

**Minutes of Board Meeting No. 107 held on Monday 25 September 2023  
at Marlborough House, Craigavon.**

**Present:**

Gerard McCurdy - Chair (Chief Commissioner)  
Kieran Donaghy, Charity Commissioner  
Patricia Kelly, Legal Commissioner  
Alan Hunter, Charity Commissioner  
Terence McGonigal, Charity Commissioner

**In Attendance:**

Frances McCandless, Chief Executive  
Punam McGookin, Head of Charity Services  
Aubrey McCrory, Head of Corporate Services  
Rossa Keown, Head of Compliance and Enquiries  
Maeve Curley, Boardroom Apprentice  
David McGurk, Minutes  
Erin Gordon, Policy Officer (observer)

**Apologies:**

Hugh McKeag, Charity Commissioner

The meeting commenced at 9.30am. The Chair welcomed the new Board member Terence McGonigal, Maeve Curley (Board Apprentice) and Erin Gordon to the meeting.

**1. Minutes of Board Meeting 106, Monday 26 June 2023**

Following discussion, the minutes of the Board Meeting held on 26 June 2023 were agreed as a true and correct record as proposed by Patricia Kelly and seconded by Kieran Donaghy. The Chief Executive outlined progress on action points since the last meeting and it was agreed to update timescales.

**AP1: Minutes of Board Meeting No 106, Monday 26 June 2023 to be published on CCNI website.**

**AP2: Action Point timescales to be updated.**

**2. Conflicts of Interest**

None were noted.

**3. Chair's Business, Correspondence and Meetings**

The Chair updated the Board on recent meetings and correspondence and outlined steps to update the Commission's committees. It was agreed the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee would comprise Hugh McKeag (chair) Alan Hunter, Terence McGonigal and Caron Alexander, the Human Resources Committee would comprise Kieran Donaghy (chair), Patricia Kelly and the new Deputy Commissioner with a new Performance and Development Committee to be set up comprising Gerard McCurdy (chair), Hugh McKeag and Kieran Donaghy, as proposed by Alan Hunter and seconded by Terence

McGonigal. Patricia Kelly will continue to chair the Legal Advisory Group, and the Chief Commissioner will continue to take an active role in the Stakeholder Forum pending a new Deputy Chief Commissioner appointment.

**AP3: Performance and Development Committee to be set up and Terms of Reference brought to Board.**

**4. Chief Executive's Report**

The Chief Executive introduced her report and gave an update on the planned Board evaluation, current litigation and sponsor Department's forthcoming Charity Regulation: Partnership and Planning strategic workshop which Commissioners were due to attend.

**5. Policies and Processes**

**a. Annual review of Board Operating Framework, Code of Conduct and Standing Orders**

The Chief Executive introduced the review and following discussion the Board Operating Framework, Code of Conduct, standing orders and an amendment to the Schedule 1 TOR were agreed, subject to further minor amendment, as proposed by Alan Hunter and seconded by Kieran Donaghy. It was noted the HR committee would review its terms of reference in October.

**AP4: Updated Board Operating Framework, Code of Conduct and Standing orders to be published.**

**AP5: HR committee to review its terms of reference.**

**b. Records Management Policy**

The Head of Corporate Services introduced the review which identified a series of amendments in light of legislative changes and experience. Following discussion the Board agreed the proposed updates, subject to a further addition as proposed by Terence McGonigal and seconded by Patricia Kelly. It was noted the revised policy would be submitted to PRONI for sign off.

**AP6: Amended Records Management Policy to be submitted to PRONI for sign off.**

**c. Data sharing with third party researchers involved in the UK Third Sector database project.**

The Head of Charity Services introduced the research project and highlighted various data sharing considerations. Following discussion, the Board asked for a paper to be brought to the November Board meeting highlighting the resources required and further sharing considerations.

**AP7: Further data sharing paper to November Board meeting.**

**d. Options for Commission legal support**

The Chief Executive introduced the paper and outlined options for the Board to consider. Following discussion, the Board agreed a preferred option in line with the strategic resource business case and the Chief Commissioner undertook to write to sponsor Department highlighting the

Commission's preferred structure and approach, as proposed by Patricia Kelly and seconded by Kieran Donaghy.

**AP8: Chief Commissioner to write to Department outlining the Commissions preferred legal staffing structure.**

**AP9: Personal specification and job description to be drafted for an additional Legal post.**

**e. Compliance with MSFM**

The Chief Executive introduced the paper and the Board noted there were no non-compliance issues.

**f. Legal update**

The Head of Charity Services introduced the update, and a number of queries were addressed. In relation to ongoing litigation the Board identified its preferred action and authorised staff to implement this in conjunction with sponsor department, as proposed by Alan Hunter and seconded by Kieran Donaghy.

**AP10: Legal team to pursue Board's preferred option in conjunction with sponsor department.**

**g. Accommodation review – Initial high-level overview**

The Head of Corporate Services introduced the paper and gave a high-level overview of the current situation which the Board noted.

**6. Reports from Committees**

**Audit and Risk Assurance Committee**

**a. Minutes of meeting No 57 – 11 September 2023**

Following discussion, the minutes of the Audit and Risk Assurance (A&RA) meeting held on 11 September 2023 were approved for publication, as proposed by Alan Hunter and seconded by Kieran Donaghy.

**AP11: Minutes of A&RA Committee No 57 – 11 September 2023 to be published on the website.**

**b. 6 month Assurance statement**

The Chief Executive introduced the paper and it was agreed the Chair would sign and the statement be submitted to the Department, as proposed by Alan Hunter and seconded by Terence McGonigal.

**AP12: Chief Commissioner to sign the Assurance statement, to be submitted to sponsor department.**

**c. Corporate Risk Register**

The Head of Corporate Services introduced the Corporate Risk Register and highlighted proposed changes. Following discussion the revised register was agreed by the Board as proposed by Alan Hunter and seconded by Kieran Donaghy.

**d. Review of Information Security policy**

The Head of Corporate Services introduced the review and highlighted changes to the policy and the information manual. Following discussion all three changes were agreed by the Board as proposed by Patricia Kelly and seconded by Terence McGonigal.

**AP13: Updated Information Security policy and information manual to be implemented.**

**e. Review of Governance Framework**

The Head of Corporate Services introduced the review and highlighted the proposed changes to the framework to bring it up to date. Following discussion the updated framework was agreed by the Board as proposed by Kieran Donaghy and seconded by Alan Hunter.

**AP14: Updated Governance Framework to be published on website and implemented.**

**f. Review of Raising concerns about the Commission policy**

The Head of Corporate Services outlined the review process and the assurance from Internal Audit. Following discussion, the revised policy was agreed, subject to minor amendment as proposed by Alan Hunter and seconded by Kieran Donaghy. The Chair undertook to write to the sponsor department outlining the results of the review and the updated policy.

**AP15: Chair to write to the Department regarding the review and updating of the Raising Concerns policy.**

**g. Internal Audit Charter**

The Chief Executive introduced the Charter which was agreed following proposal by Terence McGonigal and seconded by Alan Hunter. It was agreed the Chief Executive would sign the document and return to Internal Audit.

**AP16: Chief Executive to sign off the Internal Audit Charter and return to Internal Audit.**

**h. NIAO Report to Those Charged with Governance**

The Board noted there were no priority one recommendations.

**i. Schedule 1 Decisions**

**Note of Schedule 1 Committee – 09 June 2023**

Decisions were noted.

**Note of Schedule 1 Committee – 16 June 2023**

Decisions were noted.

**Note of Schedule 1 Committee – 07 July 2023**

Decisions were noted.

**Note of Schedule 1 Committee – 18 August 2023**

Decisions were noted.

**Note of Schedule 1 Committee – 12 September 2023**

Decisions were noted.

### **Commissioner registration decisions 21 July 2023**

Decisions were noted.

### **Commissioner registration decisions 25 August 2023**

Decisions were noted.

## **7. Charity Services Report**

The Head of Charity Services introduced her report and highlighted a number of aspects. The Board discussed and agreed a minor amendment to the Legal Manual as proposed by Alan Hunter and seconded by Patricia Kelly.

**AP17: Amended Legal manual to be implemented and reviewed in one year.**

## **8. Compliance and Enquiries Report**

The Head of Compliance and Enquiries introduced the report and gave an update on various cases and complaints which the Board noted. The Chair raised the issue of correspondence received by sponsor department regarding a complaint and undertook to write back to the department. The Head of Compliance and Enquiries highlighted that the updated charity register traffic light display was due to go live before the end of Quarter 3 and the Board noted communications work planned to support this.

**AP18: Chief Commissioner to write to sponsor department regarding handling complaint related correspondence.**

## **9. Corporate Service Report**

The Head of Corporate Services introduced the report and gave an update on budget spend, noting a number of emerging pressures. The Board noted sponsor department's initial response to the draft strategic and business plans and proposed steps to sign off, including discussing reporting outcomes at the charity partnership and planning strategic workshop in mid-October. The Board stressed its role as an independent regulator and its responsibility to set strategic and business plans. It noted it was not for the partnership workshop to dictate these matters, but rather to consult and discuss. Following further discussion, the Board agreed to submit the revised draft 2023-24 Business Plan with minor amendments as proposed by Patricia Kelly and seconded by Kieran Donaghy. It was agreed the Chief Executive would liaise with sponsor department about finalising the strategic plan.

**AP19: Chief Executive to submit revised draft Business Plan to sponsor department for approval and liaise on arrangements for the strategic plan.**

## **10. Issues for next meeting**

The Chair noted the following items to be included at the next meeting on 13 November 2023:

- First draft 24/25 business plan
- October HR Committee items
- Accommodation plans update and licence renewal
- Fundraising regulator presentation
- Comms and engagement update

**11. AOB**

None

Meeting ended at 12.30 pm

### Register of Outstanding Action Points

<b>Board Meeting and Action Point Number</b>	<b>Date Raised</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Owners</b>	<b>Status (target)</b>
107(1)	25/09/2023	1	Minutes of Board Meeting No 106, Monday 26 June 2023 to be published on CCNI website.	Comms	Complete
107(2)	25/09/2023	1	Action Point timescales to be updated.	CEx	Complete
107(3)	25/09/2023	3	Performance and Development Committee to be set up.	CEx	Ongoing (Q3 23/24)
107(4)	25/09/2023	5a	Updated Board Operating Framework, Code of Conduct and Standing orders to be published.	CEx	Complete
107(5)	25/09/2023	5a	HR committee to review its terms of reference.	HR Cttee	Complete
107(6)	25/09/2023	5b	Amended Records Management Policy to be submitted to PRONI for sign off.	HCorpS	Ongoing (Q3 23/24)
107(7)	25/09/2023	5c	Further data sharing paper to November Board meeting.	HChS	Ongoing (Q3 23/24)
107(8)	25/09/2023	5d	Chief Commissioner to write to Department outlining the Commissions preferred legal staffing structure.	Chair	Complete
107(9)	25/09/2023	5d	Personal specification and job description to be drafted for Senior Legal post.	HChS	Ongoing (Q3 23/24)

107(10)	25/09/2023	5f	Legal team to pursue Board's preferred option in conjunction with sponsor department.	Legal	Ongoing (Q3 23/24)
107(11)	25/09/2023	6a	Minutes of A&RA Committee No 57 – 11 September 2023 to be published on the website.	Comms	Complete
107(12)	25/09/2023	6b	Chief Commissioner to sign the Assurance statement, to be submitted to sponsor department.	Chair	Complete
107(13)	25/09/2023	6d	Updated Information Security policy and information manual to be implemented.	HCorpS	Ongoing (Q3 23/24)
107(14)	25/09/2023	6e	Updated Governance Framework to be published on website and implemented.	HCorpS	Ongoing (Q3 23/24)
107(15)	25/09/2023	6f	Chair to write to the Department regarding the review and updating of the Raising Concerns policy.	Chair	Complete
107(16)	25/09/2023	6g	Chief Executive to sign off the Internal Audit Charter and return to Internal Audit.	CEx	Complete
107(17)	25/09/2023	7	Amended Legal manual to be implemented and reviewed in one year.	HChS	Ongoing (Q3 23/24)
107(18)	25/09/2023	8	Chief Commissioner to write to sponsor department regarding handling complaint related correspondence.	Chair	Complete
107(19)	25/09/2023	9	Chief Executive to submit revised draft Business Plan to sponsor department for approval and liaise regarding arrangements for the strategic plan.	CEx	Complete
106(2)	26/06/2023	3	Board to meet with SMT following Board meeting in September or November depending on availability.	CEx	Ongoing (Q3 23/24)
106(10)	26/06/2023	5g	Religious designation component elements policy to be implemented.	HChS	Complete

105(5)	15/05/2023	5b	Monitoring and Compliance Manual to be updated with four new compliance failure themes and related scenarios	HC&E	Ongoing (Q3 23/24)
105(7)	15/05/2023	5e	Option 2 to phase out the Combined list to be progressed	HChS	Complete
104(2)	27/03/2023	3	Litigation to be progressed in line with legal advice.	CEx	Ongoing (Q2 23/24)
104(4)	27/03/2023	3	Commission to write to Assembly Communities Committee members regarding future plans.	Comms	Ongoing (Q4 23/24)
104(10)	27/03/2023	5c	Further training on equality for staff and Commissioners to be arranged.	HCorpsS	Ongoing (Q3 23/24)
104(22)	27/03/2023	7	Publication policy version 7.0 to be implemented going forward	HChS	Complete
102 (8)	19/12/2022	5e	A review of accommodation to be undertaken in early 2023.	HCorpS	Complete
102 (10)	19/12/2022	5f	Action plan including disposal schedule to be implemented.	HCorpS	Underway (Q4-23/24)
100(10)	26/09/2022	6d	Risk Workshop to be planned for later this year or early next year.	HCorpS	Underway (Q3 - 23/24)
98 (7)	16/05/2022	5e	Training in complaint handling to be arranged.	CEx/ HCorpS	Trauma element Complete
94 (3)	15/11/21	5a	Corporate Social Responsibility policy to be developed as part of the next strategic planning process.	HCorpS	Ongoing (Q1-25/26) when premises known
90(8)	17/05/21	5d	Impact of the Stakeholder Forum to be measured via the Research Strategy.	HChS	Ongoing (Q4-23/24)
90(10)	17/05/21	6b	Information on other regulators' risk register approaches to be collated for Board risk workshop.	HCorpS	Ongoing (Q4 - 23/24)