

**MINUTES OF THE NINETY SECOND MEETING OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE OF THE ARMAGH OBSERVATORY AND PLANETARIUM HELD ON 5 JUNE 2014 AT 1.00 P.M. IN THE CASSINI ROOM, ARMAGH PLANETARIUM**

Present: Professor A. Hibbert (Deputy Chair), Professor T. Ray, Dr M. McKay, Professor M. Merrifield, Mr B. Hannam and Professor R. Oudmaijer

Apologies: Archbishop Clarke (Chair), Archdeacon R. Hoey

In attendance: Professor M. Bailey, Dr T. Mason, Mrs E.J. Kennedy (Operations Manager), Mrs K. McLoughlin (temporary Accountant) and Mr A. Hughes (DCAL Observer)

**1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were recorded as above.

**2. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

No conflicts of interest were declared.

**3. MINUTES OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 23 JANUARY 2014**

The minutes of the meeting of 23 January 2014 were reviewed, approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting and signed by the Deputy Chair.

**4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

An update on the Matters Arising can be found in the Action Point Log attached at Annex 1.

**5. CHAIR'S BUSINESS**

The Deputy Chair reported that the Joint Administrator had tendered his resignation. Professor Oudmaijer queried if a vacancy existed. The Deputy Chair confirmed that the Review of the Organisation and Management would consider the level of support required in this area. Currently the activities were being covered through the secondment of an Operations Manager from the Northern Ireland Civil Service and a temporary Accountant.

**6. UPDATE FROM THE AUDIT AND RISK ASSURANCE COMMITTEE MEETING**

Mr Hannam presented the Annual Report for 2013/14 (Paper 3). He also provided an update from the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meeting. Annual Audit Reports had been received from ASM (Internal Auditors for 2013/14). The Reports set out the formal audit opinion on the adequacy, reliability and effectiveness of the organisations' systems of risk management, control and governance. The Observatory had achieved satisfactory assurance and the Planetarium, limited assurance. The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee had considered the implementation of recommendations arising from the audits and was content that action was underway. The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee had approved the draft internal audit plan for 2014/15. The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee also noted a clean external audit report and recommended that the Accounting Officers sign the Letters of Representation to accompany the Annual Report and Accounts. Mr Hannam reminded the Management Committee of the need for more members for the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

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## 7. NIAO AUDIT OF ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

- 7.1. The Deputy Chair informed the Management Committee that the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee had considered the draft Annual Report and Accounts at its meeting earlier on 5 June 2014. The external auditors had reported that they anticipated recommending to the Comptroller and Auditor General that he certify the 2013/14 financial statements with an unqualified audit opinion.
- 7.2. The Directors provided a summary of the end-year performance of the Armagh Observatory and Planetarium with regards to Key Performance Indicators. Professor Bailey noted that the target (Target 11) for External Income as a percentage of total income had not been achieved (19.4% against target of 21.5%). As the Accounts showed, this did not mean there was a deficit, but more external income was needed to help finance the organization. Dr Mason explained that the Planetarium had offered more free events in 2013/14 in line with the DCAL priority to Promote Equality, Tackle Poverty and Social Exclusion. Efforts had been skewed towards attracting people from deprived areas. This had resulted in increased visitor numbers but reduced self-generated income (Target 12). He had increased shop prices and some admission prices to help balance this.
- 7.3. The Deputy Chair alerted the Management Committee to the outstanding need for the Board of Governors and the Management Committee to complete the internal self-assessment of their effectiveness as recorded in the Governance Statements for both organisations. He hoped to take this forward for the Management Committee over the summer period.

### **Action Point MC05/06/14 – 01 – Deputy Chair to take forward the internal self-assessment of the effectiveness of the Management Committee over the summer period.**

- 7.4. The Management Committee also noted the limited level of assurance from the audit of the Bytel Car Agreement and Core Financials as noted in the Governance Statement. Work was underway to update the agreement with Bytel for the use of space within the Planetarium estate. The intention was to charge rent for this and then lease a car under a Department of Finance and Personnel contract. The Operations Manager was making enquiries about how this could be achieved.
- 7.5. Mrs McLoughlin presented the Financial Review for 2013/14. The Management Committee was content with the explanations for the operating deficits, income received, variances in expenditure and noted the position regarding debtors, accruals, deferred income, fixed assets and factors influencing future financing requirements. The Deputy Chair welcomed the breakeven position achieved by the Observatory and highlighted that this could only have been achieved through careful monitoring of expenditure throughout the year.
- 7.6. The Management Committee reviewed the findings set out in the Report To Those Charged With Governance (RTTCWG). It was content that the unadjusted misstatements set out in Section 3 remained uncorrected in the final Annual Report and Accounts. The Management Committee noted the risks that had been identified in the Audit Strategy and the outcome of the audit. The Equal Pay issue had been raised by staff again, given the recent media coverage of the issue for current and former staff in the PSNI and DOJ/former NIO members. The Management Responses to the issues raised at Final Audit were accepted by the Management Committee. It was noted that Issue 4 – Strategic Report not included in the accounts was to be removed as this did not apply to charities.
- 7.7. The Management Committee was content that the Accounting Officers sign Letters of Representation to accompany the Annual Report and Accounts.

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## 8. DIRECTORS' INTERIM REPORTS AND REVIEW OF RISK REGISTERS AND ASSURANCE STATEMENTS

### Directors' Interim Reports

- 8.1. Professor Bailey and Dr Mason presented the current position of performance of the Armagh Observatory and Planetarium with regards to Key Performance Indicators up to 31 May 2014.
- 8.2. Professor Bailey also highlighted a summary of research activities (Paper 7, page 14) and the Review of Collaboration with Queens University Belfast (page 39). He also mentioned his plans to fill three vacant posts within the Observatory in 2014/15. Professor Merrifield endorsed this approach as it would lessen the impact on current staff of having to carry out additional duties. He also expressed his concern that if the vacancies remained there could be potential implications for future funding. The DCAL representative confirmed that the department was content for these posts to be filled. The Management Committee agreed that this should proceed.
- 8.3. Professor Bailey reported that the upgrade to the Fire Detection and Alarm system had been completed with relatively little disruption to staff. He thanked Mrs Kennedy for leading on this project.
- 8.4. Dr Mason emphasized the recent request by DCAL to carry out a scenario planning exercise for 2015/16 budgets. The baseline for 2015/16 funding was the 2014/15 allocation however pressures at Northern Ireland Block funding level may lead to cuts against the baseline. Scenario planning for savings requirements of 2%, 4% and 6% had been requested. DCAL required the information to inform decisions as to how these savings might be realised at a departmental level.
- 8.5. Dr Mason highlighted the successful event delivered at the Planetarium from 26 – 31 May when the Science and Technology Facilities Council brought their interactive exhibition 'Seeing the Universe in all its light'. Over 900 visitors attended.
- 8.6. Dr Mason concluded his report with a comparison of staff complements between 1996 when he was appointed to 2014 (Paper 6, page 6). The current staff complement is skewed towards front end delivery of services to the public.

### Review of Updated Risk Registers

- 8.7. The Management Committee considered the Risk Registers for the Planetarium and the Observatory and was content that all the relevant risks had been captured, assessed and managed adequately.

### Update on Assurance Statements

- 8.8. Mrs Kennedy updated the Management Committee on Assurance Statements. A Review of Governance project had been established by DCAL with the objective of reducing the amount of time spent on governance, while obtaining similar levels of assurance to the DCAL Accounting Officer, to free up resources to focus on delivery against the Department's main priority to Promote Equality and Tackle Poverty and Social Exclusion. One of the changes, arising from the Review, was a change to the frequency of Assurance Statements, which had been reduced from quarterly to bi-annually. The next assurance statement to be presented to the Committee would cover April – September 2014. Further guidance was to be issued by DCAL on the new process.

## 9. REVIEW OF THE ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT OF ARMAGH OBSERVATORY AND PLANETARIUM

- 9.1. Professor Hibbert provided an update on Review of the Organisation and Management of Armagh Observatory and Planetarium. The Terms of Reference (Paper 10) had been approved by the Board of Governors during their Annual Visitation on 28 March 2014. A letter was sent to DCAL on 14 May 2014 requesting resources and the commissioning of the review. The Review

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Panel was to comprise staff from the Strategic Investment Board, Professor Len Culhane, UCL, and Dr Mike McKay, ESA. The Report was due to be received in September 2014 and the Terms of Reference needed to be updated to reflect this. The Board of Governors was to meet on 29 September 2014 to consider the findings of the Review. The Deputy Chair was to agree a process with the Chair for the Management Committee to consider the findings of the Review.

**Action Point MC05/06/14 – 02 – Mr Hannam to ensure SIB staff update the Terms of Reference of the Review of the Organisation and Management of AOP to reflect the new reporting timetable**

**Action Point MC05/06/14 – 03 – Deputy Chair to agree the process with the Chair for the Management Committee to consider the findings of the Review of Organisation and Management**

- 9.2. There was a discussion about how effective the review of governance would be if the recommendations arising had to be acceptable to the Board of Governors. The Deputy Chair confirmed that this was not binding and the Board of Governors would have to justify why a recommendation had not been accepted. The discussion then moved on to whether there was an overlap in scope of this Review of the Organisation and Management with the recent DCAL review of ALBs, for which a draft report had been received in April 2014. A meeting of SIB staff with DCAL representatives was to be arranged to discuss the findings of the ALB Review. Dr McKay asked that the comments made by the Directors on the ALB Report be shared with the Review Panel members.

## **10. UPDATE ON REVIEW OF ARMAGH OBSERVATORY RESEARCH AND OUTREACH 2014**

Professor Hibbert presented the Terms of Reference for the Review of Research and Outreach which was due to complete by 1 October 2014.

## **11. ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS AND REMUNERATION COMMITTEE**

Professor Hibbert presented the Annual Report for the Employment Conditions and Remuneration Committee for 2013/14.

## **12. AOB**

### **SELB request for additional land for Armstrong Primary School**

- 12.1. Mr Hannam declared a conflict of interest in this matter as a member of his family is employed by the Primary School. Dr Mason informed the Management Committee that representatives from the Southern Education and Library Board had met with him recently to explore the possibility of purchasing or leasing part of the grounds belonging to the Armagh Observatory and Planetarium for use by the Armstrong Primary School. A similar meeting had taken place with Professor Bailey late in 2013. The school had reached the limit of the use of the land available to it and needed to increase its playground with regards to both hard and soft play areas.
- 12.2. It was agreed that a meeting should be arranged between the Chair of the Management Committee, the Directors and representatives from SELB to explore the request in greater detail. After this a paper was to be developed for the Board of Governors setting out the situation and identifying the scope for a solution.

**Action Point MC05/06/14 – 04 - Meeting to be arranged between Chair of Management Committee, the Directors and representatives from SELB to explore in greater detail the request for land for Armstrong PS.**

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**Director of Planetarium intention to resign/retire**

- 12.3. Dr Mason informed the Management Committee of his intention to resign/retire with effect from end of December 2014. He was to draft a formal letter in due course providing six months' notice. The Management Committee expressed its gratitude for all that Dr Mason had achieved during his term as Director of Armagh Planetarium.

**13. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be on **Thursday 13 November 2014 at 11.30** in the Boardroom, Armagh Observatory.

The meeting ended at 15.50.

Signed as a true record of the Meeting

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(Chair)

Dated:

## Action Point Log of the Management Committee of Armagh Observatory and Planetarium

Reference	Action	Owner	Progress
MC18/10/13-01	Explore informal co-operation with the Armagh Public Library at the next Library Sub-Committee meeting	Professor Hibbert and Mrs Wilson	Ongoing <b>28 May 2014:</b> A meeting between Prof Hibbert and Primrose Wilson took place on 4 March 2014. Primrose explained that the Armagh Public Library project is much further progressed than the Observatory project. It does not seem possible for there to be a joined project for both. <b>23 Jan 2014:</b> Meeting scheduled for late November had to be postponed. An informal discussion to take place with the Dean to explore extending the links with the Armagh Public Library.
MC18/10/13-02	Revised Business Plan to be drafted for consideration by DCAL by 30 November.	Professor Bailey, Dr Mason & Mrs Kennedy	Completed <b>28 May 2014:</b> The DCAL Minister approved the Business Plan for 2013/14 on 28 March 2014 and the Plan for 2014/15 on 17 April 2014. The final versions of these Plans were circulated to members of the Management Committee by email.
MC18/10/13-05	Directors to define the future direction of their respective organization and develop a plan to achieve this by end of December 2013	Professor Bailey & Dr Mason	Ongoing <b>28 May 2014:</b> The Review of the Organisation and Management of Armagh Observatory and Planetarium and the Review of Armagh Observatory Research and Outreach have been included in the 2014/15 Business Plan as key tasks to be carried out in 2014/15. The outcome of these will shape the Strategic Plan. <b>23 Jan 2014:</b> Strategic Planning meeting held on 4 December. Elements to be incorporated into Business Plans for 2014/15
MC18/10/13-07	Propose members of a Scientific Review Team independent reviewers of the Strategic Plan by end December	Strategy Sub-Committee	Completed <b>28 May 2014:</b> The panel has been selected and comprises Prof Alan Hood, University of St Andrews, Prof Ian Howarth, University College London, Dr Ferdinando Patat, European Southern Observatory.
MC18/10/13-08	RTE Junior channel to be approached by end of December 2013 about making a children's television programme on astronomy in the Planetarium	Dr Mason	Ongoing <b>28 May 2014:</b> Dr Mason will explore this in more detail during 2014. <b>23 Jan 2014:</b> Dr Mason is exploring the potential for this. Professor Ray explained that there are already links between RTE Junior and CBBC as they recently commissioned a new series of 'Brain Freeze' which will be aired on both channels. The Science Foundation Ireland has provided a grant to help with the production of the series.

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MC18/10/13-11	Chairman to consider the request for new nominations to ARAC	Chair	Ongoing <b>28 May 2014:</b> As yet DCAL has not made any appointments to the Management Committee. <b>23 Jan 2014:</b> This can only be resolved when the criteria for membership has been considered by the Chair. A meeting is to be convened between the two Chairs to discuss this.
MC23/01/14-01	Consider the most efficient way for the Board of Governors to consider the Terms of Reference for the Review of the Organisation and Management of AOP.	Chair	Completed <b>28 May 2014:</b> the Board of Governors considered & approved the Terms of Reference for the Review of the Organisation and Management at its meeting on 28 March 2014
MC23/01/14-02	Committee members to suggest names for the Organisational Review by 21 February 2014	Management Committee members	Completed
MC23/01/14-03	Confirm whether the Organisational Review team should receive remuneration	DCAL	Ongoing <b>28 May 2014:</b> A letter was sent to DCAL on 14 May 2014 requesting resources and the commissioning of the review.
MC23/01/14-04	Provide further comments on the Terms of Reference for the Review of the Organisation and Management of AOP to Professor Hibbert by 21 February 2014.	Management Committee members	Completed
MC23/01/14-05	Arrange a meeting with Mr Hannam to discuss a revised version of the Terms of Reference.	Professor Hibbert	Completed <b>28 May 2014:</b> the Board of Governors considered & approved the revised Terms of Reference for the Review of the Organisation and Management at its meeting on 28 March 2014
MC23/01/14-06	Provide a finalised version of the Board Operating Framework to the Review team.	Mrs Kennedy	Ongoing <b>28 May 2014:</b> Board Operating Framework has been finalised but Review yet to commence

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**Matters Arising from the Management Committee on 23 January 2014**

Paragraph 9.4	Damage to rear retaining wall at Planetarium	Dr T Mason	Ongoing <b>28 May 2014:</b> A representative from DFP Properties Division has examined the wall and the report has been passed to H & J Martin for a response. As this has been outstanding for some time, it has been escalated further up the management chain in H & J Martin. There is a query as to whether the wall was re-rendered under the contract for the extension to the Planetarium and therefore where the liability lies.
Paragraph 9.5	Collaboration with the Institute of Astronomy, Bulgaria	Prof M Bailey	Completed <b>28 May 2014:</b> Since January 2014 the Observatory has concluded the agreement. We provided a retarder waveplate to the Institute of Astronomy, Bulgaria. Work is underway to facilitate its use on their telescope. Dr Stefano Bagnulo along with Will McClean (PhD student) and two colleagues from Observatories in Italy and France, have been granted approval to use the telescope. Dr Bagnulo has been invited to deliver lectures on spectropolarimetry in the autumn.
Paragraph 9.7	Upgrade of Fire Detection and Alarm Systems in the Observatory	EJ Kennedy	Completed <b>28 May 2014:</b> After exploratory work had been carried out, the project commenced on 27 January 2014, managed very effectively by William Frazer, DFP Properties Division, Andrew Cousins, H & J Martin in conjunction with Emma-Jane Kennedy, Operations Manager. Work progressed with relatively minor disruption to staff throughout the Observatory site. New smoke/heat detectors have been located throughout the main building, library and domes. Each detector and 'Break Glass' panel in the main building has a unique reference allowing its location to be displayed on the Fire Panel (located at the front door) should it be triggered. The library and the domes share the same reference. Wireless detectors have been installed in the kitchen/lobby area of the main building and in the domes. The fire alarm sounders have been replaced throughout the building and comply with new standards. A repeater panel has been located at the door into the basement which also shows the location of any detector or 'break glass' panel that has triggered the alarm. The new fire alarm system was commissioned on 23 April 2014.