

**MINUTES OF THE ONE HUNDREDTH AND FIRST MEETING OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE OF THE ARMAGH OBSERVATORY AND PLANETARIUM HELD ON 29 MARCH 2017 AT 11.00 A.M. IN THE BOARD ROOM, OBSERVATORY**

**Present:** Archbishop Clarke (Chair), Professor A. Hibbert (Deputy Chair), Dr M. McKay, Professor R. Oudmaijer, Mr S. Brown, Professor L. Harra, Mr B. Hannam, Professor T. Ray, Professor M. Merrifield, Mrs P. Wilson, Mr P. McGurgan, Professor M. Mathioudakis

**Apologies:** Canon Hilliard

**In attendance:** Professor M. Burton (AOP Director), Professor G. Doyle (Temporary Head of Observatory), Mr T. Heron (Temporary Head of Corporate Services), Mrs D. Neill (Operations Manager), Ms C. Corvan (AOP Head of Corporate Services, April 2017). Mrs T Hogg, (Organisation Change Joint Project Manager) item 9.  
Mrs A Stafford (Organisational Change Joint Project Manager) item 10.

**1. APOLOGIES**

The Chair welcomed Professor Mathioudakis to his first Management Committee meeting. He also welcomed Ms Corvan, who would be starting as Armagh Observatory and Planetarium's (AOP) new Head of Corporate Services on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2017 and the current temporary Head of Corporate Services, Mr Heron. The Chair advised the Committee that Canon Hilliard hoped to be well enough to attend future meetings.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Chair reminded members and officers of the need to declare any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest associated with any item on the Agenda either now or at the relevant stage during the meeting. No conflicts of interest were declared.

**3. MINUTES OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 18 JANUARY 2017**

The minutes of the meeting of 18 January 2017 were reviewed, approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.

**4. MATTERS ARISING**

4.1 Dr McKay advised the Committee that in relation to the action 15-01 that he had raised this matter while at ESA HQ the previous week and this would be pursued in conjunction with the new Head of Education and Community Outreach when appointed.

4.2 Professor Hibbert explained that action 15-03 had two parts to it. One was related to the lack of strategy which was being progressed and will be in place shortly. The second was the Board Evaluation Questionnaire which has not been completed for two years and this was needed. **Action Point MC 29/03/17-01 Professor Hibbert to complete draft pro forma and circulate for review and approval.**

4.3 A discussion took place regarding action 16-06, access to journals. A number of possible options were proposed by the Committee, such as negotiating subscription costs, a joint membership with other universities, special status to allow access to QUB's IT facilities etc. It was agreed that in the first instance, Professors Hibbert, Mathioudakis and Burton would have further discussions with Queen's University.

## 5. CHAIR'S BUSINESS

Nothing to report.

## 6. UPDATE FROM THE AUDIT AND RISK ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

- 6.1 Mr Hannam reported to the Committee that the ARAC had considered both the Accounting Officer's and the Board's Assurance Statements and were content that these provided a correct view of the ARAC's understanding of the organization and had approved these.
- 6.2 In relation to the review by Internal Audit, discussions with AOP were ongoing to finalise the March 2017 draft audit report. The ARAC were content to consider the outcome of these discussions at their next meeting in June 2017.
- 6.3 Finally, Mr Hannam updated the Committee in relation to the Annual Report and Accounts. The 2014/15 Annual Report and Accounts will be clear, the 2015/16 Annual Report and Accounts will be qualified due to irregular expenditure on a contract which may flow into the 2016/17 Annual Report and Accounts. It was unlikely that work would be completed on these until late autumn.
- 6.4 The Committee acknowledged the difficulty that AOP faced in dealing with these legacy issues and expressed their opinion that the Department should contribute to the resolution of these matters where Department officials were in post at that time. Members supported the views expressed by the ARAC that they had acted promptly and properly in commissioning an investigation by the Internal Auditors and that this reality should be reflected in the final NIAO report.
- 6.5 Professor Burton explained that he was not providing unqualified assurance in his Statement which had been reviewed by the ARAC. The Statement provided transparency on the issues and provided a realistic picture of the capability of the organization. Professor Burton stated that AOP could not move forward without additional resources, support and budget.
- 6.6 Mr Brown queried the BiAAS statement in relation to the effectiveness of the Board. The Chair explained that the Management Committee had been delegated much of the responsibilities of the Board. The Board of Governors act as the trustees and guardians and its management responsibilities are mainly discharged through the Management Committee. Professor Burton explained that in relation to the Management Statement/Financial Memorandum (MSFM) and Terms of Reference (ToR), AOP's Senior Management Team needed to input into these.
- 6.7 Professor Merrifield queried the "working towards compliance" assurance regarding Health & Safety. Mr Heron agreed to investigate and provide clarity on the issue by adding a note to the assurance statement. **Action Point MC 29/03/17-02 Mr Heron to update the Assurance Statement.**
- 6.8 Mr Heron clarified that there are two Assurance Statements; one is for the Accounting Officer to sign and one for the Board. There were minor changes requested by ARAC which will be done before the Chair signs off both statements. The Chair asked if the Committee were content for him to sign the statements subject to the agreed changes being made and the Committee agreed. **Action 29/03/17-03 Mr Heron to arrange for Assurance Statements to be signed by the Chair.**

## 7 UPDATES ON AOP Activities

7.1 Professor Burton highlighted a number of issues in his written report. He advised the Committee that since writing the report he had now received approval for the Head of Research post, although no funding was available for this. He also highlighted the need for extra resources to complete the unification of the organization.

*Mr Brown left the meeting at 12.30*

7.2 Professor Burton asked for suggestions in relation to the post of Science Media Officer. Professor Ray suggested that he contact the Royal Observatory in Greenwich, Professor Merrifield suggested a 5-year postgraduate studentship and emphasized that it should be a recruitment to the roles of both research and communication, i.e. part time student and part time communications officer.

7.3 Professor Burton asked for opinions regarding how AOP might be incentivised through the ability to earn, and retain, income. The Committee agreed that this was an important issue to explore with the Department, particularly with regard to finalising the MSFM.

7.4 In relation to increasing delegation limits, Mr Hannam suggested that a case could be made to the Department supported by the provision of a quantitative analysis highlighting the number and types of decisions which currently cannot be made by AOP and required Department approval.

7.5 Professor Burton asked the Committee if they had any case studies about how ICT could or was being managed in a research environment so as to provide a reference point for AOP to compare with as it plans for the future.

7.6 Professor Burton advised that he had an additional matter to discuss which was the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Planetarium on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2018. This was a significant event – the oldest operating Planetarium – in the UK and Ireland and Professor Burton had contacted Dame Jocelyn Bell Burnell, who has agreed to attend. Planning for this event now needs to commence. Members agreed the importance of marking this significant milestone in a meaningful way.

7.7 Mrs Wilson welcomed the Vision statements and congratulated Professor Burton on the good work that was continuing in what were clearly difficult times for AOP. Mrs Wilson advised the Committee that 2018 would be the European Year of Cultural Heritage and this would tie in with the Planetarium's anniversary. Professor Harra suggested that Professor Burton contacts the BBC.

The Committee was invited to consider this event and provide input to Professor Burton.

The Committee broke for lunch at 13.15 and resumed at 13:50

*Mrs Hogg joined the Committee*

7.8 Dr McKay seconded the comments made by Mrs Wilson before lunch in terms of congratulating Professor Burton on work ongoing. He asked if the Committee could provide any support in relation to the progression of providing a Senior Management Team. The Committee agreed this should be reflected in the minutes. The Committee also requested that the money for the ICT Review would be provided.

#### **7.9 Review of Risk Register**

Mr Hannam advised that the ARAC had reviewed this and were content that it was an accurate reflection of AOP. The Committee approved the risk register.

#### **7.10 Draft Business Plan**

This paper was tabled to the Committee. Professor Burton advised that while every Government Department was facing a 5% cut, AOP had, in effect, a 10% cut in the baseline. This plan was submitted in draft to the Department on 27 March 2017.

*Professor Mathioudakis left at 14:15*

The Committee discussed the issues the reduced budget would raise such as not being able to provide outreach in areas of deprivation, lack of staffing which may affect health and safety issues for staff and visitors, etc. There was discussion around funding for the accountant's post. Ms Corvan suggested that there should be discussions with the Department about re-baselining the budget as part of the overall change management project.

*Mrs Wilson left the meeting at 14.30*

7.11 Professor Ray suggested that the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first confirmation of General Relativity, in 1919, might also be included in the planning for future events, in particular, with regard to the involvement of Andrew Crommelin. Andrew Crommelin, originally from Cushendun in Antrim, was an astronomer at the Royal Greenwich Observatory, who participated in the expedition to Brazil that measured the deflection in starlight caused by the gravitational pull of the Sun during an eclipse.

*Mrs Stafford joined the meeting at 14:40*

#### **8. MSFM**

Professor Hibbert explained that the Board of Governors did not wish to finalise approval of the MSFM until the AOP's SMT had had an input. In relation to the position of a Chair for the Committee, the Board of Governors had requested that this would be publicly advertised. Whilst the job description was written as a remunerated post for 30 days per year, this would have to be revised as the Minister had not approved remuneration.

*Mr McGurgan left at 14:50*

The Committee agreed this post was to be advertised without remuneration. **Action Point MC 29/03/17-04 Position of Chair of Management Committee to be advertised.**

#### **9. CORPORATE PLAN PROCESS**

Mrs Hogg updated the Committee on the progress made on the Corporate Plan. Consultation was still ongoing and it was anticipated that this would not be completed until June.

*Professor Oudmaijer, Professor Merrifield and Professor Harra left at 3pm*

The Chair asked if Mrs Hogg could circulate her notes to the Committee. **Action Point MC 29/03/17-06 Mrs Hogg to circulate written progress on the Corporate Plan Process**

## 10.0 UPDATE ON FINANCIAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Mrs Stafford explained that the revision of AOPs financial policies and procedures was approximately 90% complete. The policies needed to be cross referenced back to the MSFM and then followed by an awareness session for staff. Mrs Stafford advised that the next step would be desktop procedures which would allow anyone to make a payment, subject to delegations. Mrs Stafford also advised that she had a suite of procurement documents that could be tailored to AOP. The policies had been linked with audit recommendations so that when the exercise was completed, audit recommendations would be met.

## 11.0 AOB

11.1 Professor Hibbert had addressed the matter relating to the evaluation of the Committee's Effectiveness under 4.2

11.2 The Committee noted the training and development available.

## 12. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETINGS

The next meeting will be on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2017

The meeting finished at 3.25pm

Signed as a true record of the meeting.

  
.....  
(Chair)

Dated:

## Updated Actions as at 22 March 2017

Reference	Action	Owner	Progress
MC29/01/15 - 01	Dr McKay to explore within ESA if exhibits could be provided to the Planetarium	Dr McKay	<p><b>Ongoing</b></p> <p><b>20 September 2016:</b> Dr McKay has spoken to ESA PR in HQ (Paris). ESA would like to understand the direction AOP intends to follow and what support they could provide. It has been decided to wait until the new Head of Education &amp; Outreach is appointed before pursuing further.</p> <p><b>28 January 2016:</b> Dr McKay to introduce Planetarium representative to the ESA teams to pursue potential exhibits.</p>
MC29/01/15 - 03	New Management Board to consider the areas of concern arising from the Board Evaluation Questionnaire	Chair of new Management Board	<p><b>Ongoing</b></p> <p><b>16 May 2016:</b> The Organisational Change Project Board is considering these</p> <p><b>28 January 2016:</b> The Organisational Change Project Board is considering these.</p> <p><b>28 May 2015:</b> No action has been taken</p>
MC29/01/15 - 05	Board Operating Framework to be updated following any new governance arrangements arising from the Review of Organisation and Management	Mrs Neill	<p><b>Ongoing</b></p> <p><b>16 January 2017:</b> Final revised documents to be presented to Management Committee in January 2017</p> <p><b>20 September 2016:</b> The final draft governance documents were presented at the Management Committee meeting in June and subsequent amendments made. The final documents are now being presented at the October Management Committee meeting on 6th October 2016. Board Operating Framework to be devised following this.</p> <p><b>16 May 2016:</b> New governance arrangements for AOP will be presented to the Management Committee at its June 2016 meeting. Board Operating Framework to be agreed after this.</p> <p><b>28 January 2016:</b> The Organisational Change Project Board is considering new governance arrangements.</p> <p><b>28 May 2015:</b> No action has been taken</p>

MC04/06/15 – 06	Mrs Kennedy to share the draft agreement with Mr McGurgan and also liaise with the Planetarium's solicitor	Mrs Neill	<p><b>Ongoing</b></p> <p><b>16 January 2017</b> AOP requested update on progress</p> <p><b>15 August 2016:</b> Amended maps have been received and approved. AOP is currently awaiting a response from the Solicitors in relation to amendments required to the lease agreement.</p> <p><b>24 May 2016:</b> Atlas Communications has been contacted again and they are to follow up with their surveyor in relation to the maps.</p> <p><b>15 August 2016:</b> Amended maps were received and approved by AOP. Amendments to the lease have been requested. AOP awaits response from Solicitors</p> <p><b>28 January 2016:</b> Ongoing discussions with the solicitor and Atlas Communications about the production of maps to accompany the lease.</p> <p><b>28 October 2015:</b> Mr McGurgan provided his comments on the draft lease and correspondence has continued with the solicitor. The current hold up is in relation to obtaining maps of the property as quoted throughout the lease.</p>
MC12/11/15 - 03	Dr Vink to continue discussions with Eircom UK with regards to exploring their proposal in more detail.	Professor Burton	<p><b>Ongoing</b></p> <p><b>28 September 2016:</b> On hold pending capital development programme</p> <p><b>12 May 2016:</b> Nothing to report</p> <p><b>21 January 2016:</b> Nothing to report</p>
MC08/06/16-06	Access to Queen's University's journals to be investigated`	Professor Hibbert	<p><b>Ongoing</b></p> <p><b>December 2016:</b> Applications for visiting academics have been submitted to Queens for consideration</p> <p><b>29 September 2016:</b> Professor Hibbert has investigated this and he and Professor Burton will meet with the Head of Information Services at QUB to progress this.</p>
MC 06/10/16-01	Discussion on research review to be an Agenda item at a future MC meeting	Professor Burton	
MC 06/10/16-02	Science Vision to be presented at January meeting	Professor Burton	<p><b>Completed</b></p> <p>Presentation took place at Corporate Planning Event on 18 January 2017</p>
MC 06/10/16-03	MC to seek final approval and adoption of governance documents from the AOP Board of Governors including the approval of a remunerated chair	Mrs Hogg	<p><b>Ongoing</b></p> <p>Final revised documents presented at Management Committee 18 January 2017</p>

MC 06/10/16-04	Corporate Strategy to be discussed at January MC meeting	Professor Burton	<b>Completed</b> Corporate Planning Event took place on 18 January 2017
MC 06/10/16-01	Formal note of thanks to be issued to Mr Hughes	Mrs Neill	<b>Completed</b> Letter issued from Chair on 20 January 2017
MC 18/01/17-01	ARAC to review AOP Audit Action Plan and report to Management Committee	Mr Hannam	
MC 18/01/17-02	MSFM (word format) to be forwarded to MC for amendment. Professor Hibbert to review and present revised draft to March Committee	Mrs Neill Professor Hibbert	<b>Completed</b> Document forwarded and MSFM to be discussed on 29 March 2017