

MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING: 31st May 2013

11:30am Friday 31st May 2013

Northern Ireland Screen, Alfred House, Belfast

Present: Rick Hill (Chair), Brian McMahon (Vice Chair), Tim McKane, James Penny, Michael Catto, Adeline Dinsmore, Laurence McKeown, Fiona MacMillan, Aódán MacPóilin, Michael Kuhn, Maurice Hayes, Jennifer Johnston, Ian Parsley, Arthur Scott (DCAL – Observer)

In attendance: Richard Williams (CEO), Linda Martin (Head of Finance), Andrew Reid (Head of Production), Moyra Lock (Head of Marketing), Áine Walsh (Head of ILBF), Bernard McCloskey (Head of Education), Elsie Brown (Operations Manager), Rebecca Mairs (minutes)

There were no conflicts of interest raised by members of the Board.

1.0 Chair's Opening Remarks

- 1.1 The Chair updated the Board on the appointment of his successor indicating that the process was very near to conclusion and that an announcement was imminent. The Chair noted that the sequencing and communication around the appointment were less than ideal. The Board agreed that the Vice Chair would act as Chair through any interim period.
- 1.2 The Chair advised the Board that the CAL Minister had indicated her wish to resolve the issues around Staff Terms & Conditions. He noted that he expected Northern Ireland Screen to be granted authority to honour staff bonuses for the outstanding years. He also noted that it was agreed that Northern Ireland Screen would undertake a Staff Review at an appropriate time with the present Staff Review process set aside. The Board welcomed this as considerable and critical progress. The CEO also welcomed the progress endorsing the Chair's view that authority to honour the bonuses would be forthcoming. He also noted that the

regularisation of Staff Terms & Conditions including pension provision was still outstanding. The Board agreed to accept the bonus treatment of the CEO's bonus.

- 1.3 The Chair congratulated the Board and Staff on securing *Game of Thrones* Season 4 and Universal Pictures' *Dracula*, and noted with satisfaction that *Blandings* and *The Fall* had been re-commissioned for a second series.
- 1.4 The Chair reported positively on Northern Ireland Screen's presence at the Cannes Film Festival, noting that the Chairman's Lunch was very well attended.
- 1.5 The Chair noted DCAL's intention to undertake a zero-based budget approach to its funding for 2014-15 with a focus on Social Inclusion, Equality and Poverty Reduction. He welcomed this opportunity to further align Northern Ireland Screen with DCAL's objectives and expressed the view that Northern Ireland Screen was well placed to assist DCAL with these priorities.
- 1.6 The Chair circulated Board appraisals for Board members to sign and return to Elsie Brown as soon as possible.

2.0 Minutes of the Board meeting of 26th February 2013

- 2.1 The minutes were agreed and signed.

3.0 Management Accounts

- 3.1 Linda Martin presented the accounts, informing the Board that due to a change of legislation the NIAO will in future audit Northern Ireland Screen's accounts. She noted that NIAO had indicated that they could not facilitate the audit until late Autumn. The Board expressed its concern at this delay.
- 3.2 The AGM has been moved to September/October in the hope that the audit may be complete by then.

3.3 Northern Ireland Screen has lodged an appeal with HMRC in relation to a rejected VAT claim associated with the period of change over from the old VAT treatment to the newly agreed VAT treatment. £140k is at stake with particular impact on the ILBF. At this juncture, the Finance & Audit Committee is optimistic that the appeal will be successful.

3.4 The Board approved the Management Accounts.

4.0 Review of Risk Register

4.1 The CEO's Quarterly Assurance Statement of Internal Control was considered and noted with satisfaction. The Board agreed to continue to engage with DCAL regarding the appropriate wording for its noting of the CEO's Quarterly Assurance Statement.

4.2 The CEO reported on the Risk Register.

4.3 The Board added the risks associated with the potential drastic action of the Board should the Staff issues not be resolved soon to the Risk Register, and the need to secure future ILBF & USBF funding.

4.4 The Board approved the Risk Register.

5. CEO's Report

5.1 The CEO updated the Board on *Dracula* and noted that the production experience on *Dracula* illustrated the need for new sound stages – either refurbished or newly built – to be developed. The experience of accommodating *Dracula* in make shift spaces had been below an acceptable level of satisfaction.

5.2 The CEO noted the importance of The Game of Thrones Exhibition at Titanic Belfast as the beginning of serious tourism dimension to the screen industries and further noted the successful collaboration with NITB. The Chair

congratulated the Marketing Team on securing the Exhibition for Northern Ireland.

5.3 He noted the BFI's Screening Literacy Film Seminar to take place in Derry on 4th June at which the results of the European Film Education Survey would indicate Northern Ireland's leading position in film education. It was also noted that The Review of A Wider Literacy would also be announced at this event.

5.4 The CEO and Aine Walsh had met with DCMS to discuss the funding of the ILBF and USBF beyond March 2015, the key outcome being DCMS's agreement that a decision should be made by March 2014 to facilitate the ongoing good management of the funds.

5.5 The CEO reported that he had undertaken to assist DCAL with a potential legacy project from UK City of Culture and that DCAL was encouraging Northern Ireland Screen to explore a closer link with Momentum and with CultureTech.

6. PI Report

6.1 CEO noted the very strong delivery represented in the PI Report but noted that NI resident crew had dropped slightly below target during the year. The Board asked for more detail on the crew targets noting that percentage targets, while useful, did not capture overall growth or shrinkage.

6.2 The Board was content with this report.

7. Committee Updates

Irish Language Broadcast Fund

7.1 Maurice Hayes noted the importance of securing on-going funding by March 2013.

- 7.2 Áine Walsh reported that DoubleBand had been awarded funding from RTE and BAI for an Irish Language project noting with pleasure that it was good to see companies secure Irish Language projects without ILBF funding.
- 7.3 Áine noted that a failure to agree mutually acceptable terms between the BBC and BAI was impacting negatively on potential ILBF projects. Discussions are ongoing and it is hoped that there will be a satisfactory conclusion to this issue.

Investment Committee

- 7.4 Michael Kuhn reported a busy period with a wide range of projects awarded funding since the last Board meeting.
- 7.5 He reported very positive feedback from David Parfitt, the producer of *The Wipers Times*, about his experience filming in Northern Ireland.
- 7.6 He noted the importance of re-commissioned projects including Game of Thrones, Blandings, Dani's Castle and The Fall, noting also that Dracula was a returning project from Universal Pictures.

Ulster-Scots Broadcast Fund

- 7.7 Ian Parsley noted that the cash-flow of USBF had caught up with funding commitments from its inception in 2010.
- 7.8 He also reported that the USBF Committee had been formally reconstituted.

Exhibition Sub-Committee

- 7.9 Laurence McKeown reported on the QFT's ongoing bid to secure Lead Organisation status for the BFI's regional hub.
- 7.10 He also reported Belfast Film Festival's involvement in providing cultural programming during the upcoming Police and Fire Games.

- 7.11 The Board noted Mike Catto's concern that the consultancy work being undertaken regarding a possible new mixed venue to include a cultural cinema was overly leading.

Education Policy Working Group

- 7.12 Adeline Dinsmore reported that the consultation exercise around reviewing the Wider Literacy Strategy had been successful.
- 7.13 She also noted the BFI event in Derry represented a strong opportunity to highlight Northern Ireland Screen's Education initiatives.
- 7.14 She reminded the Board that funding for After School Film Clubs beyond March 2014 was still to be secured and emphasized that there was a very high level of expectation within the participating schools that After School Film Clubs would continue.

Skills Panel/Training

- 7.15 The Board noted the continuing work of the Skills Panel.

Finance & Audit Committee

- 7.16 The Vice-Chair updated the Board on the Finance & Audit Committee's meeting, noting that the VAT issue had been discussed at some length. The VAT issue will be added to the risk register but it is hoped that a favourable outcome will be reached soon. The Board is satisfied that the risk is being managed and will look forward to hearing the outcome of the HMRC review.

8. Any Other Business

- 8.1 A draft copy of the new Opening Doors Strategy 2014-18 had been tabled. It was agreed that a reworking of this draft could be shared with Invest NI. It was

also agreed that further discussion of the draft Strategy should be undertaken at the next board meeting after the new Chair was in place.

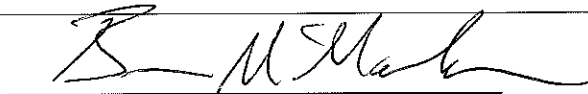
- 8.2 The Board expressed its great appreciation of the commitment of the outgoing Chair, thanking him for his considerable contribution. On behalf of the staff, the CEO also thanked the Chair for his enormous support and encouragement throughout his term of office.

9. Date of Next Meeting

- 9.1 The dates of the next scheduled Board meeting, due to be held in September, and subsequent 2013/14 dates will be emailed to the Board in due course.

<i>Point</i>	<i>Detail</i>	<i>To be action by</i>
1.2 & 4.3	Amend Risk Register	CEO
3.3	Review outcome of HMRC review of VAT appeal	Finance & Audit Committee
8.1	Opening Doors draft strategy to be completed	CEO

Signed:



Date:

27 Sep 2013