

MINUTES OF THE ONE HUNDREDTH AND SEVENTH MEETING OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE OF THE ARMAGH OBSERVATORY AND PLANETARIUM HELD ON 18 SEPTEMBER 2018 AT 11.00 A.M. IN THE KEPLER ROOM

Present: Mr J Briggs (Chair), Mr S Brown, Mr B Hannam, Professor R Oudmaijer, Professor L Harra, Dr M McKay, Professor M Mathioudakis, Professor M Merrifield, Mr P McGurgan, Professor T Ray

Apologies: Canon Hilliard

In attendance: Professor M Burton (Director), Mrs C Corvan (Head of Corporate Services), Dr Marc Sarzi (Head of Research), Mr Leonard Knox (Head of Finance and Income) (part) Mrs D Neill (AOP Operations Manager)

1. APOLOGIES

1.1 Apologies were recorded as above. The Chair welcomed Dr Marc Sarzi, who took up appointment as Head of Research on 6th August 2018.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1 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.

3. MINUTES OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 21 JUNE 2018

3.1 The Chair raised a matter with the Committee concerning paragraph 6.5 of the minutes of 21 June 2018. Professor Oudmaijer had raised a query in relation to the departure of the ICT Manager and this query along with Professor Burton's response was not recorded. The Chair asked Professor Oudmaijer to address this issue and Professor Burton to respond in order to record an appropriate minute to be agreed by the Committee. Professor Oudmaijer reflected that he had joined the meeting via skype and that better facilities for conference calls may have assisted the interaction. **Action MC 19/09/2018-01 Armagh Observatory and Planetarium (AOP) to consider procurement of specialised conference call equipment.** Professor Oudmaijer outlined the concern previously raised and Professor Burton referred to his June report. Committee Members discussed the role and remit of the Management Committee in relation to operational and personnel matters and agreed that it was not appropriate for the Management Committee to get into a level of detail about individual issues. As a result of this discussion it was agreed that there should be an amendment to the minutes detailed below:

Professor Oudmaijer raised a concern in relation to the sudden departure of the ICT Systems Manager. Professor Burton referred to his report on emerging and contingency issues. He indicated that the ICT Manager had left before the end of his notice but that he did not consider it appropriate to discuss the detail of personnel matters. Professor Burton assured the Committee he was confident that the current strategy being progressed was reducing the risk of system failure and is much more robust than a few months ago.

- 3.2 It was also agreed that it would be appropriate for Professor Ray, as Chair of the Staffing Policy and Remuneration Committee (SPRC) to review how this particular operational matter was handled and report on whether or not there was any cause for concern in relation to the matter raised. **Action MC 19/09/2018 – 02 Professor Ray to investigate on behalf of and report back to the Management Committee in relation to this matter.**
- 3.3 The minutes of the meeting of 21 June 2018 were reviewed, and subject to the proposed change, approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.

Mr Knox joined the meeting at 11.24

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

- 4.1 The Committee noted the updates recorded.

5. CHAIR'S BUSINESS

- 5.1 Nothing to report.

6 REPORT FROM DIRECTOR

- 6.1 Professor Burton referred the Committee to his paper and reported on a number of matters from this. He advised the Committee that there would be more discussion on the Strategic Outline Case over lunch.
- 6.2 Dr McKay enquired if there was any action or support the Management Committee could provide in relation to some of the matters. Mrs Corvan explained that at present AOP was waiting for information in relation to ICT matters to decide if in house support or IT assist would be the best way forward for AOP. 11 funding bids had been made and this included a funding bid for the website, which is a key priority for delivery this year. There was a discussion about ICT needs and Professor Oudmaijer enquired about facilities for research. As a new member of the research team who had to experiment with the new ICT structure, Dr Sarzi confirmed that there were no issues in this area. Professor Merrifield endorsed the need for an ICT manager to be a priority and the Chair advised that the SPRC would address these issues when the position on longer terms resourcing and staffing needs became clearer.
- 6.3 There was a discussion about the proposed contribution from AOP to the International Astronomical Union's (IAU) Centenary Program. The Committee agreed that AOP should become an IAU Organisational Associate with a sponsorship contribution of €1,000 and should avail of any opportunities to increase this. Professor Ray congratulated Professor Burton on his recent election as President of IAU's Division B ("Facilities, Technologies, Data Science").
- 6.4 Dr McKay enquired as to why AOP was pursuing accredited museum status. Professor Burton explained that this would enable AOP to lever support in order to open up our collection to the public. Mrs Corvan added that it would also provide AOP with a process to ensure AOP looked after its Heritage Assets.

7.0 UPDATE FROM THE AUDIT AND RISK ASSURANCE COMMITTEE (ARAC)

- 7.1 Mr Hannam reported that ARAC completed a self-assessment which was broadly satisfactory. A number of technical questions had been raised with DfC and the Committee requested the appointment of a qualified accountant to ARAC. **Action MC 19/09/2018 – 03: The Chair to take forward with DfC**
- 7.2 Mr Hannam advised that following a Safeguarding Audit, there were no observations or recommendations and a satisfactory assurance was provided.
- 7.3 The Committee were asked to note that apart from the addition of reference to Heritage Assets, there were no significant changes to the Risk Register.
- 7.4 Mr Hannam reported that ARAC had reviewed the BiASS and recommended acceptance by the Management Committee.
- 7.5 Mr Hannam advised that the main focus of ARAC was to consider the Annual Report and Accounts for 2016/17 and 2017/18. The most important change to the accounts was in relation to the Heritage Assets held in trust by the Observatory. Mr Hannam explained that the value of the Heritage Assets in 2010 was over £1m but in the past these had not appeared on the balance sheet which was contrary to rules applicable to charities. Due to timing constraints, it was not possible to provide a more up to date valuation. It was proposed that going forward there would be an initial valuation with 20% being valued per year over a 5 year period and then an indexation. Mr Hannam reported that the qualification for 2016/17 would also be applicable in 2017/18. However, this was a technical qualification, not related to propriety, and would not result in a separate report from the C&AG. This was covered in the RTTWG and ARAC recommended the 2016/17 report goes forward. The 2017/18 accounts would be completed in 2 weeks and apart from the qualification relating to Heritage Assets there would be no significant issues and the auditors were content with the quality of the report which would be present to the December Committee.
- 7.6 In relation to outstanding audit recommendations, Mr Hannam reported that there were 19 outstanding, although at least 15 of these should be addressed by February 2019.
- 7.7 Finally, Mr Hannam reported that ARAC had approved the Risk Management Policy and the revisions to the Financial Policy and Procedures.
- 7.8 The Chair thanked ARAC and AOP staff for the improvements made and commented that there was now confidence that AOP had systems in place for proper audit and risk management.
- 7.9 The Chair asked if the Committee was content to accept the report from the ARAC and approve the Risk Register, BiASS, Annual Reports and Accounts, and the policies of Risk Management and Financial Policy and Procedures. The Committee approved the papers.

8 UPDATE FROM THE STAFFING POLICY AND REMUNERATION COMMITTEE (SPRC)

- 8.1 Professor Ray informed the Committee that recruitment was ongoing to fill posts. The Education & Outreach Manager post had been approved by DfC at Deputy Principal (DP) level for 12 months plus a 12 month option after that. The Corporate Manager business case was awaiting approval from the Permanent Secretary. There was also progression in the regrading of posts with the Grounds and Meteorological Officer being graded as an Executive Officer II and renamed to Estates and Meteorological Officer to reflect the fact that the postholder looks after the buildings as well. A JEGs process was underway to evaluate the Observatory Secretary's post which was now renamed as Executive Officer.
- 8.2 Professor Ray advised that new terms and conditions have now been agreed with trade unions and are recommended for approval. Mrs Corvan was thanked for her work in progressing uniform terms and conditions and the Committee acknowledged that there was a lot of work with unions to progress this.
- 8.3 The Committee was advised that legal advice had been received in relation to holiday pay calculations for staff who work regular overtime, which should be calculated on average pay rather than basic pay. As a result of this, and in agreement with the union, it was proposed back pay would be implemented subject to signed compromise agreement with affected staff.
- 8.4 The Committee was also advised that the 2017 pay remit had been forwarded to DfC for approval.
- 8.5 Finally, Professor Ray reported that a review of policies was underway and the SPRC would review these over the coming months with some being brought before the December Committee.
- 8.6 The Chair thanked the SPRC and Mrs Corvan for their work.

9 BUSINESS PLAN FOR 2018/19 UPDATE

- 9.1 Mrs Corvan informed the Committee that final changes to the Business Plan circulated in June had been agreed with DfC, these were to reflect a differentiation between what was achievable within core budget and what was made possible by additional funding. Mrs Corvan assured the Committee that these were technical changes not changes to priorities and objectives and AOP was actively working to achieve the objectives set. The Business Plan is currently being considered for formal approval by DfC.

10 PERFORMANCE AGAINST BUSINESS PLAN - KPIs and Finance

- 10.1 Professor Burton addressed the KPIs for the first quarter that were not currently on target. Mr Brown enquired about the Juno Practitioner status. Mrs Corvan explained that there was an option to resubmit this financial year, however the Juno Committee felt it more appropriate to resubmit in May 2019.
- 10.2 Professor Mathioudakis proposed the addition of a KPI in relation to successful graduations, there was some discussion in relation to the merits of this due to the small number of students. Dr Sarzi agreed to consider this for 2019/20.

10.3 Mr Knox referred to the Financial Report for the period ended July 2018, pointing out two areas of concern: (1) good summer weather had led to reduced admissions and a fall in income of £10,000; (2) the maintenance budget for the year was already spent, with the majority of this on reactive maintenance to support AOP's diverse estate. AOP had requested additional support for maintenance to meet the increasing demands in the recent (September 18) Monitoring Round.

11 AOB

11.1 Mrs Corvan advised the Committee that minutes of the ARAC and SPRC were now included in the papers to provide better information and transparency.

The meeting ended at 12.45.

Members were asked to move to the Cassini Room for a working lunch to meet the Juno Committee and then had a general discussion about strategy.

Project Juno: Management Committee confirmed commitment and support towards achievement of Juno Practitioner Accreditation. The Chair will include improving gender balance as a criterion in ongoing discussions about vacancies on the Board of Governors and Management Committee.

Strategy Discussion: The Chair will continue to keep this as an agenda item and consider how best to progress the discussions.

12 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting will be 10 December 2018

Signed as a true record of the meeting



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(Chair)

Dated:

10.12.18

Updated Actions as at 12 September 2018

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>Ongoing</p> <p>21 June 2018 Dr McKay advised that he has been unable to progress this due to his contact being on exceptional leave. He will endeavour to resolve this before his retirement.</p> <p>17 November 2017 Continuing to explore opportunities with Dr McKay</p> <p>1 September 2017 Dr McKay advised that he will introduce Mr News to the ESA PR.</p> <p>23 August 2017 John News has been appointed as temporary HECO and will pursue this matter with Dr McKay</p> <p>29 March 2017: It is hoped that a temporary Head of Education & Outreach will be appointed shortly and this matter will be pursued at this time.</p> <p>20 September 2016: 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 & Outreach is appointed before pursuing further.</p> <p>28 January 2016: Dr McKay to introduce Planetarium representative to the ESA teams to pursue potential exhibits.</p>
MC26/03/18-09	Mrs Corvan to contact Departmental IT Officer.	Mrs Corvan	<p>Completed</p> <p>Following discussion with the contact, AOP is content that its arrangements are more than satisfactory</p> <p>21 June 2018 Ms Kennedy has provided a contact</p> <p>15 June 2018 - IT Manager to progress</p>
MC26/03/18-10	Professor Burton to investigate an honorary professorship for the new Head of Research.	Professor Burton	Completed
MC21/06/18-01	The Chair and DfC to discuss timing of confirmation of extensions	Chair/DfC	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>10 September 2018 DfC advised that the process is underway to reappoint 3 members. There are no plans to appoint a replacement for Primrose Wilson in the absence of a Minister.</p>
MC 21/06/18-02	Professor Burton to provide the Committee with information regarding request from IAU	Professor Burton	<p>Completed</p> <p>Information included in Director's Report</p>

MC 21/06/2018-03	Mrs Corvan to bring final Business Plan to September Committee	Mrs Corvan	Completed Business Plan included in September Committee papers
MC 21/06/2018-04	Mrs Corvan to provide details of training to members	Mrs Corvan	Completed Training took place on 29 th August 2018

