

Minutes of the meeting of the Toscaireacht, 10th February 2015 at the Arts Council, 70 Merrion Square, Dublin 2.

Present: Seóirse Bodley, Vivienne Roche, Rhona Clarke, Mary FitzGerald, Shelley McNamara, Éilis Ní Dhuibhne, Brian Lynch

Apologies: Jane O’Leary, Anthony Cronin

In attendance: Liz Powell, Registrar

Previous minutes and matters arising

Add BL to list of those present at previous meeting

RC proposed and VR seconded the minutes as an accurate reflection of the meeting

General Assembly

It was confirmed that the 2015 General Assembly will take place on Thursday 5 March 2015 in the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham. The meeting to begin at 10am and tea/coffee will be available from 09:30am. There will be no charge for parking in the RHK that day.

President Michael D. Higgins accepted the invitation of the Toscaireacht to address the assembly. This is scheduled to take place at 11am.

Discipline ballots

Members noted discipline ballot decisions and nominations rolling over from previous years meant that there were 20 nominations for 10/11 places. LP to communicate if 10 or 11 places are available for new members.

New voting procedure

On the proposal to introduce a simple, ‘first past the post’ system, whereby the candidate with the greatest number of votes will be deemed to be elected to the first available place, the candidate with the next greatest number of votes will be deemed to be elected to the second available place and so on for the remaining available places, 133 votes were received. 119 members voted YES; 14 voted NO; 1 blank vote was received. Therefore, this proposal has been carried. It should be clarified to members that, at the General Assembly, members may vote for as many candidates as they wish.

Abolishing Private Business of General Assembly

In response to members’ concerns about the prospect of abolishing all private business at the Aosdána General Assembly the Toscaireacht asked members were they in favour of:

- A:** Opening the **entire** business of the General Assembly to the media and the public?
- B:** Opening the business of the General Assembly to the media and the public **with the exception of the nomination speeches?**
- C:** Retaining the present arrangement?

134 votes were received as follows:

- A: 40
- B: 44
- C: 50

The option with the highest return from the membership was **C: Retaining the present arrangement**. Therefore, this proposal will be carried forward to the General Assembly.

Motions

It was noted that three motions were received from members for the General Assembly, but that all required some re-working. It was agreed that MF would contact each of the proposers to discuss.

Finance

Martin O'Sullivan, the Arts Council's Director of Finance, joined the meeting. The Toscaireacht asked for information regarding a range of financial matters relevant to the membership of Aosdána and Mr. O'Sullivan kindly undertook to pursue these enquiries with the Revenue Commissioners. Once available, the reply from the Revenue Commissioners will be provided to the Toscaireacht by the Registrar.

Co-option of new Toscaire

The Toscairí noted with regret that Brian Maguire had tendered his resignation from the Toscaireacht on health grounds. Members expressed their thanks to him for his role on the Toscaireacht and as chair and wished him well. Visual Artist Samuel Walsh has agreed to join the Toscaireacht for the remaining period of the Toscaireacht term.

Saoi

The Registrar noted that following a ballot of the membership of Aosdána, **Edna O'Brien** has been elected a Saoi of Aosdána by the members to honour her outstanding achievements as a writer.

A further nomination for visual artist **Imogen Stuart** to be honoured as Saoi has been received and was ratified by the Toscaireacht. All members now to be asked to vote on the nomination.

The meeting ended.