Minute 1
2023/24

Exemptions

FOI Exemptions:

Page 1, Section 3.1,	Data Protection Section 1.1
Page 2, Section 4.2,	Data Protection Section 1.1
Page 3, Section 5.0,	FOI Exemption Section 43
Page 3, Section 5.0,	Data Protection Section 1.1
Pages 3-4, Section 5.3,	FOI Exemption Section 43
Page 4, Section 5.3,	Data Protection Section 1.1
Pages 4-5, Section 5.1,	FOI Exemption Section 43
Pages 5-6, Section 5.2,	FOI Exemption Section 43
Page 6, Section 5.2,	Data Protection Section 1.1

CONFIRMED

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of the Arts Council
Held on Friday 28 April 2023 at 2pm
in The Duncairn, Duncairn Avenue, Belfast

CONFIDENTIAL

1. Attendance

Present
Liam Hannaway (Chair), William Leathem (Vice Chair), Paul Boyle, Paul Brolly, Joe Dougan, Ray Hall, Sean Kelly, Laura McCorry, Gearóid Trimble, and Tanya English (Boardroom apprentice)

In Attendance
Roisin McDonough (Chief Executive)
Karly Greene (Director of Strategic Development and Partnerships)
Maria Lynch (Director of Operations)
Noirin McKinney (Director of Arts Development)
Gilly Campbell (Director of Arts Development)
Diane Dillon (Assistant to the Board and Director of F&CS)

Apologies
Lynne Best and Geoffrey Troughton (Director of Finance and Corporate Services)

The Chair opened the meeting at 2.10pm and welcomed all.

With Board member's agreement, the Chair changed the running order of the agenda; the main items for discussion and approval (items 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3) would be presented in the latter part of the meeting.

2. Declarations of Interest
Paul Brolly: Golden Thread Gallery
Ray Hall: Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association NI
Sean Kelly: Cathedral Quarter Arts Festival
Noirin McKinney: Irish Pages

3. Previous Meeting

3.1 Minutes – 28 March 2023
The Chair thanked the Vice Chair for chairing the March meeting. The minutes were agreed, approved by the Board, and signed by the Chair.

Proposed by: [redacted] **Seconded by:** [redacted]

3.2 Board and Board Effectiveness Action Logs
The document was noted.

3.3	**Matters Arising** DfC Bi-annual Assurance Statement: The Chair advised that he had completed the Chair's comments before submitting to DfC; the comments reflected that the Board remains extremely concerned at the inadequate level of funding for ACNI and subsequently the Arts as a whole.
4.	**Chair's Report**
4.1	**2023/24 Draft Board Work Plan** To note that Board Strategy working group dates have been added into the work plan. The first meeting of the Music working group was held on 7 March 2023; group members agreed that it was a good meeting. The Director of Arts Development advised that the Music working group intend to meet again during May. The document was noted.
4.2	**Chair and Committee Chairs Updates** Finance and Capital, Audit and Risk and Grants Committees: no meetings held since the last Board. The Acquisitions Panel Chair provided an update on purchases for the Art Collection and on behalf of the Panel expressed thanks to the Head of Visual Arts and the Visual Arts team who have worked extremely hard to spend the additional capital monies allocated for the Collection. The Chair provided updates on various meetings and discussions held since the last Board which included: • Conversations with various organisations outside NI. • DfC Deputy Secretary has been commissioned by the Head of NICS to put a case forward for the arts. • Chief Executive attended a Breakfast meeting on 13 April 2023 with US Economic Envoy, [redacted], the Head of NICS and sectoral leads. • Chair and Chief Executive met with [redacted] (former chief of staff for Joe Kennedy II) on 31 March 2023. • [redacted], Director of Creative Ireland. • The Chief Executive is invited to attend a Joint Committee on Tourism, Culture, Arts, Sport, and Media in Dublin on 10 May 2023. • A meeting with the NI Secretary of State has been requested. • The Chief Executive met NIO Permanent Secretary, [redacted], who has agreed to schedule a meeting. • Philanthropic meeting/support re opening an Arts Academy in NI. • Meeting with An Chomhairle Ealaíon (AnCE) Chair and CEO. N/S Plenary potential meeting June/July 2023. This may be linked to Shared Island Proposals. The Chair advised that prior to the meeting he had a conversation with Board member [redacted] regarding advocacy for the arts and asked for Board members thoughts. Board members discussed in detail; key points of discussion included: • ACNI should be upfront regarding the cuts to the sector. • Equity petition submitted to the Permanent Secretary. • Petitions and protests, it is not ACNI's role to get involved in these. • The Chair and Chief Executive role is to advocate and provide influence to the Department. • Public perception, PR piece that ACNI advocate the arts, a think piece. • People within the sector feel powerless. The Chief Executive said it was important that the Arts Council are not seen to be critical of the Department and need to work closely with colleagues in DfC. The Chief Executive suggested that it may be helpful for the sector if a simple communications line be taken and shared on the website of the numerous recent meetings held and with whom, in terms of advocacy.

CONFIDENTIAL

	Board members agreed that the Chair and Chief Executive were doing a great job advocating for the arts. The Director of Strategic Development and Partnerships said that a lot of advocacy groups have approached ACNI and noted that the Arts Council were involved with and supporting these groups. The Chair said that he and the Chief Executive would continue to work together, and it was good to get a sense of Board members' opinions.
6.	**Financial Update**
6.1	**Financial Report** The standard financial management report provided the financial position to 28 February 2023. DfC letter dated 24 February 2023 re 2022/23 Post-January Budget Position was attached for information. It was noted that the abbreviation DEL referred to Departmental Expenditure Limits. The Board were content to take the report as read; the report was noted.
7.	**Business Reporting**
	Nothing to report.
8.	**Matters to Note**
8.1	**Committee minutes previously circulated** The document was noted.
8.2	**Board and Committee Attendance 2022/23** The document was noted.
5.	**Chief Executive's Report**
	The Chief Executive provided an update on the AnCE/ACNI Chairs/CEOs meeting held 19 April 2023. Items discussed: (i) report on the new island-wide dance company to be commissioned by AnCE. (New Dance Company - FEI Report - April 2023.pdf (artscouncil.ie). ACNI will be expected to contribute financially; this will likely be through Lottery funding, and (ii) Irish Language Theatre touring, again ACNI will be expected to contribute. The Chief Executive advised that the 2023/24 Business Plan had been approved by DfC and will be published on the ACNI website. The Chief Executive advised that following CPD competitive process to appoint an internal audit service for three years commencing April 2023, the winning tender was [redacted]. The Chief Executive sought Board approval to appoint [redacted] as internal auditor (3 years commencing April 2023). The Board were unanimous in their approval. **Proposed by:** [redacted] **Seconded by:** [redacted]
5.3	[redacted] The Chief Executive provided a brief overview of the report and explained the rationale behind the reduction [redacted] are aware of the proposed reduction and have proposed that ACNI's funding would be for [redacted]. The Chief Executive sought Board approval that: • [redacted] allocated budget from ACNI is reduced by 50% to £125k annually for the duration of the next Delegation Agreement.

CONFIDENTIAL

	• Allocated funds for the 23/24-24/25 period are focused on [redacted] The Board were unanimous in their approval. **Proposed by:** [redacted] **Seconded by:** [redacted] ***The Head of Literature and Drama joined the meeting at 3.07pm***
5.1	[redacted]

[redacted]

The Head of Literature and Drama left the meeting at 4.21pm

[redacted]

Due to conflicts of interest regarding AFP, Board members Paul Brolly, Ray Hall, Sean Kelly, and Director of Arts Development, Noirin McKinney left the meeting at 4.28pm.

Board members took a 15-minute comfort break. The meeting reconvened at 4.45pm

The Head of Literature and Drama joined the meeting at 4.45pm

5.2 Annual Funding Programme 2023/24

The Director of Operations presented the paper and provided a detailed overview of the 2023/24 Annual Funding Programme recommendations. Full details of the 85 recommendations were included in the report at Appendix 1.

The Director of Operations provided a comprehensive analysis of the additional £1m subvention from ACNI's Lottery Funds, the reductions to [redacted] (approved under item 5.3) and Small Grants Programme funding (detailed on page 1 of the report), and the reduction to NLDF reserves.

The Director of Operations provided a summary of the 8 clients recommended for uplifts and the 11 existing clients rejected for funding. The 11 clients rejected for funding would be eligible to apply for Lottery Project Funding (LPF); the programme opens mid-May and recommendations will be presented to the Grants Committee in June 2023.

In response to questions raised, the Director of Operations provided the rationale for [redacted]. The rationale for the single soft-landing offer as detailed in the paper was also discussed.

The Director of Operations noted that whilst rejected current clients in particular would be disappointed and concerned, Artform Officers would seek to meet with them to discuss the outcome and answer any queries regarding the upcoming LPF application process.

Two clients were recommended for cuts, [redacted]

Board members raised several questions and points for clarity regarding the application and moderation process and budget implications. The Chief Executive and Director of Operations provided comprehensive responses.

The Chair thanked the Director of Operations for the tremendous amount of work undertaken and providing a comprehensive report.

CONFIDENTIAL

Recommendations for approval

The overall summary of 85 recommendations presented to the Board for approval were:

- 1 new application recommended for funding.
- 74 applicants recommended for standstill funding.
- 8 applicants recommended for an uplift.
- 2 applicants recommended for a cut.
- 27 applicants were rejected for funding (11 exiting the portfolio; 16 new).

Full details were provided in Appendix 1.

Total Moderation Recommendation for 85 awards and 1 soft landing: £12,926,927

The Board were unanimous in their approval of:

- 1 new application recommended for funding.
- 74 applicants recommended for standstill funding.
- 8 applicants recommended for an uplift.
- 1 applicant recommended for a cut.

- 1 applicant recommended for a cut not approved. [redacted]

The Board were unanimous in their approval of 84 awards and 1 soft landing: **£11,936,477.**

Board approval was also sought for the following recommendations:

- The recommended funding level would require a further £41,902 increase on the agreed planning figure for the AFP budget, with an additional marginal adjustment between the Exchequer and Lottery contributions. The Executive were content that these additional funds could be found over the course of the year.
- Increase in the maximum application request and award level for the Lottery Project Funding Programme to £75k from its current £50k.

The Board were unanimous in their approval.

Proposed by: [redacted] **Seconded by:** [redacted]

9. Any Other Business

None.

10. Date of next meeting:

Friday 30 June 2023 at The Playhouse Derry/Londonderry BT48 6RG
Lunch 1pm, Board meeting 2pm

There being no further business the Chair declared the meeting closed at 5.30pm.

CONFIDENTIAL

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____

Liam Hannaway (Chair) **30 June 2023**