

MINUTES OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND TWELTH MEETING OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE OF ARMAGH OBSERVATORY AND PLANETARIUM HELD ON 16 DECEMBER 2019 AT 11.00 AM IN THE PLANETARIUM BOARD ROOM

Present: Mr J Briggs (Chair), Mr S Brown, The Very Revd Dean G Dunstan, Mr B Hannam, Professor L Harra (via MS Teams), Dr M McKay, Mr R Wilson

Apologies: Professor M Mathioudakis, Professor R Oudmaijer, Mr P McGurgan, Professor M Merrifield, Professor T Ray

In Attendance: Professor M Burton (Director), Mrs C Corvan (Head of Corporate Services), Mr M Sarzi (Head of Research), Mr L Knox (Head of Finance and Income Generation), Mrs L Brown (Corporate Manager), Dr K Lemon (Boardroom Apprentice), Mrs E Gill (ERGA Strategies Ltd)

1 APOLOGIES

1.1 Apologies were recorded as above.

1.2 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, extending a particular welcome to Mr Roger Wilson who was attending his first meeting of the Management Committee. In response, Mr Wilson referred to the old Council's long connections with the Observatory and Planetarium and to the new Council's partnership in terms of the Mullinure Masterplan and stated that he was pleased to join the Management Committee and hoped to be able to contribute to it.

1.3 The Chair advised that Ms Eleanor Gill, ERGA Strategies would be joining later in the meeting.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1 The Chair reminded members and officers of the need to declare any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest associated with any item on the Agenda either at that point or at the relevant stage during the meeting.

2.2 Dean Dunstan declared an interest in the Mullinure Project, being a Board of Governor of the Royal School. Mr Wilson also declared an interest in the Project.

3 MINUTES OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 23 SEPTEMBER 2019

3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 23 September 2019 were reviewed and approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.

4 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

4.1 A paper outlining matters arising from previous meetings had been circulated. There were 8 matters, 5 of which it was proposed to close and 3 remained ongoing.

- 4.2 Dr McKay referred to the long-standing action regarding the potential of ESA exhibits being provided to the Planetarium and reported that he and Professor Burton had discussed this briefly prior to the meeting and it was now deemed the appropriate time to progress the action point. It was proposed to invite ESA planetarium experts across to consider and discuss. Mrs Corvan considered it timely, advising that there were some works planned for the exhibition area during Jan-March 2020. Dr McKay and Professor Burton to progress.
- 4.3 Mrs Corvan referred to the outstanding action to invite Sean Barden to a meeting of the Management Committee and suggested that it may be more appropriate for him to attend a Board of Governors meeting, subject to Members' approval. **Action MC 16/12/19 – 1 Sean Barden to be invited to the next Board of Governors meeting.**

5 CHAIR'S BUSINESS

- 5.1 A further one year extension, until 31 December 2020, had been granted to Mr Hannam and Dr McKay, Management Committee and Mr Greg Berry, Board of Governors. The Chair thanked all three of them for their agreement to the extension.
- 5.2 The Chair welcomed Dr Lemon to the meeting and reported that AOP proposed applying again for a 2020/21 Boardroom Apprentice.
- 5.3 The Chair advised that AOP may explore previous cohorts of the Boardroom Apprentice scheme as a potential source from which to co-opt members, to address identified skills gaps.
- 5.4 Archbishop Clarke would retire in February 2020 and invitations had been issued for a reception on 9 January which would be an opportunity to thank the Archbishop for his commitment to AOP and to reflect on the achievements of 2019 and look forward to the next chapter. He encouraged Members to attend.
- 5.5 Mrs Corvan advised that it was likely that the 2020 Board of Governors meeting would take place later in the year than normally scheduled. The Archbishop's Secretary would identify a suitable date following appointment of the new Archbishop.
- 5.6 The Chair advised that later in the meeting they were due to have a presentation from Mr Ronan O'Hara, SIB, however he had tendered apologies and was no longer able to attend. Mrs Corvan had agreed to step in. The Chair stated that he wished to take the opportunity to recognise the leadership and direction provided from SIB. He said that Mr O'Hara was a tremendous help and active in his commitment to AOP and he hoped that that participation could continue in the future.
- 5.7 In conclusion, the Chair reported that Ms Eleanor Gill, ERGA Strategies Ltd would be joining the Committee after the meeting to further the work undertaken after the last Management Committee meeting. He advised that Ms Gill had held independent sessions with the Management Team and the Management Committee and the session was for everyone to be together to plan the next steps.

6 REPORT FROM DIRECTOR

- 6.1 Professor Burton guided the Committee through his report elaborating briefly on various sections.
- 6.2 There being no questions from the Committee the Chair thanked Professor Burton for his comprehensive report. With reference to the matters for consideration, he pointed out that the issues associated with realising the AOP Vision would be discussed later in the meeting.
- 6.3 Dr Sarzi guided the Committee through his report which had been included in the Research Matters section of Professor Burton's report.
- 6.4 In response to a query from Prof Harra regarding the Review of Research, Dr Sarzi confirmed that the review would be a REF-like exercise. He added that he had provided the Panel with an example of the information produced previously. The Management Committee approved the appointment of the panel proposed for the Review of Research.
- 6.5 In terms of Research Sustainability and the potential of Immersive Visual Analytics as a possible direction of travel Dr Sarzi responded to comments regarding Analytic Engines in Belfast and Digital Catapult's Immersive Labs and explained that the dome presented a unique opportunity for AOP.
- 6.6 At the suggestion of Prof Harra the Head of Research undertook to contact Professor Mathioudakis to explore opportunities for linkages with QUB as a means of increasing the pool of PhD applicants to the AOP Summer Internship Programme.
- 6.7 Professor Burton commended Dr Sarzi on successfully obtaining funding for a two-year PDRA position.
- 6.8 Mrs Corvan guided the Committee through the Operational and Staffing Matters report which had also been included in Professor Burton's report.
- 6.9 The Chair thanked Dr Sarzi and Mrs Corvan for their reports adding that it was clear that AOP was now considered a 'safe risk' and that all the hard work over the past three years bode well for the organisation moving forward.

7 UPDATE FROM THE AUDIT AND RISK ASSURANCE COMMITTEE (ARAC)

- 7.1 The ARAC had noted that AOP had no powers to remunerate the Management Committee Chair and until the Northern Ireland Assembly returned there was no possibility of such powers being granted.
- 7.2 A report on the Internal Audit review of Financial Management had been considered. The report, which provided satisfactory assurance, had identified two minor recommendations that had been addressed by Management. An Internal Audit Progress Report against the 2019/20 Audit Plan identified that two satisfactory audits had been completed, with two further audits planned – IT Systems and Security and Review of Outstanding Recommendations. A report on the status of Outstanding Internal Audit Recommendations, as assessed by Management, identified 21 outstanding recommendations. By year end it was expected that 17 of these would be fully

implemented, there would be one outstanding recommendation in relation to the review of policy documents and 3 recommendations had not been accepted and therefore not implemented.

- 7.3 The ARAC considered the Risk Register as at 4 December 2019 which included a new risk relating to funding associated with long-term developments and recommended its approval.
- 7.4 The Committee had considered the implications of the McBride Judgement, a point of law associated with delegation of functions, and assessed these as being a low risk for AOP.
- 7.5 In terms of External Audit, Mr Hannam reported that the issue relating to heritage assets had been resolved and a clean Audit Report had been achieved. The ARAC therefore recommended approval of the Annual Report and Accounts 2018/19.
- 7.6 The ARAC considered an IT Asset Management Policy, a Password Policy and a proposed change to the Financial Policies and Procedures and recommended Management Committee approval of same.
- 7.7 The Chair sought the Management Committee's approval to the recommendations from the ARAC as outlined below:
- Risk Register as at 4 December 2019;
 - Recommendations included in the report on the McBride Judgement;
 - Annual Report and Accounts 2018/19;
 - IT Asset Management Policy;
 - Password Policy;
 - Change to Financial Policies and Procedures.

The Management Committee formally approved the ARAC recommendations as outlined above.

8 UPDATE FROM THE STAFFING POLICY AND REMUNERATION COMMITTEE

- 8.1 Mr Brown, who had Chaired the SPRC in the absence of Prof Ray, provided a summary of the matters discussed.
- 8.2 The Recruitment Policy, which had previously been circulated to and approved by SPRC members via email had been formally approved by the Committee and was recommended for Management Committee approval.
- 8.3 SPRC recommended Special Bonus Scheme payments totalling £2,200, to 9 employees and 2 temporary staff members who had all worked above and beyond, for Management Committee approval.
- 8.4 The Committee recommended Management Committee approval to the use of available resources to provide Lone Working Training, delivered by the Suzie Lamplugh Trust, and to enable the Head of Research to undertake a Leadership Programme.

8.5 SPRC had noted:

- the Education Structure Review was being progressed;
- recruitment for the Öpik Fellowship was under way with a closing date of 8 January 2020;
- the Pay Remit for 2018 had been approved and would be processed in December salaries;
- the staff survey had been conducted. Whilst generally favourable there were still some areas of dissatisfaction, particularly within Research;
- progress against the HR Strategy.

8.6 The Chair sought the Management Committee's approval to the recommendations from the SPRC as outlined below:

- Recruitment Policy;
- Special Bonus Scheme payments to 9 employees and 2 agency staff;
- Staff Training.

The Management Committee formally approved the SPRC recommendations as outlined above.

9 PERFORMANCE AGAINST BUSINESS PLAN – CORPORATE PLAN OBJECTIVES, KPIs AND FINANCE

9.1 Reports providing progress against the 2019/20 Business Plan in respect of Corporate Plan Objectives (Q3); KPIs (Q2) and Finance (to Period 7) had been previously circulated.

9.2 In terms of the Corporate Plan Objectives, it was noted that the Corporate Plan had been developed at a time when the Management Team was new to the organisation. Whilst a lot of the objectives were on target there were some missed which would be discussed later. The Committee noted that AOP Management also reported performance to the Department at Accountability Meetings on a quarterly basis.

9.3 In terms of the KPIs, Mrs Corvan pointed out that these were mostly green and, where this was not the case, this was largely a timing issue. In relation to the KPI associated with the long-term strategy she explained that when the Business Plan had been developed it has been thought that the OBC would have been completed by 31/3/2020, however significant pre-OBC work was under way. She advised that discussion had taken place regarding redefining the KPI, however, upon the advice of the new Director for the Department of Communities it was considered best not to do so.

9.4 In response to observations from Mr Brown, the Management Committee noted that the success of the summer events programme was reflected in KPI 4 visitor numbers and that KPI 5 in relation to a post-primary school pilot had been met in the period Sept-Dec, programmes to encourage visits from more secondary level schools were being developed and opportunities of maximising numbers by accommodating multiple schools at the same time were also being considered.

9.5 In terms of the Financial Report, Mr Knox reported that a break-even position at 31/3/2020 was forecast. He also reported that a further £29k resource allocation had been received since the Report date and it was hoped that this would further increase. Professor Burton pointed out that the financial position was more stable than in previous years.

10 AOP FUTURE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT – WISDOM BEGINS WITH WONDER

The Chair reported that Ronan O’Hara, SIB was due to make a presentation in respect of the above matter, however, in his absence Mrs Corvan would deliver the presentation.

With Committee permission, the Chair proposed dealing with AOB before taking the presentation and thereafter having a short break for refreshments before reconvening for the facilitated session with Ms Eleanor Gill, ERGA Strategies Ltd.

The Committee approved this approach.

11 AOB

11.1 The Committee noted the:

- availability of training as outlined in the report;
- ARAC minutes September 2019;
- SPRC Minutes September 2019.

11.2 The date of the next meeting was noted as 30 March 2020.

12 AOP FUTURE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT – WISDOM BEGINS WITH WONDER

12.1 Mrs Corvan guided the Committee through the following papers which had previously been circulated elaborating briefly on the salient points:

- Update on pre-OBC Activities 2019/20;
- Summary Project Plan;
- Preparatory Work to inform SOC/OBC Preparation.

12.2 The Committee viewed a 3D video that had been created by Hamilton Architects to help illustrate what the future development might look like.

12.3 In response to queries from the Chair as to how the Planetarium and Grounds would fit in with the Observatory development and from Mr Brown in terms of the integration between the legacy and modern elements of the project, Mrs Corvan explained that there were still lots of layers of detail to be developed. The video was intended to give the Committee an idea of the space and the opportunities that existed to capture their imagination of what could be possible and the scale of the ambition.

12.4 The Chair considered that it was important that, in relation to the Observatory, there was a feel for the Robinson legacy and the continuation of 200 years of research.

12.5 Mr Wilson considered the video to be very impressive and queried whether the team involved were specialist in this type of project and whether it would be the same team to bring the project through

to fruition. In response, Mr Corvan explained that the current team had been procured to deliver the concept. She confirmed that Hamilton Architects were conservation architects and had worked on the Conservation Management Plan. A further procurement exercise would be required at OBC stage to bring to the next phase. The Chair pointed out that Hamilton Architects had been procured through SIB and Mrs Corvan added that a new contract would be necessary.

- 12.6 In response to a query from Mr Wilson regarding the use of frameworks, Mrs Corvan explained that should AOP receive grant funding from the NLHF at that stage consideration would have to be given to how to procure the team to work on that project.
- 12.7 The Chair reflected upon the significant progress that had been made in the last year which he considered was mainly due to the support of SIB, both financial and also their professional support and expertise. Mrs Corvan also commended the work of Susan Lindsay, SIB Advisor who helped identify groups; Caroline Maxwell, SIB Advisor who had assisted with funding options and Tara Florence, Hamilton Architects who had been procured through SIB framework.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 12.30 pm.

Following the meeting Ms Eleanor Gill, ERGA Strategies Ltd conducted a facilitated session with the Management Committee Members and Senior Management Team.

Signed as a true record of the meeting


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(Chair)

Dated: 30 March 2020

Updated Actions as at 9 December 2019

Reference	Action	Owner	Progress
MC29/01/15 – 01	Dr McKay to explore within ESA if exhibits could be provided to the Planetarium	Dr McKay	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>10 December 2018: Dr McKay advised that he and Professor Burton would endeavour to progress the matter relating to the exhibits.</p> <p>21 June 2018: Dr McKay advised that he has been unable to progress this due to his contact being on exceptional leave. He will endeavour to resolve this before his retirement.</p> <p>17 November 2017: Continuing to explore opportunities with Dr McKay</p> <p>1 September 2017: Dr McKay advised that he will introduce Mr News to the ESA PR.</p> <p>23 August 2017: John News has been appointed as temporary HECO and will pursue this matter with Dr McKay</p> <p>29 March 2017: It is hoped that a temporary Head of Education & Outreach will be appointed shortly and this matter will be pursued at this time.</p> <p>20 September 2016: Dr McKay has spoken to ESA PR in HQ (Paris). ESA would like to understand the direction AOP intends to follow and what support they could provide. It has been decided to wait until the new Head of Education & Outreach is appointed before pursuing further.</p> <p>28 January 2016: Dr McKay to introduce Planetarium representative to the ESA teams to pursue potential exhibits.</p>
MC26/3/19-01	The Chair to approach the Board of Governors regarding co-option to Management Committee from Council	Chair	<p>Propose to Close</p> <p>23 September 2019: MC advised that Roger Wilson, intended fulfilling the role. It was hoped he would be present at the December meeting.</p> <p>1 August 2019: Response received by Chair of Board of Governors from council advising that Roger Wilson, Chief Executive will fulfil the role on the Board.</p> <p>24 June 2019: Board of Governors Chair has formally written to council chief executive to invite a representative onto the Board and is agreeable that this person could also be a Board of Governors representative on the MC.</p> <p>22 May 2019: Discussed at Board of Governors meeting. Council has been invited to appoint an officer at Director-level to the vacant position on the Board of Governors. The Board of Governors also gave approval, in principle, for the nomination of the Council's appointment to the Board of Governors to the Management Committee. No response to correspondence has been received to date.</p>

Reference	Action	Owner	Progress
MC24/6/19-02	Invite Sean Barden to September Management Committee meeting	Corporate Manager	Ongoing December 2019: Deferred to December meeting due to time constraints of December meeting 10 September 2019: Deferred to December meeting due to facilitated session with Management Committee Members following September meeting
MC23/9/19-01	Annual Report and Accounts 2018/19 and Report to Those Charged With Governance to be presented to the December meeting	Corporate Manager	Propose to Close Annual Report and Accounts 2018/19 and Report To Those Charged With Governance on Agenda
MC23/9/19-02	Financial Policies and Procedures to be changed to extend the use of the Credit Card to facilitate travel and accommodation costs for all staff	Head of Finance and Income Generation	Propose to Close Financial Policies and Procedures amended and communicated to staff
MC23/9/19-03	Approval of revised Recruitment Policy, subject to staff comments, final amendments and recirculation via email to SPRC	Head of Corporate Services	Propose to Close Final Recruitment Policy approved by SPRC and included for formal approval 16/12/19.
MC23/9/19-04	KPI 3 to be reviewed for 2020/21 financial year in consultation with Professor Mathioudakis	SMT	
MC23/9/19-05	Professor Sarzi to provide Professor Ray's contact details to the AOP Seminar Programme organisers	Head of Research	Propose to Close Professor Ray's contact details provided

