

**Tha Boord o Ulster-Scotch
81st Board Meeting
5th September 2008
Hilton Hotel, Templepatrick**

Present;	Mr Mark Thompson
	Mr William Humphrey
	Mr William Leathem
	Mrs Angela Graham
	Mrs Jackie Reed
	Dr William Roulston
	Dr Ian Adamson
In attendance:	Mr George Patton
	Mr Michael McCullough
	Mr Jim Millar
Recording Secretary;	Ms Lyndsey Hanna

1. Welcome from the Chairman

Mr Thompson welcomed everyone to the 81st Board Meeting at the Hilton Hotel, Templepatrick.

2. Apologies

Apologies were tabled on behalf of Dr Aileen Douglas.

3. Minutes of the last meeting (25.07.08)

The Board accepted the minutes of the previous meeting with some minor amendments;

Proposed and agreed: that the minute be accepted.

4. Matters arising

Press Complaints / Irish News

Mr Thompson is still in discussions on this matter.

Milwaukee Irish Fest

The report produced by Mr Alister McReynolds was tabled. Of the £2,500 potential grant aid awarded, Mr Reynolds received £1,950 having been part funded by Irish Fest.

The Board proposed that a letter of thanks be sent to Mr McReynolds on behalf of the Board.

The Board were reminded that the Chair is still to meet with Ministers to discuss the Northern American Strategy in November 2008. This meeting could open up further links to the USA if successful.

Language Diversity in Schools Programme

The matter is ongoing. This project will involve two grammar schools. Schools have been approached and they are taking the idea to the School's Board of Governors.

TV Programme

A paper was tabled regarding the DVD produced by Vinegar Hill Productions. The Executive felt that the DVD produced lacks interest and Ulster-Scots language content. Mr Millar will arrange a further meeting with Vinegar Hill to discuss this matter and arrange them to meet with the Board at their next meeting.

Copies of the DVD produced will be posted to the Board before the next meeting.

Mr Millar is also to check the content within the contract and find out if the Agency received a paper script before the recording commenced.

Action: Mr Millar

Sailing Project

Mr Millar took children from Dromore High School on a 5 day sailing journey outlining Ulster-Scots history and carried out related activities.

After carrying out an evaluation with the pupils the programme proved very successful. Foras na Gaeilge were meant to joint fund the project with the Agency but had to withdraw. Mr Millar will be speaking with Foras to run this project as a joint cultural programme in 2009.

5. Chairman's Report

The Chairman listed the events he had attended and the organisations he had been in contact with since the last meeting.

- East Belfast Festival at Pitt Park

- Portavogie pre-12th Festival events – have led to after schools project in the local primary school, and an intergenerational project run by the community association
- Cairncastle Ulster-Scots Festival – attended on the Saturday night and Sunday afternoon
- European Pipe Band Championships at Lisburn
- North West Pipe Band Championships at Portrush
- Londonderry – Jonathan Burgess’ Siege Drama
- New BBC “A Kist o Wurd’s” team / meeting with Mark Adair, Head of Public Policy
- Covenanters project continuing; universal praise for the Heritage Trail
- “A Dander with Drennan” tv programme – letter to the News Letter to clarify that the Agency was not involved in the programme.

6. Report from the Executive

Copies of this report were tabled.

Aubrey Irwin sent a letter of invitation for Ulster-Scots staff representatives to attend Stone Mountain Highland Games in October 2008. The Agency would be liable to pay its own costs.

A tender has been awarded to a company to replace the locks in Brunswick Street to store Agency PR goods whilst USAIG use the premises also.

The Agency is not liable for USAIG equipment on our premises at Franklin House.

At the previous meeting the Agency approved spend of £5,000 at an Irish Football Association football match in Glasgow to showcase Ulster-Scots. However, the event did not proceed. The Executive suggested consideration may be given for a future event when more preparation can be given.

The Board accepted this report from the Executive.

7. Budget and Business Plan Report

Copies of this report were tabled.

The Executive suggested that the Agency run Road Shows in the Border Counties and the South again to engage more Ulster-Scots events in these areas.

Most of the targets in the Progress Report have been reached. Some targets are proving difficult due to the restraint on language and the absence of a Director of Culture.

The Board received a presentation from Mr Alan Thompson of Goldblatt McGuigan.

The Agency will receive a report from Goldblatt Maguigan during the second week in October. The Audit Committee will then brief DCAL with this detailed report.

8. Audit Report

This report will be tabled at the Board meeting in November 2008.

HELM has agreed second a temporary Finance Manager for 10 days to the Agency to help with the absence of a Finance Manager.

The Board acknowledged external factors which have hindered the outcomes outlined in the Strategic Organisational Review.

The report from KPMG was to be tabled today at this meeting but due to their staff being ill, the report will not be available until 19th September 2008.

Action: Mr Patton to forward report.

9. Staffing

The Board were updated on Agency staffing issues by Mr Thompson before lunch. Mr McCullough and Mr Millar left the meeting at this point.

After lunch the meeting resumed. Mr McCullough then took staffing issues forward.

Finance & Administration Manager

The Board were in agreement to advertise this post. The job will be advertised with an emphasis on Finance duties.

Music/Dance Tuition Teachers

The Board discussed the paper tabled to discuss four contracts for experts to provide services to schools and communities. These positions will last twelve months. Costs would run to £2,000 per month, per position.

Proposed and Agreed.

10. Grants

(1) Ballinran Community Association (Appeal)

Proposal:	£2,450 of £2,450
	Please see information below.

The Board previously offered £1,925 against a total cost of £6,525.

The offer was originally accepted but the group have now appealed the decision on the basis that an event which they had originally advised was happening on 12th September (and was therefore not part of the Festival) is actually taking place on 28th November during the festival. They have advised that this was a typographical error

on their part. The cost of this specific event is £2450 and if the appeal was upheld the Agency would offer £912 against eligible costs.

Proposed and Agreed.

(2) Jonathan Burgess / Partisan Productions -Production of the Play "Confessions of a Justified Sinner"

Proposal:	£20,000 of £71,000
	Total Cost £71,330. Assistance has already been received from the Arts Council (£27,300) and grant aid is being sought from the Community Relations Council. If the Agency is to support this then it probably needs to be viewed as a commercial product with appropriate caveats.

This application was previously considered by the Board but further information was requested. Jonathan Burgess has now provided the following clarification.

Proposed and Agreed.

(3) Altnaveigh House School of Dance

Proposal:	£6,000 of £7,960
	This funding is for Dance Tuition and will run for a period of 30 weeks. In accordance with the financial scheme this group would be eligible for an award of £6,000.

The Board were in agreement to offer this group funding for this project.

Proposed and Agreed.

(4) The Villages Together – The Gathering (Appeal)

Proposal:	
	This application dates back to 2006. There was some delay to its commencement but ultimately the group did not proceed with an application to drawdown funding as they were advised by a former employee that the changes they made would have to be agreed by our Board and having heard nothing assumed the Board rejected this. It does not appear that this was taken to the Board and the group having received a letter from the Agency about their failure to claim are now wondering if this could be revisited.

Further information is requires regarding this application before it can proceed.

(5) The Orange Tree; a novel by Dr Philip Robinson

Proposal:	£6,985 of £7,985
	The author of this book feels that this proposed novel falls within the category of Ulster-Scots literature. He also suggests it contributes to one of the core aims of the Agency.

The Board were in agreement to offer this group funding for this project.

Proposed and Agreed.

(6) Newtown Fife & Drum – Boys Model School Project

Proposal:	£6,975 of £7,425
	This proposed project will provide the children with 24 sessions of Fife & Drum tuition classes.

The Board were in agreement to offer this group funding for this project.

Proposed and Agreed.

(7) The Ulster-Scots Folk Orchestra

Proposal:	
	The Director of Language and Education would contact Willie Drennan to discuss the details of the project and calculate finding proposals. An update on this project will be given.

The Board were in agreement in principal to offer this group funding for this project.

Action: An update will be given at the next meeting.

Proposed and Agreed.

(8) East Belfast Titanic Festival

The Board requested the Executive produce a report on the cost to the Agency of its festival in East Belfast on 5th July 2008. Approval was granted for the payment of all associated costs.

Proposed and Agreed.

(9) Lyric Theatre Project

Proposal of £10,400 is sought from the Agency. The Board approved in principal this level of spend on this project. The project will see the Dan Gordon play “The Boat Factory” directed by Lyric Theatre professionals in six primary schools in the greater Belfast area. The total project cost is £25k +.

Proposed and Agreed.

Mr Thompson suggested that the Agency should complete a tender for a film crew to capture all future dramas and Ulster-Scots events taken on by the Agency.

Action: Mr McCullough.

11. 2009 Business Plan

If the Agency was to receive extra funding in 2009, Executive will have to prepare a paper outlining how the Agency may spend it.

Action: Board to forward any proposals to the Executive.

12. Revised Financial Assistance Scheme

Festival funding application and guidance notes for future tranche funding was tabled. These forms have been created in line with Agency corporate governance.

Proposed and Agreed.

13. AOB

SEUPB Project Update

This project finishes on 30th September 2008. All targets have been met and the evaluation of the project is being carried out. The draft report to date is encouraging.

Office Accommodation

A Health and Safety check was carried out on the new premises by the Environment Department at the Belfast City Council. All procedures and policies are now in place.

A tender has been awarded to Robinsons Promotions Limited for the design of the ground floor Information Centre.

Institute of Ulster Scots Studies

Mrs Reed informed the Board that she had met with members from the Institute of Ulster-Scots Studies at Magee College, Derry. She received papers and reports from the Institute that have been produced over the previous years.

Mrs Reed was critical that the Board had not received copies of these papers/reports and requested work to date.

Action: The Executive are to request a meeting with members of the Institute to take issues raised today forward.

Summer Schools

Reports on this project are to follow at the next meeting.

Action: Mr Millar

After Schools Clubs

To date the number of clubs running has risen to 22. All have been well received.

Marketing

The development of the new Agency website is ongoing at present.

The Agency is running an advertising campaign by designing an Ulster-Scots Magazine for the end of 2008.

The Agency are Sponsoring the International Horse Show which runs from 23rd to 26th October 2008. This project usually consists of joint funding from Foras na Gaeilge who will contribute €5,000. The Board approve spend for an Ulster-Scots showcase and Corporate Sponsorship for £12,000.

Proposed and agreed.

Tabled was a report from the USHC on the Ulster-Scots Tours that were running over the busy summer period.

The QE2 is arriving in Belfast on 4th October 2008. The Agency will be providing entertainment for the passengers at the Port of Belfast.

Community Conference

The CEO sought approval for payment for an Ulster-Scots conference. Spend will be approximately £10,000.

Proposed and agreed.

Minority Languages in Europe

This conference takes place on 15th October 2008 in Brussels. The Board were in agreement that the Agency should send representatives to this event. The Board proposed that Mr Millar, Director of Language and Education and Dr Ian Adamson, Board member should represent the Agency at this conference.

Proposed and agreed.

CEO Bonus

This item is to be carried to the next meeting.

14. Date and Venue of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on 23rd October 2008. The venue is to be confirmed but possibly in the new offices.

Signed:

Dates: