



**Minutes of Board Meeting No. 79 held on Monday 27 January 2020
At 9:30am, at Charity Commission for Northern Ireland Office, Lurgan.**

Present:

Nicole Lappin, Chief Charity Commissioner
Gerard McCurdy, Deputy Chief Charity Commissioner
Steven Cockcroft, Charity Commissioner
Kieran Donaghy, Charity Commissioner
Séamus Magee, Charity Commissioner
Hugh McKeag, Charity Commissioner
Carmel Mullan, Charity Commissioner

In Attendance:

Frances McCandless, Chief Executive
Aubrey McCrory, Head of Corporate Services
Punam McGookin, Head of Charity Services
Myles McKeown, Head of Compliance & Enquiries
Clare McElherron, Finance & Admin Officer
*For item 9b only Shirley Kernan, Communications Officer

Apologies: Rachel Harrison, Board Apprentice

1. Minutes of Meeting No 78 – 12th December 2019

Following discussion the minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2019 were agreed as a true and correct record as proposed by Gerard McCurdy and seconded by Steven Cockcroft.

AP1: Minutes of Board Meeting No 78 to be published on CCNI website.

2. Conflicts of Interest

Steven Cockcroft declared a conflict in relation to his employer, Johns Elliott, being instructed in relation to Milibern Trust, Belfast. No other conflicts of interest were declared. No action was required and the meeting proceeded.

3. Chair's Business, Correspondence and Meetings

The Chair welcomed everyone and highlighted, with the new Assembly in place, she had written to the new Minister and a meeting will take place on the 6th February 2020.

Details of the forthcoming Court of Appeal hearing were discussed and an outline of a meeting with senior officials in sponsor department was given. This included feedback on proposed Partnership Agreement arrangements.

The Chair indicated Caron Alexander had accepted the role as Independent Member of the Audit and Risk Committee. Details of the March Board Residential were discussed including an invitation to the Chief Executive and Chair of the Charities Regulator in Republic of Ireland.

Commissioners noted the Head of Compliance and Enquiries had resigned to take up a new post and would be leaving at the beginning of April 2020. The Board expressed their appreciation for his work.

4. Chief Executive's Report

The Chief Executive (CEX) introduced her report and highlighted membership of Assembly Committees had been announced. The CEX confirmed she had written to the chair, vice chair and members of the Committee for Communities to offer briefings.

Following discussion the Board agreed to submit a request to the Attorney General to extend the Section 47 temporary arrangements by a further six months and agreed an approach to a planned group registration as proposed by Hugh McKeag and seconded by Steven Cockcroft. The CEX agreed to write to the central organisation to set out the Commission's position regarding Trustees and registration obligations for the group registration.

A number of governance items were highlighted and discussed. Commissioners welcomed the A&RA induction session arranged for 12 February 2020 and commended staff for the satisfactory rating across the areas tested during the first Internal Audit assignment. The Board welcomed this assurance in the controls and management arrangements and noted it was the first report with no recommendations identified.

Following a query the Board considered whether a single Commissioner should be designated to take on responsibility for Whistleblowing, as was the emerging practice in the Health sector. It was agreed that the Board needed more details on what the role would require and A&RA committee undertook to report back to the Board.

Commissioners noted that following a meeting with the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority a number of compliance matters will be taken forward.

AP2: A&RA committee to clarify role of a commissioner for whistleblowing

AP3: CEx to write to representatives of planned group registration setting out the Commission's position

5. Charity Services Report

The Head of Charity Services (HCS) outlined various aspects of her report. Following discussion the Board agreed a revised business plan registration target for 2020/21 to 450 organisations as proposed by Steven Cockcroft and seconded by Séamus Magee. The Board considered changes to the closures process regarding administrative amendments to aid the operation of the closures manual. This was agreed as proposed by Steven Cockcroft and seconded by Carmel Mullan.

AP4: Changes to be made to 2020/21 draft Business Plan registration target.

AP5: Agreed amendments to Closures Manual to be implemented in version 3.0 going forward.

6. Compliance & Enquiries Report

The Head of Compliance & Enquiries (HCE) introduced his report. The Board noting various points including the issuing of twenty eight Section 23 orders since the last meeting, and that three Northern Ireland appointments had been made to the Charity SORP committee. A series of queries from Commissioners regarding ongoing Enquiries work were responded to.

7. Corporate Services Report

The Head of Corporate Services (HCorpS) outlined aspects of his report including the impact of the restoration of the Assembly on Strategic Investment Board (SIB) priorities and availability to progress planned work on the Transformation project. As a result a tail of £90k capital spend would move into 2020/21. An update on current business plan progress was provided and planned budget underspend of 2% was accepted as the likely position at year end.

8. Reports from Subcommittees

Schedule 1 Committee

a) Minutes of Schedule 1 Meeting 29 November 2019

Noted.

9. Policies and processes

a) ICT Hosting Options

The HCorpS outlined the current hosting arrangements for the Commission's digital services and future options. Commissioners raised a series of queries and discussed the pros and cons of the options as well as risks associated with the current arrangements. It was agreed to progress hosting option three with IT Assist, as proposed by Hugh McKeag and seconded by Séamus Magee.

b) Social Media Policy

The Communications Officer presented a series of proposed developments to the Commission's Social Media policy. These included use of a range of media including Facebook as an information platform, LinkedIn for recruitment, and wider use of Twitter and affiliated accounts. Steven Cockcroft declared a conflict in relation to his employer, Johns Elliott, being instructed in relation to Facebook and indicated he would not take part in the decision. After some discussion the remaining members of the Board agreed to adopt the changes outlined for a trial period, with Facebook being reviewed in June and Twitter and LinkedIn after a year, as proposed by Kieran Donaghy and seconded by Séamus Magee

AP6: Communication Officer to set up new social media presence and train users.

AP7: Agreed amendments to Social Media policy to be implemented in version 2.0 going forward.

c) Standing Orders and Board Operating Framework

The CEx introduced the results of a review. The Board considered and approved a series of changes to The Board Operating Framework and the Commission's Standing Orders as proposed by Steven Cockcroft and seconded by Gerald McCurdy.

d) Environmental Policy Review

Review by HCorpS noted and Board agreed to the recommendation to develop a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) strategy as part of the 2021/22 Policy Development Plan as proposed by Kieran Donaghy and seconded by Gerald McCurdy.

AP8: Development of CSR strategy to be included in 2021/22

e) Legal Update

The Board noted the update on ongoing litigation and other legal work.

f) Board Self-Assessment Arrangements

The CEx highlighted the formal assessment approach normally taken every three years. Following discussion the Board agreed to delay this exercise until 2020/21 in light of plans to develop the Partnership approach. In the meantime the Self-Assessment Questionnaire will be recirculated for Commissioners to complete by 20 February so that details can be collated and discussed at the March Board residential.

AP9: Commissioners to complete self-assessment forms by 20 February and discuss results at March Board residential

g) Hospitality Register Review

The Board noted the register which had been kept under a watching brief for the past six months.

10. Issues for next meeting

Issues proposed for the next meeting were noted.

11. AOB

None.

Meeting ended at 12.30pm

Register of Outstanding Action Points

Board Meeting and Action Point Number	Date Raised	Agenda Item	Action	Owners	Status
79 (AP1)	27/01/2020	1	Minutes of Board Meeting No 78 to be published on CCNI website.	HCorps	Complete
79 (AP2)	27/01/2020	4	A&RA committee to examine approaches to whistleblowing	CEx	Complete
79 (AP3)	27/01/2020	4	CEx to write to representatives of planned group registration setting out the Commission's position	CEx	Complete
79 (AP4)	27/01/2020	5	Changes to be made to 2020/21 draft Business Plan registration target.	HCS	Underway
79 (AP5)	27/01/2020	5	Agreed amendments to Closures Manual to be implemented in version 3.0 going forward.	HCS	Underway
79 (AP6)	27/01/2020	9b	Communication Officer to set up new social media presence and train users.	Comms Officer	Underway
79 (AP7)	27/01/2020	9b	Agreed amendments to Social Media policy to be implemented in version 2.0 going forward.	Comms Officer	Underway
79 (AP8)	27/01/2020	9d	Development of CSR strategy to be included in 2021/22 Communication Officer to set up new social media presence and train users.	HCorps	Underway
79 (AP9)	27/01/2020	9f	Commissioners to complete self-assessment forms by 20 February and discuss results at March Board residential	CEx	Complete
78 (AP4)	12/12/19	8	Draft minutes from most recent A&RA meeting to be brought to Board for information	HCorpS	Underway

73(AP2)	13/05/2019	4	CEx to arrange Fundraising Regulator briefing for all Commissioners and Staff	CEx	Underway
73(AP8)	13/05/2019	9(d)	Research strategy to include a baseline and evaluation of comms work	HCS	Underway
56-12	12/12/2016	18	MOU with CRA to be drafted	HCS	Underway