

Minutes of the meeting of the Toscaireacht

Date: 13 February 2008

Time: 12.00 am

Venue: No. 70 Merrion Square

Present:

Mannix Flynn, Mary Fitzgerald, Alice Hanratty, Macdara Woods, Eibhlís Farrell, Seoirse Bodley.

In attendance

Toby Dennett (Registrar), Karen Lee Walpole (International Arts and Artists' Officer, Acting)

Papers before the meeting

Agenda

Minutes of previous meeting

Toscairí expenses claim forms

Agenda

1. Apologies
2. Previous Minutes / Matters Arising
3. Briefing re recent press coverage
4. Date and Venue for General Assembly
5. Motions for General Assembly
6. Discussion: Rules and Procedures Governing Aosdána Business
7. AOB

1. Apologies

Apologies from Dermot Healy, Samuel Walsh, Anthony Cronin and Brian Maguire were noted.

2. Previous Minutes/Matters Arising

The Toscaireacht agreed that the minutes were a true and accurate record of the meeting. Proposed by Macdara Woods and seconded by Eibhlís Farrell. There were no matters arising.

3. Recent Press Coverage

It was agreed that The Toscaireacht would not issue any public statements or contribute to any public debate concerning the fitness for membership of any member.

Mannix Flynn raised the issue of nominating a press liaison for Aosdána to act as a point of contact with the press on an ongoing basis. It was confirmed that the scope of the role was confined to communicating issues already agreed by

Aosdána or the Toscaireacht and it was not the remit of any member appointed to the role to express personal comment or opinion.

After discussion, Mannix Flynn was nominated by Seoirse Bodley, seconded by Eibhlís Farrell and appointed by unanimous vote as Press Liaison for the remaining period of the Toscaireacht.

Mannix Flynn brought to the attention of the Toscaireacht that Fintan Connolly, filming a documentary on Aosdána, had requested to attend the meeting and the Toscaireacht were asked to decide if they would be prepared to allow Fintan to attend the meeting. It was decided that in this instance it was unsuitable but that an invitation could be extended to prior to a future meeting

4. Date and Venue for General Assembly

The registrar confirmed that the General Assembly is intended to take place on 8 May at the Irish Museum of Modern Art. It was agreed that a note would be issued by the Registrar to all members of Aosdána informing them of this date.

It was noted that the schedule of the General Assembly would be discussed and agreed by the Toscaireacht at a future date.

5. Motions for General Assembly

The Registrar confirmed that the call for Motions and Items for the Agenda had been sent to members in advance to encourage early responses. It was confirmed, however, that as per the Standing Orders Motions and Items for the Agenda could still be received 20 days in advance of the General Assembly. It was confirmed that in certain circumstances motions could also be put forward on the day of the General Assembly.

The Registrar asked whether the Toscaireacht wanted to propose any Items for the Agenda or any Motions.

It was noted that the following agenda Item may throw up the need for proposed amendments or additions to the Aosdána Handbook.

6. Rules and Procedures governing Aosdána Business

It was noted by the Registrar that -

- while the present Aosdána Handbook was a useful guide to understanding many of the principles that underpin the workings of Aosdána the lack of detail in the Handbook had led to difficulties in understanding the interpretation of rules.

- decision making often relies on memory and on a recollection of precedent rather than on a published and agreed set of rules and procedures that are accessible to and understood by all.

It was agreed that the Toscaireacht would review the Aosdána Handbook and identify where clarification may be needed. It was decided that in this meeting that the handbook would be overviewed and items would be noted for further consideration.

The Chair noted that the Handbook was an important foundation document and that a review would be an ongoing task over a number of meetings.

The Handbook was reviewed under the following headings –

Introduction

Discussion focused on

- Who the handbook is published for and what function is it intended to serve

Membership Elections

Discussion focused on -

- Residency requirements
- Designation of disciplines
- Timeframe for nominations and voting
- Content and length of nomination letters
- Appropriate reference material to accompany nomination letters
- How members familiarize themselves with the work of the nominees
- Voting procedures
- Election results and subsequent implications and procedures

General Assembly

Discussion focused on –

- Schedule of General Assembly
- Function of General Assembly

Saoi

Discussion focused on -

- Nomination and voting procedure

Cnuas

Discussion focused on –

- Residency requirements
- Definition of 'earnings' in relation to threshold
- Requirements of the application process
- Pension Scheme
- Tax exemption

7. AOB

Seoirse Bodley raised the issue that it was difficult to distinguish the individual work of the Architect in relation to the information provided on company websites in the recent nomination material. Mannix Flynn noted that the nature of Architecture was a collaborative and contemporary creative process.

The Chair noted that through his discussions with the Registrar it had become apparent that the Arts Council may bring back to the table the issue of performing or interpretive artists becoming part of Aosdána and that the Toscaireacht may be asked to respond to this.

It was agreed that the next meeting would take place on 13 March.
It was agreed that Mannix Flynn would chair the next meeting.