

Minutes of the meeting of the Toscaireacht

Date 13th June 2011

Time 1 pm

Venue No 70 Merrion Sq

Present

Seóirse Bodley, Anthony Cronin, Mannix Flynn, Dermot Healy, Hugh Maxton, Brian Maguire

In attendance

Toby Dennett (Registrar) and Katie Lowry (International Arts and Artists' Supports Officer)

Agenda

- Apologies
- Previous minutes and matters arising
- General Assembly - issues arising
 - Draft minutes
 - Policy and procedure on observing minute of silence
 - Aosdána and I&PA
- General Assembly - follow up to motions
 - Motions Re. Donal O'Kelly resignation
 - Motion Re. Culture Ireland
 - Motion Re. JSTOR
 - Motion Re. Gardening and curriculum
- New member nominations process
- Imprisonment of artist Ai Wei-Wei
- Correspondence from Vincent McCabe
- Update on Toscaireacht nomination process
- AOB

1. Apologies

Apologies were noted from Theo Dorgan, Nick Miller, Jane O'Leary, Macdara Woods

2. Previous Minutes and Matters Arising

The minutes were accepted as an accurate and true record of the meeting.

3. General Assembly and matters arising

Draft Minutes

The Registrar drew attention to the draft minutes of the General Assembly which had been distributed in advance.

There was some discussion about the accuracy of the minutes. The Chair recommended that any issues around accuracy should be forwarded to the Registrar who would be able to check them against the recording taken on the day.

The Toscaireacht also discussed whether the level of detail recorded in the minutes was necessary and appropriate. It was agreed that the Chair and Registrar might liaise on a revised shorter version of the minutes.

Policy and procedure on observing a minutes silence

A discussion took place regarding the minutes silence observed at the end of the General Assembly. It was proposed that in General Assembly the observing of a minutes silence should be limited to members of Aosdána and in the case of non-members a motion of sympathy should be extended. It was agreed that the Toscaireacht would give consideration to proposing this as a motion for the next General Assembly.

Interpretive and performing artists

It was noted that the issue had been raised and discussed at the General Assembly through the report of the Toscaireacht. It was therefore agreed that the Toscaireacht were not in a position to consider the issue further.

4. General Assembly – Follow up to motions

Motion Re. Donal O'Kelly

It was agreed that the Registrar would write to Donal O'Kelly informing him of the one motion from the General Assembly which specifically referred to him.

Motion Re. Culture Ireland

Registrar to write to Culture Ireland

Motion Re. JSTOR

Registrar to approach the Arts Council.

Motion Re. Gardening and school curriculum

Registrar to write to the Minister

5. New member nomination process

There was a long discussion about the fact that the membership of Aosdána is almost at its upper limit. It was suggested that the Registrar might raise the matter internally in the Arts Council. The Toscaireacht felt that the issue could be one of a number of matters that might be discussed at a future meeting between the Arts Council and the Toscaireacht. It was agreed that the new member nomination process should proceed as normal and that the call for nominations should include a strong reminder regarding the small number of new places available.

6. Toscaireacht position on the imprisonment of artist Ai Wei Wei

Hugh Maxton highlighted the position of Chinese artist *Ai Wei Wei*. The following motion was proposed by Hugh Maxton and seconded by Mannix Flynn:

The Toscaireacht of Aosdána, at its meeting of 13 June 2011, expressed deep concern about the whereabouts and well-being of a fellow individual artist, Ai Wei Wei: it calls on the Chinese government to release Mr WeiWei and to guarantee him liberty of artistic endeavour at home and abroad.

The motion was passed and it was agreed that the Registrar would write to the Chinese Embassy to inform them of this motion.

7. Correspondence from Vincent McCabe

It was reported that Vincent McCabe had requested to meet with representatives of the Toscaireacht. It was agreed that Dermot Healy and Brian Maguire would meet with Vincent McCabe.

8. Update on Toscaireacht nomination process

The Registrar updated the meeting on the Toscaireacht nomination process.

9.AOB

Brian Maguire proposed that the Toscaireacht write to the outgoing Director of the Arts Council to express their gratitude at her support and wish her good luck in the future. The Registrar agreed to pass this sentiment on to the outgoing Director.

Mannix Flynn drew the attention of the Toscaireacht to the situation regarding the closure of the Lighthouse Cinema. The following motion was proposed by Mannix Flynn and seconded by Anthony Cronin: *The Toscaireacht at its meeting on the 13 June wishes to express its deep concern at the closure of the Lighthouse Cinema and the threat to close the Complex Cultural Space at Smithfield. We urge the Minister Mr Jimmy Deenihan and his dept to do everything in their power to ensure that these vital cultural infrastructures are kept in good use and good working order for the enjoyment of the public.*

The motion was passed and it was agreed that the Registrar would write to the Minister.

The following motion was proposed by Anthony Cronin and seconded by Mannix Flynn: *As this is the last meeting of the current Toscaireacht, we propose to thank the Chair for his contribution over the last two years.*

The motion was passed.

The meeting ended.