

MINUTES OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND TENTH MEETING OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE OF THE ARMAGH OBSERVATORY AND PLANETARIUM HELD ON 24 JUNE 2019 AT 11.00 A.M. IN THE PLANETARIUM BOARD ROOM

Present: Mr J Briggs (Chair), Mr S Brown, The Very Revd Dean G Dunstan, Mr B Hannam, Professor L Harra (via Skype), Professor M Mathioudakis (via Skype), Mr P McGurgan, Dr M McKay, Professor T Ray

Apologies: Professor R Oudmaijer, Professor M Merrifield

In attendance: Professor M Burton (Director), Mrs C Corvan (Head of Corporate Services), Dr M Sarzi (Head of Research), Mr L Knox (Head of Finance), Mrs L Brown (Corporate Manager)

1. APOLOGIES

1.1 Apologies were recorded as above.

1.2 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and reported that Dean Gregory Dunstan had been appointed to the Management Committee to replace Canon Hilliard, however, due to a prior appointment in his diary, would be late for the meeting in progress.

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 26 MARCH 2019

3.1 With reference to Paragraph 8.8 the Chair reported that DfC had asked that it be clarified at the meeting in progress that a Department derogation had enabled AOP to procure the capital items without CPD involvement.

3.2 With reference to Paragraph 8.9 Dr McKay pointed out that his title was incorrect.

3.3 Professor Ray referred to the last sentence of Paragraph 6.9, seeking clarity on what it meant. Prof Harra explained that she believed that this related to summer students. On the suggestion of Professor Ray, the Committee agreed to delete the sentence from the minutes.

3.4 The minutes of the meeting of 26 March 2019 were reviewed and approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting, subject to the amendments outlined at 3.2 and 3.3 above, and signed by the Chair.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

4.1 There were 7 matters arising from previous meetings, 3 of which it was proposed to close, 1 for which there had been a change in direction, leaving 3 ongoing matters.

4.2 The Chair reported that Dr Kirstin Lemon from the British Geological Survey had been appointed as AOP's Board Room Apprentice. He advised that he had met her briefly recently and considered her a very good appointment. He felt that AOP could also benefit from her involvement adding that she had a strong interest in increasing the number of females in science. Dr Lemon would be at the September meeting.

4.3 The Committee had no further issues to raise.

5. CHAIR'S BUSINESS

5.1 The Chair reported briefly on the positive meeting that Professor Burton, Archbishop Clarke and himself had had with Tracy Meharg, Permanent Secretary on 22 May. Professor Burton added that she had been given a short tour and at a later event, at which he was also present, spoke to HRH Prince Charles about AOP.

The meeting was temporarily suspended at this juncture to facilitate Professor Mathioudakis joining the meeting. He initially joined for a short period by phone link before later joining via Skype.

5.2 The Chair reported that at the Annual Visitation on 22 May the Board of Governors had been updated, as far as possible, on progress in relation to delivery of the AOP Vision. The Governors were content with the direction of travel and progress to date.

5.3 In terms of Membership, the Chair reminded Members that the Board of Governors could appoint three members to the Management Committee. He advised that the Board had reappointed Professor Oudmaijer and that Dean Gregory Dunstan had been appointed as a replacement for Canon Hilliard who had been unable to attend meetings. With regards to the remaining position, the Board of Governors had agreed to seek representation from Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council (ABC Council) to the Board and had further agreed that that appointment would also be the Board of Governors third nominee to the Management Committee.

5.4 The Chair advised that since the last meeting there had been significant engagement with the Department for Communities (DfC), ABC Council and the Strategic Investment Board (SIB) regarding future development and the outline business case, the detail of which was outlined in the Director's Report.

5.5 With reference to the AOP future Vision the Chair stated that in terms of the Observatory this would mean supporting the team and ensuring the Observatory was kept as pure as possible in terms of Heritage, Academia and Research etc, however, in terms of a new planetarium and what that would look like there was a need to develop the vision much more. He advised that at the end of the meeting Stan Brown would make a presentation, for discussion, on his idea as a possible concept using the theme of light. The Chair pointed out that an economist would review the project and whilst capital investment was one challenge, ongoing sustainability presented another. He said the Vision had to provide marketability and sustainability and so AOP needed to be creative in providing something for Northern Ireland, Ireland, the world of astronomy and the world of physics.

5.6 The Chair advised that the Annual Board Evaluation Questionnaire would be issued in the next few days and asked Members to complete and return promptly.

- 5.7 In terms of the Museum Accreditation, the Chair advised that, as had been reported in the Director's Report in December, Sean Barden, curator at Armagh County Museum had agreed to serve as mentor to take AOP through the process, but that this appointment needed to be formally approved by the Management Committee. The Management Committee duly approved the appointment. It was also agreed to invite Mr Barden to the September meeting. **Action MC24/6/19-01 Appointment of Sean Barden as Accreditation Mentor for Museum Accreditation process. Action MC/24/6/19-02 Invite Sean Barden to September Management Committee.**

6. REPORT FROM DIRECTOR

- 6.1 Professor Burton took the Committee through his report, elaborating briefly on various matters.
- 6.2 In relation to realising the AOP vision, Professor Burton referred to the number of meetings held as outlined in his report and advised that significant progress had been made over the last year, elaborating briefly on same. Professor Burton pointed out that the current business model was unsustainable long-term and so if funding wasn't secured for an Outline Business Case this would present a risk for AOP and the matter would need to be included in the AOP Risk Register.
- 6.3 In response to a query from Dr McKay regarding other alternative funding sources, it was pointed out that without the funding required to proceed to OBC stage there was a risk that the Planetarium could be overtaken by other attractions and become obsolete, however, there was optimism that funding would be secured.
- 6.4 In terms of the Collaboration Forum, it was recognised that there were confidence issues to be managed. ABC Council would want to see that AOP was moving forward and the DfC was mindful of the need to come up with a form of words to encourage ABC Council to see AOP as a partner rather than a stakeholder.
- 6.5 Professor Burton briefly reported on the Matters for Information during which Dr McKay congratulated AOP on obtaining the Armagh.space URL and it was noted that later that day the Education Team would be receiving training by the Institute of Physics' Scientific Sue on workshop experiments.
- 6.6 With reference to Professor Gerry Doyle's retirement, Professor Harra suggested that a meeting be held in Armagh to celebrate his career. In response, Mrs Corvan reported briefly on what was currently being proposed to mark his retirement, adding that the students wanted to be involved. Professor Mathioudakis concurred with Professor Harra suggesting a 2 or 3 day workshop to celebrate his work. He felt that such an event would be well attended and an excellent opportunity to bring people from around the world to Armagh and suggested that the first few weeks in September would be an ideal time. Professor Burton undertook to take the Committee's comments on board and proceed with arrangements for an appropriate event.
- 6.7 In response to a query from Dr McKay regarding ICT support Mrs Corvan reported that it was hoped to submit a report to DfC by the end of June setting out three options – full onboarding with IT Assist; a hybrid approach with IT Assist and full in-house provision. She said that being small AOP would probably be best served by retaining everything in-house. Mrs Corvan advised that the Business Case approach was to consider if a project was an IT project and, if so, AOP was required to consider IT Assist as the first option. If approved to be retained in house, recruitment would be via an external campaign, however it was anticipated that it would be

September at the earliest before approved by the Department. Mrs Corvan advised that she was working closely with DfC to take forward.

6.8 The Committee noted the other matters included in the Director's report.

7. REPORT FROM HEAD OF RESEARCH

7.1 Dr Sarzi took the Committee through his report, elaborating on the matters for discussion. The Committee noted the matters and some of these were discussed in detail.

7.2 Discussion ensued regarding the Review of Research during which Dr Sarzi responded to specific questions from Members regarding Panel Members, their appointment, the similarities with REF and assessment ranking. Professor Ray suggested that the exercise might have more credibility if all the panel members were former REF assessors. Dr Sarzi confirmed there would be some vetting of the AOP submission prior to assessment. In response to a comment from Professor Mathioudakis that the submission should reference any awards and also mention grant income over the period, Dr Sarzi confirmed that the environment component of the review would include such elements according to the REF guidelines. With reference to the open access policy, Professor Mathioudakis suggested a rule that papers go on ArXiv unless there was an embargo period imposed by the relevant journal.

Dr McKay temporarily retired from the meeting at 12.02 pm returning at 12.07 pm and Mr Brown at 12.06 pm returning at 12.10 pm during the above discussion.

7.3 In relation to the PhD recruitment process, Professor Harra pointed out that having female representation on the panel could only help with ensuring a fair recruiting process but per se it could not address the problem of under-representation of female students. In response, Mrs Corvan stated that AOP was aware that they needed to improve the pool of applicants. It was hoped that with the new website and the Fellowship position they could promote Armagh as a place to live and work.

7.4 Dr Sarzi advised that the QUB review had gone well. The Panel had encouraged closer links between Armagh and QUB students which was positive.

7.5 The Committee noted that the AOP Fellowship position would be known as the Ernst Öpik Fellowship.

7.6 The Chair thanked Dr Sarzi for his report.

8. CHAIR'S WELCOME

8.1 The Chair formally welcomed Dean Gregory Dunstan to his first Management Committee meeting, the Dean having joined during consideration of the Head of Research's report. The Dean suitably acknowledged.

9. UPDATE FROM THE AUDIT AND RISK ASSURANCE COMMITTEE (ARAC)

- 9.1 Mr Hannam referred to the three documents that had been circulated with the Agenda and took each in turn. He advised that the Committee had approved the final Internal Audit Plan 2019/20 which included audits in respect of IT Systems and Security, Financial Management and Reporting and HR Management.
- 9.2 In terms of the Risk Register, Mr Hannam advised that there was one extreme risk – Failure of the Digistar equipment. The specification for replacement was with CPD for review, funding had been confirmed by DfC and the process for procuring was under way.
- 9.3 The ARAC had considered the draft Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2019. The accounts would be finalised for audit in August and sign off in September.
- 9.4 The Management Committee approved the Risk Register as at 17 June 2019 and the Draft Annual Report and Accounts 2018/19.

10. UPDATE FROM THE STAFFING POLICY AND REMUNERATION COMMITTEE (SPRC)

- 10.1 Professor Ray provided a summary of the matters discussed at the SPRC. He reported that the Committee recommended a £250 bonus payment to the ICT Student for the exceptional job and additional hours undertaken to develop the new AOP website. In response to representations from Mr McGurgan, Professor Ray confirmed that £250 was the gross figure.
- 10.2 Professor Ray reported on a recent recruitment campaign for three part-time Education Officers. He explained that two had commenced, however, there had been delays and difficulties with the third appointment and the offer had been withdrawn. A possible solution had been identified to give additional hours to the two recent appointees to bring them both to 80% FTE and the SPRC was recommending this approach. In response to representations from the Chair, Professor Ray confirmed that this was within budget.
- 10.3 The SPRC had been advised of the recruitment of a pool of Casual Education Assistants and of four temporary Administrative Assistants for a period of 6 weeks to assist with the retention and disposal of legacy documentation, primarily associated with the Planetarium.
- 10.4 The Committee was content to accept the report and approved the recommendations from the SPRC.

11. BUSINESS PLAN 2019/20 UPDATE (FINAL DRAFT)

- 11.1 Professor Burton advised that the Business Plan had been reviewed since the previous year and now had simplified KPIs and included more quantifiable information. In addition, Mrs Corvan pointed out that the Business Plan had been condensed and the Strategic and Business Plan Objectives were all captured in one table demonstrating how they fitted in with the Programme for Government and Outcome Delivery Plan. AOP was also fortunate that the budget could be included.
- 11.2 The Committee approved the Final Draft Business Plan 2019/20.

12. AOB

12.1 The Committee noted the availability of training as outlined in the report and the Chair suggested that there may be other courses available that would be more relevant to Management Committee members.

12.3 The remaining meetings for 2019 were noted as 23 September and 16 December.

12.3 The Chair drew attention to the Papers to be Noted and advised that he had not received any requests for discussion.

The meeting concluded at 12.25 pm.

Following the meeting Mr Stan Brown gave a presentation using the theme of light as a concept for design of the Planetarium.

Professors Harra and Mathioudakis received a copy of the presentation for independent review.

Signed as a true record of the meeting

.....
(Chair)

Dated: 23.09.19.

Updated Actions as at 17 June 2019

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>10 December 2018: Dr McKay advised that he and Professor Burton would endeavour to progress the matter relating to the exhibits.</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>
MC21/06/18-01	The Chair and DfC to discuss timing of confirmation of extensions	Chair/DfC	<p>Propose to close</p> <p>Mr Brown, Professor Harra and Mr McGurgan's terms of office extended until 30 April 2019</p> <p>26 March 2019: Chair advised that the terms of office for Mr Brown, Professor Harra and Mr McGurgan would be extended for a further term.</p> <p>10 December 2018: Professor Harra advised that the term for Mr McGurgan, Mr Brown and herself had been extended for 6 months, until 31 March 2019.</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>

Reference	Action	Owner	Progress
MC19/09/18-03	The Chair to take forward the appointment of a qualified accountant to the Committee with DfC	Chair/DfC	<p>Propose to close</p> <p>24 June 2019: DfC have been advised of skills gaps for filling of vacancies and the Chair has agreed to represent AOP on the selection panel. If skills gaps remain at the conclusion of the process co-opted positions will be considered.</p> <p>22 May 2019: Board of Governors agreed that co-option positions on the Management Committee are reviewed following completion of the public appointments process, particularly if there are specific skills gaps.</p> <p>Nov 2018: Discussions have taken place between DfC, the Chair of the Board of Governors and the Chair of the Management Committee in relation to Committee vacancies.</p>
MC10/12/18-01	The Chair to bring paper to March 2019 meeting regarding engagement with Council	Chair	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>17 June 2019: Paper Agenda Item under Chair's Business.</p> <p>25 March 2019: Governance arrangements being progressed in discussion with SIB. Presentation of paper postponed until June 2019.</p>
MC26/3/19-01	The Chair to approach the Board of Governors regarding co-option to Management Committee from Council	Chair	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>24 June 2019: Board of Governors Chair has formally written to council chief executive to invite a representative onto the Board and is agreeable that this person could also be a Board of Governors representative on the MC.</p> <p>22 May 2019: Discussed at Board of Governors meeting. Council has been invited to appoint an officer at Director-level to the vacant position on the Board of Governors. The Board of Governors also gave approval, in principle, for the nomination of the Council's appointment to the Board of Governors to the Management Committee. No response to correspondence has been received to date.</p>
MC26/3/19-02	AOP to apply for participation in the Board Room Apprentice Scheme	HoCS	<p>Propose to close</p> <p>Application submitted and AOP has been successful in obtaining a Board Room Apprentice. The Chair will provide an update at the meeting.</p>
MC26/3/19-03	AOP to explore suggestion of naming 3-year Fellowship after Dame Jocelyn Bell-Burnell	Director	<p>Not progressed – due to change in direction.</p> <p>See Paper 4 – Report from Head of Research</p>