

**MINUTES OF THE NINETY FIFTH MEETING OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE OF THE ARMAGH OBSERVATORY AND PLANETARIUM HELD ON 4 JUNE 2015 AT 2.00 P.M. IN THE KEPLER ROOM, ARMAGH PLANETARIUM**

Present: Professor A. Hibbert (Deputy Chair), Professor R. Oudmaijer, Professor T. Ray, Mr B. Hannam, Professor M. Merrifield, Mr S. Brown, Professor L. Harra, Mrs P. Wilson

Apologies: Archbishop Clarke (Chair), Mr P. McGurgan, Dr M. McKay

In attendance: Professor M. Bailey, Mrs E.J. Kennedy (Operations Manager), Mrs K. McLoughlin (temporary Accountant)

**1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were recorded as above.

**2. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

Mr Hannam declared an interest in relation to the Armstrong Primary School

**3. MINUTES OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 29 JANUARY 2015**

The minutes of the meeting of 29 January 2015 were reviewed, approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting and signed by the Deputy Chair.

**4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

An update on the Matters Arising can be found in the Action Point Log attached at Annex 1.

**5. CHAIR'S BUSINESS**

Nothing to report.

**6. UPDATE FROM THE AUDIT AND RISK ASSURANCE COMMITTEE MEETING**

6.1. Mr Hannam provided an update from the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) which met earlier on 4 June 2015. The Committee considered the following areas:

- Outstanding Audit recommendations – A number of outstanding recommendations remained from 2013/14 relating to the Atlas Communications agreement which was to be discussed later in the meeting. The ARAC was satisfied with the progress made on the implementation of recommendations from 2014/15 internal audit reviews. Two new reports had been received on the Drawdown process, which had achieved a Satisfactory assurance rating and Governance, which had achieved a Limited assurance rating due to weaknesses in roles, responsibilities and accountability and strategic planning. Risk management, Management Information and Monitoring and Corporate Activities had achieved Satisfactory or Substantial assurance ratings.
- Risk registers – Both organisations had increased the risk rating associated with being able to deliver planned programmes due to potential in-year budget reductions. A new risk had been identified in the Planetarium in relation to outstanding maintenance activities. The ARAC had reclassified this risk as 'red' until the work had been completed, and sought approval from the Management Committee for the work to be commissioned. The Committee was content to give approval for the maintenance works to be carried out.
- A report on grievances and whistleblowing activities had been passed to a sub-group within the Management Committee for consideration. It was agreed that the reports should also be passed to DCAL.

# MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ARMAGH OBSERVATORY AND PLANETARIUM MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

4 June 2015

Page 2

- Annual Report & Accounts – a draft Report to Those Charged with Governance had been issued by NIAO which provided an unqualified audit opinion. Three recommendations had been made.
- Single tender actions – there was a clear process to be followed which required approval from DCAL and DFP. A number of single tender actions had been identified in the Planetarium for which it appeared no authorisation had been sought. It was thought that this may be classed as irregular expenditure and could have an impact on the accounts for 2014/15. Irregular hospitality expenditure had also been identified. As a result the ARAC could not recommend the accounts be signed until an investigation was carried out. It was agreed that Mr Hannam and Professor Hibbert would report back in writing on these matters to the Management Committee.

**Action Point MC04/06/15 – 01 Mrs Kennedy to arrange for the outstanding maintenance activities to be commissioned in the Planetarium**

**Action Point MC04/06/15 – 02 Professor Hibbert to share the Report from the Grievance Panel with Mr Alastair Hughes, Head of Museums and Libraries branch**

*Mr S. Brown arrived at 2.15 pm*

## 7. INTERIM MANAGEMENT OF PLANETARIUM

- 7.1. A discussion followed about the need for an urgent appointment at the Planetarium to take on the role of Accounting Officer and management responsibilities (but not strategic development – these decisions would be made by the Management Committee), following the recent retirement of the Director. This issue had also been discussed at the joint meeting of the Board of Governors and Management Committee. Mr Hannam and Professor Hibbert had considered various options and had had discussions with DCAL. It had become clear that it would take 3-6 months for DCAL to provide someone. Mr Hannam presented the conclusion of the Joint meeting and proposed holding a competition within AOP which would allow all interested staff to take part. After a long discussion it was agreed that such a process would be fair and transparent. A job description was to be developed by Professor Hibbert, in conjunction with the Employment Conditions and Remuneration Committee (ECRC), Mr Hannam and Mr Brown. Candidates would be asked to submit a short statement outlining why they should be considered by the middle of the week commencing 8 June 2015 and a decision would be made by the ECRC, as to who was best qualified to take on the role, by the end of the week. It was agreed that some internal restructuring of current staff may be required to allow a new management structure to be put in place.

**Action Point MC04/06/15 – 03 Professor Hibbert to arrange for an internal recruitment competition to be carried out for the post of Acting Head of Armagh Planetarium**

- 7.2. Mr Hannam presented the ARAC Annual report for 2014/15 which included a revised Terms of Reference. The Management Committee was content to approve the report and the Terms of Reference of the ARAC and it was agreed the owner of the policy was to be the Management Committee.

## 8. NIAO AUDIT OF ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

In light of the update provided by Mr Hannam from the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, there was a brief discussion about the draft Annual Report and Accounts. Professor Merrifield queried the reason for the unadjusted misstatement in the Observatory. Professor Bailey confirmed this was associated with currency fluctuations for an outstanding payment expected from UNAWA. The Committee agreed to await the outcome of investigations by Mr Hannam and Professor Hibbert which would determine if any changes were needed to the Planetarium accounts, otherwise the Committee was content with the draft presented.

# **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ARMAGH OBSERVATORY AND PLANETARIUM MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

**4 June 2015**

**Page 3**

## **9. UPDATES ON OBSERVATORY AND PLANETARIUM ACTIVITIES**

- 9.1. Mrs Kennedy tabled an updated summary of the Key Performance Indicators up to 31 May 2015. All were on track to be achieved, except for the number of participants at outreach events and the number of events targeted at areas of multiple deprivation. Ms Thompson had expressed concerns about not achieving these targets as the Planetarium would no longer be represented at events that had previously contributed to the Planetarium's figure for the number of participants at outreach events, and fewer events had been planned for deprived areas in 2015/16.
- 9.2. Mrs McLaughlin tabled an updated version of the Planetarium's budget which now projected a deficit of £13.6k. Additional spend had been incurred on a Service Contract for the theatre, new shows and seating refurbishment. Mr Brown queried whether the contract should have been developed by the Planetarium under local laws rather than under US law. The Committee noted that DCAL had withdrawn capital funding for seating in March 2015 as the terms of contract requested by the supplier were unacceptable. It was agreed that ARAC would consider this expenditure.
- 9.3. Professor Bailey presented his extensive report on the work of the Observatory. He drew the Committee's attention to pages 3 and 11 which showed the significant reduction in the grant from DCAL in 2015/16. On page 19 he emphasised the need for an increase in funding for vacant posts in addition to the extra funding required to implement the Organisational Change activities. He highlighted the progression of students from the Observatory (page 35), the retirement of the Computer Systems Manager, Martin Murphy in late May 2015 and the appointment of his replacement Mr Greg Milligan. Recruitment in 2015 had included two Post-doctoral Research Assistants and two/three PhD students (due to start by October). A review of each of DCAL's ALBs contributions to the STEAM agenda had been completed by the Education and Training Inspectorate in 2014, and this together with other parts of the Observatory's report were drawn to the attention of the Committee.
- 9.4. The Committee was content with the update provided by Mr Hannam in relation to the Risk Registers and approved the current draft registers, subject to the amendment previously agreed by ARAC.

## **10. DRAFT BUSINESS PLAN FOR 2015/16**

Mrs Kennedy presented the most recent version of the AOP Business Plan, highlighting that new sections had been added to reflect the organisational change activities currently being undertaken. There was also a brief discussion of the Outreach targets for the Planetarium about which Ms Thompson had expressed concern prior to the meeting, as Mr Robert Hill, Northern Ireland Space Office would no longer be able to contribute to delivery against these targets. Mr Brown suggested that another paragraph be added to strengthen the introductory section of the Business Plan about astronomy being the queen of sciences.

**Action Point MC04/06/15 – 04 Professor Bailey to draft an additional paragraph to strengthen the introductory section of the Business Plan.**

## **11. UPDATE ON REVIEW OF ARMAGH OBSERVATORY RESEARCH AND OUTREACH**

Professor Bailey updated the Committee that due to time constraints on the Panel members, this review was not likely to be undertaken until late summer 2015.

## **12. ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS AND REMUNERATION COMMITTEE 2014/15**

Professor Hibbert indicated that he would provide a written report on the work of the Committee shortly.

**Action Point MC04/06/15 – 05 Professor Hibbert to share his written report on the work of the Employment Conditions and Remuneration Committee with the Management Committee**

# MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ARMAGH OBSERVATORY AND PLANETARIUM MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

4 June 2015

Page 4

## 13. ALTERNATIVE USE OF AOP LAND

Mrs Kennedy provided an update on a draft agreement that had been obtained from the Planetarium's solicitor. It was agreed that the agreement should be shared with Mr McGurgan for his views, along with asking the solicitor to include the recommendations made by the Internal Auditors in 2013. A proposal from Eircom UK was also considered and it was agreed that Mrs Kennedy should seek advice from the Asset Management Unit in SIB.

**Action Point MC04/06/15 – 06 Mrs Kennedy to share the draft agreement with Mr McGurgan and also liaise with the Planetarium's solicitor**

**Action Point MC04/06/15 – 07 Mrs Kennedy to seek advice from the Asset Management Unit about the Eircom UK proposal**

## 14. AOB

- 14.1. Professor Merrifield drew the Committee's attention to new rules that had been introduced by a research council which required archiving all data and making it publicly available. It did not affect the Observatory at present but the Science and Technology Facilities Council may adopt the same requirement in the future.
- 14.2. The Access NI, Whistleblowing and Risk Management Policies had been considered by Mr McGurgan and Professor Hibbert (in their role as Policy Review Sub-group) in advance of the meeting. The Committee approved the new versions
- 14.3. Professor Hibbert expressed his thanks to Professor Ray, Dr McKay and Mr Donnelly for their work on grievance panel.
- 14.4. Professor Bailey advised the Committee that Mr Moseley had enquired if the Irish Astronomical Association could borrow the Planetarium's star dome. Mrs Kennedy confirmed that these events had been used to contribute to the Planetarium's outreach figures. The Committee agreed that the Planetarium could lend the IAA the dome, provided it was returned in same state as it was taken. Professor Bailey also informed the Committee that the DCAL Management Board had arranged to hold its monthly meeting in the Planetarium on 23 June. Both he and Mrs Martina Glass, ESO would deliver presentations about the work of AOP. Professor Bailey also mentioned that on 8 June 2015 Royal Mail was to unveil a plaque on a post box in Armagh to celebrate 50 years of special stamps, featuring a special stamp issued on the occasion of the Observatory's Bicentenary in 1990. Finally he noted a recent visit to Armagh by the Chilean Ambassador to the UK, His Excellency Mr Rolando Drago and his delegation along with the Mayor of Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council.

## 15. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be on **Thursday 12 November 2015** in the Armagh Observatory.

The meeting ended at 4.20 p.m.

Signed as a true record of the Meeting

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(Chair)

Dated:

Updated Actions as at 4<sup>th</sup> June 2015

Reference	Action	Owner	Progress
MC18/10/13-01	Explore informal co-operation with the Armagh Public Library at the next Library Sub-Committee meeting	Professor Hibbert and Mrs Wilson	<b>Completed</b> <b>4 June 2015:</b> It was agreed that this action was to be closed. The Armagh Public Library project was progressing. It was agreed that a new Library building should be pursued in the future as there was no capacity to take it forward currently. Borehole excavation work carried out in February 2015 had not indicated any reason why a two or three storey building could not be buried in the hill between the Observatory and Planetarium.
MC23/01/14-03	Confirm whether the Organisational Review team should receive remuneration	DCAL	<b>Completed</b> <b>15 May 2015:</b> DCALs view is that this work was similar to that of a sub-committee of the Management Committee and it would not be normal practice to pay additional remuneration, although travel costs were reimbursed. <b>29 January 2015:</b> Mrs Kennedy to seek an update from DCAL <b>5 November 2014:</b> Email sent to DCAL requesting an update <b>28 May 2014:</b> A letter was sent to DCAL on 14 May 2014 requesting resources and the commissioning of the review.
MC13/11/14 - 02	Dr Mason to make arrangements to obtain an indication of the potential lease value	Dr Mason	<b>Ongoing</b> <b>21 January 2015:</b> Dr Mason to obtain this information
MC13/11/14 - 03	Dr Mason to arrange a meeting with the SELB to discuss the potential of leasing land from AOP	Dr Mason	<b>Ongoing</b> <b>4 June 2015:</b> The Committee agreed to await further contact from SELB. <b>21 January 2015:</b> A meeting took place on 21 November 2014 with the SELB architect and on 20 January 2015 with the SELB representative Paul Crooks. Another meeting is to be arranged for both Directors with SELB representatives
MC13/11/14 - 04	Dr Mason to continue discussions with ESA and also approach STFC with regards to updating the Planetarium's exhibition area	Dr Mason	<b>Completed</b> <b>28 May 2015:</b> This has been superseded by <b>MC 29/01/15 - 01</b> <b>21 January 2015:</b> Discussions are ongoing. No application has been made to the STFC.

MC29/01/15 - 01	Dr McKay to explore within ESA if exhibits could be provided to the Planetarium	Dr McKay	
MC29/01/15 - 02	Dr Mason to explore how a Review of the Planetarium's activities could be carried out.	Dr Mason	<b>Close</b> <b>4 June 2015:</b> To be taken forward by CEO when appointed.
MC29/01/15 - 03	New Management Board to consider the areas of concern arising from the Board Evaluation Questionnaire	Chair of new Management Board	<b>Not started</b> <b>28 May 2015:</b> No action has been taken
MC29/01/15 - 04	Mrs Kennedy to amend the Fraud Prevention Memo for staff in line with amendments suggested at ARAC meeting	Mrs Kennedy	<b>Completed</b> <b>28 May 2015:</b> The Memo was updated and circulated to staff on 16 February 2015.
MC29/01/15 - 05	Board Operating Framework to be updated following any new governance arrangements arising from the Review of Organisation and Management	Mrs Kennedy	<b>Not started</b> <b>28 May 2015:</b> No action has been taken
Minutes 29 Jan 2015 Para 7.2	Service contract with Evans & Sutherland for Planetarium Theatre		A 3 year contract was put in place by Dr Mason but the required approvals have not yet been sought.