

**MINUTES OF THE NINETY FOURTH MEETING OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE OF THE ARMAGH OBSERVATORY AND PLANETARIUM HELD ON 29 JANUARY 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, Dr M. McKay, Mr P. McGurgan, Mr S. Brown, Professor L. Harra, Mrs P. Wilson

Apologies: Archbishop Clarke (Chair), Professor M. Merrifield

In attendance: Professor M. Bailey, Dr T. Mason, 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 13 NOVEMBER 2014**

- 3.1. The minutes of the meeting of 13 November 2014 were reviewed, approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting and signed by the Deputy Chair.
- 3.2. The notes of the Special Meeting on 13 November 2014 were also approved subject to a minor amendment proposed by Mr Brown that it was the 'top level structure' that he would have recommended (paragraph 4). It was agreed that the amendment should be made.

**4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

- 4.1. An update on the Matters Arising can be found in the Action Point Log attached at Annex 1.
- 4.2. There was a lengthy discussion on the potential for the Armstrong Primary School requesting to lease AOP land (MC13/11/14 – 03). Dr Mason informed the Committee that a new option included the installation of a space themed playground to be installed in the Planetarium car park, behind the building where they launch water rockets, which would be available to both pupils and visitors to the Planetarium. The Primary School also required land to decant to while work was ongoing in the Primary School. This appeared to require the installation of portacabins for classes to move into on a temporary basis. As the detail of this proposal was unclear, it was agreed that a meeting should be arranged between the Directors and the Southern Education and Library Board to discuss further.
- 4.3. Dr McKay agreed to talk to colleagues in the European Space Agency to see if any exhibits could be provided to update the Planetarium's exhibitions and displays (MC13/11/14- 04). Professor Ray enquired whether any progress had been made regarding the STFC exhibition and mentioned that 2016 was the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formulation of General Relativity, which could provide subject matter for a new exhibition. Dr Mason said that he thought the STFC exhibition would overwhelm the available space in the Planetarium.

**Action Point MC29/01/15 – 01 Dr McKay to explore within ESA if exhibits could be provided to the Planetarium.**

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## 5. CHAIR'S BUSINESS

A letter of retirement had been received from Dr Mason which indicated he planned to retire on 30 April 2015. The Chair recorded his appreciation of Dr Mason's efforts at Armagh Planetarium and the great work that he had delivered in bringing the Planetarium up to its present world class standard.

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

Mr Hannam provided an update from the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) which had met earlier that day. The four main areas discussed were:

- 1) Risk registers – Registers had been considered and the ARAC was content that risks were being managed appropriately.
- 2) Draft Terms of Reference for Review of Governance – these were approved and it was agreed that this further review would be completed by the Internal Auditors by 31 March 2015.
- 3) An update was provided on the outstanding audit recommendations. The ARAC was content with the progress that had been made.
- 4) Fraud Prevention Memo – a draft memo for staff had been considered and was approved, subject to a small amendment suggested by Ms Fahy, RSM McClure Watters

## 7. DIRECTORS' UPDATES

- 7.1. Mrs Kennedy presented an update on the Key Performance Indicators as at 31 December 2014 (Paper 3) along with some highlights from the Directors' Interim reports covering matters such as Financial Position, Staffing Matters, External Grant funding and Outreach. All of the Indicators were on track to be achieved by the end of the Reporting year. An update was also provided on the DCAL priority of Promoting Equality, Tackling Poverty and Social Exclusion targets, all of which were on track to be achieved.
- 7.2. In relation to a service contract with Evans and Sutherland for the theatre projection equipment that Dr Mason had referenced in his report, Mr Brown queried if DFP approval had been obtained for a Single Tender Action. Approval had not been sought as the required funding was not available to set up the contract. Professor Harra enquired if the Institute of Physics or the Northern Ireland Science Festival had been leveraged for zero or low cost advertising for the Planetarium. Dr Mason explained that the Planetarium had been included in publicity material for the NI Science Festival and also provided information on other avenues that provided good coverage of the Planetarium, such as Armagh City and District Council, Tourism Ireland and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board. Professor Hibbert wished his congratulations to be passed on to the team who had successfully obtained the STFC Consolidated Grant funding for 2015/18.
- 7.3. Dr Mason wished the Committee to note that the Planetarium's risk appetite had to be more open than normal government activities as it needed to seize opportunities that often arose at short notice e.g. the Commander Hadfield event.
- 7.4. Professor Bailey provided more detailed information on:
  - trends of the Observatory's performance indicators (Paper 4, page 4),
  - budget position and the need for £175k (approximately) uplift compared to its position a year or two ago in order to return to a long-term sustainable position (page 9)
  - multi-lateral and bi-lateral collaborations with international observatories which are essential for Armagh Observatory to continue its work (page 28)
  - external grant funding achieved (page 35)
  - Meteorological readings at Armagh (page 42)
  - Astronomical Museum collection (page 47) – it is important to retain on site the collection of historic scientific instruments as part of the astronomical museum collection and the scientific heritage associated with Armagh Observatory

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- DKIST Consortium Agreement (page 102) – the Committee agreed that Professor Bailey should sign the Memorandum of Agreement when it was received.

## **Review of Updated Risk Registers**

7.5. The Risk Registers (Papers 6 & 7) had been considered by the ARAC. They were accepted and no changes were proposed. There was a brief discussion about the risk associated with the lack of funding to carry out planned programmes. The Committee noted that it was possible for the Impact rating of a Risk occurring not to reduce, despite how the risk was managed or the actions planned. The Observatory's Review of Research and Outreach activities was ongoing and was expected to be completed by end March 2015. The Committee agreed that it was important to find the means to strengthen the research function of the Observatory in the future. The discussion moved on to whether the activities delivered by the Planetarium had been reviewed. Dr Mason indicated that DCAL had previously wanted to Quality Assure what was being delivered. This had been achieved through Education Quality Insurance Inspectors but hadn't been completed within the last 3 years. Dr Mason explained that Armagh Planetarium was unique as it was not attached to a University. It was agreed that a more specialised review may be of benefit as it may be useful for developing the strategy for the future.

**Action Point MC29/01/15 - 02 Dr Mason to explore how a Review of the Planetarium's activities could be carried out.**

7.6. There was a discussion about the colour coding of risks. It was explained that this followed the DCAL approach and was outlined in the Risk Management Policy. The colour code was related to the product of the Impact and Likelihood scores.

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

Mrs Kennedy provided an update for the Committee on the status of the Draft Business Plan for 2015/16 (Paper 8). The current draft had been submitted to DCAL in December 2014. It was broadly similar to the Business Plan for 2014/15 and maintained a strong focus on Promoting Equality, Targeting Poverty and Social Exclusion. Budget reductions of 11.2% were being planned by DCAL and would place significant pressure on both the Armagh Observatory and Planetarium. DCAL had reviewed the draft Business Plan and it was agreed that a section would be added relating to actions arising from the implementation of the Review of the Organisation and Management. The Committee noted the current position.

## **9. SELB REQUEST FOR ARMAGH OBSERVATORY AND PLANETARIUM LAND**

This item was covered under matters arising.

## **10. AOB**

10.1. Board Evaluation Questionnaire – An updated version of the completed questionnaire was shared with the Committee (Paper 9). Professor Hibbert explained that the main area of concern was the lack of a strategy. He believed the outcome from the Research and Outreach Review could contribute to the development of the Research Strategy for the future. It was agreed that the results of this Questionnaire and areas of concern were to be addressed when the new Management Board was set up.

**Action Point MC29/01/15 – 03 New Management Board to consider the areas of concern arising from the Board Evaluation Questionnaire.**

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- 10.2. The Fraud Prevention Policy (Paper 10) was carefully considered by the Committee. The one page memo for staff was to be amended to include a box on False Representation as agreed by the ARAC and the definition of theft was to be checked.

**Action Point MC29/01/15 – 04 Mrs Kennedy to amend the Fraud Prevention Memo for staff in line with amendments suggested at ARAC meeting.**

- 10.3. Professor Bailey informed the Committee that a recommendation had been made by the Internal Auditors for an owner, date approved and date of next review to be included on each policy. At ARAC it was agreed that two members of the Management Committee should be nominated to work with Professor Bailey and Mrs Kennedy. Mr McGurgan and Professor Hibbert agreed to take this forward. The Internal Auditors were to complete a Review of Governance before 31 March 2015, and through this they would advise which policies belonged to the various oversight boards or Directors.
- 10.4. Board Operating Framework – The Framework (Paper 11) was to be updated annually and was due to be considered by the Board of Governors at its Annual Visitation on the 19<sup>th</sup> March 2015. After discussion it was agreed that the next version should take account of any new governance arrangements arising from the implementation of the Review of the Organisation and Management.

**Action Point MC29/01/15 – 05 Board Operating Framework to be updated following any new governance arrangements arising from the implementation of the Review of Organisation and Management.**

- 10.5. Safeguarding Policy – The Committee considered the revised draft of the Safeguarding Policy (Paper 12) which had been updated in a number of minor respects due to staff changes in DCAL. The policy was approved and it was agreed that the date approved was to be 29 January 2015.
- 10.6. Access to Bank Accounts – DCAL had asked for read only access to the current accounts of all Arms-length bodies. The purpose was to allow them visibility on the level of cash balances so that they could be assured that they were reasonable. A central objective of the department's cash management function was to minimise cash holdings. The Committee agreed that read only access was to be permitted.
- 10.7. Dr Mason referred to his pending retirement and asked the Committee to look after the future of the Planetarium after his departure.

**11. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be on **Thursday 4 June 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 29<sup>th</sup> January 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>Ongoing</b> <b>4 November 2014:</b> Arrangements have been made through DFP Properties Division for bore holes to be drilled to determine is the extent of any rock under the hill where the library is planned to be located. <b>28 May 2014:</b> A meeting between Prof Hibbert and Mrs Wilson took place on 4 March 2014. Mrs Wilson explained that the Armagh Public Library project is much further progressed than the Observatory project. It does not seem possible for there to be a joined project for both.
MC18/10/13-11	Chairman to consider the request for new nominations to ARAC	Chair	<b>Completed</b> <b>29 January 2015:</b> Professor Harra and Mr McGurgan were appointed to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.
MC23/01/14-03	Confirm whether the Organisational Review team should receive remuneration	DCAL	<b>Ongoing</b> <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.
MC05/06/14-01	Internal self-assessment of Management Committee effectiveness to be completed over the summer period	Chair	<b>Completed</b> <b>29 January 2015:</b> On the agenda to be discussed at the meeting on 29 January 2015 <b>4 November 2014:</b> Prof Hibbert to discuss further at meeting on 13 November 2014
MC13/11/14 - 01	Members of the Management Committee to provide comments to the Deputy Chair on the draft Evaluation Questionnaire by Friday 21 November	Committee	<b>Completed</b> <b>21 January 2015:</b> Members comments have been considered and an updated Evaluation is listed at Item 8 on the agenda of the meeting on 29 January 2015
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	<p><b>Ongoing</b>  <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</p>
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	<p><b>Ongoing</b>  <b>21 January 2015:</b> Discussions are ongoing. No application has been made to the STFC.</p>