

MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING: 25th June 2024

11am, Tuesday 25th June 2024

Northern Ireland Screen Boardroom ~ Alfred Street, Belfast

Present: David Sterling (Chair), Roise Ni Bhaoill, Mark Huffam, Fionnuala Deane, Michael Fanning, Peter Weil, Carmel Mullan

In attendance: Richard Williams (CEO), Áine Walsh (Head of ILBF), Andrew Reid (Chief Content Officer), Nicola Lyons (Head of Production), Laura Higgins (Head of Finance), Suzanne Harrison (Head of Funding), Chloe McAdam (Office Assistant)

Apologies: Brenda Romero, Tom Gray, Susan Picken, Richard Hanna, Francis Jones (Archive Manager), David McConnell (Education and Careers Manager), Mary McVey (Head of Marketing), Marie Shivers (PA to CEO)

No conflicts of interest were noted.

1.0 Minutes of the Board meeting of 19th March 2024.

- 1.1 The Board were content with the minutes, and they were signed.
- 1.2 Two actions remain ongoing and the CEO will update at the next meeting.

2.0 Chair's business

- 2.1 The Chair noted positive engagement at the Chamber of Commerce lunch at Belfast City Hall. Chair noted that the subject of the lunch focused on the success of Blue Lights, and this included an interview panel with cast from the show. The CEO was also in attendance.
- 2.2 The Chair has reviewed and approved all Board member appraisals.
- 2.3 We are looking forward to welcoming the Department for Economy (DfE) Minister to a set visit for a new large-scale production filming. A date for this has not yet been set. Andrew Reid to follow up on suitable date.
- 2.4 The Chair noted that we should follow up on the No.10 Roundtable.

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

- 3.1 The CEO's Report highlights the DfC budget return to its traditional level with annual funding confirmed at £1.999m as per our Business Case, reversing the substantial cut in 23-24.
- 3.2 The CEO noted strong positive developments for the BBC partnership following a meeting with BBC NI CEO, Adam Smyth. He noted the success of Docs Ireland and local pupils' success at the INTO Film Awards.

- 3.3 We are negotiating with Queen's University the undertaking of a research project on AI across the screen industries.
- 3.4 KPIs expanded this year to include tracking gender for 'above the line' roles. Other areas include retention rate for trainees and uptake in sustainability measures by funded projects. We have also introduced a number of qualitative measures for DfC funded activities. Across the board we're tracking positively for Q1.

4.0 Draft Business Plan 2024/25

- 4.1 The Chair noted the Business Plan is consistent with the current strategy. All members had reviewed the Business Plan and agreed to formally endorse it.

5.0 Finance, Audit and Governance

Risk Register

- 5.1 There have been no major changes to overall risks although a general and significant global slowdown in screen production across all sectors has replaced the challenges from the SAG/Afra strikes. Uncertainty around funding for CINE for 25/26 year remains a risk. Northern Ireland Screen is looking at alternative funding options that will continue the funding of the CINE scheme. The education, outreach and cultural activities of Northern Ireland Screen came under pressure during the year due to a £0.5m cut in annual funding from DfC. However, the risk was entirely mitigated by DfE.
- 5.2 The Board approved the Risk Register.

Direct Award Contracts

- 5.3 Carmel Mullan noted the ARC Workplan required Board approval for 3 items including: 1 year pilot scheme for 'OLIO' which is a food waste app for industry caterers, which feeds into Albert Calculation; AI research paper in partnership with Queens University; and Northern Ireland Screen lunch at MIP Com in Cannes.
- 5.4 The Board approved the Direct Award Contracts.

Internal Audit

- 5.5 The internal audit was completed with a satisfactory review outcome.
- 5.6 In the year coming, Internal Audit will review Studio Ulster and internal approval processes. Laura Higgins noted there will be a review of cyber security and Business Continuity Plan going forward as well.

Strategic Resources Committee Update

- 5.7 The Chair noted that a total of 8 new Board members are required. We hope to introduce new members over an 18-month period. The Board will be required to review members who are staying against members required, which will help to determine what skills and areas new members will need to cover.

- 5.8 The Chair noted recent leave of absence by Board member Richard Hanna due to illness. The Chair will keep in touch with Richard to determine whether he wishes to remain in post until the end of his appointment in June 2025. Action to review this with Richard Hanna.
- 5.9 Brenda Romero will be stepping down as a Board member at the end of June. Mark Huffam and Fionnuala Deane's contracts to be extended. Action to follow up on this and send out letters of offer.

6.0 Outstanding Board Away Day Session

Minute added to Away Day minutes.

7.0 Other Committee Updates

USBF

- 7.1 Richard Hanna stepped down as Chair of the USBF. Frank Ferguson was appointed by the Committee as the new Interim Chair of the USBF.
- 7.2 All funding has been allocated for the year.

Investment Committee

- 7.3 Peter reported on the commitments from the Investment Committee including the commissioning of the third series of Blue Lights, the third series of Children's TV series Puffin Rock, and the second series of Children's TV series Pickle Storm.

NIHAWG

- 7.4 Funding of £78,800 was secured through the BFI's Screen Heritage Fund for 'Northern Ireland Now', a contemporary collecting project designed to give voice to those whose stories are currently underrepresented within the Digital Film Archive. In addition, an extension until December 2028 for the UTV Archive Partnership (ITV, PRONI and Northern Ireland Screen) was formalised in March 2024.

Skills/Training

- 7.5 Recruitment is underway for positions in Interactive, Animation, Development, and Craft and Technical. Warner Brothers HQ have taken on 10 trainees in various areas for large-scale production 'Sweetfoot'.

CEFFWG

- 7.6 It was noted that Docs Ireland had been a success and was well attended. Ticket sales almost doubled year on year. Noted that this is a strong partnership with Queen's Film Theatre and this partnership will continue to grow with support from both partners. This is further cemented with confirmation of return of DfC funding for the exhibition sector.

SECWG

- 7.7 The CEO noted that DfC confirmed the full allocation of funding to cover education, exhibition, and archive funding.

ILBF

7.8 Áine Walsh is newly appointed as Chair of the Celtic Media Festival.

7.9 ILBF Officer Bridin Ni Mhaoldomhnaigh is leaving her position in July and her position has been filled by James Jamison Mac Lochlainn.

8.0 Marketing Update

8.1 Marketing calendar reviewed and noted.

9.0 Any Other Business

9.1 The Chair noted that the Board Effectiveness review has been postponed to next year due to the ongoing ALB review.

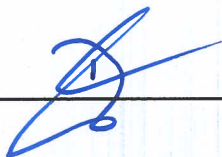
10.0 Date of Next Meeting

10.1 The date of the next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 24th September.

Actions

Point	Detail	Actioned by	Update
2.3	Confirm set visit for DfE Minister for Away Day	AR	Set visit undertaken
2.4	Follow up with relevant parties from No.10 Roundtable	CEO	Completed
5.7	Review with Richard Hanna on continuance of position as a Board member	CHAIR	Ongoing
5.8	Mark Huffam and Fionnuala Deane position as Board members to be extended. Action to follow up on this and send out letters of offer	CHAIR	Completed

Signed: _____



Date: _____

24/9/24