

MINUTES OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND NINETEENTH MEETING OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE OF ARMAGH OBSERVATORY AND PLANETARIUM HELD ON 20 SEPTEMBER 2021 AT 11.00 AM IN THE PLANETARIUM BOARDROOM

Present: Mr J Briggs (Chair), Rev Canon W M Adair, Mr S Brown, Mr G Cox, Dr M Darnley, Professor L Harra, Mr P Kennedy, Dr K Lemon, Professor M Mathioudakis, Mr E Rooney and Mr R Wilson

In Attendance: Professor M Burton (Director), Mrs C Corvan (Head of Corporate Services), Mr L Knox (Head of Finance), Dr M Sarzi (Head of Research), Mr J Murray (Boardroom Apprentice), Mr John McCord (Department for Communities), Mr Sean Barden (Armagh County Museum) and Mrs L Brown (Corporate Manager)

Apologies: Professor C Jackman and Mr P McGurgan

1. OPENING REMARKS

- 1.1 At the outset the Chair welcomed everyone to the hybrid meeting, the first meeting for which there were people in the Boardroom since December 2019. He extended a special welcome to new Member, Rev Canon Bill Adair, Board of Governors nominee. Canon Adair thanked the Chair for the welcome.
- 1.2 Mr Jason Murray was welcomed to his first meeting as AOP's new Boardroom Apprentice. The Chair noted that it was the third year that AOP had been involved in the Scheme, the first Boardroom Apprentice having been Dr Kirstin Lemon, who was now a member of the Management Committee. He hoped that Jason would enjoy his year and that they could learn from each other.
- 1.3 The Chair also welcomed Mr John McCord, Department for Communities and Mr Sean Barden, Armagh County Museum. Mr Barden being in attendance for the first Agenda Item, as AOP's Mentor for the Museum Accreditation Project.
- 1.4 Congratulations were extended to Caitriona Jackman who had been elevated to Professor.
- 1.5 On behalf of the Management Committee, the Chair offered condolences to Mr Leonard Knox on the death of his wife, Muriel, and to Mr Greg Cox on the death of his mother.

2. APOLOGIES

- 2.1 Apologies were recorded as above.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 3.1 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 now or at the relevant point during the meeting.
- 3.2 Mr Wilson declared an interest in relation to Armagh Leisure Village, noted that the Agenda had been structured to have this item considered at the end and undertook to withdraw from the meeting at that point.

4. MUSEUM ACCREDITATION PROJECT

- 4.1 At the outset Professor Burton apologised to Mr Barden that his attendance at a Management Committee meeting had been deferred previously on a number of occasions. He briefly explained that part of the Accreditation Process required outside validation, by way of a Mentor, and for that person to report to the Management Committee about progress and whether they were content with this. Mr Barden, who worked for Armagh County Museum, was AOP's Mentor.
- 4.2 A Progress Report on the Museum Accreditation Project, prepared by Matthew McMahon, Museum Assistant and Heather Alexander, Senior Education Officer had previously been circulated.
- 4.3 Mr Barden said he was delighted to be involved with the Project and to work with Professor Burton and Matthew McMahon and others and having read the Progress Report and the Policies and Documents that had been produced so far, he considered AOP was well down the road towards accreditation status. He said he was always willing and available to assist when called upon.
- 4.4 Professor Burton reported that there was a time limit on completing the Accreditation Process which, as a result of COVID, had been extended until May 2022. With reference to the Report he briefly elaborated on the importance of the Collections Management System and accessibility to the public for Museum Accreditation.
- 4.5 In response to a query from Mr Cox in relation to the task of cataloguing and the resourcing of same, Professor Burton advised that an application to Heritage Lottery Fund had been unsuccessful. Departmental funding which had enabled the work undertaken to date to be carried out was coming to an end and plans to continue would be discussed later in the meeting during the Director's Report.
- 4.6 Professor Burton referred to the book 'Bishops and Buildings', co-ordinated by Mr Barden with contributions from Armagh Robinson Library, Cardinal Ó Fiaich Library and Archive, Armagh County Museum, Armagh Observatory and Planetarium and advised that it had been shortlisted for an Ulster Architectural Heritage Angel Award.

Having been thanked for his attendance and his assistance to AOP in this Project, Mr Barden retired from the meeting at this juncture.

- 4.7 The Committee noted the Progress Report and approved the History and Heritage Policy Documentation Handbook, which had previously been circulated.

5. MINUTES OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 21 JUNE 2021

- 5.1 The minutes of the meeting of 21 June 2021 were reviewed and approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.

6. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

- 6.1 There were 11 matters arising from previous meetings. It was proposed to close 7 of these and 4 remained ongoing.
- 6.2 The Chair reported that Professor Mathioudakis' continuing membership of the Management Committee for a further and final 5-year term had been confirmed.
- 6.3 There were no further matters arising.

7. CHAIR'S BUSINESS

- 7.1 Mrs Corvan advised, that following on from the last meeting, a comparison of text within the Terms of Reference of all of the Sub-Committees had been undertaken. A Paper detailing the text comparison and the actions taken along with a clean copy of the ARAC and SPRC had been circulated.
- 7.2 The ARAC and SPRC Terms of Reference were approved.
- 7.3 The Chair referred to the Paper on the proposed delegation of Charity Trustee status from the Board of Governors to the Management Committee and the legal advice, both of which had been previously circulated.
- 7.4 Mrs Corvan briefly explained the background to the matter, elaborating on the information contained within the report and the two issues on which legal advice had been sought, namely the ability of the Board of Governors to delegate responsibility to the Management Committee and the personal implications for Management Committee members if they agreed to become the Charity Trustees. A further area on which advice had been sought was a proposed name change. She advised that the Management Committee was asked to consider the proposal and, if agreed, arrangements would be made to progress.
- 7.5 Mr Cox advised the Committee that he had felt it was incumbent on him to read the detail and the cases referred to in the legal advice, and, having done so felt it was a proposal that the Management Committee could and should accept, as the role sat more properly with the Management Committee than with the Board.
- 7.6 Mr Rooney referred to the issue of personal liability, which had been raised at the ARAC meeting earlier that morning, in relation to the operation of AOP and the risks that it faced. In response, Mr Cox explained that if you endeavoured to do the right thing then you would be fine, however, if you directed funds towards something that you shouldn't or had some personal conflict that you didn't declare, then you could have some personal liability. He explained that there were two ways of obtaining reassurance – there was an indemnity already in place from the organisation to the Members, if they did the right thing and something happened to go wrong then the organisation would cover the indemnity, and the second was to take out a policy of insurance but the latter didn't cover a rogue. In his experience it was incredibly rare for someone who had acted in good faith and something went wrong to be held personally liable.
- 7.7 In terms of failure to act in a negligent manner, Mr Brown, briefly explained the general thrust of the discussion at the ARAC which centred around the risk register and that even when treated risks remained red, the question being did they accept that or did they insist that something was done about it through the Department? He added that the organisation was exposed but was doing its best.
- 7.8 In response, Mr Cox considered that if they asked the correct questions and took appropriate actions as a consequence then they would be ok.
- 7.9 Mr Brown pointed out that the biggest risk centred around financial risks and resources and considered that by making the Department aware of them they were transferring that risk. Mrs Corvan added that this was why there were Accountability Meetings and engagement with the Sponsor Branch, adding that there were things outside of both AOP and the Department's control.
- 7.10 Picking up on the example outlined, Mr Cox reiterated that if they did the right thing, even if things went very badly wrong from a financial perspective, there was no personal liability. Only if they did the wrong thing or failed to do anything at all was this an issue.

- 7.11 In response to a query from Dr Darnley, Mr Cox briefly explained that the Management Committee would be the recipient of the power, which would have to be donated by the Board of Governors and it was for the Management Committee to decide if it would accept it. It was highly desirable to do this with unanimity. Whilst it was possible to proceed without unanimity, he felt that this should be done cautiously and considered it much better to address the queries or concerns to get that unanimity.
- 7.12 Mr Wilson commented that it was a matter of the Management Committee considering if this was something it wanted to take on. He said the legal advice from Arthur Cox was fairly clear and addressed the issues and concerns raised at the previous meeting and as long as they were doing the right thing and looking after the good and proper interests of the Observatory and Planetarium then they shouldn't be concerned about risk or exposure to liability. For him, he said it wasn't just about the risk or risk registers, but it was about anything and everything that they did. He explained that whilst they would take and make decisions based on advice and recommendations from the Management Team it was about how the Management Committee would consider and debate and come to its conclusions and decisions on them based on what they thought was the right thing for the organisation. He added that both he and the Chair were familiar with this as a concept, as surcharge was very familiar in Local Government terms for Councillors and senior officers, where there was an extreme exposure to personal liability.
- 7.13 Mr Wilson advised that the McKee case referred to in the legal advice provided had been taken on the basis of a charity linked to the former Craigavon Borough Council and actions taken there. He didn't believe this to be a conflict of interest but felt that it should be noted.
- 7.14 In response to a query from Mr Rooney as to whether the proposal would make any difference at a practical level as to how the Management Committee would need to operate, Mrs Corvan advised that AOP's requirement to report on its Charity's activities was already included within the Annual Report. Officers also felt that the responsibility for Charity Trustees more closely aligned with the Management Committee. Mr Cox considered that practically the obligations of Trustee might be clearer in their mind but he didn't think they would do very much different at all – they would do the right thing. In terms of any governance requirement, Mr Cox suggested it to be no more than good housekeeping when making decisions to make sure they reminded themselves that there were some obligations as Trustees and to consider whether they had thought about those.
- 7.15 Mrs Corvan advised that she had specifically asked the Solicitor if, as a member of the Management Committee and bound by a Code of Conduct and the Nolan Principles etc., was there anything much dissimilar to that and they confirmed not really. As a Charity Trustee they needed to ensure they fulfilled the role of a Charity Trustee and this was already done through the annual reporting.
- 7.16 The Chair asked the Management Committee to approve the recommendation to collectively take on the role of Charity Trustee and for officers to progress the formal requirements. If any Management Committee Member had any remaining concerns or queries these should be forwarded for consideration by either Mr Cox or Arthur Cox, Solicitor. It was noted that Mr Cox was not related to the firm Arthur Cox.
- 7.17 The Management Committee agreed to collectively accept the role of Charity Trustee when arrangements were in place and this was formally offered by the Board of Governors. **Action MC 20/09/21-1 Officers to put in place the necessary arrangements for the role of Charity Trustee to be transferred from the Board of Governors to the Management Committee.**
- 7.18 The Chair referred to the proposal in respect of Management Committee Annual Board Evaluation which had been provided. He explained that it was very important to carry out an annual review, however, arising from difficulties with the procedure in 2020 it had been agreed to review the process.

- 7.19 Mrs Corvan took Members through the report highlighting that it was proposed to set aside some time, probably at the start of the December meeting each year, for the Management Committee to collectively review its performance against the 9 areas outlined in the Central Government questionnaire. The discussion would be led by the Chair who may appoint an external facilitator and the evaluation could take place without officers present.
- 7.20 For the ARAC, it was proposed to continue with the annual evaluation using the National Audit Office Audit Committee Self-Assessment Checklist and that the Chair should set aside sufficient time to consider the responses and may ask officers to remove themselves from the meeting.
- 7.21 It was also proposed that the Chair of SPRC should set aside time annually to review effectiveness, in particular in relation to the agenda, quality and level of detail provided in papers and reports and may ask management to remove themselves for this discussion.
- 7.22 Mrs Corvan acknowledged that the REAC was a new Committee, however, it was suggested that there should be some evaluation of effectiveness annually also.
- 7.23 The Chair thanked Mrs Corvan for the proposal. He said he welcomed the proposal, was minded to use a facilitator and considered it good that the Management Committee meet on its own for this matter. **Action MC 20/09/21-2 Arrangements to be put in place for annual review of effectiveness of the Management Committee and its Sub-Committee to be undertaken in December.**
- 7.24 Mr Rooney expressed his support for the proposal. He considered it was good practice to have an annual evaluation and agreed that it should be tailored to AOP.
- 7.25 Mr Brown, also endorsed the proposal. With reference to point 7 and the bullet point providing assurance relating to membership, skills and expertise he asked if it could be more explicit in terms of the quality of expertise needed by the committee and fulfilment of that by the existing membership. Mrs Corvan took on board Mr Brown's comment adding that a skills gap analysis had been carried out and as a result of this it had been concluded that there was a good balance of all the skills. She undertook to revisit the information and bring back a summary report to the December meeting. **Action MC 20/09/21-3 Summary of Skill Gap Analysis exercise to be brought to December meeting.**
- 7.26 The Chair sought and was granted approval to formally sign the Boardroom Apprentice Memorandum of Understanding. **Action MC 20/9/21-4 Boardroom Apprentice MOU to be signed.**
- 7.27 Suggested dates for 2022 Meeting Schedule would be circulated in the coming days for Members' consideration.
- 7.28 The Committee noted that a stakeholder launch of AOP's 5-year Corporate Strategy and Future Vision would take place on Wednesday 6 October.

8. REPORT FROM DIRECTOR

- 8.1 Professor Burton guided the Committee through his report, elaborating briefly on the matters contained within it which included an update on AOP activities and operations; Head of Research Report; Staff Appointments, Achievements and Activities and 2021/22 Resource and Capital Budgets.
- 8.2 In terms of the AOP activities and operations, the Committee noted:
- a number of re-opening activities which including that:
 - the Planetarium had been fully booked throughout the summer, albeit with reduced capacity;

- Friday evening music shows had been introduced to the programme and were proving successful;
- two new presenter-led dome shows had been developed in-house;
- over the summer the Planetarium had featured on Tourism NI's website as the backdrop to its home page and on a billboard campaign;
- AOP had featured in Channel 4's series 'Exploring Northern Ireland' and Virgin Media's programme 'A Giant's Welcome';
- the application to present at the UN Climate Change Summit (COP26) in Glasgow in November 2021 had been successful, progress on the show being delivered and AOP's commitment;
- Professor Burton had delivered a public talk on 'Astronomy, Ireland and UNESCO World Heritage' at the Astronomical Society of Ireland's annual meeting (INAM) and had been elected by the International Astronomical Union (IAU) as Vice President to its Commission on World Heritage;
- updates on a number of Armagh Heritage activities:
 - the National Lottery Heritage Fund application had been unsuccessful;
 - the collections management system was nearing completion;
 - a paper 'Ten Amazing Objects from the Armagh Observatory and Planetarium' had been written for the Scientific Instrument Society's journal;
 - a tours programme for the Observatory at weekends had been introduced;
 - AOP was supporting a project led by the Royal Observatory in Greenwich entitled 'Observatory Sites and Networks since 1780' for which 4 workshops were planned, culminating in a 2-3 day meeting in Armagh in September 2022;
- on-going discussions with DIAS regarding a joint application to the RoI Government's North-South Research Programme;
- a detailed explanation of the issues surrounding the meteorological record during the heat wave in Northern Ireland in July 2021;
- arrangements for the biannual Robinson Lecture on 24 November;
- work was progressing on Urban Night Sky Place Accreditation;
- AOP's involvement at the International Cosmic Ray Conference.

8.3 During Professor Burton's presentation, Mr Wilson expressed disappointment that the application to NLHF had not been successful. He said he was aware that previous applications by both AOP and the Council had also been unsuccessful and commented on the feedback received, both individually, and separately, around coming together and working together on a larger scheme. Having spoken to the Chair of Heritage Lottery Fund Northern Ireland, who also sat on the National Board, he said they were very aware of the potential of Armagh and that there was good awareness of the City and a lot of the assets within the City and there was a willingness and keenness to find projects and to award money to Armagh. He suggested that if putting bids forward in the future they should try and combine them as they would stand a much better chance of being successful.

8.4 Mrs Corvan reported that a meeting with Council Officers had been scheduled for 30 September. Professor Burton added that AOP also had a meeting with the NLHF scheduled.

8.5 The Chair concurred with Mr Wilson's suggestion. By working together he considered they could develop a really good project.

8.6 In terms of immediate needs regarding heritage activities, Professor Burton reported that earlier in the day AOP had made a commitment to retain the existing temporary resource until the end of the current financial year with the officer focussing efforts on the Museum Accreditation Project.

8.7 The Committee also noted Staff Appointments and Achievements, including International Astronomical Union elections; officers had attended a Stocktake meeting with DfC Permanent Secretary and 2021/22 Resource and Capital Budgets.

- 8.8 The Head of Research's Report, which had been included within the Director's Report, provided updates in respect of AOP's REF-like Research Excellence Report; Öpik Fellowship; STFC Postdoctoral Positions and REAC. Dr Sarzi took Members through the Report.
- 8.9 Dr Sarzi reported that since writing his report there was a further matter to update upon. He referred to the draft letter to the Leverhulme Trust considered at the June meeting and advised that the challenge had been unsuccessful, briefly elaborating on the feedback received. The Leverhulme Trust's response indicated that eligible Institutions awarded their own research degrees, which AOP could not address, and had also mentioned that Institutions should have sufficient depth of research, quoting a minimum 15 research active staff.
- 8.10 By way of clarification, Dr Darnley commented that the figure of 15 related to whole research activity, not just astronomy, with most astronomy departments being embedded within larger physics groups.
- 8.11 In response to a query from Professor Mathioudakis, Dr Sarzi confirmed that AOP was ineligible for Leverhulme Early-Career Fellowships and Visiting Professorships but was eligible for other major research grants. It would welcome applications on Early-Career Fellowship in partnership with QUB. The Chair suggested that this was a matter for REAC to consider further.
- 8.12 Dr Sarzi drew attention to the award by the British Council for AOP's long and positive relationship with the International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience (IAESTE) and support of the summer programme. He said they had a very large network of universities and helped a lot when recruiting PhD students and it was recognition for staff members involved with IAESTE students.
- 8.13 Professor Burton pointed out that the decision from the Leverhulme Trust presented a challenge to AOP, relating to the concept of 'critical mass' of its research apparatus. AOP had been arguing for the need to retain its numbers as a minimum critical mass and the response from the Leverhulme Trust indicated that AOP needed more than its current numbers to reach critical mass. As such, it was a matter for discussion by REAC but also a wider discussion about resources for the organisation.
- 8.14 Dr Lemon referred to the sale of gemstones within the giftshop and also reference within the History and Heritage Policy documents to geological materials and where they were sourced and reported that the majority of geological materials for sale in retail outlets was unethically sourced. She added that this was also particularly important in the context of World Heritage, being an issue UNESCO was very much aware of. **Action MC 20/9/21–5 Source of gemstones to be investigated with suppliers.**
- 8.15 The Chair thanked Professor Burton and Dr Sarzi for their updates and the Committee approved the Director's report.

9. UPDATE FROM THE AUDIT AND RISK ASSURANCE COMMITTEE (ARAC)

- 9.1 Mr Brown informed the Committee that ARAC had considered and noted the report on the Follow up Review on the External Quality Assessment of Internal Audit Services.
- 9.2 Of the Status of Outstanding Internal Audit Recommendations two had been completed and two remained ongoing.
- 9.3 ARAC had considered the Risk Register, for which a proposed new format had been presented. The Committee had been content to recommend approval of the new format but had had some questions around how to track improvements, as they implemented actions, and would do a deep-dive into this at the next ARAC.

- 9.4 The Bi-Annual Assurance Statement (April-September 2021) had been reviewed and ARAC noted that since issue the vacant Board of Governors' nominee position had been filled. As a result, there were now no vacancies on the Management Committee. ARAC was content to present to the Management Committee for approval, subject to the update outlined.
- 9.5 ARAC was content to recommend approval of the draft Annual Report and Accounts 2020/21 and draft Report to Those Charged With Governance 2020/21.
- 9.6 ARAC had considered a paper on the review of policies undertaken and recommended the following policies to the Management Committee for approval:
- Whistleblowing Policy
 - Fraud Prevention & Response Policy
- 9.7 Discussion had taken place regarding the Bring Your Own Device Policy, under development, in terms of the issues around security of the IT systems versus the flexibility needed by researchers. It was felt that external expertise was required.
- 9.8 The Chair thanked Mr Brown for his report and the Management Committee approved the new format Risk Register; the draft Bi-Annual Assurance Statement (April-September 2021); the draft Annual Report and Accounts 2020/21; the draft Report to Those Charged With Governance 2020/21; the Whistleblowing Policy and the Fraud Prevention & Recovery Policy.

10. UPDATE FROM THE STAFFING POLICY AND REMUNERATION COMMITTEE (SPRC)

- 10.1 Mr Rooney advised that SPRC had considered the Skills Gaps and Options Paper. He said it was a Paper that the Committee would want to look at and develop with the Management Team, adding that the range of skills gaps and resource issues was such that there was a real challenge for AOP to be able to deliver its objectives, with issues around resilience, critical mass and single points of failure being risks for the organisation given the breadth of activities the organisation was involved in.
- 10.2 SPRC had received updates on the recruitment process for both the Öpik Fellowship and the Corporate Policy and HR Officer.
- 10.3 The Committee had also been appraised of the recruitment of an IT student which had been unsuccessful and the proposal to appoint a previous IT student who had recently completed their degree. SPRC approved the proposal to the appointment on a temporary fixed term contract.
- 10.4 SPRC noted participation in the Workable NI Programme, funded by DfC, following on from AOP's involvement in the Job Start Scheme.
- 10.5 The Committee considered some structural issues to include the creation of a Senior Education Officer post, from within the existing complement and secondment of an existing Education Officer to develop programmes around Climate Change and approved the structural changes. It also agreed the JEGS evaluation of two posts.
- 10.6 SPRC approved the Attendance Management and Flexible Working policies and noted the HR Strategy Action Plan 2021/22.
- 10.7 In summary, Mr Rooney sought the Management Committee's endorsement of:
- the recruitment of the temporary IT Student on a 1 year FTC;

- the structural changes to include a third Senior Education Officer post, filled through an internal recruitment process; the secondment and backfill arrangements for the Climate Change programme development work;
- JEG evaluation of two posts;
- Attendance Management and Flexible Working Policies.

10.8 The Committee approved the recommendations from the SPRC as outlined by Mr Rooney.

11. UPDATE FROM THE RESEARCH AND EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (REAC)

11.1 Professor Harra advised that the REAC had met recently at which it had considered and made a few minor amendments to its Terms of Reference, which having been previously circulated, were recommended for approval. A date for the first meeting of the Committee had been set for November and the Committee would be joined by Dr Sarzi and Mrs Sinead Mackle. At the meeting one of the issues to be discussed would be whether to go into the REF or not.

11.2 The Committee approved the REAC Terms of Reference.

12. 2021-2026 CORPORATE STRATEGY

12.1 At the outset, Mrs Corvan advised that copies of the designed Corporate Strategy were circulated within the room and a soft copy had been uploaded to the SharePoint site earlier that morning. She explained that in developing the Strategy there had been a number of very worthwhile sessions with available Management Committee members and advised that the text that had been in the Word document was all contained within the designed document but better presented. She drew attention to the astronomy diagram and the map showing the telescope projects which provided visual impact and advised that it now contained quotations as had been suggested. In order to have the document available for the 6 October launch date it would be going to print the following day. She thanked everyone who had contributed and felt that this had created a stronger document.

12.2 The Chair thanked Professor Burton, Mrs Corvan and the whole team involved in delivering the document in a very short timeframe. He also thanked those who had engaged so thoroughly both via Zoom and in person. The designed document was very impressive and a professional production.

12.3 Mrs Corvan added that the graphic design was carried out within the NICS's DoF's Shared Services team. In particular, she extended appreciation to Ms Arlene Stevenson who had been working on it with her the previous day.

12.4 In response to a query from Mr Rooney as to whether the Strategy had received DfC approval, Mrs Corvan explained that she had been in contact with Ms Kennedy to advise that a designed up version was coming. DfC had received the word version but not a designed copy as the pages that were being worked on the previous Thursday and Friday were around the Programme for Government and DfC. Ms Kennedy was aware that it would be with her early that morning. It was hoped to obtain the necessary approval to enable the document to go to print.

12.5 Mr Cox extended thanks to Mrs Corvan and all those who had worked on the document which he considered was a great piece of work. He said the challenge for AOP was to make it real.

12.6 In response, Mrs Corvan advised that at the ARAC earlier they had been talking about the Risk Register which had been reviewed because of the Strategy and at SPRC about the Skills Gaps Paper looking at the skills necessary to deliver it. See added that they would be reporting to the Department on progress.

12.7 The Committee formally approved the 2021-2026 Corporate Strategy.

13. 2021/22 BUSINESS PLAN

13.1 The Committee noted letter dated 17 August 2021 from Minister Hargey approving the Business Plan.

13.2 The Committee approved the performance against the Business Plan as outlined in the following papers, which had previously been circulated:

- Corporate Plan Objectives
- KPIs Q1 2021-22
- Finance – Period 4

13.3 In response to a query from Mr Kennedy in respect of the value of the bids submitted to the October Monitoring Round, Mr Knox apologised that he didn't have that information to hand but was aware that AOP had been awarded an additional £10k resource and £35k capital funding and that there were still some outstanding bids, including one for the short-fall.

13.4 Mr Kennedy referred to the discussion previously around income generated through donations being off-set against budget allocation and advised that he had looked at the treasury budgetary guidance on this matter and would be willing to take this off-line. In response Mrs Corvan reported that this had since been resolved as the Department had granted approval for AOP to accrue donations specifically for its PhD Programme and since approval AOP had been putting a big push on donations.

13.5 Professor Burton added that donations was one reason why it was proposed to change the name of the Charity as making a donation to the Governors of Armagh Observatory and Planetarium didn't sound very attractive. Mrs Corvan explained that AOP was actively promoting Amazon Smile. When making a purchase through the Amazon Smile App you could choose a charity registered with them to make your donation. She felt the charity registration name of the Governors of Armagh Observatory and Planetarium didn't do much to encourage donations.

13.6 The Committee noted that donations through ticket sales were being received at a steady rate.

13.7 Mr Kennedy considered it was a very significant policy shift if AOP was permitted to retain that income, given the constraint on budgets.

13.8 Picking up on Mr Kennedy's previous query regarding the Monitoring Round, Mrs Corvan reported that there had been £120k of resource bids submitted.

14. POLICY REVIEW

14.1 The Committee approved two new policies – Policy on the Operation of CCTV and Use of Bailey House Accommodation. It also approved the revised Complaints Policy & Procedures to which there had been no material changes.

15. AOB

15.1 The Committee noted the:

- date of the next meeting - Monday 6 December 2021;
- availability of training as outlined in the report;

- ARAC and SPRC Minutes for June 2021;
- REAC notes of Preliminary Meeting September 2021;
- PR Coverage Report.

Mr Wilson retired from the meeting at 12.40 pm.

16. CONFIDENTIAL ITEM REMOVED

The Chair thanked Members for their attendance and participation.

Mrs Corvan briefly explained the arrangements for the Engagement Event following the meeting.

The meeting concluded at 1.05 pm.

Signed as a true record of the meeting

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(Chair)

Dated:

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE ACTION POINT LOG
AND MATTERS ARISING

Updated Actions as at 19 November 2021

Reference	Action	Owner	Progress
20 September 2021			
20/09/21-01	Officers to put in place the necessary arrangements for the role of Charity Trustee to be transferred from the Board of Governors to the Management Committee.	HoCS	Ongoing December 2021: being progressed to align with 2022 Board of Governors Annual Visitation.
20/09/21-02	Arrangements to be put in place for annual review of effectiveness of the Management Committee and its Sub-Committee to be undertaken in December.	HoCS	Ongoing 28 October 2021: ARAC Self-Assessment Checklist issued to ARAC Members. 6 December 2021: Summary of ARAC Self-Assessment Checklist considered by ARAC. 6 December 2021: Review of Effectiveness session held with MC Members. SPRC Review of Effectiveness to be undertaken March 2022.
20/09/21-03	Summary of Skill Gap Analysis exercise to be brought to December meeting	HoCS	Propose to Close 6 December 2021: Agenda item for meeting.
20/09/21-04	Boardroom Apprentice MOU to be signed.	Corporate Manager	Propose to Close 20 September 2021: Boardroom Apprentice MOU signed.
20/09/21-05	Source of gemstones to be investigated with suppliers.	HoCS	Propose to Close 6 December 2021: update report included in Director's report.
20/09/21-06	AOP's Solicitor to be instructed to seek payment of AOP's legal fees by the Council.	HoCS	Propose to Close September 2021: Solicitor instructed accordingly.
21 June 2021			
21/06/21-03	Continuing Membership of Management Committee for Professor Mathioudakis' Membership to be progressed	HoCS	Propose to Close 20 September 2021: Professor Mathioudakis' continuing membership confirmed and reported. September 2021: a verbal update will be provided at the meeting. August 2021: correspondence issued to QUB.
21/06/21-04	REF-like Research Excellence Report to be considered by REAC	HoR	Propose to Close 16 November 2021: report discussed at REAC meeting. 2 September 2021: preliminary meeting of REAC. First meeting to take place 16 November 2021.

**MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE ACTION POINT LOG
AND MATTERS ARISING**

Sp 5 May 2021			
SpMC5/05/21-01	Records of all meetings and discussions associated with the ALV to be marked as confidential and redacted from publishes minutes	Corporate Manager	Ongoing September 2021: moving forward this matter will be last item on Management Committee meeting Agenda
30 March 2020			
MC30/3/20-02	Explore inclusion of Observatory in Armagh Conservation Area and report back to a future meeting.	SMT	Ongoing September 2021: ongoing but no further update at present June 2021: ongoing but no further update at present 15 March 2021: ongoing but no further update at present June 2020: update included in Director's Report