

Toscaireacht meeting

14th October 2003, 2 pm

The Arts Council, 70 Merrion Square, Dublin 2

Present: Alice Hanratty
Anthony Cronin
Brian Maguire
Theo Dorgan
Paul Durcan

In attendance: Paul Johnson (Deputy Registrar), Siân Cunningham, (Artists' Services Officer) (minutes)

Apologies: Seóirse Bodley, Maud Cotter, Fergus Johnston, Michael Kane, Eric Sweeney, Patricia Quinn (Registrar).

In advance of the meeting, the new Arts Council Chair, Olive Braiden was introduced to the Toscairí.

Brian Maguire was nominated to chair for this meeting.

Agenda item 1 – Minutes/Matters Arising

The minutes of the Toscaireacht meeting held on July 28th, which had already been circulated, were approved as being a correct record.

Under matters arising, Theo Dorgan reported that Maud Cotter had informed him that the proposal to increase the membership of Aosdána was ratified in full at the June 26th 2003 plenary meeting of the Arts Council.

The Toscairí requested to see this section from the minutes of June 26th. Copies were made and distributed for discussion by the Toscairí.

Theo Dorgan spoke about the how the new Council accepts continuity of responsibility. The Council has also requested a briefing on Aosdána.

With reference to agenda item 5 of the Toscaireacht July 28th meeting, Anthony Cronin sought clarity on the outlined proposal, which was given by Paul Johnson.

A discussion followed about the pension scheme for Aosdána members. Most of the discussion was given over to a historical overview, which was provided by Anthony Cronin. A discussion also ensued about the relevance of the pension scheme and administration of it some twenty years after its instigation.

The Toscairí agreed that the issue of the pension should be discussed at the next General Assembly and that much discussion was needed about it by the Toscairí themselves in advance of this.

With reference to agenda item 7 of the Toscaireacht July 28th meeting, Brian Maguire confirmed that a directive has been issued and implemented by the Irish Prison Service, which ultimately censors the work undertaken by artists working in prison contexts. The Toscairí agreed that a meeting should be requested with Mr Sean Aylward, Director General of the Irish Prison Service, as a matter of urgency, and that this is an issue for the Arts Council executive. It was also agreed that a member of the Toscaireacht should also attend this meeting. Anthony Cronin expressed a wish to attend this meeting.

Agenda item 2 – Nominations

The following errors were noted on the list of nominations which was circulated in advance of the meeting:

Fergus Johnston is the 1st nominator for Siobhán Cleary and Stephen Gardner is the 2nd nominator.

Michael Kane is the 1st nominator for Seán Fingleton and Alice Hanratty is the 2nd nominator.

Noel Sheridan is the 1st nominator for Jaki Irvine and Cecily Brennan is the 2nd nominator.

The Toscairí agreed to examine the nominations for each candidate, which were distributed at the meeting and agree on valid nominations.

The following are the valid nominations:

Siobhán Cleary
John F. Deane
Seán Fingleton
Frances Hegarty
Jaki Irvine
Aodhan Madden.
William McKeown

The nomination for Padraic Reaney was deemed invalid, as the 2nd nominator had not submitted a nomination.

The nomination for Pádraig Ó Cíobháin was deemed invalid as no second nomination was submitted.

The nominations for Cindy Cummings and Geraldine O'Reilly were deemed incomplete and therefore are not currently valid, as the nominees had not responded by the closing date for acceptance of nominations, nor submitted the required curriculum vitae.

Agenda item 3 – Proposal regarding increased membership

This item was previously discussed under matters arising.

Agenda item 4 – Pension/VHI report

Paul Johnson spoke about the effect of the internal changes within the insurance brokers (Marsh) and the Arts Council's own internal personnel changes on furthering this work at present.

PJ reported that this report is forthcoming and as soon as it is received it will be distributed to the Toscairí.

PJ also spoke about the VHI scheme and about the Arts Council's wish to facilitate as many requests as possible from Aosdána.

Agenda item 5 – AOB

The Toscairí requested that the Deputy Registrar convey to the Director of the Arts Council that they welcome the decision recorded at the June 26th plenary Council meeting regarding the increased membership of Aosdána and that they look forward to further discussing how best to approach this augmentation and fill these places as soon as possible.

The Toscairí also agreed that this should happen in advance of the next General Assembly, so that they have solid information and proposals to put to the meeting.

It was agreed that the next Toscaireacht meeting would be held at 2pm on Monday 10th November.

Theo Dorgan reminded members that the 13th October is the 4th anniversary of Michael Hartnett's death.

Anthony Cronin spoke about Proinsias MacAonghusa's passing since the last Toscaireacht meeting. He paid tribute to Proinsias' help and support to Aosdána over the years.

It was agreed that the Deputy Registrar would write a letter to Proinsias' family on behalf of all the members of Aosdána.

The meeting concluded at 4pm.

ENDS