

**MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING: 12<sup>th</sup> March 2019**

**11am, Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2019**  
**Northern Ireland Screen, 21 Alfred Street, Belfast**

**Present:** Rotha Johnston (Chairwoman), Elaine Sperber, Jennifer Johnston, Fiona MacMillan, Michael Kuhn, Greg Maguire

**In attendance:** Richard Williams (CEO), Andrew Reid (Head of Production), Bernard McCloskey (Head of Education), Aine Walsh (Head of ILBF), Linda McGuinness (Acting Director of Finance), Mary McVey (Marketing Manager), Marie Shivers (PA to CEO)

**Apologies:** Ian Parsley, Adeline Dinsmore

No conflicts of interest were noted.

**1.0 Minutes of the Board meeting of 4<sup>th</sup> December 2018**

- 1.1 The December minutes were agreed and signed.
- 1.2 The Chairwoman would like to add more Board member input to the complaints procedure with the proposed change to be circulated for approval.
- 1.3 The Chairwoman has forwarded correspondence to the Permanent Secretary regarding the treatment of our funding and will follow up with the Department after Brexit.
- 1.4 All other action points were completed.

**2.0 Chairwoman's Business**

- 2.1 The Chairwoman thanked those who had agreed to extensions to their terms and noted that the current membership of the Board allowed us to be quorate until the end of June. Mike Catto has stood down for personal reasons and the Chairwoman will write to him thanking him for his service. The Chairwoman hoped that Board membership will be resolved by June.
- 2.2 The Chairwoman welcomed Mary McVey, Marketing Manager, to the Board.

**3.0 Chief Executive's Report**

- 3.1 It is good news that 100% of the Game of Thrones prequel pilot will shoot in Northern Ireland. Derry Girls Season 2 has aired to rave reviews, and we are pleased with how The Pixel Mill is going. The CEO noted the success of Into Film's ScreenWorks programme and Nerve Belfast's Animation Academy and expressed hope that we can raise their priority further in the next financial year. We are in the process of a turnover of new staff and should be back up to full complement by April.

### Performance Indicator Report

- 3.2 The PI Report was presented with the CEO noting that the cycle of Game of Thrones production left us behind target in year one.

### Investment Report

- 3.3 The CEO noted that the Development funding allocated is substantial. He also reflected on the strategic value in seeking to shift a percentage of the TV drama to indigenous companies and noted some developments in this area.
- 3.4 Hat Trick recently won the tender for Mastermind with a proposal to produce it in Belfast. The tender will last for 2 years.
- 3.5 Performance across all areas towards the end of the financial year is on track. Given the amount of change on an Executive level, it is a great achievement, and the Chairwoman extended her thanks to all staff.

## **4.0 Finance, Audit and Governance**

### Risk Register for Approval

- 4.1 The biggest issue on the Risk Register is the current issue of Board appointments. We are now down to 8 members from 13.
- 4.2 The Transitional Arrangement risk has been taken off the Register and a new risk has been added for the development of new studio space which is now urgent due to recent problems arising with Britvic Studios.
- 4.3 It was agreed that the change in pension contributions should be added to the register if necessary once the executive has met with NILGOSC to discuss further.
- 4.4 ILBF/USBF funding won't be confirmed until the next UK Spending Review which has been delayed due to Brexit. ILBF has an investment round soon, at which most of the remaining budget will be spent so their next round in October will be unfunded. We will continue to monitor the situation and, if necessary, prior to the meeting in June, we may approach NIO directly.
- 4.5 Studio capacity remains an issue. Krypton are leaving Britvic due to an unreasonable rent demand. This increases the pressure on the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of Belfast Harbour Studios. Ideally, additional studio space is required in no later than 18 months' time.

### Audit and Risk Committee Update

- 4.6 The internal auditors may need to reduce the days allocated to our audits due to staffing issues. The Chairwoman confirmed it was the responsibility of the Board to appoint the internal auditors. Their performance will be reviewed at the end of the second year.
- 4.7 External audit presented the Audit Strategy for 19-20.

#### Management Accounts to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2018

4.8 The Management Accounts were presented to the Board. The following significant variances were highlighted:

- Screen Fund cashflow is under budget due to project timing: 77% of the annual year cash budget was released at the end of February;
- All staff, except one, who accepted VES have now left the organisation;
- Other income has increased due to facility income not being included in the original budget;
- The legal fees are forecasted to have a variance of £60k over the original budget. This is due to the incremental budgeting approach being applied whereas the activity-based method should have been used and will be applied going forward;
- Marketing fees have increased by 10% due to increased activity;
- We are on track for a full spend by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

#### Strategic Resources Committee Update

4.9 A number of issues were discussed at the last Committee meeting, including staff structure and regrading matters which the Department confirmed we have delegated authority for. The next Staff Survey will issue shortly.

### **5.0 Committee Updates**

#### Investment Committee

5.1 Clips from all sectors were shown and the reported information noted.

#### Irish Language Broadcast Fund

5.2 The next Investment Committee meeting will take place in early April with 25 applications received. The ILBF is working with TG4, S4C and BBC Alba on the Young Audience Content Fund with the first call for applications opening on 1<sup>st</sup> April.

#### Ulster-Scots Broadcast Fund

5.3 Recent Burns Night projects were well received with good audience figures; a project from UTV is expected to be received in the next round; Fiona Keane is holding an event for consultants in April; the 2 new trainees are doing well.

5.4 The ILBF and USBF will undergo an audit in 19/20. We will request this to be done as early in the year as possible and the duration to be reduced from 10 to 5 days' each. Linda to liaise with the Auditors.

#### Screen Education and Careers Working Group

5.5 Apologies from Adeline were passed to the Board. She is recovering and hopes to be at the next meeting. David McConnell has been recruited as the Educations and Careers Manager and will start in early April. Rachael Garrett will also start in early April as the new Outreach officer. Nerve Belfast are moving to Havelock House and should be

operational by early April – this is a temporary measure and they are still in discussions with W5 about a permanent space there.

- 5.6 The Screen Education and Careers Working Group recently met with new members in attendance: Alison Thompson, NIFTS in Bangor; and Helen Thompson, Belfast Met. Moving Image Arts entry for GCSE is up by 30%. The ScreenWorks programme recently recruited 150 students into the programme. This will continue to be supported next year. The Animation Academy is also going well with 50 students recruited. The Nerve Centre in Derry are talking to The Pixel Mill about setting up a games academy. 700 items on the DFA UTV archive have been captured and digitised and more are in the pipeline with additional BAI funding confirmed.

- 5.7 Michael Kuhn noted a new craft school has started up in London and suggested we make contact with them. It looks as though it will be large and aimed at people from deprived areas.

#### Skills and Training

- 5.8 Fifteen Aim High candidates are currently at bootcamp. Feedback so far is positive.

#### **6.0 Business Plan**

- 6.1 The Business Plan was read and discussed by the Board and will be submitted to DfC shortly.

#### **7.0 Update on NSPCC**

- 7.1 The safeguarding document was circulated for the Board's review and comments. The next stage will be to work up a presentation for training. Guidelines will be part of the contracting process and four members of staff will be trained for safeguarding purposes. The Board suggested clear prohibition on under age people being offered alcohol should be included in the document.

#### **8.0 Annual Production Report**

- 8.1 The Chairwoman asked who would have sight of the Annual Production Report? if we could use this very beneficial document more widely? It was agreed that the Report be marked as confidential and that a summary would be beneficial for broader distribution.

#### **9.0 Any Other Business**

- 9.1 No other business was discussed.

#### **10.0 Date of Next Meeting**

- 10.1 The date of the next meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> June at 11am.**

Point	Detail	Actioned by
1.3	Amended complaints procedure to be circulated for approval	Linda McGuinness
2.1	Write to Mike Catto thanking him for his service	Chairwoman
4.3	The change in pension legislation should be added to the register once the executive has met with NILGOSC to discuss further	CEO
5.4	Liaise with Auditors regarding the ILBF/USBF Audit	Linda McGuinness
5.7	Make contact with a new craft school in London	CEO
7.1	Update NSPCC document with Board comments	Andrew Reid
8.1	Make the Annual Production Report confidential and draw up a summary for broader distribution	CEO

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

(Chairwoman)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

11/6/2019