

MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING: 13TH SEPTEMBER 2022

11am, Tuesday 13th September 2022
Boardroom, Northern Ireland Screen

Present: David Sterling (Chair), Róise Ní Bhaoill, Richard Hanna, Michael Fanning, Peter Weil, Tom Gray, Carmel Mullan, Fionnuala Deane, Brenda Romero

In attendance: Richard Williams (CEO), Anne Dorbie (Chief Operating Officer), Andrew Reid (Head of Production), Áine Walsh (Head of ILBF), Mary McVey (Marketing Manager), Francis Jones (Head of Archive), David McConnell (Education Manager), Laura Higgins (Accountant), Marie Shivers (PA to CEO)

Apologies: Greg Maguire, Susan Picken, Mark Huffam

No conflicts of interest were noted.

Board members introduced themselves for the benefit of Paul Grocott and Giulia ní Dhulchaointigh.

1.0 Minutes of the Board meetings of 21st June 2022

- 1.1 The Board agreed the draft minutes were an accurate reflection of the last meeting and were signed.
- 1.2 The Chair and CEO had a useful meeting with the DfC Permanent Secretary. It was a good opportunity to give him a brief update on our organisation; Andrew Reid is in regular dialogue with BECTU; KPIs will be discussed during the meeting; Studio Ulster was due to be formally launched on 12 September but has been rescheduled to 20 September due to the passing of Queen Elizabeth.

2.0 Chair's business

- 2.1 The Chair made brief remarks on The Queen's passing.
- 2.2 The Chair informed Board members that Marie would be in touch to arrange annual assessments over the coming weeks.

3.0 10x Presentation, Department for the Economy

- 3.1 Paul Grocott, Deputy Secretary at the Department for the Economy, and Giulia ní Dhulchaointigh, Director for 10x Strategy, presented on their ambition to encourage greater collaboration and innovation to deliver a ten times better economy with benefits for everyone. This is a mission-oriented approach aligned with DfC, DE and DAERA.
- 3.2 The Board thanked Paul and Giulia for the presentation noting the importance of collaboration with other departments. The Board noted that Careers education is critical element to future success and that industry must have input into careers education. Giulia noted that the

strategy is more focussed on disadvantaged education areas with far more opportunities for DfE to become more involved in this area.

- 3.3 In a response to questions from the CEO about how Northern Ireland Screen can contribute particularly in the inclusive growth area and available matrix to allow us to see if we are making an impact, Giulia stated that they need all delivery bodies to work with them to understand what everyone is able to contribute. The Department is working on what can be measured as data is not available for certain targets. A coordinated approach is needed to achieve the outcomes and scale required.
- 3.4 Anne Dorbie suggested it would be useful to look at the recent Education Evaluation report which sets out the outcomes and achievements very well and sits well within the 10x Strategy.
- 3.5 The Board expressed some concern that the screen industry was not overtly referred to within 10X. Paul indicated that creative industries were detailed within one of the clusters and virtual production was highlighted as a key technology.

[Paul and Giulia left the meeting]

4.0 CEO's Report including Performance Indicator Report and Investment Report

- 4.1 Despite a slow start to the year all indications are positive on large-scale with a number of potential future projects to fill the studios hopefully formally announced soon. As mentioned above, Andrew is in regular dialogue with BECTU and local freelance crew regarding their concerns. Good news that the Minister has confirmed the overall budget. This is particularly useful ahead of our Stories, Skills and Sustainability Strategy launch on 11 October.
- 4.2 Investment in skills, not including CINE, is £2.5m which means NI is coming close to the sort of funding for skills indicated as necessary at a UK, probably the only place in the UK coming close to that figure. We are starting our journey on sustainability with the appointment of Gavin Kelly to the post of Facilities and Sustainability Manager. We are very drawn to the potential of HVO (hydrogenated vegetable oil) which Gavin is exploring.

KPI Report

- 4.3 The KPI Report was noted.

Investment Report

- 4.4 The Investment Report was noted.

5.0 Finance, Audit and Governance

Risk Register

- 5.1 The vast majority of risks since the last meeting have improved. The two that remain red (studio space and language funds) we hope will be down by the next meeting.

Business Plan

- 5.2 It was noted that the Business Plan had been overhauled to reflect the first year of the new strategy period and the areas of focus within Stories, Skills and Sustainability, particularly the increased focus on skills and the introduction of sustainability as a key concern.
- 5.3 The Board approved the Business Plan.

Audit and Risk Committee Update

- 5.3 Carmel Mullan informed the Board that the last Committee meeting was postponed at the last minute due to audit queries over accounting technicalities, specifically pensions, an issue that occurred in the previous year which the Department is awaiting a solution on, and how recoupment is treated. We are pulling together a summary of what information we have and what next steps will be. The Board noted that retention of the present treatment of recoupment was preferable from an operational perspective.

Management Accounts to 31st January 2021

- 5.4 Anne Dorbie noted a significant variance with the £4.8m bringing us up to the current baseline level with the challenge being now to spend it. The CEO thought it worth mentioning that Screen Fund is always slow initially but is now starting to pick up.

Strategic Resources Committee Update

- 5.5 The Chair noted the Committee sat this morning and discussed the Risk Register, Business Plan and two HR policies, TOIL and Maternity Leave, which were being tabled for Board approval.
- 5.6 The Board reviewed and approved these policies.

6.0 Other Committee Updates

SECWG

- 6.1 All partner organisations are gearing up for a busy term. Nerve Belfast is now located in W5 as a co-tenant alongside Microsoft. The Amma Centre in Armagh is heavily involved in the campus in Omagh's shared education programmes. The Nerve Centre continues to work on the very successful Unboxed event. Key Stage 2 Storybuilder has been very popular with over 10,000 copies distributed. Storybuilder and Games for Key Stage 3 are currently being developed in collaboration with Into Games. ScreenWorks has returned to physical delivery and engagement has been very high. Screen Academies will start again in the Autumn and is already oversubscribed.
- 6.2 Richard Hanna suggested we invite people to see what we do and what is available in terms of providing industry knowledge and opportunities.

Irish Language Broadcast Fund (ILBF)

- 6.3 The Committee will consider digital and audio projects at their next meeting. A wide range of programming is currently in production and post-production. The Laughing Boy recently captured media attention as did a programme about Kingsley Arthur Porter, a billionaire from Boston, who came to Donegal, bought Glenveigh Castle but subsequently disappeared without trace. A feature documentary on Paul Muldoon has been selected for Cork Film Festival.
- 6.4 The last tranche of trainees completed their placements, all but one is currently employed. A celebration for past and present trainees will take place on 22 September and the new tranche of trainees began their placements last week.

Ulster-Scots Broadcast Fund (USBF)

- 6.5 Digital projects were discussed at the recent Committee meeting. Richard Hanna was pleased that there were more applications than funding available. He reiterated his disappointment at the current funding situation reemphasising that this affects business planning and every other aspect of managing the Fund.

Investment Committee

- 6.6 Peter Weil highlighted an article in the Newsletter by Gordon Lyons on large-scale projects over the last few years. As previously mentioned there are a number of leads on potential projects to fill the studios. Netflix will shortly be airing 3 programmes, Derry Girls, School for Good and Evil and Lift, and Bloodlands Series 2 returns this weekend. Other projects coming soon are a new series, B&B By the Sea, Hope Street, and Wreck will launch on 9 October.

NIHAWG

- 6.7 How to Bury a Dead Mule, a one man show using archive clips launched last week. Pleased to have appointed a dedicated Archive Education Officer whose key role will be to raise awareness of archive, its value and potential as an educational resource. We are in conversation with Ulster University around standalone development courses to cover skills gaps.

Skills/Training

- 6.8 Skills issues have been covered already. Nothing further to add.

CEFFWG

- 6.9 Cinemagic Film Festival launches on 18 September, Belfast Film Festival will run from 3-12 November, Foyle from 18-22 Nov, and Into Film UK wide festival from 8-25 November. The first session of the Belfast Stories consultation period for screen industries took place last week. There are further sessions on 20 September (online) and 30 September (in person). The public consultation is happening alongside this.

7.0 Marketing Calendar

- 7.1 Strategy launch invites will issue this afternoon.

8.0 Any Other Business

8.1 No other business was raised.

9.0 Date of Next Meeting

9.1 The date of the next meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday 13th December 2022 at 11am** at Northern Ireland Screen.

Point	Detail	Actioned by	Update
3.4	Forward the recent Education Evaluation Report to Paul Grocott and Giulia ní Dhulchaointigh	Marie Shivers	Completed

Signed:  _____

Date: 13/12/22