

**The Board of Ulster-Scotch
Board Meeting
27th April 2007
Mount Errigal Hotel,
Letterkenny, Co Donegal**

Present: **Chairman;** Mr Mark Thompson
 Dr Ian Adamson
 Dr Linde Lunney
 Mr Alistair Simpson
 Mr Jim Devenney
 Mr Eddie O'Donnell

In attendance: Mr George Patton
 Mr Michael McCullough
 Mr Jim Millar
 Mrs Vanessa Wilson

Recording Secretary: Miss Lyndsey Hanna

1. Welcome from the Chairman

The Chairman Mr Thompson welcomed the Board to the 66th meeting of the Board at the Mount Errigal Hotel, Co Donegal.

2. Apologies

Apologies were accepted on behalf of Mr Wall and Mr Stoker.

3. Minutes of Meeting 30th March 2007

The Board accepted the minutes of the previous meeting with some amendments.
Proposed and agreed; that the Minutes be accepted.

The Board discussed the decision of the last meeting re: Primary Schools Project. Members who were not present at the previous meeting were concerned about the Board decision and sought leave to rescind this decision at the next meeting.

Members clarified the reasoning behind the original decision.

Action: Mr Patton to seek clarity from NSMC and Sponsor Departments to enable the Board to discuss this more fully at the next meeting.

Maiden City Festival

After discussion the Board agreed that Mr Patton should write to the Maiden City Festival committee to clarify their decision that no festival will take place this summer. When clarification is given, the Agency can proceed to organise a small Ulster-Scots festival in this area if necessary.

Dunloy Accordion Band

At the previous meeting the Board proposed and agreed that this application be approved for £7,200 with a condition that the resulting musical material is made widely available.

The Band has now advised that they made an error in completing the application form and have approached the Agency for further funding.

Action: The Director of Culture to seek further clarification but it was considered unlikely that additional financial assistance could be provided.

4. Matters Arising

Letter to NSMC

This item was dealt with in item 3.

TV Programme

Mr Millar informed the Board that he is awaiting results from the screen test for possible presenters. Mr Millar advised that he has put Will Drennan's name forward for possible advice on Ulster-Scots.

Primary Schools

Mr Millar advised that he has approached Sponsor Departments with the Board proposal from the last meeting. To date DCAL have no problems with the decision and we await a response from DCAL.

5. 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:

- Accountability Breakfast at the BBCNI.
- Building relationship with Ken McCurry, Controller, BBC Scotland on future linked projects.
- Correspondence with Harold and Joyce Alexander from the Scotch Irish Society, USA re: Ulster/Virginia Website. Emails sent but no response to date.
- Development of the Bruce 700 Project. BBCNI have agreed to provide the Agency with supporting footage of helicopter shots in the Rathlin area. The Bruce 700 story has been highlighted in the Ulster-Scot paper.
- Mr Thompson was in contact with the Ulster Historical Circle re: Blue Plaque Campaign. Rathlin will be the first historical spot to be marked with a plaque.

- Mr Thompson stayed in Ayr, Scotland on Saturday 31st March 2007 and attended an event in Cumnock Town Hall. Networking, he met with North Ayrshire Cllrs and other future contacts.
- The job description for the post of Arts & Language Officer at the Arts Council that the Board proposed to jointly fund has been approved. It will require the application to speak Irish and have Ulster-Scots knowledge.
- Mr Thompson informed the Board that the new Minister for DCAL is to be Mr Edwin Poots of the DUP.
- Mr Thompson has been approached by Ms McKibben of the USAIG on private consultancy to design their corporate website.
Proposed and agreed; that Mr Thompson act on this matter.
- Mr Thompson has been in discussions with NSMC regarding the procedure of new Board appointments. He will give a further update at the next meeting.
- Mr Thompson has been working with Cllr Neslon McCausland on his research in the Nova Scotia/Belfast links.
- Mr Thompson noted regular American activity at Airports and thinks that the Agency should look at advertising space in Airports, sea terminals and in-flight magazines.
Proposed and agreed; that Mr Thompson pursue this matter.

6. Executive Reports

All Executive reports were tabled. The following items on Mr Patton's report were discussed.

- Item J – Mr Patton met with representatives of DCAL to discuss his contract of employment. Mr Patton will meet with Mr Thompson to finalise this matter.

Mr Millar's report was tabled. Issues discussed were:

- Mr Millar informed that Board that the Schools Play went to a school in Dublin and they were impressed. They have requested for the play to be shown in other schools in Dublin.
Action: The Agency is to recognise the work of the Drama team.

At this point Dr Adamson queried whether or not the nominated staff to the USAIG Language Standardisation Committee will be attending future meetings. He was advised that Mr Millar could not attend under the proposal of the Board at a previous meeting. Mr Thompson advised that although he has intended to attend these meetings he has other work commitments that have stood in his way.

- Item D – Mr Millar is working with Mr Wilson Burgess to publish his book on Ulster-Scots poetry.

Mrs Wilson's report was tabled. Issues discussed were:

- Item K – She attended the Ulster-Scots Dance Championships on 13th April 2007 and they were a huge success.
Proposed and agreed; that Mrs Wilson send a letter to the organising committee thanking and commending their achievement.

7. Budget and Business Plan 2006/7

A report on the expenditure to date for 2007 was tabled. To date spend is going according to projections.

8. Grants

(1) Stranocum Ulster-Scots Cultural and Heritage Society –
Robert the Bruce 700th Anniversary Community Festival

Proposal:	£6,650 of £8,150
	They state 'The event will be designed to demonstrate all aspects of our much valued Ulster-Scots culture. The objectives are to place within the public domain Ulster Scots activities in a positive and entertaining way, in the belief that this will lead to a willingness on the part of the local populous to involve themselves and organise future Ulster Scots activities.'

Proposed and agreed; that this application be approved for £5,500.

(2) York Island Liberty Days Festival

Proposal:	£19,675 of £39,035
	The aim of this festival is to further develop through the broad range of artistic expression and awareness of the history and culture of Ulster-Scots. The festival will include in May/June a Play, a concert of songs, a concert of revolutionary themes. Family entertainment day and a costume course.

Proposed and agreed; that this application be approved for £17,107.50

SPONSORSHIP

(3) East Antrim Traditional Music School

Proposal:	£7,000 of £12,000
	This programme will provide a platform for local musicians and will deliver a series of talks with an historical perspective. Activities will include workshops, performances and session over a five day period.

Proposed and agreed; that this application be approved for £7,000.

(4) Ballycarry Community Association

Proposal:	£6,000 of £17,310
	The Broadisland Gathering Festival involves events including children's programme, pipe bands, band concerts, exhibitions and it focuses on music, pageantry and cultural expression. This event will attract numbers between 3,000 to 4,000 over 4 days and has every potential of growing.

Proposed and agreed; that this application be approved for £6,000 sponsorship.

Millstone Events Forum

Kidiscape (Newry Heritage and Development Association Youth Group)

As both application forms arrived late to be assessed before the Board meeting the Board proposed and agreed that the Executive should assess and advise these 2 groups of possible funding so that they can progress with the planning of their events.

The final decision will be made by the Board at the next Board meeting.

Proposed and Agreed by the Board.

East Donegal Ulster-Scots Project.

This group approached the Agency to seek advanced funding for their project as they were having difficulties with upfront payments to run activities. The Board proposed and agreed that this group should receive half the proposed funding. The balance will be paid on return of all received receipts for the event.

Proposed and Agreed by the Board.

Bushmills Project

This group approached the Agency to seek advance funding for their project as they were having difficulties with payments for advertising. The Board proposed and

agreed that this group should receive £8,000. The balance will be paid on return of all received receipts for the event.

Proposed and Agreed by the Board.

9. Comprehensive Spending Review

Mr Patton informed the Board that he had to provide DCAL with the Agency budget for three year at short notice. He was unhappy to do this in advance of Board approval but had to proceed. He based the spend inline with the Corporate Plan.

Proposed and Agreed by the Board that Mr Patton's report be approved.

10. Corporate Plan 2008 - 2010

Mr Patton tabled the new draft Corporate Plan to the Board. He has emailed this to Board for their views to be discussed at the meeting. The final draft is to be submitted to Sponsor Departments by 8th May 2007.

Suggestions by the Board to be included in the draft Corporate Plan included:

- Tourism Development
- Connections with the USA to be developed
- Scottish links to be developed
- Retain SEUPB staff when current funding has finished
- Policy, lobbying and public affairs
- Data protection – new list of groups that can be shared amongst Ulster-Scots activists
- More involvement with public art.
- Involvement in more core funding eg a piping centre
- Weavers Poet books to be reprinted
- Show casing Irelands landscapes
- Project including North and South of Ireland to celebrate people who came and left Ireland eg a website.
- Museum of Emigration
- Permanent Head Quarters with a centre for events.

The Board proposed and agreed that the Executive should delete the section on language on page 6 and the list of stakeholders as we have many more stakeholders than listed.

Proposed and Agreed by the Board.

2008 Business Plan

Mr Patton tabled a draft of the Business Plan and requested the board to return comments by email to Executive before Friday 4th May 2007.

11. Institute of Ulster-Scots Studies

Mr Millar highlighted the report tabled received from the Institute of Ulster-Scots Studies. This is the first quarter report received by the Agency. It was noted that work of Frank Ferguson has not been included in the progress report and Mr Millar is waiting a reply to his query concerning this.

On receipt of this additional information further funding will be released to the Institute.

The Board agreed that a further meeting of the advisory committee and Management Board to be initiated. Mr Millar will replace Mr Patton on the Advisory Committee and Dr Adamson will continue to represent the Agency on the Management Board.
Proposed and Agreed by the Board.

12. Staffing

Mr McCullough informed the board that the new Business Plan included approval from DCAL for two further Development Officers and a staffing paper had been presented for approval.

The new Communications Manager will commence work at the Agency on Tuesday 1st May 2007.

Agency staff will be attending training away days on 10th and 11th May 2007.

Interviews have taken place for a part time Administration Assistant in the Raphoe Office and successful candidate has been informed. Board have approved flexible hours and increase in hours if needed.

Proposed and Agreed by the Board.

13. AOB

SEUPB Project Update

Two planned conferences will take place in June 2007 to showcase the SEUPB project to local government and government officials.

Action: Dates to be emailed to Board.

Book Week

Twenty three libraries have been identified to host the Ulster-Scots Book week from 21st – 25th May 2007. Local schools will be invited along to attend this event.

Robert the Bruce

The festival will take place on 16th June 2007 in Bushmills from 12 noon to 18.00pm. Mr Gareth Fulton has been assisting the Agency with plans. Further up date will be given at the next meeting.

Advertising costs will amount to £8,500. Advertising will be on Bus Stops, Phone Boxes and large posters throughout the area.

Mr Thompson informed the Board that representatives from the Scotland Home Coming festival will attend the Bruce 700 Festival to get ideas from it.

Ballymoney Agriculture Show 100th Year

The Agency will be show casing at this event.

Joint Language Officer for Arts Council

This issue was dealt with at item 5.

2002/3 Accounts

These have been consolidated and presented.

Ulster-Virginia Links

The website for this will go live in June 2007. An advertising campaign that will run for two weeks in June and two weeks in July will cost £18,000.

Belfast/Nashville

The Mayor of Nashville is coming to Belfast on 29th June 2007. The Agency will provide a showcase at Carrickfergus Castle which will also be the launch date of the Agency new leaflet.

Community Radio

The caravan under construction at present for the Radio show which will run in five venues, for two week events commencing on 16th June 2007 in Newtownards and finishing in September 2007.

David Healey Coaching Day

This event will take place in Newtownards on 23rd June 2007. The Northern Ireland Scouts have volunteered to carry out all administration for the event. Sponsorship is being agreed at present with local companies.

Summer Schools

Thirty four Summer Schools will take place over the Province during July and August 2007. They will be advertised in the Ulster-Scot.

After Schools Clubs

Three areas have been identified for a pilot scheme. The programme will run over two weeks with six sessions in storytelling, drama, poetry, dance, music etc. Feedback will be given to board after pilot scheme finishes.

Reivers Festival

The Agency is at the planning process of this festival. Location will be in Co Fermanagh. At present discussion with the Heritage and Environment Agency are underway to secure a venue.

Independent Producers

To date a few Independent Producers have approached the Agency to complete some Ulster-Scots programmes. The Executive are in discussions at present and the Board approved the decision to provide financial support as appropriate.

Virginia College

The Board proposed that the Executive send a letter of condolences to the Virginia College.

Proposed and Agreed by the Board.

The Board are to be notified of the dates of all events taking place over the summer months so that they can plan which events they will be attending.

Action: Email list to Board and also for insertion in the next edition of the Ulster-Scot.

15 Date and Venue of Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting should take place in Belfast on Thursday 17th May 2007.

SIGNED:

DATED: