

MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING: 21ST JUNE 2022

11am, Tuesday 21st June 2022

Boardroom, Northern Ireland Screen

Present: David Sterling (Chair), Greg Maguire, Richard Hanna, Michael Fanning, Peter Weil, Tom Gray, Carmel Mullan, Fionnuala Deane

In attendance: Richard Williams (CEO), Anne Dorbie (Chief Operating Officer), Áine Walsh (Head of ILBF), Mary McVey (Marketing Manager), Francis Jones (Head of Archive), David McConnell (Education Manager), Laura Higgins (Accountant), Marie Shivers (PA to CEO)

Apologies: Susan Picken, Mark Huffam, Róise Ní Bhaoill, Brenda Romero, Andrew Reid (Head of Production)

No conflicts of interest were noted.

The Chair welcomed the Board to the first in person meeting in 2 years. It was good to finally meet everyone face to face. Board members introduced themselves.

1.0 Minutes of the Board meetings of 15th March 2022

- 1.1 The Board agreed the draft minutes were an accurate reflection of the last meeting and were signed.
- 1.2 The action for a Board member to head up the skills portfolio is ongoing and the CEO will pursue. All other actions and matters arising were completed.

2.0 Chairman's business

- 2.1 The Chair and CEO are due to meet the new DfC Permanent Secretary, Colum Boyle, at the end of the month. The Chair will report back to the Board on the outcome of that meeting. They also undertook a visit to "*B&B By the Sea*" and dropped in to see "*Liff*" in production at Belfast Harbour Studios which were both very positive and going well.

3.0 CEO's Report including Performance Indicator Report and Investment Report

- 3.1 The CEO noted that his meeting with BECTU this week will be to formally close off the issue around crew rates and the agenda should revert to matters that would usually be discussed including trade, working practices etc. The CEO will update the Board if there is anything of note to disclose.
- 3.2 While it is disappointing that Contraband, the potentially long running series which was already prepping and due to film in Belfast this summer, has been cancelled, the Head of Production and Production Manager are currently in LA to chase up leads for a replacement large-scale project. The CEO noted that key stakeholders, while disappointed, were not panicked by the news.

- 3.3 Studio Ulster is progressing. Belfast Harbour and Ulster University both have Board meetings this week which are critical to the project being greenlit and we fully expect these to be approved.
- 3.4 Our working assumption is that we will receive the full budget set out in the approved economic appraisal and now in our strategy. The Strategy launch date is confirmed for Tuesday 11th October 2022. The Chair thanked the CEO for his report.

KPI Report

- 3.5 Nothing further to add although the CEO noted that despite taking the Contraband funding out of the strategy together with some minor adjustments, we are still hitting our £300m target. A presentation on refreshed KPIs will be made at the next meeting.

Investment Report

- 3.6 Detail to be covered in the Investment Committee update. Nothing to add.

4.0 Finance, Audit and Governance

Risk Register

- 4.1 Since compiling the Risk Register most risks have improved. The CEO noted that the language funds lack the 3-4 year commitment that is the usual working model. Studio Ulster should reduce from red within the next week or so depending on the progress on the exchange of contracts.
- 4.2 In response to a question from Greg Maguire on Studio Ulster, the CEO noted that Belfast Harbour should be greenlit by 3rd July and Ulster University by the end of the month. The next step then is a competitive dialogue process to appoint the industrial partner. Temporary accommodation may be required but we won't know until the dialogue process begins. The CEO will request the latest timelines on the constructive dialogue process from Ulster University and how that plays into purchasing of the kit.
- 4.3 We have been placing significant focus on cyber security. A lot has been done to reduce the risk but this is an ongoing process and there is still a lot of work to be done.

Audit and Risk Committee Update

- 4.4 Carmel Mullan briefly summarised the discussion at the recent Audit and Risk Committee meeting noting that the Annual Report and Accounts, which would normally come to this meeting, will be tabled at the September meeting due to a delay in the preparation of the Accounts and a revised audit timeline. This timing is in line with other ALBs, but we will revert back to the original timing next year.
- 4.5 A significant amount of progress has been made as a result of recommendations in the IT Security Policy report. The majority have been completed or are in the process of being completed. Staff training, resource management and admin etc are ongoing and will continue to come up for review.

Management Accounts to 31st January 2021

- 4.6 Anne Dorbie presented the 2022-23 Budget and Management Accounts for May 2022 report which provides more clarity on the income and expenditure. Anne noted that first year DfC money has been approved and we are hopeful for confirmation of multi-year funding, and a revision of IFRS16 has meant that we have to capitalise all of our leases. Everything is currently on track.
- 4.7 The Board agreed that this report was very clear compared to previous accounting reports and that it was good to see the key messages.

Strategic Resources Committee Update

- 4.8 The Committee looked at the Risk Register in detail at the last meeting and the Chair is pleased and encouraged that this document is regularly monitored and updated. The Committee also looked at budget and projected position, the Investment Report and were updated on the new HR system currently going live with the intention of attaining Invest NI's charter mark bronze award by September. The Committee noted a lot of activity around recruitment and noted one complaint which is being dealt with.

5.0 Other Committee Updates

CEFFWG

- 5.1 Docs Ireland launches on 29th June and QFT have had a busy quarter after the start of the year and are expecting a busy autumn around the festival period. Wendy Langham presented on Belfast Stories at the recent meeting. The group were enthused by this and the possibilities around public engagement. Meetings will be held with Belfast City council, the BFI and BBC NI and the Board kept updated.
- 5.2 The CEO added that Docs Ireland could be the significant documentary festival and market on the island of Ireland. The programming this year has been excellent, it feels relevant to the production sector and has tied in archive to make it feel like an interesting space. It can only grow in terms of its strategic value and critical reputation around the globe.

SECWG

- 5.3 The Committee met recently and noted that lots of virtual programmes are now starting to drop away and personal events happening more. The CLCs have been busy with school numbers and teacher training and the Nerve Centre Unboxed Festival was hugely successful. Nerve Belfast are hoping to relocate to W5 in August and are already building a partnership with Microsoft who they will be co-located with. The Into Film awards will take place next Tuesday at Leicester Square and three NI integrated schools have been nominated for awards. ScreenWorks and Screen Academies programmes are all now back in person.

Irish Language Broadcast Fund (ILBF)

- 5.4 Áine Walsh updated the Board noting the most challenging issue was managing the reduction in budget from last year. A recent tough production round had resulted in one complaint from a company that didn't receive funding. This reiterates the importance of the need for multi-year funding. Good news that Sol won at the RTS NI Awards and the Celtic Media Festival. A further audio and digital call focussing on education content will launch soon. Last year's

was very successful even though funding was limited but the value in terms of resources that aren't there currently is important. The Fund are talking to Screen Ireland and TG4 about a new scheme similar to Storyland which will hopefully launch at Galway. New trainees are starting in September and an event will be organised to celebrate achievements of trainees over the last couple of years.

Ulster-Scots Broadcast Fund (USBF)

- 5.5 Richard Hanna expressed his disappointment over the cut to funding particularly because of the enthusiasm and ambition of the Fund, it makes planning very difficult. He also highlighted the success of a small budget short film in the Ulster-Scots language which has, over the last 7 months, been very successful in a number of international film festivals in America and Europe. For the Committee this is symbolically important as it is a film in Ulster-Scots which has generated interest internationally.

Investment Committee

- 5.6 Peter Weil summarised the awards made at the recent Committee meeting as well as the recent BECTU discussions and cancelling of Demimonde. He was extremely pleased with the audience figures for the final two episodes of Derry Girls, which are very strong for that slot on Channel 4.

NIHAWG

- 5.7 Peter updated the Board on the new Archive UTV/PRONI partnership which is in its last 12 months. Negotiations with partners begin in early July to see what scope the new agreement might have. It is positive that there is an appetite to extend the existing agreement.

Skills/Training

- 5.8 The CEO briefed the Board on the CINE scheme, a partnership with the BBC funded by DfC with Northern Ireland Screen acting as sub-contractor. The initial budget is £4m over 3 years and its aim is to deliver a new entrant programme for up to 100 young people that is more focussed on outreach and targeted at people who would not alternatively find a way into the industry.
- 5.9 In response to a question by Fionnuala Deane, the CEO clarified that we may need to pull together a Derry focussed round to establish what the capacity is for Derry-based companies engage with and benefit from CINE. The CEO also clarified that a small number of the new entrants will work within the BBC but the majority will be placed within independent companies.

6.0 Marketing Calendar

- 6.1 Mary McVey noted that all things on this calendar are in person compared to this time last year when all events were online. A lot of companies are heading back out to festivals, and we are in the early planning stages for the Strategy launch in October.

7.0 Any Other Business

- 7.1 No other business was raised.

8.0 Date of Next Meeting

8.1 The date of the next meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday 13th September 2022 at 11am** at Northern Ireland Screen.

Point	Detail	Actioned by	Update
2.1	Report back to the Board on the outcome of the DfC Permanent Secretary meeting	Chair	Update at next meeting
3.1	Report to the Board if anything to note from BECTU meeting	CEO	Update at next meeting
3.5	Presentation on refreshed KPIs at the September meeting	Anne Dorbie	Update at next meeting
4.2	Request updated timeline for Studio Ulster	CEO	Update at next meeting
5.9	Specific CINE scheme for Derry/Londonderry	CEO	Update at next meeting

Signed: _____



Date: _____

13/9/22