

Minutes of the meeting of the Toscaireacht

Date 13 March 2008

Time 12 pm

Venue No. 70 Merrion Square

Present

Mannix Flynn, Mary FitzGerald, Alice Hanratty, Macdara Woods, Anthony Cronin, Seoirse Bodley, Dermot Healy, Sam Walsh.

In attendance

Toby Dennett (Registrar), Karen Lee Walpole (International Arts and Artists Officer, Acting), Mary Cloake (Arts Council Director), Niamh McCabe (Traditional Arts Officer).

Papers before the meeting

Agenda

Minutes of previous meeting

Motions for General Assembly

Registrars report

Proposal to honour performing artists

Draft minutes of General Assembly 2007

Aosdá na discipline ballot count

Saoi nomination ballot count

Agenda

1. Apologies
2. Introduction to Aosdá na Documentary by Fintan Connolly
3. Previous mins /matters arising
4. Registrars report
5. Aosdá na rules and procedures update on discussion at last meeting
6. Approve minutes of last general assembly
7. Discipline Ballot
8. Saoi
9. Motions for General Assembly
10. Representation by Mary Cloake Director of the Arts Council Re proposal on how the Arts Council might honour interpretative and performing artists.
11. AOB

1. Apologies

Apologies from Brian Maguire and Eibhlís Farrell

2. Introduction to Aosdá na Documentary by Fintan Connolly

Fintan Connolly discussed the documentary on Aosdá náhat he is currently working on and the possibility of having access to the General Assembly as well as the possibility of filming the general business of a Toscaireacht meeting. It was agreed that the Registrar would liaise with the Chair of the next meeting and with Fintan Connolly to facilitate a possible filming opportunity at the next Toscaireacht meeting.

3. Previous mins /matters arising

It was agreed that an amendment would be made to item 3, line 1 to read,
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

4. Registrars report

Items read and noted

Freedom of Information
Minutes on line
General Assembly venue confirmed
Received discipline ballots
Saoi elected

Disappointment was expressed in the return of only 160 ballot papers from the recent discipline ballot.

5. Aosdá na rules and procedures update on discussion at last meeting

There was an extended discussion around the role that the Toscairí could and should play in regard to the rules and procedures governing Aosdá na. It was agreed that not all members had a clear understanding of the Rules. It was agreed that there must be a clear distinction between Aosdá na rules (which can only be changed with the consent of the Membership and approval of the Arts Council) and the processes and procedures operated by the Arts Council in its administration of Aosdá na. It was agreed that there was a need to provide clarity to members and others as outlined at the previous meeting and that the Toscairí would revisit the issues discussed at future meetings.

6. Approve minutes of last general assembly

It was agreed that the draft minutes would be reviewed by the Toscairí prior to the next meeting of the Toscaireacht.

7. Discipline ballot

The results of the discipline ballot were circulated and noted.

8. Saoi

It was reported that Camille Souter had been elected as Saoi through the postal Ballot. The registrar noted that at the request of Camille a ceremony would not take place until 2009.

9. Motions for the General Assembly

Motions received from members were put to the Toscaireacht for consideration. The Registrar noted that the motions for consideration of the General Assembly should be concerned with issues relevant to the arts and artists in society.

Motion Proposed by: Margaretta D Arcy

Motion Seconded by: Vivienne Dick

That the Toscaireacht impress upon Seamus Brennan TD, Minister for the Arts, that it is totally unacceptable that many of our members should potentially draw pensions or otherwise benefit from investment in armaments; and urge him to use his best efforts to have a bill passed implementing the UN Principles of Responsible Investment at national level, and to exclude (as has been done by the Norwegian government) any firms involved in the production of nuclear weapons, cluster bombs, etc.

It was agreed that the motion did not meet the relevant criteria and it was therefore not accepted.

Motion Proposed by: Alice Hanratty

Motion Seconded by: Patrick Pye

That the General Assembly of Aosdá na, while not decrying the work of Anthony Gormley would suggest nevertheless that his proposal for the River Liffey would be profoundly inappropriate and a gross intrusion in the river; and that the proposal should be abandoned altogether.

It was agreed that the motion be accepted.

Motion Proposed by: Alice Hanratty

Motion Seconded by: Michael Kane

The General Assembly of Aosdá na wishes to draw the attention of the Minister for Communications Mr. Eamonn Ryan and of An Post to the inappropriateness of such a commemoration of that terrible event which was designed to destroy as many as possible of the people of Ulster.

It was agreed that the motion be accepted with changes to the wording of the motion (to be agreed between Anthony Cronin and Alice Hanratty)

Motion Proposed by: Bob Quinn

Motion Seconded by: Rita Ann Higgins

Aosdá na wishes to support the people of Rossport in their dignified and heroic struggle to protect their homes, families and environment against the inherent dangers posed by the unprecedented gas project being forced on their community. The right of the people of Rossport to live safely in their homes is sacrosanct under Bunreacht na hÉireann. While recognising the interests of the oil companies in bringing the gas to market we call on Shell, Statoil and Marathon to configure the Corrib project in a manner that respects the wishes of the receiving community. Aosdá na proposes that the natural resources of Ireland should primarily benefit the citizens of Ireland.

It was agreed that the motion did not meet the relevant criteria and it was therefore not accepted.

Motion Proposed by: Michael Holohan

Motion Seconded by: Dermot Healy

That Aosdá na supports the recent statement (in the Irish Times 1st/2nd March 2008) by our fellow member Seamus Heaney that the local landscape around the site of ancient Tara has been desecrated by the construction of the M3 motorway and consequently Aosdá na calls upon the Irish Government to enact legislation immediately to protect the local landscapes of our other ancient sites especially Bremore Balbriggan, Feltown, Callowkeel, Callowmore, Loughcrew and other similar monuments.

It was agreed to give in principle support to the motion but that it be reworded before being put to the General Assembly (Dermot Healey to Liaise with Michael Holohan)

10. Representation by Mary Cloake Director of the Arts Council Re proposal on how the Arts Council might honour interpretative and performing artists.

The Chair welcomed Mary to the meeting. Mary thanked the Toscaireacht for the opportunity to provide an update on this important issue.

At the request of the Toscaireacht Mary updated the meeting on the Councils efforts to secure an increase in the Cnuas.

An outline proposal was distributed to the Toscaireacht suggesting how the Arts Council might introduce a system of honouring performing and interpretative artists as called for at the last General Assembly.

Mary Cloake presented the proposal noting that the issue had been considered at great length by Council. It was proposed that -

- 1) the membership of Aosdá na be extended to include performing artists;
- 2) a new but separate electorate of performing artists is created within the membership of Aosdá na and that this would essentially create a bi-cameral structure, which would
 - a. allow the existing members to retain existing voting patterns and a separate identity as creative artists;
 - b. provide an equality of esteem for performing artists who would be unambiguously members of Aosdá na;

The Toscaireacht were asked to consider

- if there would be support in principle for the proposal
- how might such a proposal be presented to the membership for consideration

A number of issues were discussed in relation the proposal including Cnuas, election/appointment procedures, administration, definitions, membership numbers, General Assembly and the relationship between the two bodies.

It was felt that more time was required to consider the proposal. It was agreed that the issue would be discussed again at the next meeting but that it would most likely require still further consideration and clarification before any decision might be taken.

11. AOB

It was noted that in future the minutes of the General should identify specific tasks and those charged with those tasks.

It was agreed that Anthony Cronin would chair the next meeting of the Toscaireacht to be held in April.