

**MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING: 10<sup>th</sup> September 2019****11am, Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> September 2019****Northern Ireland Screen, 21 Alfred Street, Belfast**

- Present:** Rotha Johnston (Chairwoman), Elaine Sperber, Michael Kuhn, Adeline Dinsmore, Patrick Barr, Roise ni Bhaoill, Fionnuala Deane, Michael Fanning, Richard Hanna, Susan Picken
- In attendance:** Richard Williams (CEO), Linda Martin (Director of Finance and Corporate Services), Andrew Reid (Head of Production), Aine Walsh (Head of ILBF), Mary McVey (Marketing Manager), Marie Shivers (PA to CEO)
- Apologies:** Greg Maguire, Mark Huffam, Brenda Romero, Sheila Fleming, Bernard McCloskey (Head of Education)

No conflicts of interest were noted.

The Chairwoman welcomed new Board members and indicated she was looking forward to working with everyone.

The Board made introductions for the benefit of the new members.

**1.0 Minutes of the Board meeting of 11<sup>th</sup> June 2019**

- 1.1 Adeline Dinsmore and Michael Kuhn noted the minutes were an accurate reflection of the last meeting. The minutes were agreed and signed.
- 1.2 The Chairwoman noted that the action point to contact the new craft school in London would be picked up by the CEO during Bernard's absence. Useful discussions with the Economy and Communities Permanent Secretaries have taken place. A Game of Thrones economic impact exercise is ongoing with Tourism NI and an update will be provided at the December meeting. Induction for new Board members is ongoing and the Chair thought it would be useful for the Board to visit key partners or events as time goes on.

**2.0 Chairwoman's Business**

- 2.1 The Chairwoman and CEO met with Tracy Meharg from the Department for Communities to discuss a number of issues, notably our suggestion to move to a four-year funding cycle as opposed to the current annual cycle.
- 2.2 ILBF/USBF funding runs out in 2020. DCMS has recommended to the Treasury that the two funds are replenished for next year at the current funding levels in line with the Comprehensive Spending Review. We are optimistic that this issue will be resolved by the end of October 2019. It was agreed that a meeting with NIO be requested for the end of October/November if no progress has been made.
- 2.3 The Chairwoman and CEO also met with Sue Gray, from the Department of Finance to outline the need for ongoing funding and the importance of tax credits among other issues.

- 2.4 The Department for the Economy Permanent Secretary announced he is retiring in November. The Chairwoman will seek a meeting with him before his departure.
- 2.5 The Chairwoman noted that the Board are responsible for confirming appointments to our various Committees and would like approval for the following as of 1<sup>st</sup> September 2019:
- Sheila Fleming and Michael Fanning to join the Strategic Resources Committee which will have up to four Board members;
  - Sheila Fleming to Chair and Patrick Barr and Susan Picken to join the Audit and Risk Committee.
- 2.6 Adeline Dinsmore will continue to Chair the SCEWG and Michael Kuhn will continue to Chair the Investment Committee. The Board agreed these appointments.
- 2.7 The Chairwoman noted a Bank Mandate approval request had been received for a new member of staff to be able to access the bank. Board agreement was required for the Chairwoman to sign the mandate. The Board agreed.

### **3.0 Chief Executive's Report**

- 3.1 Toronto International Film Festival is currently underway with Ordinary Love premiering to positive reviews. A Bump Along the Way, our New Talent Focus film, has also premiered at the festival to a very positive response. Ordinary Love will also screen at London Film Festival in October alongside Lost Lives, a project marking 50 years of the start of the Troubles and co-financed with the BBC.
- 3.2 Pablo is launching its second series on 1<sup>st</sup> October and Mastermind is currently shooting here as a result of Hindsight's successful tender bid supported by Northern Ireland Screen.
- 3.3 There are challenges around largescale production with the cancellation of Krypton freeing up studio space. Studios may be taken but it doesn't guarantee a production although there are a number of potential projects in the pipeline. Michael Kuhn offered his assistance if needed.
- 3.4 There is an oversupply of TV drama projects in the late winter/early spring which will have to be addressed. It is possible that projects, including BBC projects, will have to be turned away.
- 3.5 The Screenworks programme has been successfully launched. The Chairwoman was keen for the Board to take a look at it and give feedback on the basic principles. Relevant information will be circulated to Board members.
- 3.6 The CEO provided background for the new Board members on the Belfast Film Centre/Media Lab within the City Deal. A Steering Group, including the CEO, has been set up for the Destination Hub which includes the Belfast Film Centre, and a development programme is underway with Belfast City Council. The CEO has also been asked to join the steering group for the Media Lab.
- 3.7 Donal Phillips, our Interactive Content Executive, will be leaving on 20 September to take up a new post at Queen's University. Donal leaves a significant legacy, including getting The Pixel Mill up and running. We are pleased that he will remain close to the games sector

in his new role. Recruitment for a successor is currently underway. The Board expressed an interest in a visit to The Pixel Mill in early 2020.

#### Performance Indicator Report

- 3.8 The CEO noted that we are on track for a full spend despite slow movement on largescale. Screen fund ratios and skills percentages are looking good.

#### Investment Report

- 3.9 The CEO summarised the Investment Report noting that funds will need to be rephased to replenish the Independent Film budget which is already fully committed.

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

#### Risk Register for Approval

- 4.1 The CEO noted the two biggest current risks: largescale projects and the language funds which have already been discussed. The Chairwoman suggested the CEO, Linda Martin and the Audit and Risk Committee meet separately to discuss other significant risks that should be considered but are beyond the reach of Northern Ireland Screen to mitigate. The Board approved the Risk Register.

#### Audit and Risk Committee Update

- 4.2 In Sheila Fleming's absence, the Chairwoman updated the Board on the recent meeting noting the following issues were discussed: management accounts; complaints/FOI requests; GDPR update; the Risk Register and Dear Accounting Officer (DAO) requests. The satisfactory outcome of the ILBF/USBF audit was discussed including how to address the one recommendation. A copy of the internal audit report will be circulated to the Chairs of the ILBF and USBF Committees.
- 4.3 The final Report to Those Charged with Governance was signed off.

#### Management Accounts to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2019

- 4.4 The Management Accounts were presented to the Board. The following significant variances were highlighted:
- Screen Fund cashflow is under budget by £681k due to project timing. Most of this cashflow will be rectified in the August accounts;
  - We have an indication from DCMS for the language funds for a commitment of one year, although this is yet to be confirmed;
  - Overheads and salary costs are on track.

#### Strategic Resources Committee Update

- 4.5 The Chairwoman provided an update on the last meeting, noting that HR issues including new starts and an update on VES were discussed. An economic evaluation by Invest NI of the previous Strategy will commence shortly with the final report due in January. We

are also subject to a mid-term review of the current Opening Doors 2 Strategy which will commence early next year.

## **5.0 Committee Updates**

### Screen Education and Careers Working Group

- 5.1 The recent recruitment for wider representation on the Committee is working very well. The key issue raised at the last meeting in terms of young people was progression. Screenworks has seen a very successful start. 827 students sat GCSE MIA with a pass rate of 71%; 557 took AS level with 83.8% achieving A\* to C; and 482 at A-level with 88% achieving A\* to C. David McConnell has stepped on to the Committee in Bernard's McCloskey's absence. CLCs are still doing a good job in teacher education, staff development support.
- 5.2 The Chairwoman noted that it would be helpful to engage with the Department of Education. It would be useful for the Board to have sight of Declan Keeney's research on Moving Image Arts.
- 5.3 Michael Kuhn re-emphasised the importance of contacting the new London Film Academy. It is backed by very important production entities and its profile is different from anything else. Michael will arrange a visit for anyone travelling to London.

### Investment Committee

- 5.4 Nothing further to add to the update. Clips of recent projects were shown to the Board.

### Irish Language Broadcast Fund

- 5.5 Roise Ni Bhaoill noted the issue of funding had already been discussed and wanted to record the appreciation of the efforts of staff to get us to this point. Roise noted the first co-production with the USBF, the Sam Henry collection, had a very strong shared heritage message and it is hoped will be the beginning of many future collaborations with the USBF. The ILBF Graduation ceremony for the current trainees will take place on 19<sup>th</sup> September and the 2<sup>nd</sup> group of new entrants are at the beginning of their training.

### Ulster-Scots Broadcast Fund

- 5.6 Richard Hanna, the newly appointed Chair gave a summary of the awards from the last meeting noting that a number of projects including Hame had been very well received.

### Skills and Training

- 5.7 Maeve McLoughlin has been placed in the BBC as a Youth Executive for an 18-month period with the aim of enhancing the relationship between production companies and commissioners.

### Exhibition

- 5.8 Susan Picken noted that capturing the impact of all the local festivals is important, especially with the development of the Film Centre. It would be useful if, where possible, links to the reviews, box office and impact of the festivals could be shared.

5.9 The Annual Production update was noted. The Board asked to pass on congratulations on the Production Report noting it was great to see the range and scope of productions taking place.

5.10 The Marketing Calendar was also noted with October highlighted as a busy month. Mary McVey updated the Board on the new Marketing Department staff.

## 6.0 Any Other Business

6.1 Marie Shivers will circulate meeting dates for 2020 once they have been confirmed. She will also circulate possible dates for On Board training which all new Board members have to undertake as part of their induction process.

## 9.0 Date of Next Meeting

9.1 The date of the next meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> December at 11am.**

Point	Detail	Actioned by	Update
1.2	The CEO will contact the London craft school in Bernard McCloskey's absence	CEO	RW, AR and RJ visiting on 16 December
1.2	Update on the Game of Thrones economic impact exercise with Tourism NI at the December meeting	LM	Awaiting report from Tourism NI
2.4	Request a meeting with departing DfE Permanent Secretary	MS	Permanent Secretary not available to meet
3.5	Circulate Screenworks programme information to Board members	MS	Information circulated
4.1	Arrange meeting to discuss other significant risks that should be considered but are beyond the reach of Northern Ireland Screen to mitigate: CEO, Linda Martin and Audit and Risk Committee	MS	LM meeting with Invest NI in November
4.2	Circulate a copy of the ILBF/USBF Internal Audit Report to the Fund Chairs	LM	Information circulated
5.2	Circulate Declan Keeney's Creative Schools Partnership Project Evaluation Report to the Board	MS	Information circulated
6.1	Circulate meeting dates for 2020 and potential On Board training dates to new Board members	LM	Information circulated

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

(Chairwoman)

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

*3 December 2019*