

Minutes

Meeting of Toscaireacht, via Webex.

12pm – 130pm 2 July 2020

Present

Anne Haverty (Chair), Eamon Colman, Deirdre Kinahan, Enda Wyley, Geraldine O'Reilly, Michael Holohan, Gerard Smyth, Grainne Mulvey, Mary O'Donnell, Theo Dorgan

Webex Host

Karen Hennessy (Registrar)

Minutes and Matters arising

Anne Haverty proposed the minutes and Theo Dorgan seconded. No matters arising.

General Assembly 2020

Michael Holohan and the Registrar reported on a meeting with John Brannigan held via Webex on 1st July. UCD O'Reilly Hall is scheduled to reopen on 14 Sep 2020. A '2' metre social distance scenario will allow the Hall to accommodate 126 people. A '1' metre social distance scenario will allow 240 people. The University itself is scheduled to reopen on 21 September. The Hall will not be divided into two as previously planned so there will be no opportunity to display work or have exhibitions involving Aosdána members who are UCD alumni. Also participation by UCD students will be curtailed in terms of programming as they will have only just started back.

From UCD's perspective a half day Assembly with only the morning session would not be a problem although it would curtail any involvement by UCD itself in the afternoon session. UCD has forwarded on the details of the outdoor sculpture trail and the artists involved. There are 5 Aosdána members featured on the trail. A walk around the outdoor sculpture trail is an outdoor activity which could occur. At present there is no detail on catering and if that will be operational. It may also happen that O'Reilly Hall is not available if UCD needs to avail of the Hall as a student hub for those students attending zoom lessons straight after live campus lectures. This is probably unlikely however John informed Michael and Karen of this possibility.

A number of scenarios were discussed. In all cases it was thought that the Assembly should follow the 2 metre social distance guideline given the age profile of many of the members. It was asked if the Assembly could be held on a Saturday if the Hall is being used by UCD during the week. Karen can look into this.

It was suggested that the Assembly could take place just over half a day with the main private sessions focused on. This would cover the main business of the Assembly. Members could be asked to bring their own lunch and refreshments if catering is an issue. There was a discussion around attendance. If attendance is low this could impact on a good representation across art-

forms for the election of new members. A quorum of not less than 20% of the membership is required for a General Assembly. This requires a minimum of 49 members in attendance.

The General Assembly could be postponed until Spring 2021. The situation then is hard to predict. It also would mean that no new members would be elected in 2020 and there are currently 9 places available. Discussion ensued on a postal vote in the absence of an Assembly. The difficulty of this is managing the presentations by nominators. This would not be satisfactory via zoom.

It was decided that it would be best to meet again in about a month's time to discuss in detail all scenarios; holding the Assembly on 5 Oct in UCD as a private morning session only; holding the Assembly on 5 Oct in UCD with a focus on the private morning session only however with some option for afternoon activity if members bring own lunch and activities like the UCD outdoor sculpture trail could work as part of the programme; holding the Assembly in UCD on a Saturday if this is the only day O'Reilly Hall is available; looking into alternative venues . Meanwhile the Registrar will investigate alternative venue options and email the members to gauge their intentions around attendance.

Aosdána/Arts Council Working Group. Update

Discussion was had on the draft Artistic Attainment Document circulated by the Registrar to the members of the working group for feedback and input. The Registrar outlined the background to the document and that it had been requested at the last meeting of the Aosdána/Arts Council working group on 28 Nov 2019. The document circulated had been drafted with input from Thomas McCarthy and Rhona Clarke who had been on the Toscaireacht and were at the working group meeting. Due to the March 2020 meeting of the working group being cancelled the document was circulated to try and work on it prior to the next working group meeting which is likely to be in September. The purpose of the document is to give an overview of the level of artistic attainment of Aosdána members both as a point of information for the general public as well as for members themselves. It was thought that the document is an important one but that the level of detail around excellence of work was not required and that the aims as outlined were sufficient.

A second document which had been circulated to the Toscaireacht: "A proposal to celebrate the 40th anniversary of Aosdána with a publication", was not discussed and will defer to the next meeting of the Toscaireacht.

Date for Your Diaries

The Toscaireacht discussed the concerns expressed by a member in relation to the content of the weekly circular compiled by the Aosdána staff. The Registrar outlined the current policy being that only work submitted by a member for circulation is included. Aosdána staff do not

actively search for content and do not liaise with representative bodies for content although they could do this if this was requested. The Toscaireacht agreed that the current policy is sufficient and complimented Justine Harrington on her work on DFYD, particularly over the past number of months, as well as her work on twitter. The Chair will contact the member directly who expressed concern over the format.

Arts Council IT system Upgrade

The Registrar outlined that as a result of capital investment from the Department in 2018 the Arts Council will upgrade all of its online services. This will also include an upgrade of the web site. This work will start to take place shortly. It will result in an improvement in all online application processes. Currently Aosdána members do not use online services for the Cnuas application or the Annual Report Form. Moving forward it is the best interest of the members to be part of the new online system. The Registrar outlined that there are currently 23 members with no email but otherwise all members use email and work online in terms of the application for the Cnuas and the Annual Report Form albeit outside of online services. A transition to online services could be managed. It would happen over time. An invitation to be part of an external group to look at the ease of use of a new system is extended to the Toscaireacht. Deirdre Behan is overseeing the process and would welcome a member as part of the group. The Registrar will follow up with members after the meeting in relation to this.

Date of next Toscaireacht meeting

In approximately one month.

Action Items

- Registrar will investigate alternative venue options to UCD.
- Registrar to investigate if O'Reilly Hall would be available on a Saturday.
- Registrar will email all members to gauge their intentions around attendance.
- Registrar will follow up with the Toscaireacht in relation to the invitation to a member to be part of the external group for the Arts Councils IT systems upgrade.
- Chair to contact member about 'Dates for Your Diaries'.