfast City Council will be providing this project with £25k to tour in its council area.

5. Presentation from Tourism Ireland

The Board received a presentation from Tourism Ireland on its new "North American Strategy". Present was Niall Gibson, Director of Corporate Services and Marie Fullington the Marketing Manager for America. Also in attendance was Rosemary Lightbody from the Northern Ireland Tourist Board.

Mr Thompson, Chair asked that a letter to be sent to Mr Paul O'Toole, CEO for Tourism Ireland to thank him for the presentation and hospitality.

Action: Executive

6. Chairman's Report

The Chairman listed the events that he had attended and the organisations he had been in contact with since the previous meeting:

- Presbyterian Historical Society re: future publications support from the Agency
- Presbyterian Historical Society launch of "Adair's Narrative" reprint
- Jim Devenney re: further projects he is developing
- Derry City Council re: First Derry Presbyterian Church visitor centre, and Plantation commemorations
- Launch of the "Gregg Volume"
- Presentation with the CEO to the CAL Committee at Stormont
- Darwin Templeton, Editor of the News Letter
- William Blair, Ballymena Museum and Arts Centre
- Stranocum "Alternative St Patrick's Night"
- Downpatrick St Patrick's Evening
- Ballymoney FUSE FM Radio Station
- Meetings of "The Covenanters in Ulster" steering group

- Professor Raymond Gilmore re: Plantation commemoration

7. Report from the Executive

The Executive tabled the minutes from the Executive meeting of Monday 10th March 2008.

Item 5 was highlighted – Child Protection. Board were advised that regulation will be changing. All appointed officers for the Agency will be receiving training on this. Mrs Reid volunteered to become a Board representative on the steering committee for child protection.

Item 6 was questioned. Executive informed the Board that the minute should note 30 fiddles instead of 3 fiddles.

Item 7 was questioned – Summer Schools. Whilst the Business Plan called for 30 the Executive anticipated greater demand but this would be offset against Agency capacity.

Board agreed that the period of notice for the Summer Scheme Training Away Day last year was not sufficient. It was proposed that all groups should receive information early next week on this year's event.

Proposed and Agreed.

The Executive advised the Board that in accordance with Corporate Governance requirements all Summer Schools must provide value for money. If a school does not provide value for money then it will be closed. The Board also agreed that a maximum number of places be agreed and added to the guidelines provided.

Action: Executive

Proposed and agreed.

The Executive were informed that the East Donegal Ulster-Scots Association have yet to receive information on the Summer Schools. Executive advised that correspondence was made with all groups in February. This will be followed up and letter reissued.

Action: Executive.

8. Report from presentation to CAL

Mr Thompson already discussed this item in his report.

9. Budget and Business Plan

Executive asked the Board to note that the Agency had no flat line spend. 9% of budget has been spent to date but this normally peaks in the summer months.

Board proposed that the budget report be sent one week before meeting and the breakdown sheets to have alphabetical order of categories.

Proposed and agreed.

Action: Executive

10. Grant Applications

A) Festival Funding

After consideration the Board agreed to the recommendations outlined for all applications tabled today.

Proposed and agreed.

It was agreed that 25% of funding for festivals could be drawn down on receipt of annex 1.

Proposed and agreed.

B) Other Grants

(1) Ulster-Scots Folk Orchestra Association

Proposal:	£7,890 of £7,890
	The project will explain Burns' popularity during his lifetime in 18 th century Ulster and why he should be recognised as one of the greatest influences on Ulster cultural traditions. Project will include the creation of stage show and workshops from 1 st April to 30 th June 2008.

The Board were in agreement that this group should receive £7,890.

Proposed and agreed.

(2) Ulster-Scots Language Society

Proposal:	£17,480 of £17,480
	Enclosed is the interim Business Plan for April – June 2008

The Board were in agreement that this group should receive £17,480. 50% should be an upfront payment.

Proposed and agreed.

Titanic Town Festival – Highland Dance Competition

The total cost of this project is £65k and the group are seeking £15k from the Agency. The other financial assistance will come from 4 other joint Funders and entry fees from competitors.

As this application was late to the Executive, the Board were in agreement that the application be copied to the Board under written procedures.

11. Financial Assistance Scheme

Copies of the Gibson Report were tabled.

Executive advised the Board that recommendations for a Grants Procedure Manual is work in progress and will be available for the next Board meeting.

The Gibson Report advised that a record book should be opened to record only applications for grant assistance at the Agency. This will be actioned. In the long term the Agency are looking at a new computer system that will allow the tracking of all applications.

Action: Executive

12. Staffing

Executive are seeking guidance from Sponsor Departments to advertise the post of Director of Culture.

The Education officer post was approved at staff officer levels previously. With changes to the job description the Executive are awaiting approval from Sponsor Departments to advertise the job at E01 level.

Approval has been sought from Sponsor Departments to proceed with a Staff Review at the Agency. The Board need to create the terms of reference for this tender. It was agreed that the Executive are to advise the appointed consultant to visit other North/South organisation to see their setup.

Action: Board and Executive.

The Executive are seeking approval for 3 Musical Tutors for the Agency.

After today's presentation from Tourism Ireland the Board feel that the Agency needs a Tourism Officer at the Agency.

Mr Thompson advised Mr Patton that the Board supports the work of the COE to date and future work at the Agency. Mr Patton thanked the staff at the Agency who have supported his role as the accounting officer.

Recommendations to update the Agency Grievance Procedure was tabled. This document of proposals was agreed by the Board.

Proposed and agreed.

The Board also agreed that the update of the Grievance Procedures should be considered by an external Human Resources Consultant before it would be adopted by the Board.

Proposed and agreed.

13 Audit Committee Report

A copy of this report was tabled.

The Board were informed that at the last meeting it was agreed that the Agency accounts would be handled in-house for 2008. This was agreed due to HELM's errors in 2006.

10. AOB

SEUPB

This project will finish in June 2008.

Mr Patton updated the Board on all aspects of this project. Concerns were raised that this project may not be completed by the project finish date. Board members offered their assistance to retrieve the situation.

Office Accommodation

Executive informed the Board that new premises have been secured. At present the Lands and valuation Agency are negotiating costs on behalf of the Agency.

The Board in principal proposed that new premises for the Agency are to be treated as urgent due to the present working conditions of the staff.

Proposed and Agreed.

Institute of Ulster-Scots Studies

The Executive received a letter from a Mr Jim Allister QC MEP re: Recruitment Processes at the Institute. Executive are to investigate this further.

Action: Executive

Summer Schools/After Schools

Executive are working to plan 30 excellent Summer Schools with community groups.

It is essential that each School should have a member of staff if not all POCVA trained. The Agency will be stipulating this in all terms and conditions.

Action: Executive

Community Radio

The FUSE fm radio station is currently running in Ballymoney. The community group involved have proposed that they run the station later in the year for a 4 week period.

Young Ambassadors Program

This is a joint project with Foras na Gaeilge and will include bringing 12 young people from the USA to participate.

There were 400 applications received. Sifting has taken place and at present 100 possible candidates are being interviewed.

David Healy Fitba Day

This item was covered in other Agenda items. A projected budget costing for the project was presented.

NSMC

Mr Thompson and Mr Patton will be giving a presentation in Dublin in April 2008.

Cruise Ships

The Agency are working with the Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau and the Ulster-Scots Heritage Council to provide Port Side Ulster-Scots entertainment for ships that will be docking in Belfast during 2008.

To provide first class entertainment the Agency will need to provide some groups with a generator and cover to perform.

Agreed and Proposed.

TV Proposal – Language Program

Work is in progress

Ulster-Scots Statue

This has been commissioned and will be on display in the Shankill area, Belfast in September 2008.

Lawrence Holden

Mr Holden is still waiting written confirmation from the Agency to proceed.

Action: Executive

Partnership with the Ulster Historical Foundation

The Board were in agreement to accept this as a single tender process as no other organisation can provide the service that will be received from the Ulster historical Foundation.

Proposed and Agreed.

Derry & Raphoe Action Group

It was brought to the attention of the Board that Woodrow Wilson Summer School had still not received their financial assistance award.

Action: Executive to investigate.

11. Date and Venue of Next Meeting

The next Board meeting will take place in Belfast.

Signed:

Dated: