

Minutes

Toscaireacht Meeting

Online

10am – 1130pm, 4 December 2024

Present online

Cecily Brennan, John McLachlan, Peter Sirr, Eithne Jordan, John Scott, Evelyn Conlon, Amanda Coogan, Grainne Mulvey, Jimmy Murphy

Apologies

None

Minutes and Matters Arising

Cecily updated that a letter had been issued to the member who had asked the Toscaireacht for their view on the Arts Council bursary and its relationship to the Cnuas. The Toscaireacht is in agreement with the Arts Council. This matter was now closed.

The decision to host the Open Forum in March and General Assembly in Sep 2025 was discussed and it was explained to those not at the October meeting that this had been agreed at the October meeting. An update was asked of the query submitted to the Data Protection Commissioner in relation to the Toscaireacht accessing all members emails. This is still with the Commissioner.

It was asked if Aosdána members could be given an @Aosdána.ie email address once elected. The Registrar will look into this. This is a separate ask and could be an optional address for each member to use. It would not replace the initial ask in to the Commissioner for all members emails to be accessible by the Toscaireacht but could be a way for members to communicate with each other. There is no guarantee a member would use an @Aosdána.ie email so it would not be a means by which the Toscaireacht could communicate with all members. The October minutes were proposed by Eithne Jordan and seconded by Jimmy Murphy.

The Arts Council/ Aosdána Liaison Committee first meeting – Update

An overview of the meeting was given by all three who had attended on behalf of the Toscaireacht. It was agreed that whilst the overall spirit of the meeting was open that it was expressed that there would not be an increase in membership size nor Cnuas threshold in 2025. It was outlined that the Council need to see a willingness on behalf of Aosdána to engage with EDI which is central to the Arts Council's work. The fact that the Toscaireacht now have a draft EDI policy document and are looking towards drafting an implementation plan is very positive. It is this kind of action which will enable the Council to understand Aosdána's commitment to EDI. It was outlined at the meeting that given that this work has started that it could be possible to ask for an increase in membership size for 2026. The ground work for an ask on this needs to take place across 2025 and before the budget decisions are made Autumn 2025. Having an open forum in March 2025 and gauging the members' reponse to the draft EDI document as well as a draft EDI implementation plan at this Open Forum will be very important.

The Chair of the Toscaireacht will meet with the Chair of the Arts Council in the new year in order to emphasise the importance the Toscaireacht is placing on EDI and to reassure the Council that the

Toscaireacht places importance on all interaction and that all interaction is conducted in a manner that observes the highest standards of professional and personal integrity. Dialogue and discussion is important but should take place within an environment that is cordial and respectful. Perception is very important and in order to enable positive perception of Aosdána it is important that the members have the tools to highlight that they are members when showing their work. The Registrar will work with the Aosdána Assistant on promotional tools including developing social media usage and branding. The Open Forum could be used as a means by which members present their work, particularly those who work in an EDI context. Council members could attend.

A stronger presence by Aosdána members on social media will highlight to the public also the work of members and their relevance to the arts in Ireland.

Aidan has been in touch with members in relation to social media and use of Instagram and the Open Forum will be a means to promote the use of social media further.

Guidelines on the use of the Aosdána logo can be given at the Open Forum.

A discussion ensued on Aosdána's status as an affiliation. The Registrar outlined that funding for Aosdána comes through the overall Arts Council grant from Government.

EDI Policy Document

Cecily had asked some of the original work group members to review the draft document. This review had taken place and the members are happy with the work done to date although they had one point to raise re gender. They would like to work on the implementation plan. The Registrar will set up a meeting with them and Leon Diop early in the New Year to work on the implementation plan.