

Tha Boord o Ulstèr-Scotch

Meeting No: 120

Date: 18 October 2012

Paper No: 03/120/18.10.12

Agenda Item: Minutes of 27 September 2012

Tha Board O Ulster-Scotch
119th Board Meeting
27 September 2012, 2.00pm
Ulster-Scots Agency Board Room, Belfast

Present:	Mr Tom Scott (Chair)
	Mrs Hilary Singleton
	Ms Val O'Kelly
	Ms Ida Fisher
	Ms Sharon Treacy-Dunne
	Mr William Leathem
	Mr Tony Crooks
In attendance:	Mr Ian Crozier, Chief Executive Jim Millar, Director Mr David McCallum, Staff Officer Accountant
Recording Secretary:	Lyndsey Sullivan

1. Welcome from the Chairperson

1.1 The Chair welcomed members to the 119th Meeting of the Board.

2. Apologies

2.1 Apologies were received from Mr Trevor Wilson and Mr Leathem advised he would be along later.

3. Minutes of Last Meeting

3.1 Minutes of the meeting of the Board on 30 August 2012 were agreed subject to a number of drafting amendments.

4. Matters Arising

- 4.1 Mr Crozier informed the Board that the application for financial assistance from MACN that had been proposed to be circulated by email for approval would be discussed later.

5. Chief Executive's Report

- 5.1 Mr Crozier informed the Board that the Agency budget for 2013 would be approved but he had now been informally advised that the likely outcome will be a further 3% reduction in the DAHG contribution to the Agency budget, with no further reduction in the DCAL contribution. This amounts to a further reduction of approximately £21,962.
- 5.2 Mr Crozier advised the Board of ongoing issues surrounding the Annual Reports and Accounts. Foras are continuing to liaise with the C & AG in relation to the consolidation of the 2009 Accounts.

ACTION: *Mr Scott to speak with FNG Chair regarding this issue.*

A proposal will be put before the Joint Language Body Board later today delegate responsibility to the Chairs and CEOs to approve the Annual Report and Accounts as soon as it is available.

- 5.3 Mr Crozier informed the Board that the Agency received a draft 'Report To Those Charged With Governance' for 2010. The majority of regularity issues identified relate to issues which had been identified in previous audits such as premises costs and the Ulster-Scot newspaper. A number of issues were raised and the Executive are continuing to liaise with Sponsor Departments in relation to some of these matters. A meeting with NIAO was planned for 28th September.

- 5.4 Mr Crozier informed the Board that the Executive are working to agree a timescale for the internal trawl to fill the Director of Corporate Services post and fill the gap in the senior management team.
- 5.5 Mr Crozier informed the Board that the Visitor Centre has now opened 10am – 4pm each day. The Agency has currently secured a worker from DEL for 30 hours per week and a further position is to be filled. He also advised that the search for the relocation of the Raphoe Office is still currently underway and 4 premises have been identified.

ACTION: *Mr Crozier to present a paper on the Raphoe Relocation at the next meeting.*

- 5.6 Mr Crozier informed the Board that the Education Team is working with Foras to develop a joint language-based programme comprising drama activities and language workshops which will be delivered in 80 schools in Northern Ireland during autumn. Other proposals for joint work with Foras are ongoing.
- 5.7 The Board were informed that the Teacher Conference has been moved to 7th November owing to logistical difficulties; however arrangements are now progressing apace.
- 5.8 Mr Crozier informed the Board that discussions are underway with Larne Borough Council in relation to the commemoration of the Brice 400th Anniversary in 2013. The initiative has also been flagged up with NIEA, who are believed responsible for the upkeep of Templecorran Church. We are also discussing the possibility of Agency funded signage in and around the village and Larne BC have agreed to lobby DRD Roads Service about improvements to brown tourist signs in the area.

Brice 400 will also be the theme of the Agency's presence at the Stone Mountain Games in Atlanta, Georgia in October, highlighting the strong thread of Presbyterian heritage that the Ulster-Scots took with them to the USA.

- 5.9 Mr Crozier advised the Board that positive discussions have now taken place with Lisburn City Council which created the context for a strategic Ulster-Scots intervention in the city.

Lisburn Council representatives have agreed that in addition to the Mayor's office and City Centre Management, the next meeting will include officials responsible for the city's Tourist Information Centres and the Linen Centre Museum, which will maximise the potential impact of such a partnership initiative. The Agency has also agreed to discuss the possibility of collaboration around Lisburn hosting a Pipe Band contest during the 2013 season.

- 5.10 Mr Crozier informed the Board that positive discussions have taken place with NMNI in relation to potential future collaborations with the Agency. The Agency has agreed that during 2013, it will work with NMNI to produce an Ulster-Scots heritage guide to the Folk Museum at Cultra, which will include a fold out guide as well as the development of living history characters that will then form part of the regular interpretation of the site.

The Agency also plan to work with NMNI to deliver a day of activities at the Folk Museum focussed on the Ulster-Scots Piping and Drumming tradition as well as planning to further explore the possibility of developing a suite of educational resources around the theme of Ulster-Scots inventors which could be linked to the various collections held by NMNI.

- 5.11 Mr Crozier informed the Board that he met with senior officers at the NIEA to discuss the potential for future initiatives and the capacity of the current regulatory regime to protect and preserve key Ulster-Scots sites for the future. NIEA have indicated a willingness to work with the Agency. Discussions to protect important Ulster-Scots heritage assets and a series of options have been identified for discussion in the Agency's response to the draft Executive Strategy for Ulster-Scots.

- 5.12 Mr Crozier advised the Board that he is currently in discussion with the Culture Company in relation to a number of collaborations around publication projects in Londonderry. The Agency has also encouraged both the Culture Company and the RSPBA to discuss the possibility of development of the Londonderry branch of RSPBA's Piping and Drumming School, potentially at the Ebrington Barracks site in the city.

- 5.13 Mr Crozier informed the Board that the Agency is working with the Linenhall Library to agree the reproduction of a number of historic Ulster-Scots texts held in their collection, including work by the poet Thomas Beggs, who wrote in both English and Ulster-Scots.
- 5.14 Mr Crozier informed the Board that the Agency has made proposals to the Ulster History Circle for the commencement of a three year long collaboration to erect blue plaques to commemorate Ulster-Scots who have made a significant contribution to life here and/or internationally. The list of names identified for year 1 includes Thomas Sinclair; Sir George Clarke; James Bryce; Hugh McCalmont Cairns; WG Lyttle; the Mulhollands; John McCredy McAlery; Thomas Sloan and Alexander Hogg.
- 5.15 Mrs Singleton gave an update of the Education Task Force meeting she had attended on behalf of the Agency.

6. Finance Report

- 6.1 Mr McCallum presented the finance report which was noted. Board members were advised that Sponsor Departments would be receiving a paper on the Agency spend to date at the end of September 2012.
- 6.2 Mr Crooks gave the Board an update on the Audit and Risk Committee meeting which took place earlier that day. The Chair thanked Mr Crooks for his report.

Mr Crooks reminded the Board that the Audit and Risk Committee is still an external member short after the departure of Ms Farmer.

ACTION: *Mr Crozier to raise this issue with DCAL.*

7 Update on Suspected Fraud Cases

7.1 Mr Millar gave a verbal update on this matter to the Board.

8 Progress Report Update

8.1 Board members noted the report and welcomed the new layout.

9. AOB

9.1 The Executive advised the Board that there would be a paper on the progress of the Community Workers Scheme at the next meeting.

9.2 A paper was presented to the Board asking them at the request of Sponsor Departments to approve the position of a number of groups who had received funding for more than three consecutive years during the life of the last FAS. This was approved.

9.3 Mr Crozier tabled a paper updating the position of the Ulster-Scot newspaper. The board noted this.

9.4 Mr Singleton left the meeting for the Board to discuss a Financial Assistance Application form received from Mid Armagh Community Network. The Executive recommended that the group receive the reward outlined and the Board agreed for the funding to proceed. Mrs Singleton then returned to the meeting.

9.5 The executive asked for permission to circulate grant proposals over £5k for approval by email between now and the end of the year and this was agreed.

9.6 Mr McCallum tabled a paper listing the policies and procedures that needed to be approved. They included: Staff Induction, Data Protection, Display Screen Equipment, IT Security, Internet Usage, Email usage, Credit Card Purchasing and IT Back Up Policy. All were adopted by the Board.

9.7 Mr Millar gave the Board a verbal update on the position of Monreagh Ulster-Scots Heritage Centre. This was noted.

ACTION: *The Board requested that an update be prepared for the next Board meeting.*

10 Date of Next Meeting

10.1 It was agreed that the next Board meeting would take place at the Agency offices in Belfast on 18 October 2012 at 11am.

Signed:

Dated: