

Minutes

Toscaireacht Meeting

2pm, 7th November 2018 at The Arts Council, 70 Merrion Square, Dublin 2

Present

Michael Holohan (Chair); Rhona Clarke; Cathy Carman; Anne Haverty; Geraldine O'Reilly; Thomas McCarthy; Samuel Walsh; Vincent Woods; Bob Quinn

In attendance

Karen Hennessy (Registrar Aosdána)

Apologies

Eamon Colman

Previous minutes and matters arising

The minutes of the meeting of 15 May were adopted.

Saoi Election

The recent nomination, received by the Registrar, of Roger Doyle, for the position of Saoi, by Fergus Johnston, was discussed. The Registrar is currently confirming in writing with all 15 members assenting to this nomination. Once all 15 members confirm in writing the Registrar will check with Roger he agrees to be nominated. It was outlined that the nomination and election process can be very arduous on individuals and that it would be worthwhile for the Registrar to convey this to Fergus Johnston so he in turn can convey this to Roger. The membership is currently 245 so the rule of 50% plus one votes of total membership requires the nomination of Roger Doyle to the position of Saoi to achieve 123 votes.

Anthony Cronin Award

The Registrar informed the Toscairi that the Council has created an Award for 2019 in honour of Anthony Cronin, former founding member of Aosdána. It is for a value of 13,000, which includes 3,000 towards travel costs and will be awarded to a writer in the English or Irish language of a novel, collection or work of literary non-fiction. The application form and guidance notes are now with the copy editor and it is due to go online for applications by 18 Dec 2018 with a deadline for applicants of 7 Feb 2019. A selection panel will meet in March 2019 and the recipient could be announced at the General Assembly on 5 April 2019. It was expressed that the Toscairi would like that this Award should continue after 2019 and be an annual or biennial award, ideally an annual Award. The Registrar outlined that Council could certainly consider this if it is proposed to them. The Registrar will work on publicity materials which will provide the

detail on Anthony Cronin and his work and the background to the award. A press release will be issued which will be made available on both the Arts Council web site as well as on the new Aosdána web site. The Award will also be publicised via the Arts Council newsletter. Aosdána members are eligible to apply for the Award if not in receipt of the Cnuas. Cnuas recipients are not eligible to receive Arts Council bursary awards and so they would also not be eligible to receive this award.

Aosdana's public role and profile

Margaretta Darcy had put forward a request to the Toscairi to ask if the membership had made any plans to implement her motion at the General Assembly 2018 on solidarity with all those under threat as well as those murdered for their right to free speech. The Chair outlined that Margaretta had asked about a public protest in front of the Dail. The Toscairi felt that such a protest would be difficult to organise and to publicise and that in light of recent events regarding journalists internationally that a new SO should be put forward on the issue at the General Assembly 2019. The Registrar is to let Margaretta know this and ask her to put forward a SO for GA2019 on the matter for all members to consider. It was also outlined that a letter to the letters page of the Irish Times had been sent in relation to this matter after the GA2018. It was agreed to re-draft this letter in light of recent events with journalists Viktoria Marinova, Bulgaria, and Jamal Khashoggi, Saudia Arabia and for all Toscairi to sign the letter and re-send it. The Chair would follow through on this.

It was requested that all SO passed at the General Assembly be tweeted in order to raise public profile. The Registrar would follow through on this.

The public profile of Aosdána was further discussed and the Chair presented the offer by the Arts Council for Aosdána to present work at the Arts Council offices as part of Culture Night 2019. The Toscairi agreed this to be a good opportunity and would look to organise a 'Pop – Up' style event with the membership. An invitation to participate would be issued to the membership in advance of Culture Night 2019.

Nominations

The Registrar showed the detail of all 22 nominations received, 5 of which carry over from 2018 and 17 new nominations. The Toscairi agreed to meet again to review the nominator/seconded letters and approve all 17 new nominations. Monday 19th Nov was decided upon as a day with a quorum for this. In advance of this meeting the Registrar will circulate the letters of nomination along with the CV of each new nominee to the Toscairi. Once nominees were approved the Registrar will make contact and confirm the nomination. The discipline ballot vote will take place in January 2019. A question was asked as to why applications for membership cannot be made and are not made. It was outlined by the Registrar that currently there is no means by which to apply to be a member of Aosdána although there are queries about this and that this is a question for the membership which currently has a mechanism of peer nomination only.

General Assembly 2019

The General Assembly is confirmed for 5 April 2019 in UCC, Cork. The Registrar will visit on 22 Nov 2018 to see the spaces and view accommodation options. Thomas McCarthy will accompany. It was outlined that a reception may take place evening of 4 April to welcome Aosdána. Accommodation is likely to be needed for 4 April with members leaving directly after the event on 5 April. All ancillary events would need to take place either on 4 April or before close of business on 5 April. It was suggested that the most straight forward mechanism for confirming artists' involvement would be to include those Aosdána members living in or around Cork. It was outlined that there was a focus on literature at the 2018 Assembly with the contribution from Sebastian Barry and considering music is central to arts practice in Cork with the legacy of Fleischman and O' Riada that music could be the focus. Visual arts would require a longer lead in. This would be considered along with venues during the visit on 22 Nov and members would then need to be consulted to pin down a programme.

Bob Quinn informed that Galway2020 are still behind the General Assembly being in Galway in 2020. It was thought timely that the Registrar make contact with Marilyn Gaughan to confirm and discuss location and pin down a date. University College Galway was mentioned and with a longer lead in time visual art could be a focus in 2020.

Working Group update

The Chair updated the Toscairi on the working group meeting of 19 September. An update was given that the File 22136 was not retrieveable and the Arts Council was still communicating with the Department of Arts, Culture and Heritage to locate the file. The Chair updated that the Registrar is undertaking some research on the trends over the life time of Aosdána on membership and elections. This was considered a good thing and welcomed.

Cnuas Update

The Chair outlined that members had asked about the pre-recession offer in 2011 of raising the value of the Cnuas and which had not been accepted by the Assembly. It was agreed that the Chair would raise this as a question at the next working group meeting on 9 November 2018.

Recognition of Anthony Cronin's role in the foundation of Aosdána.

Anne Haverty outlined that the working group had jointly and clearly recognised a shared history in the foundation of Aosdána which involved the Arts Council and the Government of the time working together and which recognised the involvement of Anthony Cronin. The Registrar confirmed that this shared history would be included on the new Aosdána web site when it goes live end Feb 2019. It was further outlined that the new web-site would acknowledge the President Michael D. Higgins as patron. The Chair outlined he had received an invitation to the inauguration of Michael D. Higgins on 11 Nov and Anne Haverty would attend also.

AOB

It was outlined by the Registrar that a request had come in to use the Aosdána logo as a funding credit by a member. It was agreed that guidelines are needed on the use of the logo and that it is not for use in this way but is a logo for recognition and administrative purposes. The Registrar would communicate this to the member.

Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting on 19 November was for the purposes of reviewing nominations.

Private Session

A private session took place in the absence of the Registrar.