

**Tha Boord o Ulster-Scotch
82nd Board Meeting
23rd October 2008
Ulster-Scots Agency Board Room, Belfast**

Present;	Mr Mark Thompson
	Mr William Humphrey
	Dr Aileen Douglas
	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
	Ms Siobhan McNally

1. Welcome from the Chairman

Mr Thompson welcomed everyone to the 82nd Board Meeting at the Agency Board Room, Belfast.

2. Apologies

Apologies were tabled on behalf of Mr William Leathem.

4. Minutes of the last meeting (05.09.08)

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

Proposed and agreed: that the minute be accepted.

3. Correspondence to the Chair

A discussion paper was tabled. Mr Thompson opened discussion. He advised the Board that in correspondence Mr Leathem requested that the Board postpone this matter to a future meeting at which he could be present.

Mr Humphrey also requested a postponement on this matter as he had not received a previous copy of the paper that was to be discussed.

The Board collectively agreed.

5. Matters arising

Press Complaints / Irish News

Mr Thompson informed the Board that he received a decision from the Press Complaints office advising that the Irish News were within their rights in the article they published about the Agency and the apology published was acceptable.

The Board collectively agreed that the only way forward was to meet with the Editor of the Irish News to mend relationships.

Action: Copies of the letter to be made available to the Board.

Language Diversity in Schools

This project will now involve four grammar schools. Schools have been approached and they are seeking approval from the School's Board of Governors. The Board collectively agreed that if the matter was not resolved by the next meeting the project will need to be revisited.

TV Programme

Copies of the DVD produced were sent to the Board. However, as the programme is to be commissioned this week by TG4 the Executive felt that a presentation to the Board was not appropriate. Ms Reed informed the Board that she had met with Declan ??? and had received a more up-to-date copy of the DVD and said it was an improvement on the copy the Board and Executive had.

Action: Mr Millar is to meet with Declan to receive feedback on the programme.

Institute of Ulster-Scots Studies

Mr Millar present the Board with potential dates for a meeting with the Institute received from Billy Kelly.

The Board agreed after discussion that Mr Eric Kaufman who carried out the Annual Review last year should also complete the review for 2008.

Proposed and Agreed.

Sam Bailie Piping and Drumming School

The Executive informed the Board that Mr Bailie was enquiring about funding for premises for tuition classes as the Institute of Ulster Scots can no longer facilitate his classes which run on their premises during weekend hours. Mr Thompson suggested that he spoke to Mr George Usher of the NIRSPBA on this matter.

Diploma at IUUS

The Institute were running a diploma in Ulster-Scots at Coleraine campus. Six students enrolled, however, only two students paid the fees therefore the course was dis-continued.

Action: Mr Millar is to get feedback and look at the possibility that there may be a need for a gap in Ulster-Scots education from community based learning and diploma.

Mr McCullough circulated brochures to the Board on the new educational programme hosted by the Lyric Theatre.

Mr Alan Thompson from Goldbalt McGuigan joined the meeting. He circulated a document on the internal audit he completed on the Agency.

Mr Thompson highlighted areas of the report that were of concern for discussion with the Board.

The Board raised a few queries on the funding received from SEUPB.

Mr Thompson proposed that Goldbalt McGuigan assist the Agency with Corporate Governance issues that were raised in the Audit Report. He is to bring his proposals to the next Audit Committee meeting.

Mr Thompson left the meeting at this point.

After concerns were raised at this discussion the Board collectively agreed to seek a letter from SEUPB ensuring that this funding is still ring fenced for the Agency.

6. Chairman's Report

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

News:

- Belfast City Council have secured the rights to host the European Pipe Band Championships for 2010 – 2012
- PCC have found in favour of the Irish News. Copies of the PCC correspondence are available.

Meetings:

- Rev Martin McNeely (Ballykeel). Sees potential for Ulster-Scots cultural outreach within the Ballykeel estates in Ballymena
- Keith Mallin, Eddie Irvine Sports. Potential here for good partnership working. Have sent a short report to staff for them to take forward
- Meeting with Jim Millar re: TG4 TV programme
- Meeting with GOLI officers, with William Humphrey and William Leathem
- CPD meeting with George and Michael to score tenders for Strategic Review of the Agency
- DCAL meeting with George and William Humphrey. It looks highly unlikely that the "UlsterScotsAmerica" strategy will gain departmental approval.

Talks/Speaking:

- Hamilton & Montgomery talk to Inner Wheel, Newtownards

- Hamilton & Montgomery talk to Portavogie Community Assoc.
- Radio Ulster: readings from the recent Anthology of Ulster-Scots
- Radio Ulster: additional interview about the Anthology
- Cairncastle Ulster Scots Association DVD Launch
- Willie Drennan book launch
- Bangor Abbey Ulster-Scots evening (myself and my brother, combining music and history)
- Schomberg Society event, Kilkeel

Contacts:

- BBC Radio Ulster “A Kist o Wurd” programme is to be outsourced. Two tendering companies approached me, and also enquired about potential Agency support. I advised that this would be an issue for the Board and also BBC to consider

Issues:

- BBC coverage of the ETI Report into the Stranmillis Ulster-Scots Curriculum Development Unit was very critical of the Agency. However the report itself contains a series of inaccuracies.
- BBC coverage on “Nolan Show” of Ulster-Scots government phone line
- Therefore there is a need for the Agency to appoint external PR / media relations Agency. Suggest that staff bring forward a set of criteria.
- 1859 Revival is a theme the Agency could consider for 2009. A number of organizations are talking about the importance of marking the event and its social impact on Ulster.
- BBC “Talkback” coverage of a post on my personal blog re: the film “Hunger”. I have contacted the CEO of Northern Ireland Screen, Richard Williams, and we are to meet soon.

Mr Thompson read an abstract from the latest OFCOM report he received related to Ulster-Scots. The Board welcomed the report.

The Board adjourned for lunch.

After lunch the Board started with item fifteen on the Agenda.

15. Date and Venue of next Meeting

The next Board meeting will take place on Thursday 20th November 2008 in Belfast. The following meeting will also take place in Belfast on Monday 15th December 2008.

7. Report from the Executive

Copies of this report were tabled.

The Board accepted this report from the Executive.

8. Budget and Business Plan Report

Copies of this report were tabled and discussed.

The progress report was tabled and noted.

Mr McCullough highlighted a project for the amount of €2,610 to send a team from the FUSE FM project to Conaghmara Radio Station in Galway to learn new skills to enhance the Agency station.

Proposed and agreed.

9. Audit Report

Mr Humphrey gave the Board a verbal report from the Internal Audit Committee.

Mr Patton circulated a written report on the Agency progress. He highlighted that interviews would be taking place early next week for the post of Finance & Administration Manager which urgently needs filled at the Agency. However, Mr Patton had received queries from DCAL regarding the interview panel for this post. The Board collectively proposed that the process proceed with the appointed panel Mr Michael McCullough, Mr George Patton and Ms Siobhan Denver, who is a Financial Consultant and who previously worked for Foras na Gaeilge.

Proposed and agreed.

The report from KPMG was received by Mr Patton on 22nd October 2008. He will email to the Board and feedback will be welcomed.

Financial System tender was awarded to Xperience who will be providing the Agency with the software system Pegasus. Further meeting are taking place to check if the software can also allow the Agency to run its grant system on this also.

Action: Mr Patton to forward feedback.

Mr Thompson asked that the thanks of the Board for the work of the Executive on this item be noted.

10. Staffing

Music/Dance Tuition Teachers

Interviews have been held and 4 appointments have been made. Posts will commence on Monday 10th November 2008.

All staff left the meeting at this point with the exception of Mr Patton who briefed the Board on staffing issues at the Agency.

Staff then returned to the meeting after this item had been discussed.

Dr Douglas left the meeting at this point.

11. Grants

(1) Mid Armagh Community Network

Proposal:	£18,545 of £46,025
	This project will run an extensive programme of Ulster-Scots traditional music, dance and traditional activities as it is a group which specialises solely in Ulster-Scots traditions which continues to grow.

The Board were in agreement to offer this group £18,545 funding for this project.
Proposed and Agreed.

(2) Blue Eagle Productions

Proposal:	£40,400 of £40,400
	This project will tell the story of the Plantation of Ulster which involved mass-movement of settlers from Scotland to Ulster.

The Board were in agreement to offer this group funding for this project. Subject to the executive receiving points of clarification.
Proposed and Agreed.

Dr Roulston left the meeting at this point.

(3) The Centre Stage Theatre Company

Proposal:	£69,915.20
	This group hopes to stage the play "That Woman at Rathard" written by Sam Hanna Bell.

The Board were in agreement to offer this group 15,000 sponsorship for this project.
Proposed and Agreed.

(4) Plantation for Schools

Proposal:	£17,390 of £17,390
	This project will create a 20 week drama course for

	primary schools across the West of Ulster and will run from January to June 2009. See attached proposal.
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This document outlined was not for grant funding but a proposal from the Executive to run. They were seeking approval of spend from the Board.

Proposed and Agreed.

Dr Roulston returned to the meeting at this point.

Mr Derek Reaney who was on a one year career break from the Agency will be returning to work. However, he has asked for a 1 one month extension to the end of November 2008.

Proposed and agreed.

12. 2009 Business Plan

Mr Patton asked that the Board consider ideas for spend if the Agency secure extra funding from DCAL.

Executive have highlighted the following areas they think could benefit:

- Tranche funding for communities
- Spend for new Structures at the Agency
- East/West Connections
- Community Training/Capacity Building

Feedback is to be emailed to Mr Patton as proposals are to go to the Sponsor Departments by end of October 2008.

Action: Board to forward any proposals to the Executive.

13. Revised Financial Assistance Scheme

Mr Patton circulated a copy of protocol regarding activity outside Ireland.

Amendments to this were highlighted to the Board and were accepted.

Proposed and agreed.

Action: The Board are to receive emailed copies of amendments to the financial Assistance Scheme that would flow from this.

14. AOB

SEUPB Project Update

Updated after items arising.

Office Accommodation

Work is underway by Robinsons Promotions Limited who is designing the ground floor Information Centre. Possible launch will be in March/April 2009.

Summer Schools

Review is in progress.

After Schools Clubs

This clubs are ongoing.

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. Work is ongoing.

All Board have been invited to the Horse Show, this evening after the meeting.

Community Conference

Mr Thompson circulated report from the conference. Proposals have been forwarded to the Agency for a further event for the Community in the South.

Minority Languages in Europe

Mr Millar attended this conference on 15th October 2008 in Brussels. Mr Millar informed the Board that Agency representation was worth while at the event.

Stone Mountain Games

Mr Patton reported on this event.

Correspondence from GOLI

Mr Patton tabled correspondence received.

Covenanters

Mr Thompson gave an update on this project. To date it has been very successful.

Ulster Historical Foundation

The Board agreed to provide funding of £5000 towards a partnership project with Ulster Historical Foundation and Tourism Ireland on Scots surnames in Ulster.

Ulster-Scots Language Society

The Executive proposed that any future income from book sales by the Society that have been funded by the Agency will now be clawed back against its core funding.

The Board collectively agreed this.

14. Date and Venue of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on 15th November 2008 at the Agency offices.

Signed:

Dates: