

MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING: 14TH December 2010

11am Tuesday 14th December 2010

Northern Ireland Screen, Alfred House, Belfast

Present: Richard Hill (Chair), Brian McMahon, Tim McKane, James Penny, Maurice Hayes, Roger Austin, Philip Morrow, Kate Smith

In attendance: Richard Williams (CEO), Andrew Reid (Head of Production), Linda Martin (Head of Finance), Áine Walsh (Head of ILBF), Moyra Lock (Head of Marketing), Elsie Brown (Operations Manager), Arthur Scott (DCAL – Observer), Marie Shivers (minutes)

Apologies: Terry Loane, Mairead Regan, Peter Quinn, Ruth McCance, Anne Cormican, Bernard McCloskey (Head of Education),

1.0 Chairman's Opening Remarks

1.1 No conflicts of interest were raised.

1.2 The Chair reported his various conversations/meetings with Ministers, including Nelson McCausland, OFM/dFM, Arlene Foster, and Sammy Wilson, and that they had all made positive comments about Northern Ireland Screen and were supportive of what we do. The CAL Committee and OFM/dFM set visits received very good feedback.

1.3 A brief discussion on possible tax breaks for TV drama took place. It was agreed that Northern Ireland Screen would continue to articulate the potential value of tax breaks for TV drama and keep a close eye on other developments in the area of tax variance.

1.4 The Board agreed to respond positively to the DCAL Permanent Secretary's letter and to provide Northern Ireland Screen's proposals as to how to move forward.

2.0 Minutes of the Board meeting of 21 September

2.1 The minutes of the last Board meeting were agreed and signed.

2.2 Action points from the last meeting were reviewed and the Board updated.

3.0 Management Accounts to end October 2010

3.1 Linda Martin explained the screen fund figure which reflects an Invest NI payment from last year for Game of Thrones. The Board approved the accounts.

4.0 CEO's Report

4.1 CEO remains optimistic about Game of Thrones series 2 going ahead in Northern Ireland. A formal decision by HBO is likely in January.

- 4.2 Progress has been made on government assistance for new studio space, with Jeremy Fitch at Invest NI playing a pivotal role. A site has been found in Titanic Quarter and meetings with key players continue. Northern Ireland Screen will probably take on the role of managing agent/leaseholder once the studio is built. The Board were content with this.
- 4.3 The DCAL Minister and department are content with our proposals on the Savings Delivery Plan.
- 4.4 There is a greater risk associated with cashflow than in previous years as the financing of local projects we have prioritised may be difficult to close due to the number of financiers involved. CEO wanted the Board to understand this risk, but also that there was no shortage of demand for funds. Andrew then briefed the Board on other projects we have going forward over the next few months.
- 4.5 CEO updated the Board on the latest developments on the Ulster-Scots Broadcast Fund. Rick Hill will chair in the interim until a selection process is undertaken.
- 4.6 The Chair thanked the CEO and Executive for their hard work.

5.0 PI Report

- 5.1 The CEO reported Northern Ireland Screen on track on most indicators except for development funding. This is due to the delay in resolving administrative changes. To compensate, development funding will be pushed in the New Year.
- 5.2 The Board accepted the report.

6.0 Committee Updates

Finance and Audit Committee

- 6.1 James Penny has succeeded Peter Quinn, who stepped down as Chair of the Finance and Audit Committee in September. Brian McMahon has also joined the Committee. Future meetings will take place on the day of the Board to ensure the most up to date information and highest levels of attendance. The Board agreed this new arrangement.
- 6.2 James briefed on the latest Committee discussion, flagging up the VAT recovery issue and the resultant cash flow problem, the Paint Hall lease and the forthcoming staff review as issues on the Risk Register which need to be rectified as soon as possible.
- 6.3 The importance of resolving the Paint Hall lease issues were affirmed, and the need for an immediate resolution of the cashflow issue resulting from VAT agreed.
- 6.4 It was noted that the risks facing Northern Ireland Screen were all external.
- 6.5 The Board raised some concern over the appropriateness of the Staff Review and confirmed the importance of clear legal advice ahead of the staff review exercise.

Arthur Scott reiterated that the money for this staff review is only available in this financial year.

- 6.6 The Board agreed the Risk Register.

James Penny and Arthur Scott left the meeting.

7.0 Committee Update Reports

Investment Committee

- 7.1 Andrew Reid updated the Board on current projects. No further points to add.

Irish Language Broadcast Fund

- 7.2 The Chair had written to thank Máirtín Ó Muilleoir for his significant contribution to the Committee. No further points to add.

Education Policy Working Group

- 7.3 Roger Austin reported that there will be an event happening next year, possibly at the University of Ulster campus in Belfast. No further points to add.

Skills Panel/training

- 7.4 Mairead Regan asked CEO in her absence to report to the Board the success of the Belfast Media Festival in October. There is now an intention for it to become an annual event.

- 7.5 The Skills Panel meeting has been rescheduled to 8 February. No further points to add.

Ulster Scots Broadcast Fund

- 7.6 Covered under CEO's Report.

CEO and Executive left the meeting

8.0 CEO'S Remuneration

- 8.1 The Chair updated the Board on this issue. A DCAL submission is currently with the Minister. It is hoped the issue will be resolved swiftly.

9.0 Any Other Business

- 9.1 No other business arose. The meeting was closed

10.0 Date of Next Meeting

- 10.1 The next Board meeting will be held at 11am on Tuesday 15th March 2010.

<i>Point</i>	<i>Detail</i>	<i>To be action by</i>
1.4	CEO to respond to Permanent Secretary's letter outlining our proposals for the way forward	CEO
4.5	Bring together the new Ulster-Scots Broadcast Fund Committee	Chair
6.3	Arthur Scott and CEO to work together to resolve Paint Hall lease issues as soon as possible	AS/CEO

Signed:

R. M. Fin

Date:

15/3/11