

Draft Minutes

11am – 1230pm 12 January 2023

Meeting of Aosdána Toscaireacht

Present

Gerry Smyth, Anne Haverty, Cathy Carman, Vivienne Dick, Michael Holohan, Theo Dorgan

Via Zoom: Anne Tallentire, Grainne Mulvey

Apologies Enda Wyley

Election of Chair

Anne Haverty retired as Chair of Toscaireacht. Anne nominated Theo Dorgan as new Chair and Cathy Carman seconded this. There were no other nominees or volunteers and as such Theo was elected. Theo agreed to take on the Chair for a limited period. Theo as newly elected Chair thanked Anne Haverty for her hard work, competence and efficiency as Chair.

Minutes and Matters Arising

Anne Haverty proposed the minutes of 28 October 2022 meeting and Grainne Mulvey seconded. Theo Dorgan asked that it is stated clearly by a member if they wish an item to be recorded in minutes. All decisions should be recorded and all action items should be clear. The Registrar took this opportunity to remind the Toscaireacht that all correspondence with the Arts Council is subject to the Freedom of Information Act and that they should be mindful of this in all communication.

Appointment of new Toscaireacht member

Each member of the Toscaireacht was invited to put forward names as candidates to co-opt on to the Toscaireacht for the remainder of the current term which is until Jan 2024. The Registrar was provided with 5 names from the current membership and an order in which to contact them.

Draft Minutes General Assembly

The Chair asked that the apologies be updated with the corrections supplied. Also that the minutes be amended to reflect that the period in which Standing Orders were suspended and then resumed did not need to be included on the minutes but rather in its place to outline that Standing Orders were suspended and then resumed. The Registrar will make these amendments and then re-circulate.

General Assembly – see Motions and Actions Below

12. 1 Motion proposed by Hugh Maxton, seconded by Anne Haverty

It was decided that a letter on this motion should be issued to the Press. The Chair requested Aosdana headed paper for this. The Registrar will look to gather all head paper left over from the previous Chair's term and order more if necessary.

'That this Assembly deplores, in the strongest terms, the recent violent and public assault on the novelist Salman Rushdie in New York State and urges other Irish arts organisations to follow suit. In doing so, we pay homage to our Toscaireacht's prompt condemnation in 1989 of the fatwah issued against his life'.

This motion was passed unanimously.

12.2 Motion proposed by Mary O'Donnell, seconded by Geraldine O'Reilly

It was decided that a letter to the Council to inform them of this motion should be issued by the Chair.

'Aosdána has reached a point in its existence at which the ceiling of 250 members is not adequate. Since its introduction and development, the number of artists of achievement in all disciplines has increased, largely due to nurturing and positive forms of arts education, facilities, introductions and professional apprenticeships to creative practice. Surely the time has arrived in which the Arts Council and we in Aosdána should welcome a gradual increase in our membership to 300, in recognition of the benefit that an increased presence would bring both to our affiliation and to Irish society in general'.

This motion was passed unanimously.

12. 3 Motion proposed by Theo Dorgan, seconded by Enda Wyley

It was proposed to send this newly amended Statement of Values to the Council.

'Proposed that Aosdána adopt the following statement of values

WHEREAS Aosdána is an independent affiliation of artists that, when places become available, elects to its membership, by peer selection, artists who have by the quality of their work made a significant contribution to their art form

AND WHEREAS Members nominating and seconding candidates for election to the honour of membership do so free from constraint and in accordance with their own independent best judgement

WE STATE AND CONFIRM That members have made, make and will continue to make every effort to inform themselves fully when identifying suitably qualified artists deserving of the honour.

WE FURTHER STATE Our unswerving commitment to undertaking that duty in a spirit of principled commitment to demonstrable equity, informed by a lively and inquiring sense of new and emerging art forms, an awareness of inherited historical discriminations in the representation of women artists and embracing the obligation to keep actively in mind how questions of class, gender, ability/disability, and ethnicity, can act to obscure significant achievements by individual artist'.

This motion was passed by majority, with a number of abstentions.

12.4 : Motion proposed by Gerard Smyth, seconded by Michael Holohan

It was requested that the Registrar circulate the document re: nominations to all for oversight and editing if required.

'That short quotations from the person being nominated are permitted in letters of nomination from the proposer and seconder, which may include quotations from the nominee's writings, extracts from artist's statements and such like. Quotations from third parties, whatever the provenance, shall continue to be disallowed.'

This motion was passed by majority, with a number of abstentions.

12.5 Motion proposed by Michael Holohan, seconded by Imogen Stuart

It was decided that Michael Holohan should draft a letter on this motion and send it to the Chair before issuing to the Press.

'That 'The Cross of Muiredach' and 'The West High Cross' at the monastic site of Monasterboice, Co. Louth, regarded as the greatest scriptural High Crosses in Europe and on an artistic par with 'The Book of Kells', be immediately restored by The Irish Government to the Tentative list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites. And also; that due to 'acid rain' and other forms of aerial pollution, that plans for the preservation of the crosses be put in place (similar to those works already carried out in Kells, Moone and Clonmacnoise).'

The motion was passed unanimously.

Motion proposed by Theo Dorgan, seconded by Eamon Colman (delayed from earlier in proceedings)

It was decided that this should go forward for the General Assembly in 2023.

'That as a prerequisite for election a candidate for membership must secure 50% plus one vote of the votes cast at the General Assembly, including postal votes properly received. Candidates who cross that threshold shall be deemed eligible and shall then be elected on a first-past-the-post basis until all available places have been filled. In the event that the number of eligible candidates shall be fewer than the number of places available in a given year, those unfilled places shall be carried forward to the subsequent year'.

This motion was withdrawn in light of time pressure, and it was agreed that it would be put forward once again in 2023.

Emergency Motion proposed by Theo Dorgan, seconded by Anne Haverty, Gerard Smyth, Enda Wyley, Michael Holohan, Paula Meehan, Anne Tallentire, Gráinne Mulvey, Vivienne Dick and Cathy Carmen

It was decided that the Chair write a letter to the Arts Council Chair on this motion.

'That the General Assembly mandates the Toscaireacht to seek with the Arts Council either an agreed third party to Chair the sessions of the working group or to seek agreement that the Chair of the working group shall rotate between the Toscaireacht and the Arts Council'.

The motion was passed unanimously.

14. Any other business

It was requested that the Registrar ask for the address of Barbara Novak to send on the letter of condolence.

The General Assembly expressed their sadness and condolences upon hearing of the death of Brian O'Doherty, an Irish-born artist who passed away in New York earlier in the month.

Aosdana Handbook

A working group to revise progress on this to date was established consisting of Gerry Smyth and Michael Holohan. The Registrar had gathered many documents on this and would liaise with the working group to develop the new Handbook. Meanwhile copies of the old handbook would be circulated.

Working Group

The two letters as issued by the Chair Anne Haverty to the Council in October were on the Council Agenda at the November plenary however due to time constraints they were not discussed at the Nov plenary and were instead postponed until the Dec plenary. They were an item on the Agenda at the Dec plenary and discussed. The Registrar will ask the Director for detail on this once the minutes are approved.

How at the next AGM some time could be made to celebrate members work

This item was not discussed and as such as postponed to the next meeting.

Meeting Ends.