

## **Minutes of the meeting of the Toscaireacht**

**Date** 3<sup>rd</sup> and 14th March 2011

**Time** 11.30 am

**Venue** No 70 Merrion Sq

### **Present**

Seóirse Bodley, Anthony Cronin, Theo Dorgan, Mannix Flynn, Hugh Maxton, Brian Maguire, Nick Miller (on 3 March only), Jane O'Leary, Macdara Woods, Dermot Healy (on 14<sup>th</sup> March only)

### **In attendance**

Toby Dennett (Registrar) and Niamh McCabe (International Arts and Artists' Supports Officer)

### **Agenda**

1. Election of Chair
2. Apologies
3. Previous minutes and matters arising
4. Discipline ballot results
5. Aosdána voting procedures
6. Meeting with Arts Council on interpretive and performing artists
7. General Assembly
  - 2010 minutes
  - Agenda items
  - Toscaireacht report

Proposed motions

8. AOB

### **1. Election of Chair**

Brian Maguire was elected to chair the meeting, and subsequent meetings of the Toscaireacht until it is decided otherwise.

### **2. Apologies**

Apologies were noted from Dermot Healy.

### **3. Previous Minutes and Matters Arising**

The minutes of the meeting on 10 November were reviewed. Some minor amendments to the minutes were proposed and agreed. Matters arising:

- Re. Item 6: It was agreed that the chair, with the aid of the registrar would attempt to set up a meeting with TBCT before the end of March. Several members of the Toscaireacht (Jane O'Leary and Mannix Flynn) volunteered to attend a meeting along with Brian Maguire.
- Re. Item 7: The Toscaireacht agreed to address the issue of the value of the Aosdána pension and present it to members before the end of the term of the current Toscaireacht.

#### **4. Discipline Ballot results**

The Registrar reported that the discipline ballots had been counted. It was confirmed that Macdara Woods had attended and witnessed the counting of votes. It was reported that the following individuals had been successful at the discipline ballot.

- Elaine Agnew
- John Arden
- Ciarán Farrell
- Joseph O'Connor
- John Tuomey
- Corban Walker
- Daphne Wright

It was confirmed that there was a total of 5 places available at the General Assembly and that were these places to be filled then this would bring the membership to its upper limit of 250 members.

The Registrar also reported that the nomination of Mary Nunan, which was successful at the 2010 discipline ballot, would also go forward for consideration to the General Assembly.

#### **5. Aosdána voting procedures**

The Chair outlined his recent examination of voting patterns, He reminded members of the change in the voting procedures agreed at the 2007 General Assembly and which took effect in 2008. The results of discipline ballots that took place before and after the change in procedures were presented. The Chair reported that he had spoken to a sample of members to ask them about their own understanding of the voting procedures and that based on responses he was satisfied that members understood the voting procedures and the implications of their voting choices.

In discussion the following issues were noted:

- That fewer nominations were now making it through the discipline ballot;
- That 8 artists would be competing at the General Assembly for 5 places;
- That in coming years there would be far fewer places available than members have been accustomed to in recent years.
- That having a large number (say 20 -30 artists) competing for 2 or 3 places at a General Assembly would be a good thing
- That recent voting patterns may be a direct result of members being aware of the now very limited number of places available in Aosdana
- That it was disheartening and difficult for artists that had been nominated several years in a row to be continually rejected by their peers
- That some disciplines particularly Visual Arts had a very broad range of membership and that it was difficult for any artist to achieve 50% support

The value and implications of proposing a change in the voting process was discussed including the possibility of:

- Returning to the previous system;
- Lowering the percentage quota required.

After discussion it was decided not to propose changes to the current voting system. It was noted that consideration would need to be given to the nomination process for 2012 given that there may be no or very few places available at the 2012 General Assembly

## **6. Meeting with Arts Council on interpretive and performing artists**

The Chair reported on the meeting with the Arts Council which he had attended with Hugh Maxton and Jane O'Leary. He distributed a hard copy of a report which had been compiled by the three delegates and which had been previously distributed to the Toscaireacht by email. The Toscaireacht welcomed and accepted the report of the delegates.

After a lengthy discussion it was noted that the Toscaireacht acknowledged and approved of the improved mood between the Arts Council and Aosdána.

The Toscaireacht reiterated its support for the establishment of a body, analogous to Aosdána for the honouring of Performing and Interpretative Artists

The Toscaireacht also emphasised the continued need for care and due consideration in positively advancing the Arts Council's and Aosdána's common interests in this matter in the coming months.

Anthony Cronin, in consultation with Hugh Maxton drafted a letter to the Chairman of the Arts Council which was approved by the Toscaireacht.

The Toscaireacht agreed on a response to correspondence received from Interpreting and Performing Artists Ireland.

## **7. General Assembly**

The Toscaireacht reviewed and approved the minutes of the 2010 GA after noting minor amendments.

It was agreed that following a comment at the 2010 GA that all members would receive a label with their name and discipline on it for the GA.

It was agreed that Brian Maguire would draft the Toscaireacht report in consultation with Hugh Maxton.

Motions and items for discussion at the General Assembly were reviewed and approved.

## **8. AOB**

There was no other business.