

Minutes of meeting of the Toscaireacht 28 March 2014  
The Arts Council, 70 Merrion Square, Dublin 2

**Present:** Brian Maguire (BM) (chair), Seoirse Bodley (SB), Rhona Clarke (RC), Mary FitzGerald (MF), Brian Lynch (BL), Éilís Ní Dhuibhne (ÉND), Jane O'Leary (JOL), Vivienne Roche (VR)

**In attendance:** Orlaith McBride, Director, the Arts Council; Liz Powell, Registrar

Apologies were received from Anthony Cronin and Shelley McNamara

Orlaith McBride joined the start of the meeting to welcome the new members of the Toscaireacht, and to restate her wish to ensure open communications between the Arts Council and Aosdána. The members thanked her for her contribution. The Director then left the meeting. BM informed the meeting that this would be his last as chair of the Toscaireacht.

### **1 Condolences**

BM led tributes on the deaths of Patrick Scott, Saoi, and Barrie Cooke. It was noted that the Registrar issued a press statement on behalf of the Toscaireacht following their deaths.

### **2 Previous minutes and matters arising**

The minutes of the November section of the meeting were proposed by Jane O'Leary and seconded by Mary FitzGerald; the minutes from the December section of the meeting were proposed by Mary FitzGerald and seconded by Seoirse Bodley.

### **3 General Assembly**

#### **a) Discipline ballot results**

It was agreed that members need to understand the importance of voting in the discipline ballots. MF reported that she had undertaken the count of discipline ballots with the Registrar and that 10 nominations were successful and went through to the General Assembly election. A further six nominations are carried over from 2013.

#### **b) Motions**

Six motions were received from members. It was agreed that three valid motions would go before the General Assembly. Three further motions were received without a seconder and were therefore not deemed eligible to be put before the assembly.

Motion 1 to amend Standing order 1.13

Proposed by: Toscaireacht (Mary FitzGerald, seconded Rhona Clarke, Jane O'Leary)

That this assembly recommends an amendment to Standing order 1.13, such that:  
Motions not on the agenda shall be taken at a General Assembly on the written proposal of a member, seconded in writing by no fewer than 9 members.

Motion 2: Proposed: Paddy Bushe Seconded: Peter Sirr

The assembly believes that it is important that the voting in relation to new members be as broad and inclusive as possible and that it should not be seen that withholding of support from other candidates is advantageous to a member's favoured candidate or

candidates. The assembly therefore requests An Toscaireacht to consider, consult on and report to next year's assembly on the desirability of using transferable preference voting for the election of new members.

Motion 3: Proposed: Tommy Peoples Seconded: Moya Cannon

That Ireland, being in possession of an abundance of riches that is uniquely Ireland's traditional music heritage, and that any nation with such a heritage, an Aosdána equivalent body, and such ambassadorial artists of world-renown in that music genre as a Matt Molloy, a Sean Keane, a Paddy Keenan, a Mary Bergin, a Liam Ó'Flynn, a Máire ní Cathasaigh, would celebrate and honour their individual genius, artistry, and dedication, by inclusion in that body.

c) Presentations

Following the success of the presentations made at the General Assembly in 2013, the Toscaireacht invited proposals from members of Aosdána wishing to present at the 2014 General Assembly. One presentation proposal from Hugh Maxton was received and would be made at the meeting during the public session.

**Presentation by Hugh Maxton**

'The relationship of the individual artist to contemporary Irish society' Or, "Money's Rant is On" ', dealing with the position of the artist today in relation to wealth, private, corporate, and public. The valuable role of Aosdána will feature, together with that of the Arts Council.

### **Communication with membership re cnuas reporting requirements and bursaries change**

Members acknowledged that they had not anticipated the level of discussion and concern regarding the change in reporting regulations for those in receipt of the cnuas and with regard to the change re bursaries. It was agreed that a new mechanism for communicating with members was required.

### **Presentation by Gaby Smyth, accountant**

In light of the changes to cnuas reporting procedures and the newly-required supplementary documentation, the Toscaireacht welcomed the offer from the Arts Council to arrange for an accountant will attend a part of the General Assembly to answer queries on aspects of the reporting procedures and financial information requirements.

### **Update re M Darcy statement**

The Toscaireacht met on 23 January to discuss the imprisonment of Margareta D'Arcy and issued a statement as follows:

A meeting of the Toscaireacht of Aosdána today, 23rd January, considered the situation in relation to the imprisonment of one of its members, Margareta D'Arcy (79), currently serving a 3-month sentence in Limerick Prison.

The Toscaireacht appeals to the Irish Prison Service to effect her release on compassionate grounds.

There should be ways to deal with these issues other than with imprisonment.

Ends

### **PSED**

Following the initial meeting between the Toscaireacht and the Minister's office, on 3 October 2013, at which it was noted by the Minister that Aosdána members participation in the PSED was voluntary, Brian Maguire reported on the follow up meeting with the Minister's office at which it was discussed how Aosdána members might report such voluntary participation (relating to their artistic activity) in the PSED with annual report forms. Concern was expressed on the matter of asking members to report on anything other than their artistic work. The item was deferred for further discussion and consultation with members.

### **AOB**

#### **Nomination of new chair of Toscaireacht:**

Brian Maguire informed the meeting that Anthony Cronin wished to propose Mary FitzGerald for the position of chair and that he supported AC's proposal; Seirse Bodley seconded the proposal. There being no other proposals, this was carried. Members congratulated Mary on the new position and thanked Brian Maguire for his work over the past number of years.

The meeting ended