



**Minutes of Board Meeting No. 39 held on Monday 23 June 2014
at 9:30am, 257 Lough Road, Lurgan.**

Present:

Tom McGrath, Chief Commissioner
Walter Rader, Deputy Chief Commissioner
Norman Bennett, Commissioner
Rosemary Connolly, Commissioner (Legal)
Geraldine Donaghy, Commissioner
Brenda Maitland, Commissioner
Philip McDonagh, Commissioner

In Attendance:

Frances McCandless, Chief Executive
Aubrey McCrory, Head of Corporate Services
Myles McKeown, Head of Compliance and Enquiries
Kathryn Jennett, Administrative Officer, CCNI

Apologies

Punam McGookin, Head of Charity Services

1. Minutes of Meeting 19 May 2014

The minutes of the meeting held on the 19 May 2014 were proposed by Walter Rader and seconded by Philip McDonagh, and agreed as a true and correct record.

AP 1: Minutes to be published on CCNI website.

2. Conflicts of Interest

The Chair reminded Commissioners of the Freedom of Information protocol and the need to declare any conflicts of interest prior to the meeting. Several Commissioners declared matters in relation to the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

3. Chair's Business, Correspondence and Meetings

The Chief Commissioner advised he would be meeting shortly with Roy Keenan, Chair of the Department's Audit & Risk Committee. It was also noted that correspondence had been received from John McAllister MLA and the Chief Executive advised she had written back offering a meeting.

The Chief Commissioner highlighted further consideration had been given to the working of the HR&R Committee, and a recommendation was made to the Board that the Terms of Reference of the HR&R Committee be amended to remove the 2 year fixed term of Committee members. This recommendation was agreed following proposal by Walter Rader and seconding by Philip McDonagh. The Board noted that it would be the Chair of HR&R committee's intention to stand down from this role shortly.

AP2 : HR&R Ctte Terms of Reference to be amended

4. Chief Executive's Report

The Chief Executive introduced her report to the Board and confirmed the Annual Report and Accounts had been signed off by the Chair and the Chief Executive and laid at the Assembly on 2 June 2014. The Chief Executive advised the Board that the Charity Tribunal was reconvening shortly regarding the removal of a Trustee. Other matters highlighted included an increase in Freedom of Information and Subject Access requests related to ongoing investigations work and how the sponsor Department were progressing the Annual Reporting requirements, with Noel Hyndman from QUB having joined the working group to take this important issue forward.

In relation to charity registration workshops the Board noted the benefit of attending vis the quality of applications and that those not attending were more likely to make applications that included common mistakes or were incomplete. The Board also noted the de-prioritisation of the research and policy agenda, and that this would not be brought to the September meeting. It was agreed to continue circulating the monthly policy update, with a legal update on a two monthly cycle and to make minor changes to the cover template for committee and board papers. The Board welcomed the Chief Executive's report as a good overview of all that was ongoing.

5. Proposed amendments to Investigations manual

The Head of Compliance and Enquiries noted a fundamental review of the Investigations manual, previously approved in early 2011, was underway and introduced the paper which set out high level proposals which had been considered and agreed by a task and finish group. Following discussion it was agreed to revise the current process requiring an Investigation to be opened under Section 22 of the Charities Act (NI) 2008 (the 'Act') before the powers under Section 23 could be used, and to adopt the high level process for appointing an Interim Manager following proposal by Walter Rader and seconding by Norman Bennett.

6. New section in registration manual relating to religious designation

The Chief Executive introduced the paper to the Board and highlighted the criteria for Religious Designation, which exempts such charities from various of the Commission's regulatory powers arising from Section 22 of the Act. It was noted the criteria required a governing structure or oversight body. Commissioners queried whether this would be clear to many of the

constituent groups and the view was expressed that this may be a source of complaints and appeals in the future if not clearly explained. After consideration the additional section was adopted following proposal by Geraldine Donaghy and seconding by Philip McDonagh.

7. Mergers/Closures process manuals

The Chief Executive introduced the draft manual to the Board and advised that the manuals had been discussed at a task and finish group following work by a project team which involved liaison with CCEW. The Chief Executive highlighted that the Commission is obliged to hold a register of Charity mergers and closures, but not all Charities are obliged to notify the Commission. In addition, Charities have an obligation under section 17(3) of the Act, to notify the Commission if the Charity ceases to exist although no specific timescale for such notification is imposed.

It was noted closures will be recorded by the Commission through the annual monitoring return, as Registered Charities must submit their final accounts to the Commission. However, under the Act there is no requirement to submit these accounts at the point of closure. Members of the Board raised concerns with the risk involved, as the amount of time a closed charity has to submit accounts could be a maximum of 22 months, and there were potential issues about how the register was finally updated by Trustees. Commissioners noted there was no way of reducing risks around this unless more resources were available. The manuals were adopted following proposal by Norman Bennett and seconded by Brenda Maitland.

8. IT Strategy

The IT Officer introduced the strategy to the Board and highlighted projects that were in current progress, such as registration online systems, enhancements to network links, and deployment of the workflow management system. The officer highlighted emerging themes and the challenges that are faced by the Commission in providing online IT services which are fundamental to the full service delivery for its customers. A member of the Board raised concerns with the risks involved when using so many service providers and the backup that would be available. It was recommended that an ICT project Board be established to introduce a portfolio approach to how CCNI sets and progresses the annual ICT investment programme. Any identified risks would be fed through the Audit & Risk Committee and then on to the Board as an update on any ICT costs and progress.

The Strategy was adopted, subject to minor amendment, following proposal from Geraldine Donaghy and seconding by Brenda Maitland.

AP3: Minor amendments to be made to strategy and action plan produced for its implementation

9. Communication Strategy

The Head of Corporate Services introduced the Communication Strategy to the Board and thanked the Task and Finish group for their hard work in helping to set out what the Commission wished to achieve. It was agreed that that a Survey of the general public will be conducted again to gain views on public benefit, compliance, charitable resources, accountability and delivery. The Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee, a member of the Task and Finish group, wished to pass on his thanks to the Comms Officer and Head of Corporate Services for their work on the strategy.

The strategy was adopted following proposal by Walter Rader and seconding by Philip McDonagh, subject to minor amendment.

AP4: Minor amendments to be made to strategy

10. Name Change Manual

The Chief Executive introduced the paper to the Board, highlighting that section 20 of the Act now gives the Commission the power to require a Charity to changes its registered name, if the Commission believe it is the same as, or too similar, that of another charity. The Board noted the procedure and adopted the manual following proposal by Geraldine Donaghy and seconding by Norman Bennett.

11. Annual Equality Report

The Head of Corporate Services introduced the paper and the Board noted the content prior to submission to the Equality Commission NI.

12. Investigations Report

The Head of Compliance and Enquiries introduced the report to the Board. The Chair of the Board declared a conflict with one of the Charities that is under investigation and the report was noted.

13. Casework Update

The Chief Executive introduced the report to the Board, highlighting that the number of charities called forward to date was 1,766. A member of the Board suggested that a date be added to the Tranche lists on the website as to when they were called forward.

The Chief Executive advised that there is a considerable amount of administration involved in calling forward tranches, dealing with queries regarding the on-line application, chase cycles and processing the application forms.

AP5: Dates of tranches called forward to be added to website

14. Budget Report

The Head of Corporate Services introduced the Budget Report to the Board and highlighted an extra expenditure in some areas of staffing. A member of the Board requested that the Programme Delivery Costs be broken down to show legal costs.

AP6: Head of Corporate Services to breakdown Programme Costs

Staff left the meeting at this point.

15. CEx performance Objectives

The proposed objectives were discussed and Board members agreed to send any suggested amendments to the Chief Commissioner by the end of June.

AP7: Commissioners to send any suggested amendments to Chair by end June.

Staff rejoined the meeting at this point

16. Press Clippings

Noted

17. Review of Meeting

The Chair commented that the new format of the Board papers had been very helpful in conducting the meeting and progressing it efficiently.

18. Issues of next meeting

None

19. AOB

The meeting concluded at 11.45

Register of Outstanding Action Points					
Board Meeting and Action Point Number	Date Raised	Agenda Item	Action	Owners	Status
31 (2)	13/05/2013	Chair's Business Correspondence and meetings.	Meeting with CCEW to be set up.	Chair	Underway
31 (9)	13/05/2013	Review of Compliance with Standing Orders	Commissioners to check indemnity wording in letters of appointment and liaise with Chief Executive re MSFM wording	Board	Underway
34 (10)	11/11/2013	Press Clippings	MOU with RQIA to be developed	HCE	Underway
37 (4)	10/03/2014	Options for developing HR Policies	Staff to progress procurement of expert HR support	HCorpS	Underway
38 (3)	19/05/2014	Review of HR policies	Officers to take forward procurement of external expertise	HCorpS	Underway
39 (1)	23/06/2014	Minutes of Meeting 19 May 2014	Minutes to be published on CCNI website	Comms	Complete
39 (2)	23/06/2014	Chair's Business, Correspondence and Meetings	HR&R Ctte Terms of Reference to be amended	CEx	Underway
39 (3)	23/06/2014	IT Strategy	Minor amendments to be made to strategy and action plan produced for its implementation	IT Officer	Complete
39 (4)	23/06/2014	Communication Strategy	Minor amendments to be made to strategy	Comms	Complete
39 (5)	23/06/14	Casework Update	Dates of tranches called forward to be added to website	Comms	Complete

39 (6)	23/06/14	Budget Report	Head of Corporate Services to breakdown Programme Costs	HCorpS	Underway
39 (7)	23/06/14	CEx performance Objectives	Commissioners to send any suggested amendments to Chair by end June.	Chief Commissioner	Complete