



**Ulster-Scots Agency**  
Boord o Ulstèr-Scotch

## **Board Decisions 2010**

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**2010**

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**Tha Board O Ulster-Scotch**  
**96th Board Meeting**  
**12 February 2010**  
**Ulster-Scots Agency Board Room**  
**Belfast**

<b>Present;</b>	Mrs Angela Graham
	Mrs Jacqui Reed
	Dr Ian Adamson
	Mr William Humphrey
	Mr William Leathem
	Mr John Hunter
	Mr Tony Crooks
<b>In attendance:</b>	Mr Jim Millar
	Miss Hazel Campbell
<b>Recording Secretary:</b>	Ms Lyndsey Hanna

**1. Welcome from the Chairperson**

- 1.1 The Chairman welcomed members of the Board and in particular Mr Tony Crooks from Dublin. Members introduced themselves.
- 1.2 The Chairman opened the meeting without officials present and summarised discussions he had had with the Agency's Chief Executive, Mr George Patton, in the early part of January in which he had indicated his intention to return to work around the middle of February on completion of his eight week period of sick leave. However, in a phone call on 8 February Mr Patton indicated that he had decided not to return to work. He explained that he would write confirming his decision. The letter was received on 9 February in a blank envelope and opened by staff. The Chairman circulated the letter for members to read. The Board agreed that the Chairman should liaise with the Department over how best to action Mr Patton's letter, taking into account legal advice. The Board also noted the report that Mr Patton had accepted a new job as Community Development Officer for Co Armagh Community Development, starting in March.

- 1.3 The Chairman reported on meetings he had had with the Minister, representatives of core funded groups, the Chairman and Chief Executive of Foras na Gaeilge and the CAL Committee at Stormont (supported by the Interim Chief Executive and Jim Millar). Officials rejoined the meeting at this point."

## **2. Apologies**

- 2.1 Apologies were accepted on behalf of Mr McCullough.

## **3. Minutes of last Meeting**

- 3.1 The minutes of the last Board meeting were tabled.
- 3.2 ***Proposed and Agreed: that the minute be accepted.***

## **4. Matters Arising**

### **4.1 Internal Auditors**

Miss Campbell reported that DCAL was looking at extending into its own internal audit service to a number of their ALB's, including the Agency. The Agency was asked not to proceed with a new tender for audit services.

- 4.2 Mr Hunter proposed that the Agency extend its current contract with Goldbatt McGuigan for a further six months until DCAL set out their proposal to the Agency.

- 4.3 ***Proposed and Agreed: that the current contract is extended for six months.***

### **4.4 Core Funded Bodies**

The Terms of Reference for Core Funded Bodies was agreed by DCAL. With the exception of one amendment the Board proposed and agreed to proceed with the independent evaluation.

- 4.5 ***Proposed and Agreed: that the paper be adopted.***

- 4.6 The Business Case for the Lawrence Holden Project was approved by DCAL and a letter of offer was now ready to issue.

- 4.7 ***ACTION: Executive to send out the Letter of Offer immediately.***

- 4.8 The final list of awards for music and dance tuition in 2010 was tabled. The Executive informed the Board that 43 applications have been rejected as they did not meet the Agency criteria for funding. Five grant applications were being held awaiting further information.
- 4.9 In total there were 48 dance and 263 music tuition awards approved by the Agency.
- 4.10 Mr Leathem queried changes to some of the amounts of grant offered compared with the list provided at the 18 December 2009 Board meeting. Miss Campbell explained that the list circulated at the December meeting was still subject to a final check which resulted in some amendments. The Executive would be happy to explain any differences.
- 4.11 **ACTION:** *It was agreed that Mr Millar would contact Mr Leathem to explain specific decisions.*
- 4.12 The Board members indicated that it would be helpful if the list could be analysed by location/tuition kind.
- 4.13 **Corporate Governance**  
Miss Campbell reported on the Accountability meeting with Sponsor Departments on 27 January 2010.
- 4.14 **“Onboard” Training**  
Miss Campbell had contacted the Chief Executive’s Forum and received three options on dates in March for Board member training. None of the dates were suitable for Members and alternative dates are to be pursued. While some members had already attended a training event, the Chairman was keen that all members should make an effort to attend.
- 4.15 **ACTION:** *Miss Campbell to seek further possible dates and to request a list of modules covered in the training.*
- 4.16 Miss Campbell advised the Board that a meeting of the North/South Ministerial Council was likely to be scheduled sometime in the Spring.
- 4.17 The Chairman indicated that he was keen for a meeting of the Language Body to take place in March/April 2010.
- 4.18 **ACTION:** *Miss Campbell to seek further clarification for possible dates.*

## **5. Re-Constitution of the Audit Committee**

- 5.1 Mr Hunter advised the Board that an Audit Committee had to be appointed.
- 5.2 As the Chairman cannot serve on the Committee, he invited the other members of the Board to volunteer their services.
- 5.3 Mr Crooks volunteered his services to sit as a member on the Audit Committee.
- 5.4 Mr Hunter suggested that future Audit Committee meetings could take place every quarter in the morning prior to a planned Board meeting. He hoped this would be helpful in terms of the time commitment from members.
- 5.5 Mrs Graham re-considered her resignation as a member of the Audit Committee under the above condition.
- 5.6 Dr Adamson volunteered to also take up the position as a member.
- 5.7 It was proposed and agreed that Mr Crooks would Chair the Audit Committee with Mrs Graham and Dr Adamson as members.
- 5.8 **ACTION:** *Miss Campbell to make available the Audit Committee Handbook for all members and organise training.*

## **6. Interim Chief Executive Officer's Report**

- 6.1 This report was tabled.
- 6.2 Miss Campbell gave a brief overview of the issues in her report.

## **7. Monreagh Heritage and Education Centre – Funding Appeal**

- 7.1 Prior to leaving the meeting, Mrs Reed queried the applicability of the terms of reference (TOR) for the independent evaluation for the Monreagh Centre as it was not currently in

receipt of core-funding. Miss Campbell agreed that not all criteria in the TOR would apply and she would amend the document to make this clear. Mrs Reed then left the meeting.

7.2 **ACTION:** *Miss Campbell to amend the Terms of Reference*

7.3 Mr Hunter agreed with the recommendation from the Executive that this funding appeal should be deferred until the Evaluation of Core Funded Bodies has been completed.

7.4 **Proposed and Agreed:** *that the Agency should defer consideration of this application until the independent evaluation has been completed.*

7.5 Mrs Reed returned to the meeting.

## **8. 2010 Business Plan**

8.1 The Board approved the 2010 Business Plan with the revised strategic aims. Two other minor changes are to be made to paragraphs 5.1 and 5.4 to reflect more clearly the cross-border nature of the Agency's programmes.

8.2 **Proposed and Agreed:** *The 2010 Business Plan was approved subject to the above amendments.*

## **9. Finance Report**

9.1 Miss Campbell reported that the Agency is awaiting clarification if the Agency is to operate a cash budget or an accruals budget. The Agency's accounts are on an accruals basis.

9.2 The Board members noted the expenditure outturn for 2009.

9.3 The Board members queried whether sufficient funds had been allocated to Seminars/Conference in 2010 as there is still a need to assist community groups in the completion of application forms and understanding the requirements of the Financial Assistance Scheme. The Executive has already planned a number of seminars and will keep the budget under review.

- 9.4 The Chairman was concerned to keep office running costs under control, including consumable items such as stationary.
- 9.5 ***Proposed and Agreed:*** the Board noted the final 2009 budget position and the 2010 in-year budget position.

## **10. 2010 Festival Awards**

- 10.1 Mr Millar circulated an interim paper on this matter to the Board.
- 10.2 Mr Millar informed the Board that the Agency Development Officers were in the process of assessing festival awards. This engaged a lot of their time following up incomplete applications. This demonstrated that there is a need for further training in the community on the application process.
- 10.3 The interim paper included recommendations for 5 successful groups (to date) to receive festival funding. These 5 festival applications needed urgent approval as they were to take place in Spring. Further recommendations will be tabled at the next Board meeting.
- 10.4 The Board were informed that to date 11 applications would be rejected as they had not met the criteria for funding.
- 10.5 Members raised some concerns about the extent of documentation required and the need to send supporting documentation, such as their constitution and child protection policies for each application, if this was already submitted for another programme. Miss Campbell agreed that the process should be reviewed to see if it could be made easier for groups to apply.
- 10.6 Concerns were also raised concerning unrealistic return dates for additional information
- 10.7 Mr Leathem raised a query on the Hillsborough Festival award as there was a significant difference from the amount requested and the award proposed.
- 10.8 ***ACTION:*** Mr Millar to provide Mr Leathem with a breakdown of funding allocated.



**10.9** *Proposed and Agreed: the Board agreed the proposed awards for the 5 festivals at the meeting.*

## **11. Review of Financial Assistance Scheme**

11.1 The Board noted the threefold increase in applications for music and dance tuition in 2010 compared with the previous year and the pressures this created for the grants team in administering the scheme.

11.2 This resulted in delays in getting the letters of offer issued, amounts offered were lower than anticipated and the number of appeals was on the increase.

11.2 Miss Campbell indicated that this situation was not sustainable and she recommended that the grants criteria and procedures needed to be reviewed. Mr Hunter indicated he was concerned about the monitoring and audit trail

11.3 While Board members agreed that processes needed to be reviewed they highlighted the ongoing need for support to community groups and that this has to be factored into the review.

11.4 Mrs Graham asked that letters sent requesting additional information needed to give a longer timeframe for groups in the South due to the postal services.

11.5 *Proposed and Agreed: the Board agreed to the proposed review of the arrangements for music and dance tuition and the criteria for funding festivals with a view to having new arrangements in place for 2011.*

## **12. 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Plantation of Ulster**

12.1 Miss Campbell informed the Board that she met with the Minister, Nelson McCausland on 21 January 2010 with DCAL's Arms Length Bodies in the cultural sector to discuss a coordinated approach to commemorating upcoming anniversaries in the next decade including the Plantation of Ulster.

- 12.2 The Minister was keen that a strategy should be developed to encourage the DCAL family to work together on these events and share resources and archive material where appropriate.
- 12.3 As yet, the Agency has no firm plans on what it should do to mark this anniversary. The Executive welcomed suggestions and possible opportunities to work in partnership with others, which would have greater impact than the Agency working on its own.
- 12.4 Dr Adamson informed the members that he is the Chair of The Grand Unionist Centenary Committee. This group was set up to celebrate forthcoming centenaries. Contact could be made to explore possible joint projects for the 400<sup>th</sup> Commemorations of the Plantation of Ulster.
- 12.5 Mrs Graham suggested that the Agency could hold a conference on the Anniversary, linking up with other groups with an interest in this subject.
- 12.6 Ms Graham informed the Board that she has come into contact with other groups celebrating the Plantation and that she would investigate if anything was planned in her area.
- 12.7 Mr Crooks suggested that the Agency look at a possible drama project on the Plantation of Ulster.
- 12.8 Board members suggested a good quality book full of facts that families could pass down through generations, and content could be supplied by the community.
- 12.09 Mr Leathem highlighted that last year the Agency carried out work in identifying possible authors for a book on the Plantation.
- 12.10 Mr Humphrey suggested that the Agency should follow up with the working group who are working on possible Tourism Trails for NI.
- 12.11 Mr Hunter concluded that the Agency should feed in these suggestions to the DCAL group and follow-up with meetings with potential partners.
- 12.12 Miss Campbell noted these suggestions.

12.13 **ACTION:** Miss Campbell to feedback suggestions to DCAL group and look for possible partnerships.

### **13. First Derry Presbyterian Church**

13.1 The Executive recommended that the Agency should provide £4k for the consultancy assignment for the Interpretative Centre as outlined in the paper tabled.

13.2 **Proposed and Agreed:** the Board agreed to provide £4k for the consultancy assignment for the Interpretative Centre.

### **14. Milwaukee Irish Fest**

14.1 The Executive recommended that the Agency set aside a budget of £7,000 (based on last year's budget) to facilitate involvement in the festival.

14.2 An open tender exercise would be carried out to identify a suitable Ulster-Scots musical showcase. The budget would cover the travel costs and any associated performance fees. However, where the cost of travel and performer fees exceeds the allocated budget, groups must be in a position to demonstrate how the shortfall will be met.

14.3 It was also recommended that potential lecturers should also be considered and this could include Board and/or staff members, with relevant expertise.

14.4 **Proposed and Agreed:** the Board agreed that the Agency set aside a budget of £7k to facilitate involvement in the 2010 Irish Fest.

### **15. Lambeg Music Book**

15.1 The Executive recommended this project which will form part of the Agency's Marketing Strategy for 2010.

15.2 The benefits of this project are to preserve and document the tradition of the Lambeg drum, making the art-form of the Lambeg drum more accessible to a wider audience and to create

an educational tool that would allow the rhythms of the Lambeg drum to be easily taught in schools, community groups, drumming classes etc.

15.3 The cost of collecting, transcribing and recording these rhythms is estimated at £5,000. Further costs for the publication are anticipated to be circa £3,500. (2,000 copies)

15.5 **Proposed and Agreed:** *the Board agreed that the Agency engage a suitable individual to provide material relating to Lambeg drum rhythms that would be notated in musical form, and which would form the basis for an Agency publication in 2010.*

.15.6 **ACTION:** *Mr Millar was instructed to take the project forward.*

## **16 Strategic Organisational Review**

16.1 The Board members discussed the paper tabled on the Organisational Review.

16.2 To bring stability to the organisation and clarity for staff on their roles and responsibilities, the Board agreed that the outstanding issues on the structural review should be brought to a conclusion as soon as possible.

16.3 Of the recommendations previously approved by the Board on 25 September 2009, only the SO Accountant post has been approved by the Departments and the North South Ministerial Council (at their meeting 2 December 2009). The recruitment process for this post has commenced and interviews will take place on 25 February 2010.

16.4 The Board approved the paper and the additional recommendations presented on the Strategic Organisational Review. The Board noted that these proposals were still subject to approval of the Departments and the NSMC. However, the transfer of the Grants section from Corporate Services to Operations could proceed without further approvals.

16.5 **Proposed and Agreed:** *The paper tabled and recommendations outlined.*

## **17 AOB**

17.1 Mrs Reed suggested that the Board should send a letter of congratulations to Mr Joe Hamill from DCRGA on his new appointment to the position of Secretary General.

- 17.2 Mrs Graham informed the Board that she had sent a letter to Gerry Kearney former Secretary General at DCRGA to recognise his work and support to the Agency Board.
  
- 17.3 Mrs Reed wished to record her thanks for the work of the Agency staff on the success of the recent Agency Burns Week. She also thanked Mr Millar on the work completed on the documentary "Hamley Tongue - Cultúr Ceilte" which had been well received.
  
- 17.4 Mr Humphrey advised that he has been invited to represent the Agency Board at an event at the Ullans Centre on 19 March 2010 but unfortunately he would not be able to attend. The Agency will be represented at the event as Miss Campbell was planning to attend.

**18. Date and Venue of next Board Meeting**

- 18.1 The next meeting will take place on Wednesday 31 March 2010.

Signed:.....

Date:.....

**Tha Board O Ulster-Scotch**  
**97th Board Meeting**  
**31 March 2010**  
**Ulster-Scots Agency Board Room**  
**Belfast**

<b>Present;</b>	Mrs Angela Graham
	Dr Ian Adamson
	Mr William Humphrey
	Mr John Hunter
	Mr Tony Crooks
<b>In attendance:</b>	Mr Jim Millar
	Miss Hazel Campbell
	Mr Michael McCullough
<b>Recording Secretary:</b>	Ms Lyndsey Hanna

**1. Welcome from the Chairperson**

- 1.4 The Chairman welcomed members of the Board to the meeting.
- 1.5 Mr Hunter advised members that Mr Robert Campton, HR Consultant had been appointed to investigate the grievances raised by Mr George Patton. The investigation had commenced and was expected to be completed around the end of April 2010.
- 1.6 The Chairman indicated that he had met with staff following the last Board meeting to appraise them of the decisions regarding the Strategic Organisational Review. The transfer of the grants function has already taken place. The decision regarding new posts requires the approval of the North South Ministerial Council.
- 1.7 The Chairman reported on a meeting he had attended with the Minister on 23 March 2010 where he raised the Boards concerns on the Agency budget, the delay in the Language, Culture and Heritage Strategy and the position of the Ulster-Scots Academy Mr

Hunter said that he was also seeking clarity on the Agency's relationship with the planned Ulster-Scots Cultural Centres which the Minister announced the following day.

- 1.8 At the meeting, the Minister clarified that when established, the Ulster-Scots Academy would be the guardian of the Ulster-Scots Language and would set standards. The Minister raised concerns over the quality of the 4 children's books that the Agency had published, particularly surrounding the language translations for the books. The Minister was still considering the issues and the Agency was asked not to distribute the books. The Chair was keen to find a resolution to this.
- 1.9 A reply is still outstanding from the Department on the budget issues. Mr Humphrey said he was concerned that the budget was still not confirmed. This made it difficult for the Executive to make recommendations to the Board.
- 1.10 The Chairman informed the Board that the new Minister for DCEGA was Mr Pat Carey, TD. The Board agreed that letters should be issued to both Minister Carey and Minister O'Cuiv welcoming both to their new positions.
- 1.11 **ACTION:** Miss Campbell to issue letters.

## **2. Apologies**

- 2.1 Apologies were accepted on behalf of Mr William Leathem and Mrs Jacqui Reed.

## **3. Minutes of last Meeting**

- 3.1 The minutes of the last Board meeting were tabled.
- 3.2 **Proposed and Agreed:** that the minute be accepted after changes of minor typos.

## **4. Matters Arising**

- 4.1 Matters arising were covered in the interim CEO's report to the Board.

## **5. Verbal Report from the Audit Committee Chair**

- 5.1 Mr Cooks, Chair of the Agency Audit Committee gave the Board members a verbal report of the Audit Committee meeting of 31 March 2010. The draft minutes would be circulated at the next Board meeting.
- 5.2 The meeting had full attendance with representatives of the NIAO, DCAL and Goldbalt McGuigan also present.
- 5.3 The Agency Board agreed to delegate responsibility for the Agency Risk Register to the Audit Committee.
- 5.4 ***Proposed and Agreed:*** *that the Agency Audit Committee take responsibility for the Agency Risk Register.*
- 5.5 The Board agreed to change the name of the Audit Committee to the “Audit and Risk Committee” due to the new added responsibility.
- 5.6 ***Proposed and Agreed:*** *that the Agency Audit Committee change the name of the committee to “Audit and Risk Committee”.*

## **6. Interim Chief Executive Officer’s Report**

- 6.1 This report was tabled.
- 6.2 Miss Campbell gave a brief overview of the issues in her report.
- 6.3 NSMC Meeting**
- Mr Crooks suggested that the Southern representatives should send a note to DCRGA on key issues being progressed by the Agency from their perspective.
- 6.3 ***ACTION:*** *Mr Crooks to discuss this with Mrs Reed and Mrs Graham.*
- 6.4 Pat and Plain Plays**



There are currently two plays from the Pat and Plain Series written by Dan Gordon being performed in schools. Miss Campbell attended the show 'A Lemonde Bottle for Clabberin' Hitler' performed by Meadowbridge PS on Thursday 25 March 2010. Mr Humphrey attended the show 'Kissing the Shuttle' performed by Edenbrook PS on Wednesday 24 March 2010. The quality of the performances had been excellent and the positive impact in the schools was evident.

6.5 **ACTION:** *Miss Campbell to write a letter of thanks to Mr Gordon for the great work he is doing on behalf of the Agency.*

6.6 **Ulster-Scots Language Society**

Miss Campbell advised the Board that no letter of offer has been sent to the Ulster-Scots Language Society as the Agency is still waiting for their revised business plan.

6.7 Miss Campbell gave an up-date on the staffing issues at the Agency. She advised that she is hoping to get assistance from DCAL, for a DP to work primarily on updating Agency policies.

**7. Finance Report**

7.1 Mr Crooks raised concerns regarding the level of detailed information required for the monthly drawdown. Miss Campbell indicated that this was the process for all DCAL's arms lengths bodies.

7.2 Mr McCullough recommended that the Board note the finance report tabled.

7.3 The Board members noted the expenditure to date in 2010.

**8. Ullans Speakers Association**

8.1 Miss Campbell advised that a letter was received 11 March 2010 from the Ullans Speakers Association requesting an additional £5k during the period of their current funding agreement (which finishes in May 2010). The increase in funding required was due to the demands for their services being significantly greater than when they submitted their original Business Plan to the Agency. The Ullans Speakers Association are currently exceeding the targets in the plan. Examples of additional work delivered include requests for translation services that do not generate much revenue, significant demands for community language classes and one-off language sessions, travel costs which had not been planned for, requests to appear on radio and television and other additional requests for schools workshops as well as participating in language sessions organised by the Agency.

- 8.2 **Proposed and Agreed:** (a) that the additional £5k be awarded, and (b) that the Ullans Speakers Association be asked to submit a Business Plan for the period 1 June to end of December 2010

## **9. 2010 Festival Awards**

- 9.1 Mr Millar recommended that the Board approve the outstanding festival grants as set out in the paper to the Board. The Board felt that they should also indicate a formal decision on the applications proposed for rejection.
- 9.2 The current budget for the scheme was £190k. The grant awards will amount to £195k.
- 9.3 **Proposed and Agreed:** all recommended and rejected applications as tabled.
- 9.4 *The Board requested details of the geographical locations to be indicated in future papers on grant awards.*
- 9.5 **ACTION:** Mr Millar

## **10. UTV Programme**

- 10.1 The Agency had been approached by Lesley Black, Producer of Evergreen Media Limited to provide £17k financial support for a one hour documentary on UTV under the title "Plantation – The Truth and Legacy". The programme has already been commissioned by UTV and is scheduled for transmission in the autumn.
- 10.2 The Producers are keen to produce a fair and balanced programme and while they retain editorial control, the Agency will have an opportunity to provide it's views.
- 10.3 Some members were concerned over the risks posed by having no editorial input. It was agreed that the Agency will liaise closely with the producers during the planning and production.

10.4 **Proposed and Agreed:** (a) to allocate £17k towards the UTV Programme on the Plantation, and (b) payments should be made on phased basis on satisfactory delivery.

## **11. Working with Others**

11.1 Two proposals were tabled under the “Working with Others Scheme”.

### **11.2 Lisburn City Council**

Mr Millar recommended that the Agency provide funding of up to £5k towards an application submitted from Lisburn City Council for a Highland Games event in June 2010. The requested funding was £7,500, however not all the project is Ulster-Scots related. A detailed budget has been submitted and the Executive have identified an appropriate contribution by the Agency would be up to a maximum of £5k.

**Proposed and Agreed:** the Board agreed to provide funding up to £5k.

### **11.3 Artists in Creative Enterprise (ACE)**

Mr Millar recommended that the Agency provide funding of up to £3.5k towards an application submitted by the group Artists in Creative Enterprise (ACE) for their Wordland project. This project was initially costed at £20,000 with a request for support of £10,000 from the Agency. This application had previously been deferred by the Board until March 2010 when a reappraisal of available funds would be undertaken. All aspects of the project is Ulster Scots related. Match funding from local authorities is in place.

**Proposed and Agreed:** the Board agreed to provide funding up to £3.5k.

11.4 After a discussion the Board members agreed that the “Working with Others” scheme should close due to the Agency’s lack of funding in 2010. The Agency may find an opportunity to re-open it once budgets have been finalised and restrictions lifted. Notification of this would be put on the Agency website.

**Proposed and Agreed:** the Board agreed to close the scheme until further notice.

## **12. Marketing Budget**

### **12.1 Publications Report**

The Board agreed that a publications strategy should be developed. Dr Adamson felt that any attempt to standardise the language could alienate native speakers. He felt that different dialogues should continue to exist.

12.2 Dr Adamson offered to prepare an erratum to issue with the 4 children's books explaining that the translations by the Ullans Speakers Association relates to the language as spoken in the North Antrim area..

12.3 The Chair was grateful for this suggestion which he would take to the Department seeking agreement to launch the books at the Balmoral Show, Belfast on 12 May 2010.

12.4 **Promotional Activity**

***Proposed and Agreed:** the Board agreed the promotional plans for April and May 2010 subject to approval of the business cases.*

**13. Progress Report on 2010 Business Plan Targets**

13.1 The Board noted the progress report tabled.

**14. Correspondence from the Ulster-Scots Folk Orchestra**

14.1 The Chairman referred to the correspondence received from the Ulster-Scots Folk Orchestra. Miss Campbell reported that she had met with Willie Drennan and other representatives from the Orchestra on 3 March 2010. She had asked Mr Alan Thompson, Internal Auditor to attend. The USFO claimed that they were still owed over £6k from the Agency for the Youth Project. The outcome of the meeting was that Goldbalt McGuigan would carry out a detailed audit of the Agency's files on the Youth project to determine if any outstanding grant was owed. Mr Humphrey said that he had been contacted by Mr Drennan as he had heard nothing further from the Agency. Miss Campbell explained that she had written to Mr Drennan following the meeting and indicated that the detailed investigation would take several weeks to complete.

14.2 The Board agreed that the USFO should receive a full response to their queries once the Audit was complete.

14.3 ***Proposed and Agreed:** Miss Campbell to make contact with the Ulster-Scots Folk Orchestra once audit is completed*

14.4 ***ACTION:** Miss Campbell to circulate the report once complete to all Board members.*

**15. AOB**

15.1 There were no issues

**16. Dates for future Meetings**

16.1 The next Board meeting will take place in the morning of 21 May 2010 followed by a Joint Language Body meeting with Foras na Gaeilge in the afternoon.

16.2 The June meeting will take place on 22 June 2010.

Signed:.....

Date:.....

**Tha Board O Ulster-Scotch**

**98th Board Meeting**

**21 May 2010**

**Ulster-Scots Agency Board Room**

**Belfast**

<b>Present;</b>	Mr John Hunter
	Mrs Angela Graham
	Mrs Jacqui Reed
	Mr William Humphrey
	Mr William Leathem
	Dr Ian Adamson
	Mr Tony Crooks
<b>In attendance:</b>	Mr Jim Millar
	Miss Hazel Campbell
	Mr Michael McCullough
<b>Recording Secretary:</b>	Mrs Catherine Martin

**1. Welcome from the Chairperson**

1.12 The Chairman welcomed members of the Board to the meeting and thanked them for their attendance at the meeting of the Language Body. Dr Adamson, Mr Leathem and Mr Humphrey indicated they may leave the meeting later in the afternoon. Mr Hunter welcomed Catherine Martin on secondment from DCAL to review policies and procedures.

1.13 Mr Hunter indicated that points related to the Business Plan and Budget had been covered during the earlier meeting. Mr Hunter advised members that Minister McCausland had invited him to continue as Interim Chairman until December 2010 which he has accepted. Mr Crooks, appointed to the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2010 also agreed to extend his membership of the Board to December 2011. The Board welcomed the extensions.

- 1.14 Mr Hunter reported on a visit to the Agency's Donegal office and the Monreagh Heritage and Education Centre and asked his thanks to be passed on to everyone involved in arranging the visit. Mr Hunter suggested the Board consider holding a meeting in Donegal.
- 1.15 Mr Hunter advised that the Review of the Organisational Structure would not be considered at the NSMC as the Minister has decided to await the outcome of the review into groups receiving Core Funding from the Agency. Mr Hunter recognised the difficult operating environment and the uncertainty this creates for staff and noted that two members of staff are absent due to work related stress. Mr Humphrey asked how attendance was managed and was advised that managers have made contact with staff during their absence. Mr Leathem proposed that a card from the Board should be issued and this was agreed. Mr Millar reported on the volume of work and arrangements in place to prioritise activity to enable the management of staff work-loads and confirmed that this would be monitored and kept under review.
- 1.16 **Action:** *Interim Chief Executive, Mr Millar, Mr McCullough.*
- 1.17 Dr Adamson left the meeting at 12.20pm.

## **2. Apologies**

- 2.1 No apologies.

## **3. Minutes of Last Meeting**

- 3.1 The minutes of the last Board meeting were tabled. Mr Leathem spoke to item 11.2 and reported as a Councillor for Lisburn City Council (LCC) he had expected reports to LCC on the Highland Games which LCC is funding in partnership with the Agency. On investigation officials reported complaints with the Agency's procedures and, while recognising the efforts of Jane Wallace in attempting to resolve issues, was advised that officials will recommend no further work with the Agency to LCC. Mr Leathem stated he was concerned about reputational damage to the Agency. Mr Millar reported that Ms Wallace was continuing to work with LCC to identify eligible costs and stated that he would investigate, meet with LCC officials if necessary and write to Mr Leathem with an update.
- 3.2 **Action:** *Mr Millar.*
- 3.3 **Proposed and Agreed:** *that the minute be accepted.*

#### **4. Matters Arising**

- 4.1 Miss Campbell requested an update on Item 6.3, Mr Crooks reported that he had written to DCRA in advance of the NSMC meeting and gave his review that work was progressing satisfactorily in the Agency.
- 4.2 Other matters were addressed in the Interim CEO's report
- 4.3 Mr Humphrey asked the Board to consider further correspondence from Mr Burns of Newry & Down District Council. Mr Burns has written to a number of Board members on two occasions expressing dissatisfaction with the appointment of an unqualified peripatetic dance tutor. Miss Campbell confirmed that she had responded to the initial letter on the Board's behalf. Mr Humphrey suggested that the Chair and interim CEO meet with Mr Burns to resolve the matter. Mr Hunter agreed in principle to meet should it be required and subject to an agreed Board position. Miss Campbell informed the Board that the criteria for appointment required accreditation or 6 years experience. The candidate fulfilled the latter requirement. Mr Millar confirmed that the rationale for including qualification and/ or experience as essential criterion was to widen the pool of potential candidates. Mr Millar also noted that for some courses there is no formal accreditation and stated that the successful candidate was capable of delivering a wide range of dance styles. Mr Hunter stated the Agency had made the appointment in good faith and after due process.
- 4.4 **Action:** *Interim Chair and CEO.*

#### **5. Correspondence Interim Chair and Minister**

- 5.1 Mr Hunter reported that the Minister responded on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2010 to the Chair's letter of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010. The response begins to explore issues around the strategic direction for the sector and invites participation in the debate. Mr Hunter stated that uncertainty around the role of the proposed academy and the proposed Ulster-Scots centres, together with the forthcoming strategy for languages will impact on the strategic direction for the Agency. Given the requirement for NI Executive approval of the Language Strategy and public consultations, it was likely to be some time before the way forward was clarified. This would impact on effective business planning and development of policies.

#### **6. Verbal Report from the Audit Committee Chair**

- 6.1 Mr Crooks, Chair of the Agency Audit & Risk Committee gave the Board members an update: The Terms of reference would be amended to reflect that the Sub-committee was a non-executive committee. In respect of procurement procedures and grants processing the Agency's Internal Auditors had identified no priority 1 issues and had provided satisfactory



assurance. Mr Crooks stated that, where possible, issues identified in the 2009 Internal Audit were being progressed – 2 items are outside of the Agency’s control. Overall, the Agency had received a satisfactory assurance to end 2009. The work to develop policies and procedures and embed risk management and controls into the organisations culture is continuing. The Sub-committee requested a copy of the review of core funded projects.

6.2 **Action:** *Interim Chief Executive*

6.3 The Sub-committee agreed an Audit Plan for 2010 which will be reviewed at each meeting. Mr Crooks confirmed that investigation into a suspected irregularity was continuing. Mr Crooks stated that there had been full attendance at the meeting and the governance training has been very beneficial.

6.4 Mr Hunter asked if issues identified during “On Board” training relating to the register if conflict of interests and financial controls had been progressed. Mr Crooks confirmed he had reviewed the 2001 Code of Conduct for the Agency’s Board and stated that the newer 2003 version will require review. The Board agreed that Mr Crooks and Miss Campbell should work together on this.

6.5 **Action:** *Interim CEO and Mr Crooks.*

6.6 The Board agreed to take item 9 on the Agenda to facilitate Mr Leathem’s early departure.

## **9. Grant Scoping Paper**

9.1 Mrs Reed and Mrs Graham noted that their Board papers were incomplete. Mr Hunter explained the origins of the paper related to the volume of applications received under the music and dance tuition programme. Applications had increased three-fold which has created administrative difficulties and resulted in the Agency missing internal processing targets. Mr Millar stated that applications requested £1.3m against a budget of £0.77m and the Agency’s approach of making awards to all eligible groups, as resulted in a large number of small awards leaving many organisers with a shortfall in funding.

9.2 Mr Millar stated that in developing options the Agency was concerned with ensuring accountability, minimising bureaucracy (both for the Agency and for applicants) and engendering quality. Each option has advantages and disadvantages which Mr Millar briefly described. Mr Leathem thanked the staff for the options presented. In respect of the first option Mr Leathem suggested that administering the scheme through tutors would not ease the administrative burden and may in fact require additional monitoring. Mr Leathem did

not support the second option suggesting that regional centres would encourage competition between bands for talent. Mr Leathem objected to proposals for a competitive scheme expressing concerns about elitism and suggesting that a competitive scheme might favour larger, established bands at the expense of those operating at community level.

- 9.3 Mr Leathem stated that the rationale to move to a tranche based funding model was to ease the administrative burdens. He acknowledged the work of the development team and suggested that the 330+ applications was the peak and indicated that he expected applications to reduce in 2011. Mr Leathem suggested that the scheme did not need to be promoted further and proposed better management of internal process. Mr Humphrey stated that the 20,000+ band members in NI represented one of the Agency's largest constituents and it was important that any new scheme achieves a balance between the Agency's needs and that of the community. He suggested that new proposals should be developed following consultation with RSPBA, Confederation of Bands and other interested parties.
- 9.4 Mr Millar described some practical measures that may reduce the administrative burden on the Agency including moving from 4 to 2 payments. Mrs Graham voiced concerns about the sectors capacity to manage the application process and monitoring requirements.
- 9.5 Mr Crooks stated that there are both strategic and operational concerns and that if the Strategy is set the operational arrangements should flow from that. Mr Crooks did not agree that a competitive scheme necessarily engendered elitism and stated that criteria could be developed to ensure evidenced need was addressed through the scheme. Mr Crooks suggested some consideration of ring-fencing some resource to support new applicants to ensure the scheme is not dominated by larger bands. Mr Crooks suggested monitoring could be encouraged by restricting applications to groups that complied with the Agency's monitoring requirements. He also suggested a "light touch" to monitoring commensurate with the level of award. He suggested establishing regional centres for delivery may be feasible for dance and may deliver efficiencies. Mrs Reed also indicated that special arrangements are required for Dance as it under-represented and needs encouragement in some communities.
- 9.6 Mr Hunter stated he was attracted to option 3 as it offered opportunity to enhance the quality and sustainability of music and dance tuition. A rigorous approach may stimulate the sector and support the development of capacity. Mr Leathem reiterated that additional requirements would restrict applications due to the low capacity of the sector. Mr Hunter asked if some amendment to the criteria together with a simplification of administrative procedures would result in a smaller number of larger grants. The proposal for a minimum award presented no issues for the Board. Mr Millar confirmed that over 90% of awards in 2010 were over £1,000 with the average grant in the region of £1,400 - £1,500. Mrs Martin stated that the criteria could be designed in such a way to ensure that the Agency's investment delivered against a range of objectives such as value for money, stimulated new

activity, rewarded access-progression through the tuition programmes and quality of provision. The Board requested that a Discussion Paper is prepared for the Board's consideration prior to circulation to the sector.

9.7 **Action:** Mr Millar, Mrs Martin

9.8 Mr Leatham and Mr Humphrey left the meeting at 2.55pm

## **7. Interim Chief Executive Officer's Report**

7.1 This report was tabled.

7.2 Miss Campbell gave a brief overview of the issues in her report.

7.3 Corporate Plan - Miss Campbell stated that DCAL have requested an update on the preparation of the Corporate Plan; Miss Campbell suggested that the agenda of the Board's August meeting is kept to a minimum to allow time for discussion on the Agency's strategic objectives for the next 3 years. Mr Hunter acknowledged the difficulties attached to planning without confirmation of the Department's plans, in advance of decisions on the role of the academy, and the emerging Language Strategy will impact on the Agency's role going forward. The absence of decisions about budgets also presented a particular challenge. Miss Campbell agreed to prepare an outline for the Board's consideration at the June meeting with discussions planned for August.

**ACTION:** Miss Campbell to prepare outline paper.

7.4 Review of Core Funded Bodies - Miss Campbell informed the Board that FGS McClure Walter have commenced the review. Mr Hunter and Miss Campbell have met with the Consultant and work is proceeding. Difficulties in obtaining information from the Ulster-Scots Language Society (USLS), due to staff resignation and absence, were noted. This could impact on the completion date for the assignment.

**ACTION:** Interim Chief Executive.

7.5 2007 Accounts - Miss Campbell informed the Board that the 2007 Accounts are nearing completion. There are a significant number of issues arising which have been reflected in the Statement on Internal Control. Miss Campbell stated the Agency awaits a decision about the status of the accounts and indicated that a clearer picture should emerge by the June meeting.

## **8. Finance Report**

- 8.1 Mr McCullough recommended that the Board note the finance report tabled. Budgets were prepared at 90% profile as clarification is required on the 2010 budget. Miss Campbell confirmed that the Agency was pressing for a decision. Mr McCullough stated that the FAS budget was below the annual spend profile due to a back-log in processing grant claims which would be addressed; Mr McCullough stated that grant activity would peak during the next quarter. Mrs Reed queried expenditure on cleaning, stationery and float. Mr McCullough addressed this and confirmed that overall office running costs were on target.

## **10. Publications Strategy Scoping Paper**

- 10.1 Mr McCullough stated that the Agency produce a range of materials including the Ulster Scot, Oot an Aboot and a series of information pamphlets for different target audiences. A 2007 survey provided positive feed-back on the content, frequency and distribution of Agency publications. Mr McCullough said that expenditure on the newspaper was currently irregular as it was an untendered service. Due to financial pressures and the ambiguity about linguistic issues he suggested that planned publications will be delivered but no new work will be commissioned. Mr McCullough confirmed that authors could still avail of Agency support through contracts or the partnership scheme.
- 10.2 Mr Hunter requested a more strategic perspective which considered: why are we publishing, how does it fulfil the Agency's remit? who is the Agency communicating with (segmentation of market)? the various mechanisms through which the Agency might communicate? and what are the intended outputs and outcomes? This process would then allow parameters to be set and operational requirements determined in the context of products, distribution, quality/ content, linguistic issues and affordability. Process issues relating to procurement etc. could be addressed following this. Mr Hunter requested an updated paper for the Boards consideration in June.

*Action: Mr McCullough.*

## **11. Grant Awards**

- 11.1 Mr Millar explained that the proposed award to the Ullans Speakers Association was for 7 months, the award would realign the Ullans Speakers group with other core funded groups. The recommended award for 7 months reflected additional rental costs that the group was incurring. The Board approved grant of £38,524.

- 11.2 Mr Millar explained that the proposed award to the Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association NI was to contribute to a targeted marketing programme to promote a series of summer events across NI. The recommended award was against eligible costs which have been identified. The Board approved grant of £20,000.

## **12. Ulster-Scots Folk Orchestra (USFO) – Report from Auditor**

- 12.1 The Board considered the draft forensic audit report prepared by Goldbalt McGuigan and the email response from Willie Drennan.
- 12.2 The Board were entirely satisfied that Goldblatt McGuigan carried out an independent and objective assessment of the outstanding claims, consistent with internal audit standards for public sector funding. The Board accepted the content of the report and its conclusions.
- 12.3 The Board also noted that on receipt of a Notice from the Northern Ireland Court Service, in the case between Kerry Jordan and the Ulster-Scots Folk Orchestra, the Agency is required to pay any monies owed to the USFO, over to the Enforcement of Judgements Office.
- 12.4 Board agreed that a line should now be drawn under this matter. Miss Campbell would convey the Board's decision to Mr Drennan.

***ACTION:*** Miss Campbell

## **13. Marketing & Promotion Plans**

- 13.1 The report was noted. Mr Hunter ask that the Board give some consideration of how the Boards 100<sup>th</sup> meeting might be marked. ***Action: Board***

## **14. Progress Report on 2010 Business Plan Targets**

- 14.1 The Board noted the progress report tabled. This was slippage on the education strategy due to pressure of other work and the absence of a clear policy framework.

**15. AOB**

- 15.1 Board members were advised that expenses claims would be processed monthly. Members were reminded to provide copies of car insurance.
  
- 15.2 Miss Campbell stated that a case of suspected fraud has been identified and is being investigated. The case relates to possible mis-declaration and submission of false receipts. This will be referred to the Audit committee.

***Action: Hazel Campbell***

**16. Dates for future Meetings**

- 16.1 The next Board meeting will take place in the morning of 22 June 2010 at 11.30 am following a meeting of the Audit & Risk Committee which will commence at 10.30am.

Signed:.....

Date:.....

**Tha Board O Ulster-Scotch**  
**99<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting**  
**22 June 2010**  
**Ulster-Scots Agency Board Room**  
**Belfast**

<b>Present;</b>	Mr John Hunter
	Mrs Angela Graham
	Mrs Jacqui Reed
	Mr William Humphrey
	Dr Ian Adamson
	Mr Tony Crooks
<b>In attendance:</b>	Mr Jim Millar
	Miss Hazel Campbell
	Mr Michael McCullough
	Mrs Catherine Martin
<b>Recording Secretary:</b>	Mrs Lyndsey Hanna

**1. Welcome from the Chairperson**

- 1.18 The Chairman welcomed members of the Board to the meeting.
- 1.19 Mr Hunter advised members that he had attended the NSMC meeting of the Joint Language Body along with Hazel Campbell and Jim Millar. He had circulated a report on the meeting to Board members.
- 1.20 Mr Hunter reported that he would be meeting Mr Patton the next day (23 June 2010) to discuss the final report into the investigation of his complaints.
- 1.21 Mr Hunter attended the launch of the “Mill Worker” project jointly supported by the Agency and Belfast City Council. The launch was a huge success. Mr Humphrey commended Mr Hanna, Development Officer’s participation in the Steering Group.

- 1.22 Mr Hunter raised the issue of conflict of interest with specific reference to the presentation from FGS McClure Watters on the evaluation of core funded groups. Mr Hunter indicated that the presentation would cover general issues which all members could attend followed by more detailed analyses of the individual groups. At this point Mr Humphrey and Mrs Reed declared their interest. It was agreed that both could be present for the general presentation and both would leave the meeting for the more detailed presentation on the individual groups.

## **2. Apologies**

- 2.1 Apologies were accepted on behalf of Mr Leathem and Mr McLoone.

## **3. Minutes of Last Meeting**

- 3.1 ***Proposed and Agreed:*** that the minute be accepted.

## **4. Matters Arising**

### **4.5 USFO**

Mr Hunter advised that the Interim CEO had written to Mr Drennan following 21 May Board Meeting indicating that the Board had considered the Goldblatt McGuigan report and had accepted its content and conclusions. Following that Mr Hunter received a request from Mr Drennan seeking to make a presentation to the Board and claiming that the audit report was not independent. Mr Hunter had turned down this request and a copy of his reply issued to all Board members. Mr Drennan wrote to Mr Hunter again on 18 June 2010 complaining again about the audit process and how the Ulster-Scots Folk Orchestra had been treated by the Agency. Copies of the letter were circulated to the Board.

- 4.2 After discussion the Board agreed that Mr Hunter should offer Mr Drennan a further meeting, although on the understanding that the Board's decision on the matter remains unchanged from that taken at the previous meeting.

- 4.3 ***ACTION:*** Interim Chair and Interim CEO.

## **5. Interim CEO Report**

- 5.1 Miss Campbell's report was tabled and the Board accepted it.



- 5.2 Dr Adamson joined the meeting at this point.
- 5.3 Miss Campbell referred to the Board members Code of Conduct attached to her report. This had been developed by the North South Ministerial Council. Miss Campbell confirmed that she and Mr Crooks, Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee had considered the content of the Code. Mr Crooks confirmed to the Chair that he felt that the code was comprehensive and that the issue of conflicts of interest was adequately covered.
- 5.4 Mr Humphrey informed the Board that he would be bringing the Code of Conduct to the attention of the party who nominated him for consideration as a Board member in the first instance.
- 5.5 Mr Hunter advised the Board members that the Code of Conduct should be adopted as Agency policy.

## **6. Music and Dance Tuition – Draft Consultation Paper**

- 6.1 Mr Millar gave an overview of the content of the draft consultation paper on options for the provision of music and dance tuition as discussed at the previous Board Meeting. He sought advice from the Board on the umbrella groups which should be consulted and the following groups were agreed:
- The Confederation of Ulster Bands
  - North of Ireland Bands Association
  - Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association
  - The Royal Scottish Country Dance Society
  - The Ulster-Scots Dance Alliance
  - Border Counties Band Association
- 6.2 It was also agreed there should be consultation with staff in the Ulster-Scots Community Network.
- 6.3 The Board agreed that the consultation should be completed as soon possible and the results fed back to the Board to agree a way forward.

***ACTION: Mr Millar***

## **7 Festival Funding**

7.1 The Board was asked to consider the options for reviewing the funding of festivals and advise the Executive of their preferred approach.

7.2 Mr Millar gave an overview of the issues and the options identified by the Executive.

These were:

7.2.1 Option 1: Do Nothing

7.2.2 Option 2: Apply amended criteria to support regional events including an annual Flag-ship event

7.2.3 Option 3: Apply amended criteria to support a smaller number of quality events at community level

7.2.4 Option 4: Allocation determined by available funds

7.2.5 Option 5: Develop a Two-tier System

7.3 The Board were attracted to the option of a two tier approach to funding to support the larger flagship festivals and a small grant scheme to support the smaller community festivals and the Ulster-Scots elements of wider festival programmes. The advantage of a two tier approach is that it would provide a “ladder of progression” for organisations to move from a small scale event to flagship festivals.

7.4 The Board indicated their desire to see a simple application process for the small grant scheme which would help to assist groups with low capacity.

7.5 Miss Campbell advised that the scope of changes proposed were likely to require an amendment to the Financial Assistance Scheme which in turn would require the approval of the Departments and North South Ministerial Council. This would prolong the timescale for getting new arrangements in place. She said that it was unlikely that the new arrangements would be in place in time for 2011 and that 2012 was more realistic.

7.6 The Board agreed that the Executive should prepare a draft consultation paper for consideration at the August board Meeting.

**ACTION:** *Jim Millar*

## **8. Corporate Plan 2011 – 2013**

- 8.1 Miss Campbell introduced the discussion paper to assist the Board in identifying strategic priorities for the Agency's new corporate plan for 2011-2013. The paper included an analysis of achievements against the 2008-2010 corporate plan.

Miss Campbell also indicated that the Agency had a number of questions in the 2010 Omnibus Survey which would provide a measure of public awareness of Ulster-Scots and the results would be available in early July.

- 8.2 The Board discussed the paper and agreed that the plan should be developed along the following themes:- Education and Language Development, widening access to and appreciation of Ulster-Scots culture, arts and heritage including cultural tourism, supporting communities engaged in Ulster-Scots activities and developing partnerships with other statutory bodies and community organisations to optimise service delivery.

- 8.3 The Board were particularly enthused about the potential for Ulster-Scots history and culture to contribute to Cultural Tourism in Northern Ireland. Mr Humphrey referred to an important piece of work currently being done by North Down and Ards Councils to develop a Ulster-Scots tourism trail and he felt there was scope to extend this.

Mrs Reed referred to the tourism development opportunities in the North West and the role of the Monreagh Centre in this.

- 8.4 There was some debate around the supporting communities theme. To ensure the Agency met its equality objectives, the Chair suggested that the Agency should be using its limited resources to "support Ulster-Scots Communities and those supporting Ulster-Scots activities". This would not exclude anyone from applying to the Financial Assistance Scheme. The Chair commented that the Agency should be empowering communities to link with Ulster-Scots activities as it is the Ulster-Scots activities that drive the communities. This would allow the Agency to develop more sustainable Ulster-Scots activities and raise the quality standards, and experience.

## **9. Review of Core Funded Groups – Presentation by FGS McClure Watters**

- 9.1 The Chair welcomed Mrs Jenny Irwin to the meeting.

- 9.2 Mrs Irwin commenced the presentation by outlining the purpose of the review as set out in the Terms of Reference. She then outlined the agreed methodology and process for conducting the review.
- 9.3 Mrs Irwin gave a summary of the results from the stakeholder surveys and outlined some of the key issues emerging. She had also completed an analysis of each body's performance against the KPI's and targets set out in their respective business plans. She indicated that the work on evaluating the governance arrangements and value for money assessment had still to be completed.
- 9.4 Mr Humphrey and Mrs Reed then left the meeting before a more detailed analysis of each of the groups was presented. At that point Dr Adamson and Mrs Graham declared that while they were not directly involved in the groups concerned that they had adhoc links with the groups. The Chair determined that they could remain in the meeting. Mrs Irwin then gave a more detailed analysis of her findings to date and questions were invited prior to Mr Humphrey and Mrs Reed rejoining the meeting.
- 9.5 At that point the floor was open for general discussion. Mrs Reed felt that to date there had been inadequate contact between the consultants and the Monreagh Centre. Mrs Irwin explained that work had now commenced in relation to the Monreagh Centre but some aspects of the terms of reference would not be relevant e.g. analysis of past performance as the group had not previously been in receipt of core funding.
- 9.6 Board members wished to be assured that all material of a factual nature relating to the groups would be accurate and requested that this should be validated with the groups prior to completion of the report. Mrs Irwin agreed that this would be done.
- 9.7 This process and other issues would extend the completion date for the final report to mid July.
- 9.8 Mr Hunter concluded that the final report would be circulated to Board Members and to the Sponsor Departments. The focus at the next Board Meeting would be on the report's conclusion and recommendations.

## **10. Grant Awards**

### **10.1 10A – Altnaveigh House**

Mr Millar explained that the Agency had previously approved funding for this project but partnership funding had not been secured at the time to enable the project to proceed. The organisation had now secured PEACE III funding and they were seeking confirmation from the Agency that it would uphold the original grant offer of £5,250.

10.2 The Board agreed to re-approve funding for this project subject to formal confirmation from the group on the scope and extent of the revised project. The funds would not be drawn down until January 2011.

10.3 **10B – Summer Schools**

The Board noted the information on the schedule of Summer Schools

10.4 **10C – Pat & Plain Drama Project with Lyric Theatre**

The Board accepted the recommendation to provide up to an additional £8,390.19 to the Lyric Theatre for the project deficit which was a result of the Arts Council not being in a position to support the project at this time.

**11. Finance Report**

11.1 Mr McCullough gave an update on the Agency financial position.

11.2 Mr Humphrey remained concerned about the lack of decision on the 2010 budget.

11.2 The Chair suggested that he would discuss with Mr Ó Maolmhichíl, Chair of Foras na Gaeilge whether they should issue a joint letter to the Departments to try to get this resolved.

***ACTION:*** *The Chair and Interim CEO*

**12. Managing Fraud**

12.1 The Board accepted and approved the new policy and noted that staff training would be undertaken.

***ACTION:*** *Interim CEO*

### **13. Marketing & Promotion Plans**

- 13.1 The Board noted and approved the planned promotional activities for July and August 2010, which included showcasing at Castlewellan Agricultural Show, showcasing at the St Patrick's Centre Downpatrick and a showcase at Greencastle Co. Donegal and Lisnahally Co. Londonderry.
- 13.2 Mr McCullough reminded Board Members that the next meeting would be the 100th meeting of the Board. He suggested Parliament Buildings as a possible option for holding the meeting.
- 13.3 The Board were in agreement with this suggestion and were keen to invite additional guests to the lunch including the two Ministers, the two Permanent Secretaries, the Joint Secretaries of the North South Ministerial Council as well as all past Chairs and Board Members. Miss Campbell indicated that use of Parliament Buildings would require an MLA to sponsor the event and it would be preferable if this was the Minister. Mr Hunter agreed to write to the Minister regarding this matter.

***ACTION: Interim Chair***

### **14. Institute of Ulster-Scots Studies**

- 14.2 Mrs Reed requested that the Board revisit the funding agreement between the Agency and the IUSS as she was concerned that the Institute would cease operating as of 30 June 2010 because no further funding has been secured.
- 14.3 Mrs Reed gave the Board an overview of the work completed by the IUSS to date with the funding the Agency had previously provided. She asked the Board why the funding has not been extended and expressed her view that the Agency had let the IUSS down.
- 14.4 At this point the Chair declared a conflict of interest as he is a member of the Council for University of Ulster as did Dr Adamson being a Committee Member of the University.
- 14.5 The Chair advised that no further application for funding had been received by the Agency and funding for 2010 was now fully committed. He said that developments in relation to the Ulster-Scots Academy would have a bearing on the future work of the IUSS.
- 14.6 The Chair suggested that he write a letter to the Institute expressing the Boards appreciation for the work they had carried out to date, and indicating that there may be further

opportunities for partnership working when the uncertainties around the Academy, the Department's language strategy and future funding were resolved.

**14.6 ACTION: Interim Chair**

**15. AOB**

15.1 There was no further business for discussion.

**16. Dates for future Meetings**

16.1 The next Board meeting will take place during week commencing 16 August 2010, subject to availability of Parliament Buildings.

Signed:.....

Date:.....

**Tha Board O Ulstér-Scotch  
100th Board Meeting  
18<sup>th</sup> August 2010, 10.30am  
Parliament Buildings, Belfast**

<b>Present:</b>	Mr John Hunter
	Mrs Angela Graham
	Ms Jacqui Reed
	Mr Tony Crooks
	Mrs Hilary Singleton
	Dr Ian Adamson
	Mr Michael McLoone
	Mr William Leathem (joined meeting 10.50am)
<b>In attendance:</b>	Mr Jim Millar
	Miss Hazel Campbell
	Mr Michael McCullough
<b>Recording Secretary:</b>	Mrs Catherine Martin

**1. Welcome from the Chairperson**

1.1 The Chair welcomed the Board, on behalf of Minister McCausland, to Parliament Buildings for the 100<sup>th</sup> meeting of Tha Board O Ulstér-Scotch. The Chair also welcomed two new members, Mr Michael McLoone and Mrs Hilary Singleton to the Board and thanked Mr Crooks for interrupting his holiday to attend. The Chair indicated that lunch would be served at 12.30pm and apologies had been received from Minister Carey, Rosalie Flanagan and Lord Laird.

1.2 The Chair reported on a number of issues:

- A letter issued to Mr Patton with a copy of the report prepared by Mr Campton – no further correspondence has been received.
- A meeting at the end of June with the Chair and CEO of Foras Na Gaeilge enabled the 2006 Consolidated Accounts to be signed off.
- The Chair and CEO represented the Agency at the opening of the new office of the Ulster Historical Foundation and agreed with the Chair of the Foundation, Sir Dennis Desmond to explore opportunities for working together.
- A review into the senior staffing structure of the Agency has been commissioned and will support the appointment of a CEO, making recommendations on grading, job description, and personal specification for advertising the post. This will require approval from the North South Ministerial Council (NSMC).



## **2. Apologies**

2.1 No apologies were received.

## **3. Minutes of Last Meeting**

3.1 Minutes of the meeting of the Board on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2010 were agreed with one amendment (the inclusion of the Border Counties Band Association as a consultee in respect of proposals for music and dance tuition.)

3.2 ***Proposed and Agreed:*** *that the minute be accepted.*

3.3 The Board noted the draft Audit and Risk Sub-committee minutes of the 22 June meeting.

## **4. Matters Arising**

4.1 The issue of a joint Agency/ Foras Na Gaeilge letter to Ministers about the finalisation of 2010 budgets has been postponed as Departments have provided assurances that the issue will be resolved in early September.

## **5. Interim Chief Executive Officer's Report**

5.1 Mr Drennan of the Ulster Scots Folk Orchestra (USFO) declined a meeting with the Chair and CEO of the Agency, and instead requested a meeting with the full Board. As the Board has considered the matter at previous two meetings and agreed the recommendations of the independent review conducted by auditors the Board decided not to re-open the issue. Miss Campbell advised that briefing on the issue has been provided to the NI Assembly Committee of Culture, Arts and Leisure and to the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) via Northern Ireland Audit Office. The Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure has also corresponded with USFO on the matter.

5.2 The Chair had issued a letter to the Institute of Ulster Scots Studies noting the end of the funding agreement, communicating the Agency's appreciation of work completed on the project and looking forward to opportunities to work in partnership in the future. Ms Reed indicated that the letter was well received.

5.3 Priority is being given to the finalisation of Annual Reports and Accounts which are behind schedule. The Consolidated Accounts for the Language Body for 2005 and 2006 have been signed off. The Agency's 2007 accounts have been completed and are with the Comptrollers and Auditors General. The Northern Ireland Audit Office is conducting fieldwork on 2008 and 2009 accounts. A recent NI PAC report on North/South Bodies noted the delay in preparation of the Language Body's accounts

and as a consequence the Departments of Finance are now monitoring progress.

- 5.4 Miss Campbell informed the Board of on-going staffing issues and the potential impact on grant payment processing times. The vacancy created by the secondment of an EO2 to OFMDFM has not been filled and the long-term absence of an EO2 within the grants team due to work related stress is on-going. Some support has been requested from DCAL. Dr. Adamson congratulated the Agency for maintaining delivery of services despite staffing constraints.

Miss Campbell notified the Board that a series of training/ information sessions have commenced for Agency staff beginning with Managing Attendance and Fraud Awareness and Prevention.

- 5.5 Miss Campbell reported on changes to the management of statutory equality duties which will require an “audit of inequalities”, a revision of the Language Body’s equality scheme and the preparation of action plans. Miss Campbell indicated that the Agency has engaged with DCAL statisticians to agree an approach to necessary information gathering.
- 5.6 Miss Campbell reported on the strong take up of Summer Schools and Festivals. Minister McCausland attended the Castle Gardens Summer School at Newtownards which attracted some television coverage. The Castle Gardens Scheme has been identified as a case study model for evaluation by the Education and Training Inspectorate which should inform other groups on the development of Summer Schools.
- 5.7 Miss Campbell attended the European Pipe Band Championships, supported by the Agency, at Stormont and reported that the event was professionally delivered and well attended.
- 5.8 Miss Campbell confirmed to Mr McLoone that the review of the senior management structure will not consider the overall workload of the Agency largely due to time constraints in getting the CEO appointment progressed. Fieldwork has commenced and the draft report will be presented at the end of September. This would not preclude a follow up review of the rest of the organisation if that was considered necessary.

## **6. Music and Dance Tuition – Preliminary Consultation**

- 6.1 Mr Millar indicated that the preliminary consultation has identified a range of issues which will require substantial change to the tuition programme and the Financial Assistance Scheme. The Executive recommended that an interim model is introduced in 2011 to allow sufficient time to develop and consult on a new funding model.

- 6.2 The consultation with representative bodies revealed the following points:
- Agency supported tuition is primarily aimed at introductory level and there is little use of the scheme to support progression towards accreditation.
  - There is limited demand for a 40 week programme.
  - The rates provided to tutors is considered generous.
  - The effective monitoring and evaluation of the programme requires specialist skills.
- 6.3 Mr Millar explained the time pressures on determining the programme for 2011. Information on the criteria for funding and the application process will be required by groups in October. Commenting on the proposed interim measures Mrs Graham indicated that removal of funding for hall rental might impact on smaller groups and she wished to see this retained. Mr Leathem suggested that an extension to the proposed 20 week programme should be provided for some groups with capacity to deliver. Miss Campbell explained that a 40 week programme was no longer affordable given budgetary constraints.
- 6.4 Mrs Singleton indicated that some groups, particularly those working towards accreditation, will require more than 20 weeks. Mrs. Singleton also identified the reduction in rates for tutors as a potential issue for smaller groups as they may be required to meet the short-fall. Mrs Singleton also indicated that Scottish Country dance lessons can be successfully delivered to young children. Miss Campbell agreed that groups delivering tuition leading to accreditation (more akin to a centre of excellence model) required different support and this can be supported under the Financial Assistance Scheme. She also advised that as per Government guidelines funding will not exceed 75% of total project costs. Mr. Leathem asked if other developments such as DCAL's review of the band sector would be taken into consideration. Miss Campbell confirmed that this work would inform the development of the Scheme for 2012. The review and amendment of the programme will address administration issues related to assessment, monitoring and verification.
- 6.5 Following further discussion, as an interim measure the Board agreed:
- Applications for one 20 week programme with the option of an extension for a further 10 weeks subject to satisfactory completion of the initial programme and if the necessary budget is available.
  - For dance tuition applications for one 30 week programme will be accepted.
  - Grant will be capped at 75% of total eligible project costs – a maximum of £30.00 will be available for hall rental and a maximum of £20.00 per hour available for tutors.
- 6.6 The interim measures were ***Proposed and Agreed.***

The Board requested a critical path mapping the proposed development process for the 2012 programme for the October Board meeting.

**6.7 Action:** Mr. Jim Millar

## **7. Festivals Consultation Paper**

- 7.1 Miss Campbell outlined the proposal to stream the funding programme to support larger grants to Flagship Ulster-Scots Festivals and small grants to support Ulster-Scots community festivals and other festivals wishing to incorporate an Ulster-Scots showcase within a wider programme of events. A detailed application using the criteria outlined would be applied to Flagship applications while a simpler process would be developed for small grants, the focus would be on quality with the highest scoring applications receiving support. Board members requested further information on disallowed costs within the proposed ineligible expenditure areas and the definition of festivals under each stream. Clarification on the process for managing appeals is also required.
- 7.2 Mr. Millar indicated that the current “one size fits all” approach was unsustainable as larger events such as the Maiden City Festival required a different level of support than smaller events. The aim would be to deliver quality and sustainable larger events while reducing administrative burdens on smaller events. Mr. McLoone indicated that the criteria provided for the promotion of Ulster-Scots culture while capturing wider economic and social benefits delivered by festivals was sound and proposed that the Board agree the criteria in principle. A timeline and revised consultation paper was requested for the next Board meeting.

The recommendation was ***Proposed and Agreed***.

7.3 **Action:** Mr Jim Millar

- 7.4 Mr. Leathem reported on his attendance at the Maiden City Festival and commended organisers for the delivery of a high quality, high impact event which demonstrated the potential of Flagship festivals.

## **8. Review of Core Funded Groups**

- 8.1 The Chairman explained that the draft final report was circulated to members but that some further work was required on the sections relating to value for money and governance and accountability. He stated that the project Steering Group would raise these with the consultants. The Chairman also felt that the conclusions and recommendations required a sharper focus. Discussion on the report content was undertaken at strategic level to avoid potential conflict of interest issues.
- 8.2 The strategic framework within which the groups operate was discussed and it was agreed direction should be cascaded from the Agency following guidance from Governments and Sponsor Departments. Targets should relate to outcomes of programmes and policies and should address any potential duplication. Miss Campbell confirmed that future expenditure would be supported by a Business Case including an economic appraisal.

- 8.3 The Chair indicated that the forthcoming language strategy from DCAL and the proposed Ulster-Scots Academy would influence planning. Mr. Crooks stated that the Agency's corporate plan would provide an ideal starting point through which groups could demonstrate how they contribute to the achievement of the Agency's objectives. Mr. Crooks stated that funding on a multi-annual basis would provide some certainty for groups and enable them to effectively manage staff and financial resources. Mr. Crooks indicated that the plan should take account of developments in both jurisdictions and should reflect the cross-border nature of the Agency's remit.
- 8.4 Mrs. Singleton stated that the review should reflect the objectives of the Agency, the budget, the proposed restructure of the Agency's Executive and the proposed role of groups in receipt of core funding. Guidance from Ministers was required to enable strategic planning and to ensure each group contributes to the achievement of the Governments and Agency's aims.
- 8.5 Mr. McLoone recognised the difficulties in setting the strategic context. Mr. McLoone proposed an incremental approach where issues related to the governance, operational controls and management could be addressed by clarifying the framework within which public funds are managed and agreeing a process with groups for supporting activity which adds value to the Agency's work.
- 8.6 The Chair highlighted concerns related to the groups internal processes in respect of internal audit arrangements, management of conflicts of interest and financial reporting systems and reminded Board members that the NI Audit Office are empowered to examine records of organisations in receipt of public money. Mr Crooks echoed the concern and suggested that workshops could be arranged with the groups to explain the governance requirements. Mr. Crooks stated that recommendations should be provided to the Audit and Risk Sub-committee.
- 8.7 The Chair indicated that the Board would need to decide how to disseminate the findings. The timing of decisions regarding future funding and the potential impact on the various organisations employees was discussed. Mr. McLoone suggested writing to the groups to request information on how their objectives align with the Agency and what activities are proposed over the next 12 months. The Chair will consider these issues further with the CEO and the Department before referring the recommendations to the next meeting of the Agency Board.
- 8.8 **Action:** Chair/CEO.

## **9. Draft Corporate Plan**

- 9.1 Miss Campbell explained that the Draft Corporate Plan had been prepared in line with guidance reviewed from Sponsor Departments and is required for submission by 31<sup>st</sup> August 2010. A draft Business Plan for 2011 will also be required. She also explained that references to the core funded groups were not explicit in the plan as the outcome of the review and approval of Business Cases would be required to determine the nature and extent of any potential future support.

- 9.2 The Board made the following comments on the draft:
- 9.2.1 Section 3 – Ms Reed requested that references to legislation are checked, for accuracy.
  - 9.2.2 Section 4 – The organisational structure may require updating following the review into the Agency’s senior management structure.
  - 9.2.3 Section 5 – Should be extended to reflect policy developments and the roles of various organisations in both jurisdictions.
  - 9.2.4 Section 6 – The overview should specifically refer to raising quality standards and sustainability. References to the plantation should be clarified.
  - 9.2.5 Section 8 – The Agency’s vision and mission should appear earlier in the document. Mr. Leathem confirmed that the mission had been reviewed and agreed by the Board approximately 18 months ago and was still relevant and appropriate. The themes were discussed; Miss Campbell explained that partnership working was not set out separately as it applied across all of the strategic themes identified.
  - 9.2.6 The Agency’s role in education was discussed and the Board agreed that activity connected to curriculum development will need to align with the emerging Government policy and that the Agency should explore this with Sponsor Departments taking account of capacity issues within the Agency.
  - 9.2.7 The Section should also reflect work required to address audit issues. Mr. McLoone suggested the development of a financial procedures manual for groups in receipt of funding from the Agency for dissemination to groups to coincide with the introduction of new funding models in 2012.
  - 9.2.8 Section 9 – Mr. Crooks recommended that references to partnership working should be included within the organisational development/ customer service section of the Plan. Mr. McLoone stated that linking outputs and outcomes to the inputs/resources available may concentrate attention on what can be achieved. He added that it would be helpful if the targets could be prioritised.
  - 9.2.9 Section 10 – The Board agreed the section on values and noted that the budget is illustrative only and will be refined and re-profiled as guidance emerges from Departments and reviews are finalised.
- 9.3 Mr. McLoone felt that the plan was ambitious given the current budget scenario and mapping difficulties within the Agency. He felt that there needed to be some references to this and flexibility to re-prioritise limited resources to help manage expectations within communities. Miss Campbell indicated that this approach may be necessary as the Agency may not have the capacity to deliver everything set out in the plan.

- 9.4 It was ***Proposed and Agreed*** that the draft will be updated and provided to Departmental officials as a “work in progress” for their initial views.
- 9.5 A revised draft will be presented at the next Board meeting, together with a draft Business Plan for 2011.
- 9.6 **Action:** Miss Campbell.

## **10. Grant Application from Mid-Armagh Community Network**

- 10.1 Mrs. Singleton left the meeting while the application from Mid-Armagh Community Network was considered by the Board. Mr. Millar presented the proposal and confirmed that a Business Case has been prepared and referred to DCAL for approval. Dr Adamson proposed the funding and Mr Leathem seconded, the funding of £23,199.60 was agreed.

## **11. Finance Report**

- 11.1 The finance report was considered on an exception basis. The difficulties in managing the business while the budget remained unconfirmed were reiterated. Mr McCullough explained that the Budget required some re-profiling to reflect actual vs projected expenditure and cost reduction measures including projected under-spend amongst core funded groups. A re-profiled budget will be prepared for the October Board meeting.
- 11.2 **Action:** Mr. McCullough

## **12. Marketing Report**

- 12.1 The report on marketing activity was noted by the Board.

## **13. Update on Business Plan Targets**

- 13.1 The Chairman noted some slippage on strategic activity due to capacity issues within the Agency. It was noted that operational targets are generally on track. The Board accepted that the targets were ambitious and have been impacted by staffing issues. The Chairman stated that while some targets may not be achieved at year end the Agency could demonstrate considerable progress overall.
- 13.2 Mrs Graham noted that the marketing campaign to mark the Plantation of Ulster remained at planning stage. Miss Campbell informed the Board that DCAL have established a group to consider anniversaries/ commemorations and the Agency will be involved in those discussions. Miss Campbell said that the Agency has invested in the production of a television programme on the Plantation which will be broadcast on Ulster Television in October/ November 2010. She was hopeful that other projects would emerge, preferably in collaboration with others.

**14. AOB**

14.1 Miss. Campbell informed new Board members that “On Board” governance training would be available on 20<sup>th</sup> October at Malone House, Belfast. Mr. McLoone confirmed his availability; Mrs. Singleton requested that alternative dates are sought.

14.2 **Action:** Miss Campbell

**15. Date and Venue of Next Meeting**

15.1 The next Board meeting will take place in the morning of 1<sup>st</sup> October 2010 at 11.30 am following a meeting of the Audit & Risk Sub-committee which will commence at 10.00am at the Agency’s Belfast office.

Signed:.....

Date:.....



**Tha Board O Ulster-Scotch  
101<sup>st</sup> Board Meeting  
1<sup>st</sup> October 2010, 10.30am  
Ulster Scots Agency, Belfast**

<b>Present:</b>	Mr John Hunter (Chair)
	Ms Jacqui Reed
	Mr Tony Crooks
	Mrs Hilary Singleton
	Dr Ian Adamson
	Mr Michael McLoone
	Mr William Leathem (joined meeting 10.50am)
<b>Apologies:</b>	Mrs Angela Graham (Vice-Chair)
<b>In attendance:</b>	Mr Jim Millar
	Miss Hazel Campbell
	Mr Michael McCullough
<b>Recording Secretary:</b>	Mrs Catherine Martin

**1. Welcome from the Chairperson**

- 1.1 The Chair thanked the Board for agreeing to meet earlier than planned due to the re-scheduling of the Audit & Risk Sub-Committee meeting and reported on a number of issues:

**Meetings**

- The Chair and CEO met with Minister McCausland at the end of August, the Minister indicated that the proposed budget reduction of 3% pa was the starting point. The Chair stated that the result of the UK comprehensive spending review and the budget in Republic of Ireland will determine budget available to the Agency in early 2011.
- The Minister also indicated that budget constraints suggest it is unlikely that tuition to communities could extend beyond 20 weeks. The Minister noted the Agency's development of strategies and policies in respect of the Community Workers Scheme and the Agency's participation in planning for various events and commemorations.
- The Chair reiterated the need for strategic direction from the Department and a framework within which the Agency will work with other stakeholders such as the proposed academy. The Minister confirmed that the preparation of Business Cases for the Academy and regional cultural centres was a top priority.
- Minister McCausland noted the findings of the review into core funding and reiterated the importance of re-establishing the Forum of stakeholder groups.
- Minister McCausland also expressed interest in emerging proposals for a W F Marshall Winter School.
- The Chair reported on a meeting of the North South Ministerial Council (NSMC) at the end of September. Key issues relate to the development of Corporate and Business Plans and the review of the St. Andrew's Agreement. The review, led by the two Governments, and due for completion by the end of October will consider efficiency, value for money and the need for new/ modified bodies. The Agency may be asked to contribute to the review in due course.

- Following attendance at the opening of Ulster History Foundation premises, the Chair and CEO met with the group. The group propose developing tourist products in partnership with local authorities and are advancing work with Ards and North Down which may serve as a model for similar work elsewhere. The Chair agreed regular on-going meetings with the group.

#### **Correspondence**

- The Chair wrote to the Ulster Scots Community Network (USCN) seeking an update on plans to manage the CEO vacancy. The group have subsequently advised that their Management Committee will consider shortly and the Agency shall be kept appraised.
- The Chair wrote to the Ulster Scots Language Society (USLS) to note outstanding administrative issues. The Chair commended USLS for the content of the recent edition of “Ullans” while expressing disappointment at the tone of the editorial and recommending that issues with the Agency are in future raised outside of the public domain.
- Minister McCausland has written to the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure’s Arms Length Bodies to encourage a strategic, partnership approach to planning activities to mark a number of forthcoming anniversaries. Bodies are asked to consider how proposals from communities can be encouraged and supported and integrate planned activity into Corporate and Business Plans. Ms Reed and Dr Adamson indicated that Minister for Communities, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs may have an interest. Mr Crooks stated that some work was underway within the Department of the Taoiseach. Various anniversaries were discussed and Mrs Reed stated that the community should be consulted, Mr McLoone offered to investigate any plans agreed in the Republic of Ireland. Mr Leathem indicated that the potentially lengthy “lead-in” times required for some events may require activity in the very short term if forthcoming anniversaries are to be appropriately marked.

## **2. Apologies**

- 2.1 Apologies were received from Mrs. Angela Graham.

## **3. Minutes of Last Meeting**

- 3.1 Minutes of the meeting of the Board on 18<sup>th</sup> August 2010 were agreed without amendment
- 3.2 ***Proposed and Agreed: that the minute be accepted.***

## **4. Matters Arising**

- 4.1 Mrs Singleton asked for confirmation that the draft consultation document on Festivals would be presented to the next Board meeting, this was provided.

## **5. Audit & Risk Sub-Committee - Verbal Report**

- 5.1 The Board were informed that the Audit and Risk Sub-committee meeting was postponed due to difficulties in securing a quorum, the Sub-committee will convene on the 18<sup>th</sup> October 2010.

## **6. Interim Chief Executive Officer's Report**

- 6.1 The CEO stated that the 2010 budget has been agreed at 94% of 2009 baseline pending ratification from the NSMC. The Agency is projecting an under-spend due to savings in quarters 1 and 2. Delay in submission of claims from community groups is also impacting on profiled spend. Correspondence from DCAL has confirmed requirements to plan for a 3%pa reduction in 2011-2013 budgets, limited opportunity for savings/ efficiencies in administration costs may result in reductions to funding for programmes. The CEO stated that a series of meetings to inform communities about changes to programmes in 2011 and to consult on further changes in 2012 will commence on 4<sup>th</sup> October.
- 6.2 The CEO stated that the member of staff on long-term sick leave has returned to work in the Grants Team. The appointment of a temporary worker will continue to address the current back-log in claims and support the forthcoming assessment of applications.
- 6.3 Finalisation of 2007 Annual Reports and Accounts is progressing and the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) have completed work, the consolidation is underway led by Foras ns Gaeilge. NIAO are conducting fieldwork on 2008 and 2009 accounts.
- 6.4 Miss Campbell informed the Board that the partnership project with Evergreen Media to produce a one hour documentary on the Plantation is progressing. There has been some delay however the project should be delivered to facilitate screening in 2010.
- 6.5 Miss Campbell reported on the partnership project to develop interpretative information at the 1<sup>st</sup> Derry Presbyterian Church. Consultants have developed a range of options which are under consideration.
- 6.6 Miss Campbell reported on a meeting with the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and representatives from Ards and North Down Councils on proposals to develop Ulster-Scots themed tourism products. Miss Campbell stated that applications for funding from the Councils may be advanced early in the New Year.
- 6.7 Miss Campbell indicated that the Agency has agreed 25% funding for a feasibility study on the proposed cultural centres in North Antrim and Belfast. DCAL has approved the expenditure. The Chair indicated that the study should consider relationships with local groups.
- 6.8 Miss Campbell stated that Minister McCausland's request to re-establish the Forum by end of September had not been achieved due to time constraints however a request for nominations from the USCN has issued and a reply is awaited. The Chair invited any interested Board Member to attend the Forum's meetings.
- 6.9 The Chair stated that the Department of Education has issued a consultation on Community Relations, Equality and Diversity in Education and are seeking responses by end of October.

The Chair suggested this as an agenda item for the Forum. The Agency will, time permitting, develop a draft response for presentation to the next Board meeting. In the event that the deadline for responses earlier than the next planned meeting the submission will be advanced as a draft. Final response will issue following Board approval.

- 6.10 Miss Campbell provided an update on difficulties related to grant to the USLS. Further guidance from DCAL has been sought. The Board noted the various problems in the administration of the grant and agreed that the Agency was exposed. While the Board acknowledged challenges created by staffing issues within USLS it decided that an appropriate letter should issue to the group notifying them that core funding will be withdrawn in December 2010. This should provide for proper periods of notice to staff. The Agency will consult DCAL prior to issue of the letter.
- 6.11 Mr Leathem queried why proposals for delivery of tuition in 2011 had been amended, as reported at paragraph 2.1 of the Interim Chief Executive Officer's report, to restrict tuition to 20 weeks. The Chair informed the Board that the change reflected budgetary constraints and was amended following the meeting with Minister McCausland.
- 6.12 Mr Leathem noted his dissatisfaction that the amendment, contrary to the Board's agreed approach which, directly impacts on front-line service provision had been advanced without consultation. Ms Reed and Dr Adamson expressed concern that neither the Department nor the Agency's Executive was taking the Board's advice into account, Mrs Singleton noted the potential impact on groups seeking to deliver accreditation. The Chair stated that after consultation with the Executive he agreed the change due to concern about raising unrealistic expectations within communities.

## **7. Review of Core Funded Groups**

- 7.1 The Chair reported that Minister McCausland accessed the draft report of the independent review into the Agency's core funding of various groups via his Special Advisor who is a member of the project steering group. Minister McCausland has asked that the Board postpones consideration of the findings until he receives a presentation from the consultants. The Chair indicated that he had not had an opportunity to discuss the matter with the Minister since the request was issued.
- 7.2 Mr. Hunter indicated that while withdrawal of the paper would not facilitate detailed discussion there was nonetheless a need to decide what advice should be provided to groups in respect of 2011 onwards. The Chair indicated that normally requests for annual Business Plans would have issued at this stage in the year and stated that in the absence of further guidance the Agency had a duty to proceed and proposed that the Agency immediately requests submission of 2011 Business Plans and issues an invitation to groups to attend governance training. The recommendation was ***Proposed and Agreed.***
- 7.3 The Board agreed the need for governance training and expressed concern about the level and nature of the Minister's intervention. The Board agreed that a letter to Minister should issue seeking clarification on governance including the demarcation of the Minister's and Agency's roles, expressing concern about the intervention and the potential cost to the public purse if issues identified within the review were not properly addressed. The Chair proposed writing to the Minister to register concern about the intervention, particularly in the context of the Agency's investment in the work (c. £16,000) and its importance in

tackling duplication, governance and value for money issues with core funded groups. A response would be requested in advance of the next Board meeting. The recommendation was **Proposed and Agreed**.

7.4 **Action:** Interim CEO

7.5 Ms. Reed reiterated her dissatisfaction that finalising the report was delaying consideration of an application from the Monreagh Ulster-Scots Heritage & Education Centre, the application was submitted to the Agency over 12 months ago. The Chair indicated that future funding would be dependent the approval of Business Plans and Cases. Miss Campbell confirmed that where Letters of Offer are in place they extend to end December 2010. The Chair confirmed that plans to move away from a core funding model would take some time and there is a need for measures to support transition to new arrangements. The Chair confirmed that any funding would require approval of a Business Case.

## **8. Draft Corporate Plan**

8.1 Miss Campbell explained that the Board's comment on the Draft Corporate Plan have, where possible, been integrated to the Plan which is in line with guidance from Sponsor Departments. The draft 2011 Business Plan prioritises actions. The guidance received from DCAL does not clarify roles in respect of education and language which are dependent on the outcome of proposals to develop an academy and regional cultural centres.

8.2 Mrs Singleton stated that clarification of roles, including that of the Council for Curriculum, Examination and Assessment (CCEA), was essential to enable the Agency to develop an appropriate strategy to mainstream learning about Ulster-Scots. Mrs Singleton informed the Board that the Royal School, Armagh have introduced a module on Gaelic Studies, with no corresponding offering in Ulster-Scots language or culture.

8.3 Mr. Millar informed the Board of work the Agency had engaged in over many years to engage with Sponsor Departments, the Department of Education and the CCEA. The Academy Implementation Group has, by choice, advanced separate discussions. Mrs Singleton stated that this reinforced the need for strategic direction from Sponsor Departments and expressed concern about the potentially nugatory value of Agency work completed to date. Mrs Singleton requested that relevant sections of the Plan (2.8, 5.1, 5.5, 9.5, 9.9) are aligned with Department of Education plans and reflect and the Agency's aim of mainstreaming provision.

8.4 Ms Reed asked that priorities are reviewed to ensure that it is clear that initiatives extend to border counties (para. 9.4). Clarification was sought on the inclusion of support for centres of excellence, Mr Millar indicated that priorities would be refined following decisions about the proposed academy and regional hubs. Mr Millar indicated that 2011 was a transitional year for many of the programmes operated under the Financial Assistance Scheme and confirmed that proposals for changes to be introduced in 2012 would revert to the Board for approval following public consultation.

8.5 Mr McLoone commended Agency staff efforts in producing the Corporate Plan and noted the challenges in setting priorities in an uncertain policy context and operating environment. Mr McLoone stressed the importance of realism in the plan and the need to set activity and outcome targets appropriate to the staff resource. The Chair indicated that once Sponsor Department's have been consulted the Plan is presented to the NSMC for approval. The

next NSMC is scheduled on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2010. Miss Campbell stated that the Business Plan will cascade from the Corporate Plan and will be tailored to meet budgets, plans may be subject to review from Finance Departments. Discussion on the allocation across Agency activity reinforced the on-going requirement for capacity building within communities and the need to address potential resource constraints. The Chair will reflect issues raised by the Board in the Foreword to the Plan. The Plan was ***Proposed and Agreed***.

8.6 **Action:** Interim CEO

8.7 Miss Campbell introduced the draft 2011 Business Plan stating that while the plan is ambitious, including a number of operational targets, it remained dependant on budget and would be revisited and refined as clarification was obtained on the budget position and Government/ Departmental policies. The Chair restated the difficulties presented by publication of the Plan before budgets and Programmes for Government are determined and indicated that objectives may be subject to significant change.

8.8 Miss Campbell explained that while effort has been made to protect funding for front-line services there remains a need to more closely manage resources to ensure timely claims from grant recipients. The timing of claims for various projects will impact on the 2011 budget. Miss Campbell indicated that the Development Team will encourage prompt submission of claims for the remainder of 2010 and reiterated there may be a need to introduce stricter controls in 2011.

8.9 Mr Leathem expressed concern about the proposed allocation of resources which reduced grant under "Serving the Community" programmes particularly for music and dance tuition. Miss Campbell stated that the decline in the overall budget required a focus on strategic and partnership work. Resources have been reallocated across programmes to support the extension of the Community Worker Scheme and the peripatetic tutor programme. Miss Campbell stated that the planned consultation would enable the Agency to introduce simplified procedures and effect further efficiencies. Mr Leathem queried the profiled budget which provides for an increase in the marketing budget and requested that proposals for use of this budget reflected the needs of the community and delivered historic and cultural value. Mr Leathem, Dr Adamson, Mrs Singleton and Ms Reed expressed concern and advised caution in reducing allocation to front-line services to communities. Mr Crooks stated that the profile may need to be revisited in the context of revised budgets. The Plan was ***Proposed and Agreed***.

8.10 **Action:** Interim CEO

## **9. Review of Community Worker Scheme**

9.1 The Chair stated the preliminary findings of the review were largely subjective due to the data available. Mr Leathem sought clarification on the requirement for groups to engage in at least 40 weeks of activity in the context of proposed changes to the Agency's tuition programme. Mr. Millar stated that applicant groups are required to deliver a programme of Ulster-Scots events/ activities. Groups can apply for grant for an administrative officer for up to 25 hours per week, awards are granted at different levels. In 2011 groups will be asked to set SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, resourced and time-bound) targets for the worker, derived from the approved business, these will be monitored via the Development Team and reports to the Agency.

9.2 Ms Reed reported that she has been advised that one group in receipt of support is not operating and that the group's Board is not aware of an application for an administrative worker. The Chair asked for the issue to be investigated immediately. Mrs Singleton asked if groups were provided with contracts of employment, Mr Millar stated that successful applicants received training and signposting to advice and resources and that all Community Workers have contracts in place.

9.3 The Board made the following comments on the draft:

Para 5.4 Mechanisms for monitoring and reporting performance and addressing any capacity issues.

Para 5.4 Proposed introduction on 01/01/11 may be unrealistic and may have budgetary impacts due to late appointments.

Para 7.1 Assurance that there is capacity and demand to extend the Scheme, Mr Millar confirmed that reports from Development Officers have confirmed demand amongst some groups for an administrative worker.

9.4 Miss Campbell reiterated the need to improve management of the programme, Mrs Singleton asked that monthly progress reports from the Development Team are submitted to the Board. Miss Reed noted the unsatisfactory performance of the Schomberg Group. Mr Millar informed the Board that the Agency has taken steps to address the issue. The Chair noted that groups require notice about the availability of grant in 2011; Mr Crooks stated that the Board need to form a exit strategy for the programme post year-3. The Chair proposed that the Board noted the findings and agreed the approach to awards in 2011, approved the interim measures and delay extending the programme pending the outcome of investigations. A paper on the proposed management of the programme will be developed for the November Board meeting. This was **Agreed**.

9.5 **Action:** Mr Millar

## **10. Peripatetic Tutor Programme**

10.1 Mr Millar provided background to the proposal and confirmed that the Agency has Sponsor Department approval to appoint up to 6 peripatetic tutors. The proposal would provide for the recruitment of one music tutor to increase the number of tutors to 4 (piping, fiddle, fife/whistle, Lambeg drumming, highland dance). Mrs Singleton asked how demand for a piper was determined, Mr Millar confirmed that requests to the Development Team and reports from Tutors were used to assess demand for services. The Chair asked about management controls, Mr Millar explained that tutors, who are self-employed, are managed by the Development Team.

10.2 Ms Reed stated that a transparent recruitment process would be required to provide sufficient assurance to the Agency and the community that a suitably qualified and experienced candidate was selected. Mr Millar confirmed that the selection criteria would be developed with support from an expert, who would also participate in a properly constituted interview panel.

10.3 Mr McLoone asked if the outcomes of investment in the programme are properly record and track participant's progression. Mr Millar explained that the programme has been delivered

in over 100 schools and communities reaching an estimated 500,000 participants. The tutors have been proactive in monitoring and evaluating activity and have made a useful contribution to the Agency's demonstration of quality learning indicators agreed by DCAL and assessed by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) within the Department of Education. A report on the Agency's Summer Schemes will be received from ETI; a review of the peripatetic tutor programme will commence in 2011. The proposal was **Proposed and Agreed**.

10.4 **Action:** Mr Millar

## **11. Proposal for W F Marshall Winter School 2011**

11.1 The Board noted the proposal for a school to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of W F Marshall's death. Dr Adamson stated that while the Rev. Marshall did not write in Ulster-Scots language he is a substantial Ulster-Scot literary figure. Ms Reed stated that further information on the cost of the project would be required and proposed that all future awards are accompanied by budget information. Miss Campbell stated that further work was required on the budget and that an agreement in principle was required at this stage. This would enable applicants to fully cost proposals, these would revert to the Board for approval.

11.2 Mr McCullough indicated that the proposal is being developed by the Ulster-Scot Community Network in partnership with the Arts Council NI. Mr McLoone queried if the proposal was in line with the USCN Business Plan and Mr Crooks stressed the importance of governance and of ensuring that the plans are aligned with other stakeholder's plans. Mr McCullough confirmed that the USCN received a grant of £300,000 but have declared and returned a surplus of £30,000 in 2010. The application for £7,000 is in addition to the original allocation. The proposal was **Proposed and Agreed in Principle**.

11.3 **Action:** Mr McCullough

## **12. Proposal for Plantation Booklet**

12.1 An opportunity to develop a booklet has been identified by the Ulster Historical Foundation, the proposal to produce a booklet for dissemination across Ulster would provide a useful cultural and educational resource. Mr Millar indicated that learning about the Plantation was elective within the current curriculum and there were few learning resources for use in educational institutions or communities. Ms Reed and Dr Adamson confirmed strong interest and take-up of quality publications amongst Ulster-Scots communities. The Chair acknowledged that the absence of a policy framework and an educational strategy resulted in the development of a cohesive set of learning materials. The proposal was **Proposed and Agreed**.

12.2 **Action:** Mr McCullough



### **13. Draft Policies for Approval**

- 13.1 The Board reviewed the draft policies. Mrs Singleton advised that issues related to discipline, grievances and harassment could be addressed in a single document which may be easier for staff to understand.
- 13.2 The role of the Board in respect of appeals procedures requires clarification. Mr McLoone and Mr Crooks recommended that where possible Appeals are delegated to the Chief Executive Officer. The Chair agreed. Miss Campbell advised that the Board might consider constituting sub-committees to deal with specific issues such as remuneration and human resource issues. Mr Crooks outlined a number of options, issues could be referred to: a nominated member of the Board (with appeal to another delegated Board member), a panel of the Board (with appeal to the full Board) or appeal to the full Board (with no further formal appeal available).
- 13.3 The Board stated that the model should minimise Board assurance while providing assurance that a full and fair hearing was provided. An amended policy document with options for alternative appeal process will be provided to the November board. Policies on Health and Safety, Expenditure Approval and Fire Evacuation were **Proposed and Agreed**.
- 13.4 **Action:** Mrs Martin

### **14. Finance Report**

- 14.1 Mr McCullough confirmed that the 2010 budget has been confirmed at 94% of 2009 Budget. Mr McCullough indicated that community under-spend and delays in the claim process may result in re-profiling of the Budget prior to year end. Unclaimed grant in 2010 will impact on budgets in 2011, the Agency aims to minimise commitments to under £100,000. The finance report was considered on an exception basis. Mr McCullough confirmed funding to Core Funded groups would correspond with allocation once provision for rent/ rates etc. had been accounted for in response to Mr Leathem's queries. Mr McCullough also confirmed that the Marketing budget would be spent by year end and that the float had been disposed of in 2009 and costs related to last quarter storage.
- 14.2 **Action:** Mr. McCullough

### **15. Marketing Report**

- 15.1 Mr McCullough updated the Board on the successful marketing initiatives at the 2010 National Ploughing Championships, Athy. An update on the Agency's work in Milwalkie, USA will be presented to the November Board. Mr McCullough informed the Board that following the Agency's participation in the Stone Mountain event in 2009 and Milwaukee 2010, Tourism Ireland are supporting the participation of Ulster-Scots groups and lecturers in the 2010 Stone mountain and Norris Homecoming events.
- 15.2 The Board were advised that the drama series developed by the Agency in partnership with the Lyric Theatre would tour venues across Ulster. An invitation to attend was extended to the Board. Board members should notify the Director of Corporate Services of interest. The

Hospitality and Gifts register will be updated by Agency staff as required. The report on marketing activity was noted by the Board.

15.3 **Action:** Mr McCullough

**16. Update on Business Plan Targets**

16.1 The Interim CEO indicated continued slippage on strategic activity due to the absence of strategic direction from Sponsor Departments and capacity issues within the Agency. It was noted that operational targets are generally on track however planned reductions in running costs are unlikely to be achieved due to additional staff costs which have off-set efficiencies.

**17. Review of Senior Management Structure**

17.1 The item was deferred until the end of meeting.

**18. AOB & Date and Venue of Next Meeting**

18.1 Mr Leathem reported to the Board that community groups progressing application to the Agency on 2011 forms have advised that requirements to allow the Agency to consult applicant's bank may be illegal. Miss Campbell agreed to investigate further and issue amendment to guidance if necessary. Miss Campbell stressed the need for proper certification from applicants and highlighted the various suspected frauds currently under investigation. The Agency is working to decrease the Agency's exposure to risk, Miss Campbell stated that the removal of provisions for groups to make cash payments. Discussions are on-going with the Sponsor Department to enable payment of up to 90% of grant on receipt of original invoices.

18.2 **Action:** Miss Campbell

18.3 The Chair reported that relevant Development Officer has confirmed that the Derry & Raphoe Action Group have met quarterly: in March at Newtownstewart, in June at Monreagh, the group are scheduled to meet again at end October. The Community Worker has been in attendance. Ms Reed stated that to her knowledge there was no meeting at Monreagh in June. Miss Campbell agreed to investigate the matter further.

18.4 The next Board meeting will take place on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> November 2010 at 10.30 am at the Ulster-Scots Heritage & Education Centre, Monreagh, Carrigans, Co. Donegal. Agency staff located in Donegal will be asked to attend lunch with the Board to provide an update of local work undertaken by the Agency.

Signed:.....

Date:.....

**Tha Board O Ulster-Scotch  
102<sup>nd</sup> Board Meeting  
12<sup>th</sup> November 2010, 11.00am  
Monreagh Heritage & Education Centre, Carriagans, Co. Donegal**

<b>Present:</b>	Mr John Hunter (Chair)
	Mrs Jacqui Reed
	Mr Tony Crooks
	Mrs Hilary Singleton
	Dr Ian Adamson
	Mr Michael McLoone
	Mr William Leathem (joined meeting 11.10am)
<b>Apologies:</b>	Mrs Angela Graham (Vice-Chair)
<b>In attendance:</b>	Miss Hazel Campbell (Interim Chief Executive Officer [ICEO])
	Mr Jim Millar (Director of Education and Language)
	Mr Michael McCullough (Director of Corporate Services)
<b>Recording Secretary:</b>	Mrs Catherine Martin

**1. Welcome from the Chairperson**

- 1.1 The Chair thanked the Board for agreeing to meet at the Monreagh Heritage & Education Centre and expressed thanks to Mr Devenney and Ms Reed for hosting the meeting. Mr Devenney addressed the Board providing information on the development of the Centre and plans for the future. The Chair reported on a number of issues:

**Meetings**

- The Chair and ICEO met with Minister McCausland in Mid October to discuss the review of groups in receipt of core funding. The Minister expressed interest in the methodology applied to determine value for money. The Chair subsequently wrote to the Minister to highlight difficulties encountered by the research team in respect of obtaining information and in quantifying the impact of each groups stated activity. The Chair reiterated the need for outcome focused business planning amongst groups receiving grant from the Agency.
- The Chair reported on a useful visit to Agency Headquarters from Minister Carey who also met with Minister McCausland and Foras Na Gaeilge while in Belfast.
- The Chair reported on his attendance, with the ICEO, at a Strategic Partnership Forum comprising senior representatives of DCAL Arms Length Bodies (ALBs). Discussion focused on the Department's strategic direction and current budgetary pressures. DFP have requested planning scenarios based on budget reductions from 8%-18% over 4 years. Ministers will consider and agree budgets shortly; a new Programme for Government is not expected. Budget allocation to the Agency as a North/ South Implementation Body will be subject to further negotiations between finance departments and Ministers from both jurisdictions. The Chair reported that the First Minister has requested that Ministers from his party consider opportunities for rationalisation of ALBs. The Agency is excluded from this review however the North South Ministerial Council (NSMC) is also conducting a review into North/

South Bodies. The Chair reported that the NSMC has not engaged the Agency in conducting the review and information on the implications for the Agency are awaited.

- The Chair and ICEO attended a NSMC meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> November at which Minister McCausland reiterated potential impacts of the current budgetary position. Presentations were received from the Chair of the Agency and the Chair of Foras Na Gaeilge on progress and from the Agency's Director of Education & Language on the Community Worker Scheme. The Chair reported that the NSMC agreed the extension of Ms Campbell's appointment as ICEO of the Agency until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011. The Chair indicated that Ministers made no reference to arrangements for the appointment of a new CEO or of a new Chair when the interim position ends at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2010.

## **2. Apologies**

- 2.1 Apologies were received from Mrs. Angela Graham.

## **3. Minutes of Last Meeting**

- 3.1 Minutes of the meeting of the Board on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2010 were agreed without amendment
- 3.2 ***Proposed and Agreed: that the minute be accepted.***

## **4. Matters Arising**

- 4.1 Mr McLoone reported that he wrote to Mr Michael Heaney from the Donegal County Development Board to provide detail of the Agency's work and request support for initiatives to promote Ulster Scots. Mr McLoone received a positive response and indicated that Mr Heaney has agreed to facilitate contact between the Agency and other key stakeholders such as libraries, tourism agencies and local development boards throughout Donegal.
- 4.2 Ms Reed indicated that the organisers of the City of Culture 2013 are proactively engaging potential partners to ensure Ulster Scots culture is showcased throughout the year of events. Ms Reed recommended that the Agency makes contact with Mr Joe Gallagher, the Arts Officer for the Northwest to explore opportunities. The recommendation was ***Proposed and Agreed.***
- 4.3 Action:** Director of Language and Education, Director of Corporate Services

## **5. Interim Chief Executive Officer's Report**

- 5.1 The ICEO reported on progress to re-establish a Forum comprising Agency staff and community representatives identified by the Ulster-Scots Community Network (USCN). A note seeking nominations and providing a draft Agenda has issued to USCN, a reminder has also issued. Mr Leathem asked about the composition, Mr. Hunter stated that the USCN

would nominate a number of community representatives and in accepting these the Agency would be mindful of the need to be both inclusive and effective.

- 5.2 The ICEO stated that the 2007 Accounts were in the process of consolidation led by Foras Na Gaeilge and that this may extend into the New Year. The fieldwork on Accounts for 2008 and 2009 was complete and the Agency awaits comments from auditors.
- 5.3 The ICEO reported on a meeting with the Chair and the Ulster-Scots Language Society (USLS) at the beginning of November to resolve outstanding issues in respect of their Letter of Offer. The Agency shared legal advice on the use of restricted funds to accumulate reserves with USLS after which the Letter of Offer was agreed. A signed Letter of Offer was received on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2010.
- 5.4 The ICEO provided copies of the updated Corporate Plan 2011-2013 which has been amended to strengthen proposals in respect of education and to address issues related to staffing. The Board were asked to communicate comments to the ICEO by 19<sup>th</sup> November 2010 to enable submission of the Plan to Sponsor Departments.
- 5.5 The ICEO reported on the operation of the Community Worker Scheme within Derry & Raphoe Action Group which included the successful delivery of a number of summer schools and other community based activities despite a number of setbacks. The ICEO stated that on balance she was satisfied that the worker was delivering agreed programmes of work. Ms Reed stated that her concerns related primarily to the sustainability of the group and indicated that there remained some uncertainty about the group's ability to continue in the absence of secure funding. Mr Hunter suggested that the Agency continues to monitor the position.
- 5.6 Miss Campbell reported on consultation with communities on the management of funding for music and dance tuition. A series of information sessions on proposed changes to the scheme in 2011 were delivered across Ulster to approximately 25-30 individuals and representatives of community organisations. The Agency's recommendations were generally well received. Over 300 applications for grant were received by the deadline. Public consultation on the operation of the scheme in 2012 is underway.
- 5.7 The ICEO reported on a conference organised by the NI Executive on behalf of the British Irish Council on minority languages which she attended with the Director of Language & Education. The ICEO stated that there were a number learning points primarily from representatives from the Channel Islands, Isle of Man, Cornwall and elsewhere where the language was at a similar early stage of development in comparison to Wales and the Republic of Ireland where language provision is more advanced.
- 5.8 The ICEO reported that correspondence issued to DCAL providing information on the Agency's contribution to plans to mark various anniversaries and commemorate key events. A meeting with representatives from the National Museums has also taken place. The ICEO reported on a meeting with NI Screen on plans for the management of the Ulster Scots Broadcast Fund; NI Screen will convene a Sub-committee with external representation from the Agency, the BBC and UTV.

## **6. Audit & Risk Sub-Committee - Verbal Report**

- 6.1 The Board were informed that the Audit & Risk Sub-committee meeting was postponed twice due to difficulties in securing a quorum so a formal report could not be provided. Mr. Crooks informed the Board about Mr. Hagan's retirement from the Board. Mr. Crooks indicated that there is now a significant backlog of business and it is important that the Sub-committee is convened before the end of 2010. The Chair suggested a temporary reduction in the quorum from three Agency representatives to two which would enable the Sub-committee to progress outstanding business in the short-term. The ICEO confirmed that NIAO guidance does not preclude this. Dr. Adamson suggested that alternative Board members are invited to attend as substitute members to secure a quorum if necessary, if not required substitute members would not vote. The Chair recommended that Sponsor Departments are contacted to secure a nomination for an external member to replace Mr. Hagan. The Chair will write to Mr. Hagan to express the Board's thanks for his service. The recommendations to temporarily reduce the quorum, to seek new external membership and to write to Mr. Hagan were ***Proposed and Agreed***.
- 6.2 The Audit & Risk Sub-committee will meet at 10.30am on the 7<sup>th</sup> December at the Agency's headquarters.
- 6.3 ***Action:*** The Chair and ICEO

## **7. Review of Core Funded Groups & Business Plans for 2011**

- 7.1 The Chair proposed that the Board consider the findings of the independent review into the groups which makes a number of observations and recommendations that fall into two broad categories:
- Governance, processes and practices;
  - Roles and activities in line with the Agency's strategic priorities.
- 7.2 Mr. Hunter indicated that ongoing work to develop strategic objectives in the context of the 2011-2013 Corporate Plan would continue to inform relationships with external organisations. The Chair requested comments on the report.
- 7.3 Mr. Crooks stated that, in the context of the Agency's developing corporate plan which should inform each group's business plans, the report was somewhat dated. Mr. Crooks stated that the recommendations where appropriate and confirmed the need for training for groups on a range of issues including corporate governance and financial management was a priority. Mr. Crooks suggested that Business Plans are reviewed to move groups away from activity focused objectives towards to an outcome based approach.
- 7.4 Mrs. Singleton stated that the report and plans reinforced concerns about duplication, value for money, quality of provision and group capacity in relation to good governance. Mrs. Singleton stated that the Board must impress upon the groups the need to work constructively in partnership to reduce duplication and reduce costs. A uniform, centralised approach to the approval of Business Plans and award of grant to each group for publications and educational activities is required. Movement towards a more regimented

system supervised by the Agency is necessary. Mrs. Singleton identified issues related to ensuring consistency in the roles of Development Workers in each of the groups. Issues related to the role of the proposed Academy and the potential impact this may have on the work of each group were identified. The Chair stated that clarification has been sought from DCAL on this issue but to date no response has been received. Mrs. Singleton proposed that a letter issues from the Board to the Department to reiterate difficulties associated with achieving value for money in the absence of strategic direction from the Department or an understanding of the proposed role of the Academy or the Department's vision for the relationship between bodies with statutory responsibilities in respect of language, culture and heritage.

- 7.5 Dr. Adamson reiterated difficulties associated with the absence of clarity about various roles in respect of language promotion. The Chair stated that it remained unclear as to various roles. Mr. McLoone stated that a framework within which work to promote the language, heritage and culture was undertaken. Evidence of baselines should inform the development of Key Performance Indicators and output and outcome measures. As an interim measure the Agency should take a lead role in agreeing a range of objectives which each body will deliver. The ICEO stated that some base-line data is available in the NI Omnibus Survey, the Continuous Household Survey and the Census.
- 7.6 Ms. Reed stated that agreeing objectives for each group in the absence of an education strategy was challenging. Mr. Leathem agreed stating that duplication across the plans presented and the inconsistency between the roles of Development Workers remained a concern. Ms. Reed concurred highlighting the significant variance in staff costs for broadly similar roles across each organisation. The ICEO stated that the statutory remit of the Agency, while not properly resourced and problematic in respect of language promotion, remained a key strength. Mr. McLoone proposed that a letter is issued to Minister McCausland and Minister Carey to highlight issues which are frustrating delivery of statutory functions. Mr. McLoone stated that it may be appropriate to both record the problem and the Agency's efforts to address them through correspondence with its Sponsor Department in NI indicating that the absence of a response was impacting on planning for the Agency and groups it supports.
- 7.7 The Board agreed the need to:
- Pursue training delivery – the ICEO confirmed that the Agency is actively considering the content of required training programmes;
  - Cascade Agency strategy to inform group's objectives;
  - Seek clarification on various existing and proposed roles and responsibilities through correspondence with responsible Ministers;
  - Remove duplication;
  - Promote coherent and consistent Business Plans across groups; and,
  - Examine corporate planning processes within each organisation.
- 7.8 The Chair confirmed that there were no conflicts of interest in relation to the USLS. The Board noted the following issues/ concerns:
- The small scale of the organisation resulted in an over-reliance on limited staff resource, this impacted directly on delivery in 2010 due to one long-term sickness absence.

- Proposals for only 3 publications in 2011 to include the Ullans periodical, a gospel and one other. The Board noted that no information has been provided to evidence demand for publications similar to those produced in 2010.
- An indicative award of £50,000 for 2011 was agreed as the basis of negotiations. Requirements to standardise salary rates and conditions of employment will be a condition of grant.

7.9 The Chair confirmed that there were no conflicts of interest in relation to the USCN. The Board noted the following issues/ concerns:

- The high degree of duplication in respect of education and publications was noted.
- The robustness of budget projections will have to be addressed and action taken to reduce costs.
- Activities planned in respect of community capacity building will require further development, under the direction of the Agency, to ensure quality and control content of programmes.
- Proposals for partnership work need to be developed to clearly set out which organisations will be approached, for what purpose and how outcomes will be measured.
- Outreach strategies to extend membership of the network, both geographically and in terms of interests represented, are required.
- An indicative award of £250,000 for 2011 was agreed as the basis of negotiations. Requirements to standardise salary rates and conditions of employment and to refine plans in line with Agency priorities will be conditions of grant.

7.10 The Chair confirmed that there were no conflicts of interest in relation to the Ullans. The Board noted the following issues/ concerns:

- The high degree of duplication in respect of education and publications was noted.
- Delivery of 2010 plans had been met or exceeded.
- Limited staff resources were hampering service provision at the centre, an indicative award of £87,356 for 2011 to facilitate the appointment of a development worker while removing support for a part-time administrative worker.

7.11 Ms. Reed left the meeting due to an interest in the Monreagh Heritage & Education Centre. The Board noted the following issues/ concerns:

- There is interest in continuing support for the Centre through a partnership approach with the Department of Community, Equality and Gaelic Affairs (DCEGA) in the Republic of Ireland. DCEGA have provided €195,000 over 3 years towards the development of the Centre.
- A meeting is scheduled for 24<sup>th</sup> November 2010.
- The Board noted the excellent facilities and the ambitious plans for the future. The relationship between the Centre and the Agency's regional office was discussed and it was agreed that separate offices supported the wider promotion of opportunities to become involved in Ulster Scots cultural activities and raised each organisation's profile.



- The Centre's relationships with various tourism agencies, local development groups and community associations need to be further developed and should be integrated into Business Plans going forward.
- The robustness of budget projections will have to be addressed and action taken to reduce costs.
- The proposed job descriptions for the Centre Manager did not include skills/ qualifications related to business management and marketing considered essential for the job.
- Benchmarking Centre activity outputs and outcomes against other comparable groups would be helpful.
- Opportunities to market the Centre and promote Ulster Scots culture more generally were recognised and it was suggested networking activity with tourism agencies, libraries, Foras Na Gaeilge should be a condition of funding.
- The work of the Centre in supporting Derry's City of Culture 2013 bid was noted.

7.12 Ms. Reed returned to the meeting at 2.45pm. The Board agreed due to time constraints on some Members that item 15 would be addressed.

## **15. Suspected Fraud Cases**

- 15.1 The ICEO reported on five suspected fraud cases, in line with Agency policy DCAL is notified of suspected frauds which are referred to Central Investigations Service (CIS) within the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development for investigation and, if necessary, action:
- The first case relates to a false or mis-declaration of public sector funding received in respect of 2008 grant. Mr Leathem stated that as a member of Lisburn City Council, the area within which the group suspected operates, he had an aligned interest as Council may have also provided funding for the group. The case has been investigated and the Public Prosecution Service (PPS) are considering. Grant for 2009 has not been paid. Grant for 2010 has been allowed and closely monitored. Monitoring visits undertaken by two members of staff have revealed that agreed levels of activity have not been taking place. ICEO contact with the Chairperson of the group has been difficult due to aggressive behaviour and use of offensive language. Monitoring reports have been provided at the group's request however the content is disputed. An application for support in 2011 is pending. The Board unanimously expressed support for the ICEO and, while recognising that the PPS action may take some time to progress, agreed there is a case for suspension of all payments.
  - The second case relates to the presentation of fraudulent invoices in respect of music tuition.
  - The third case relates to a false or mis-declaration of public sector funding received in respect of provision of dance tuition. The CIS has investigated and advised, due to the complexity of the case, that a forensic accountant should be appointed to review the organisations records. The officer that reported the issue to the Agency has been suspended from duty. The Agency has appointed a forensic accountant.
  - Cases four and five relate to the presentation of fraudulent invoices and investigation into these cases has commenced.

- 15.2 The ICEO stated that all the cases identified relate to mis-declarations of funding received or presentation of fraudulent invoices. The Agency is developing procedures, such as payment by cheque, to enable verification of expenditure. The ICEO stated the implementation of recommendations from the various reports would further strengthen governance. Mr. Crooks stated that Agency staff had identified issues of concern in four of the five cases which provided some assurance that new systems for monitoring grant were operating effectively. However Mr. Crooks noted that the high volume and low value of the grants posed particular challenges in respect of monitoring. Agreement by the Board of an appropriately resourced monitoring plan as part of the management of risk would provide Agency staff with additional protection and assurance.

## **18. Review of Senior Management Structure**

- 18.1 The Chair tabled discussion on the Review of Senior Management Structure undertaken by the Delivery & Innovation Division (DID) of the Department of Finance and Personnel. Staff left the meeting.

## **8. Review of Festivals Funding**

- 8.1 The draft consultation paper on Funding for Festivals was ***proposed by Dr. Adamson and agreed without amendment.***

- 8.2 **Action:** Director of Education & Language

## **9. Community Worker Scheme**

- 9.1 The proposal for an additional five community workers (equivalent to 3 full time posts) was agreed. The Chair stated the Scheme should seek to address gaps in the geographical coverage of the Scheme.

- 9.2 The extension of the Scheme was ***Proposed and Agreed.***

- 9.3 **Action:** The ICEO and Director of Education & Language

## **10. Draft Response to DE's Consultation on Community Relations, Equality and Diversity in Education**

- 10.1 The Director of Education & Language provided background to the consultation process indicating that the pro forma provided does not allow for significant comment on the various issues. Highlighting specific references to language diversity, the Director indicated that the tradition of poetry and ballad writing in Ulster Scots may support learning about linguistic diversity.

- 10.2 Mrs Singleton suggested that reference to survey data (DCAL analysis of the NI Omnibus Survey 2010) which indicates demand for inclusion of learning about Ulster Scots culture and language at all levels is made at Paragraph 11 of the draft. Mr. Crooks suggested some

minor amendment to Paragraph 9 in relation of multiculturalism, Mr. McLonne endorsed this suggestion. The proposal that the Chair issue the amended response was ***Proposed and Agreed***.

10.3 **Action:** Director of Education & Language

## **11. Draft Publications Strategies**

11.1 The Board acknowledged the need to set the parameters for the Publications Strategy and agreed linkages with education needed to be considered. The issue of translation was identified as critical and difficult. Full consideration of the draft Strategy was deferred until the December Board meeting. The Chair requested that Board Members provide initial views in writing to the ICEO.

11.2 **Action:** Board Members

## **12. Options for Delivery of the Ulster Scot**

12.1 Mrs. Martin provided an overview of issues related to the current production and delivery of the Ulster Scot newspaper, including:

- There is ambiguity about both the purpose of the paper and its target audience. Difficulties attached to establishing the effectiveness of the paper as a tool for Agency or Community communication has been compounded by the absence of a clear annual message plan. Consequently there is also no agreed exit strategy;
- The distribution method has not enabled the Agency to establish actual or latent demand and therefore the viability of a pricing policy cannot be determined;
- Other opportunities for income generation to off-set production costs, such as advertising, have not been explored;
- The distribution method does not provide geographical coverage and does not support penetration into new markets;
- The generation of content is highly dependent on Agency staff and a small number of contributors. Submissions from communities and community-based organisations are limited and the paper's value as a tool to promote courses and events etc. has been underutilised. Opportunities to develop content for specific audiences, e.g. children and educators and to reduce costs by packaging historical content to extend usage and shelf-life could be further developed.
- All aspects of the paper's delivery are untendered, which was identified as a Priority 1 audit issue by the NI Audit Office in 2008.

12.2 The Board agreed the paper should be a communication tool for the Agency, organisations the Agency grant aids and the wider community and that it should be continued. The Paper should seek to both engage with established Ulster Scots communities and introduce new audiences to Ulster Scots culture. Proposals should seek to achieve better geographical

coverage. Content and format should be adjusted to reduce costs by extending usage of some of the material. The Board agreed six editions are required to effectively use the paper as a promotion tool. Viable opportunities for income generation should be explored. The Board agreed the delivery of the paper should be regularised as soon as possible. It was proposed that a Business Case is developed. The proposal was ***Proposed and Agreed***.

12.3 **Action:** Mrs. Martin

### **13. Draft Policies for Approval**

13.1 The Board reviewed the draft policies. Mrs. Singleton advised that further work was required on the discipline and grievance policy. Consideration of this policy and the draft Code of Conduct for Staff & Whistle-Blowing Policy, the draft Gifts and Hospitality Policy and the draft Staff Training and Development Policy were deferred until the December Board meeting.

13.2 The Draft Fixed Asset Policy and Procedure was ***Proposed and Agreed***.

13.3 **Action:** Director of Corporate Services

### **14. Partnership Funding Scheme – Pat and Plain**

14.1 The proposal to deliver a drama project, in partnership with the Lyric Theatre and Foras Na Gaeilge, within 12 schools and a number museums across NI. The project will require an investment of £31,000 from the Agency. The proposal was ***Proposed and Agreed***.

14.2 **Action:** Director of Corporate Services

### **16. Finance Report**

16.1 The Board noted the content of the Finance Report.

### **17. Marketing Report**

17.1 The Board noted the content of the Marketing Report and agreed activity planned throughout November and December.

### **19. AOB & Date and Venue of Next Meeting**

19.1 The Director of Education & Language informed the Board that an application has been received from two Ulster Scots community groups seeking support for nineteen people to visit Scotland to participate in workshops and concerts. The Director indicated that while the Agency has no specified East/ West remit, the Financial Assistance Scheme does provide for some support to be made available. The Board expressed concern about the absence of detailed information on the project and its anticipated outcomes. The Board agreed that

while some limited support may be available it should relate to participants involved in the delivery of workshops. The Board advised that conditions on funding should include a post-event evaluation report from the participants. Funding to meet the travel costs for four members of each group was ***Proposed and Agreed.***

19.2 **Action:** Director of Education & Language

19.3 The next Board meeting will take place at 10.30am on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> December 2010 at the Ulster-Scots Agency office in Belfast.

Signed:.....

Date:.....

**Tha Board O Ulster-Scotch  
103<sup>rd</sup> Board Meeting  
16 December 2010, 12.15pm  
Ulster-Scots Agency Board Room, Belfast**

<b>Present:</b>	Mr John Hunter (Chair)
	Mrs Angela Graham (Vice-Chair)
	Mrs Hilary Singleton
	Dr Ian Adamson
	Mr Michael McLoone
	Mr William Leathem (joined meeting 1pm)
<b>Apologies:</b>	Mr Tony Crookes Mrs Jacqui Reed
<b>In attendance:</b>	Miss Hazel Campbell (Interim Chief Executive Officer [ICEO])
	Mr Jim Millar (Director of Education and Language)
	Mr Michael McCullough (Director of Corporate Services)
<b>Recording Secretary:</b>	Ms Lyndsey Hanna

**1. Welcome from the Chairperson**

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed members to the 103<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Board, which would be his last as the Interim Chair.
- 1.2 The Chair welcomed Mr Tom Scott to the meeting. Mr Scott was introduced to the Board as the new Chair Designate of the Board. While Mr Scott has accepted the appointment in principle, it is still subject to NSMC decision.
- 1.3 Mr Scott addressed the Board and told the Board that he was delighted to accept the invitation to be Chair of the Tha Boord o'Ulster-Scotch. Mr Scott highlighted his experience to date. He is currently a member of the Intertrade Ireland Board, member of the Ulster-Scots Community Network Board and a member of the Greater Shankill Partnership Board.
- 1.4.1 The Chair reported on a number of issues:
- The Chair referred to the letter he sent to Minister McCausland, and copied to Minister Carey, seeking clarity on the strategic issues raised at the November Board meeting. A substantive reply has not yet been received.
  - Mr Hunter indicated that DCAL's strategy for languages was expected to be issued shortly and he anticipated this would have implications for the Agency.

- The Chair advised that the Departments have not yet responded to the Board's recommendations regarding the Agency's Senior Management Structure. The delay in determining this is caught up with the proposed role of the Ulster-Scots Academy. Once the Departments have resolved this matter, the Agency can progress with the recruitment of the new CEO. Mr Hunter hoped that this would be resolved shortly to enable the post to be advertised in January/February 2011.
- The Chair reported on the meetings that he and the interim CEO had with the Agency's Core Funded Bodies. He welcomed their positive response to the recommendations outlined in the FSG McClure Watters Report and their willingness to work with the Agency in addressing the issues.
- The Chair said that he had watched the Plantation Programme which was aired on 15 December at 11.00pm on UTV. The Agency had part funded the programme. The Board discussed the programme and agreed that it could be a useful educational resource in the future.

**Action:** Mr Millar to find out the definite arrangements for the rights to the programme and to follow up on the DVD's that were to be received by the Agency and circulate these to Board members.

## **2. Apologies**

- 2.1 Apologies were received from Mrs Jacqui Reed and Mr Tony Crookes.

## **3. Minutes of Last Meeting**

- 3.1 Minutes of the meeting of the Board on 12 November 2010 were agreed without amendment
- 3.2 ***Proposed and Agreed: that the minute be accepted.***

## **4. Matters Arising**

- 4.1 Miss Campbell informed the Board that she will be meeting with the CEO of Ilex, Aideen McGinley to discuss what contribution the Agency can make to the plans for the City of Culture 2012. Mr McLoone indicated that Michael Heaney from Donegal County Development Board is also a member of the Ilex Board.

## **5. Interim Chief Executive Officer's Report**

- 5.1 Miss Campbell reported on progress to re-establish the Ulster-Scots Forum comprising Agency representatives and Community representatives. Nominations have been received from the Ulster-Scots Community Network (USCN). They are Elizabeth Cameron, Keith Gamble and Iain Carlisle. Mrs Hilary Singleton will be representing the Ulster-Scots Agency on the Forum, together with the Agency Chair.
- 5.2 Miss Campbell informed the Board that a new member of the Agency's Audit and Risk Committee had been appointed. The new member is Cris Farmer, Head of Financial Reporting and Accountability in Central Finance Group in the Department of Finance and Personnel.
- 5.3 The Audit Committee at its earlier meeting proposed that the revised quorum from 3 to 2 Board members should be retained for future meetings.
- 5.4 The Consolidated 2007 Accounts for the Language Body are almost completed and a joint Language Body meeting will be arranged in January 2011 to sign off the joint Accounts.
- 5.5 Miss Campbell reported that governance training is to be arranged for core funded groups in the New Year.
- 5.6 The Stakeholder consultation on Funding for Festivals in 2012 had issued with a closing date of end February 2011 for responses. The Agency will be holding a series of festival information workshops during January at various locations throughout Ulster for the 2011 applications. The details will be placed on the Agency website from 6 January 2011.
- 5.7 Further to the Board's decision to extend the Community Workers Scheme the Agency is now seeking applications from Ulster-Scots groups throughout Ulster who currently deliver a wide range of Ulster-Scots activities.
- 5.8 Miss Campbell advised that the business case for the future delivery of the Ulster-Scot newspaper had been forwarded to DCAL for approval. The Agency's preferred option is to engage more articles from community groups and arrange for better distribution of the paper in Border Counties. Miss Campbell had received a reply from DCAL which indicated that the Agency had not sufficiently scoped a 'social economy enterprise' delivery model. DCAL asked for this to be addressed. Miss Campbell indicated that it would be difficult to address this and provide costings without testing the market. The Board agreed and suggested that the Agency should test interest through placing an advertisement in the next Ulster-Scots newspaper which will be issued at the end of February 2011 and on the Agency website.



- 5.9 Miss Campbell gave a staffing update to the Board. Shakira Hanna, a temporary grants administrator will leave on Friday 17 December 2010. Lyndsey Hanna, PA to the CEO had returned from her secondment to OFMDFM on Monday 13 December 2010.
- 5.10 Miss Campbell informed the Board that 238 applications had been received for music tuition and 36 applications for dance tuition for 2011. This was a reduction in the number of applications compared with 2010. More detailed information will be provided to Board members at the next meeting once all applications have been assessed.

**Action:** Mr Millar.

- 5.11 Miss Campbell reported on a meeting she had with Minister McCausland where he requested a review of the Agency's Financial Assistance Schemes as the Minister feels that the guidelines and criteria for funding are not sufficiently transparent. The Minister is expecting the review to be completed early in the New Year. Mrs Singleton advised Miss Campbell to ask in writing for guidelines on what the Department wish to see included in the review.

**Action:** Miss Campbell to ask the Department for guidelines on the review of the Financial Assistance Scheme

## **6. Audit & Risk Sub-Committee - Verbal Report**

- 6.1 Mrs Graham gave the Board an update on that mornings Audit & Risk Committee meeting. The meeting had discussed the potential fraud cases currently under investigation on behalf of the Agency. The Audit & Risk Committee proposed that the Agency should not assess any further applications for funding from any of the groups concerned until the investigations were completed. The Board agreed and adopted the proposal.

## **7. Proposed Grant Awards for Core Funded Groups in 2011**

- 7.1 The following recommendations were proposed to the Board members:
- **USCN** – it was recommend that the Board agrees a grant offer for 2011 of £250k, plus accommodation costs.
  - **USLS** – it was recommended that the Board agree £50k and an additional £5k for the translation work for the Bible Project, giving a total award of £55k.
  - **Ullans Speakers Association** – it was recommended that the Board agree £70k and an additional £10k for publications, giving a total award of £80k.
  - **Monreagh Education and Heritage Centre** – Miss Campbell indicated that further to the discussion at the last Board meeting the Agency has advised

the Group to focus first on the appointment of a Centre Manager with appropriate skills and address the governance skills deficit in the Group's Board. She has requested a revised budget from Monreagh for 2011 which she would discuss with the Department for Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs before she would be in a position to make a recommendation to the Board.

*Proposed and Agreed: that the above recommendations be accepted.*

## **8 Review of Music and Dance Tuition**

### **8.1 Summary of Consultation Responses**

Mr Millar advised that to date the Agency has received 27 responses mainly from current users of the Music & Dance Funding scheme. He provided a summary of the information received. He said that this information will be analysed in more detail and presented to the Board together with proposals for operation of the Scheme in 2012.

**Action:** Mr Millar

### **8.2 Proposal for Fife and Drum Tuition Programme**

Miss Campbell advised the Board that this new scheme will mirror the Music and Dance tuition scheme and is designed to encourage new groups to avail of Ulster-Scots Funding. She recommended that the Board accept the proposal.

*Proposed and agreed: that the proposal tabled be accepted.*

## **9 Draft Publications Strategy**

9.1 Mr McCullough introduced this item which is designed to clarify the Agency's policy and procedures with regard to both producing and commissioning publications. Mr McCullough indicated that the Agency would take the lead in bringing together the Core Funded groups to take a strategic approach to publications and to ensure that there is no duplication.

9.2 The Board discussed the issue with regard to translation of material into Ulster-Scots and the challenges posed with no standardisation of the language. Mr Millar suggested that an editorial committee should be established with expertise in this field. Miss Campbell felt that it would be important to have representation from the Ulster-Scots Language Society on any editorial committee. The Board agreed that this should be explored.

**Action:** Mr Millar

9.3 In concluding this point Mr McCullough explained that the Agency had no immediate plans to produce any further publications in Ulster-Scots. As far as the Core Funded groups are

concerned, the Agency will be seeking confirmation that they have quality assurance processes in place for language publications.

## **10 Draft Marketing and Communications Strategy 2011-2013**

- 10.1 The Agency's marketing and communication officer, Miss Gillian Gilmore joined the meeting and presented her draft paper to the Board. She explained her approach to developing the strategy that it needed to dovetail with the programmes and plans set out in the Agency's new draft Corporate Plan. The analysis highlighted that the Agency does not have the resources and the capacity to carry out all the activities identified to a high quality and standard. Miss Gilmore sought guidance from the Board on the priorities that the Agency should focus on.
- 10.2 Mrs Singleton felt that education should be a priority and she felt that this needed to fit within a top down/ strategic approach which ideally should take account of the role of the proposed Academy. Mrs Singleton also suggested that providing clear and timely information on the Agency's grant schemes is important for community organisations.
- 10.3 Mr Leathem was interested in the potential of the Agency's website and the potential to link with websites in countries with a strong Ulster-Scots diaspora such as Canada, USA and Australia. Mr Hunter felt that supporting commemorative events should be a priority.
- 10.4 In summing up the Board agreed the following priorities for the marketing and communications strategy:
- Commemorative events
  - Education Materials
  - Developing the Agency's website and links
  - Information on grants
- 10.5 The Board commended Miss Gilmore for her excellent paper and agreed to review the marketing and communications strategy on a regular basis. The Board asked the Executive to prepare a plan of activities for 2011 for their consideration

**Action:** Mr McCullough/Miss Gilmore

## **11 Draft Policies for approval**

- 11.1 Board members were content with the draft policies as presented in the papers.
- 11.2 The policies:
- Code of Conduct for Staff & Whistle-Blowing Policy;
  - Gifts and Hospitality Policy;

- Staff Training and Development Policy; and
- Travel and Subsistence Policy

all approved by the Board.

## **12 Risk Management Policy and Risk Register**

- 12.1 Miss Campbell explained that the Board had delegated oversight of risk management to the Agency's Audit and Risk Committee. While the Agency has had a Risk Register in place for some time, a recent internal audit report highlighted that there was no risk management policy in place. The draft Risk Management Policy paper presented to the Board will address this.
- 12.2 Miss Campbell indicated that this draft policy requires the full Agency Board to consider risk management processes in the Agency on an annual basis.
- 12.3 Miss Campbell then referred to the risk register and highlighted the key risk areas denoted as "red" risks. She highlighted the risks associated with the management of grants and the actions being taken to reduce the possibility of irregularities. She advised that the Agency's internal auditors are currently devising a verification process for grants and in future the Agency will only permit payments by cheque which will be verified through bank statements.
- 12.4 Mr McLoone welcomed the comprehensive approach to risk management aligned to the Agency's objectives as set out in its Business Plan and he recognised the challenges for the Agency in monitoring and verifying the large volume of grants.
- 12.5 Miss Campbell advised that it was important to embed risk management processes within the Agency and she advised that risk registers would be developed for each directorate in 2011 to cascade the process down the organisation.
- 12.6 Mr Hunter welcomed this approach. The Board agreed the risk management policy and noted the risk register.

## **13 Working with Others Project**

- 13.1 The Agency Board supported the proposal to work in partnership with North Down and Ards Borough Councils and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board to develop Ulster-Scots Cultural products including exhibitions, providing trail maps, digitisation of the Raven maps, Ulster-Scots events day, website development and publications. While Board members noted that the councils would take the lead on the project they were keen to ensure that there would be an appropriate link to the Agency's website. Mr McCullough confirmed that this would

be the case. The Board agreed to support the project at the recommended level of funding of £10,000.

13.2 Dr Ian Adamson left the meeting at this point.

#### **14 Finance Report**

14.1 Mr McCullough explained that the estimated spend for 2010 is £3.2 million and represents a 3.5% under spend on the Agency's approved budget and that these additional savings had been reported to the Sponsor Departments. Mr McCullough explained the difficulties in getting all the claims submitted promptly by groups to enable payments to be made by the end of the financial year. Mr McCullough is currently working on a carryover of grants spend of approximately £200,000 into 2011 which would result in a pressure on that year's budget. Mr McCullough addressed queries from Board members on various expenditure items. The Chair asked Mr McCullough to pass on thanks to the finance staff for this report.

#### **15 Marketing Update**

15.1 Mr McCullough advised that it was proposed to hold Burns celebrations similar to last year but to spread it across additional venues. The proposed venues are Belfast, Letterkenny, Omagh and Ballymoney. Each venue will showcase Ulster-Scots music, dance, poetry and short stories. The possibility of also holding an event in Dublin to coincide with a meeting of the Language Body was discussed and the Board was supportive of this suggestion.

15.2 The Chair indicated that he was supportive of the Burns event although he suggested that more effort was needed to issue invitations to key stakeholders rather than simply relying on passersby. Subject to taking this point on board, the Board supported the proposal at an estimated cost of £3.5k.

#### **16 Cairncastle – Report for Review of Decision**

16.1 Miss Campbell circulated a letter received from Mr Sammy Wilson MP MLA on behalf of Cairncastle Ulster-Scots group seeking a review of the Board decision to provide limited support for the event. Following the discussion at the last Board meeting, the Agency had agreed to support 4 members from Cairncastle and 4 from East Donegal to participate in the workshops in Scotland but were not prepared to provide financial support for the musicians to attend. Mr Millar explained that the Agency's offer was therefore for the transport costs of two cars at an estimated cost of £600. The group were not happy with this and had asked for the £600 to be put towards the cost of two mini buses and that the group would pay the

balance. The Board felt that it would not be appropriate to subsidise the travel of the musician groups and confirmed their original decision. They also noted that the event had now taken place.

- 16.2 The Board agreed that Miss Campbell should write to Mr Wilson to explain the rationale for the Board's decision and the context of the limited support available under the Agency's Financial Assistance Scheme.

**Action:** Miss Campbell

## **17 Progress Report**

- 17.1 The progress report on the 2010 Business Plan Targets was tabled.
- 17.2 Mrs Singleton queried why there were no after-schools classes in County Armagh. Mr Millar informed the members that this was due to lack of resources in 2010 but it will be addressed in 2011 targets.
- 17.3 Mr McLoone requested to see a list of the joint projects with Foras na Gaeilge. Miss Campbell explained that these will be on the agenda of a meeting of the Language Board to be arranged shortly.

## **18 Review of Senior Management Structure**

- 18.1 This item was covered by the Chair in his introduction to the meeting.

## **19 AOB**

### **19.1 Draft Appeals Policy**

Miss Campbell explained that the Agency's current process for determining appeals in relation to grant decisions was inadequate and circulated a draft proposal for the Board's consideration. The Board agreed in principle that there should be a formal written process which is transparent and that the grounds for appeal should be clearly specified. They also agreed that appeals should be considered by a panel of 3 members comprising a combination of Agency Board members and executive staff. Mr Hunter felt that appeals for low value grants could be dealt with by correspondence.

- 19.2 The Board agreed that the policy should be revised accordingly

**Action:** Miss Campbell

- 19.3 Mrs Singleton said that she had reflected further on the Agency's draft Grievance Policy and Procedure and had noted that the arrangements for the CEO would be included in the new

CEO's contract. The draft policy document which had been referred to the Board at the November meeting would be amended to reflect this.

**Action:** Mrs Martin

**20 Date of Next Meeting**

- 20.1 It is proposed to hold the next Board meeting on either 4<sup>th</sup> February or 11<sup>th</sup> February, depending on the availability of the new Agency Chair. Members will be advised as soon as possible in the New Year.