



**Minutes of Board Meeting No. 77 held on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2019  
At 9:30am, at Charity Commission for Northern Ireland Office, Lurgan.  
Meeting preceded by training on Minute Pad at 9am.**

**Present:**

Nicole Lappin, Chief Charity Commissioner  
Gerard McCurdy, Deputy Chief Charity Commissioner  
Kieran Donaghy, Charity Commissioner  
Carmel Mullan, Charity Commissioner  
Hugh McKeag, 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  
Rachel Harrison, Board Apprentice  
Clare McElherron, Finance & Admin Officer

Apologies: Séamus Magee, Charity Commissioner  
Steven Cockcroft, Charity Commissioner

**1. Minutes of Meeting No 76 – 23 September 2019**

Following discussion the minutes of the meeting held on 23 September 2019 were agreed as a true and correct record, subject to minor amendment, as Proposed by Kieran Donaghy and Seconded by Gerard McCurdy.

**AP1: Minutes of Board Meeting No 76 to be published on CCNI website.**

**2. Conflicts of Interest**

No conflicts of interest were noted.

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

The Chair noted the apologies and welcomed everyone to the meeting, in particular the new Commissioners Carmel Mullan and Hugh McKeag. Details of a recent meeting with departmental officials and plans for future regular contact were highlighted. The Chair also outlined a number of considerations

regarding ongoing litigation and the Board noted plans to obtain counsel's opinion on a number of issues. Recent correspondence from the Attorney General's office was noted.

#### **4. Chief Executive's Report**

The CEx introduced her report and highlighted in particular an additional budget allocation. It was noted an indemnity letter had been submitted to the Assembly and now issued to the Commission. Plans to discuss sponsor Department's view on future remit and the new partnership agreement arrangement were welcomed. Commissioners discussed the proposed approach and requested a comparative analysis to be undertaken of current and proposed arrangements and a mapping of key stakeholders to inform future discussion.

An agenda for the forthcoming Board development day was agreed following suggestions from Commissioners.

The CEx highlighted a meeting with an MLA and confirmed she had met with NICVA and agreed further communication work. Commissioners noted this would clarify that all previous Commission decisions stand unless and until challenged in the courts. A number of developments in regard to Schedule 1 committee were identified to be taken forward, including training.

#### **5. Charity Services Report**

The Head of Charity Services outlined aspects of her report and the Board considered who could make administrative changes to the register of charities. The Head of Charity Services highlighted a number of procedures relating to the upkeep of an accurate register of charities. Following a number of queries the Board agreed the six areas of administrative changes outlined could be carried out by the staff, given no authority or decision was being made by the Commission. Proposed by Kieran Donaghy and Seconded by Carmel Mullan. Commissioners noted the recent charity law staff training and registration workshop had been extremely beneficial for Commissioners who attended.

#### **AP2: Arrangements for administrative changes to update the register of charities to be implemented**

#### **6. Compliance & Enquiries Report**

The Head of Compliance & Enquiries introduced his report with the Board noting various points. Following a query it was confirmed the second highest peak for account returns passed at end of October and following the issue of notification letters to individual Charity Trustees default rates had halved compared to the same time last year i.e. from 13% to 5.9%. The Board agreed it would be useful to repeat the mail out exercise for the next return

peak at the end of January 2020. Commissioners noted developments in terms of appointment of auditors and plans to prioritise review of certain information sharing agreements.

## **7. Corporate Services Report**

The Head of Corporate Services outlined aspects of his report including updating the forward of the draft strategic plan document. Following discussion the update was proposed by Kieran Donaghy and Seconded by Hugh McKeag. A procedure and claim form for Commissioners to be reimbursed for additional working time, using the existing sign off process for travel expenses, was adopted. The board discussed a proposal to pilot use of social media for recruitment opportunities, and after discussion it was agreed to pilot this for six months as Proposed by Gerard McCurdy and Seconded by Carmel Mullan.

**AP3: Draft strategic plan foreword to be updated**

**AP4: Finance and Travel procedures to be revised to reflect procedure and claim form for Commissioners to be reimbursed for additional working time.**

## **8. Reports from Subcommittees**

### **Schedule 1 Committee**

**a) Minutes of Schedule 1 meeting 28 June 2019**

**b) Minutes of Schedule 1 meeting 10 July 2019**

**c) Minutes of Schedule 1 meeting 23 September 2019**

Minute's noted. The Board noted the quorum required for a committee.

## **9. Policies and processes**

### **a) Generic Email signatures Policy**

The Head of Charity Services introduced the draft policy and outlined the range of areas where generic signature were currently used for example high volume or protective circumstances and confirmed the policy would operate in support of the Customer Charter. Following discussion the Board agreed the draft generic email signature policy, subject to minor amendments, as Proposed by Kieran Donaghy and Seconded by Carmel Mullan

**AP5: Generic email signature to be amended and published**

**b) Draft Business Plan 2020-21**

The Head of Corporate Services introduced the draft plan, highlighting key assumptions on resourcing and actions to be taken forward based on staff input. Commissioners noted aspects such as the two resourcing options and strategic risks would be further developed after discussion at the next A&RA committee.

Commissioners noted the historic low levels of sickness rates and agreed to reduce the target going forward. It was agreed to include a presentation on the finalised draft plan at the next board meeting.

### **c) New Partnership agreement with DFC**

The Chief Executive introduced the report noting the current governance framework and practice on delegation and escalation. The Board discussed the proposed arrangements and welcomed the concepts set out therein, which they were very supportive of. It was noted the template agreement was generic and some additional aspects would be necessary to reflect the Commission's role as a statutory regulator with accountability to the Charity Tribunal for decision making. It was agreed to hold a half day Board session to review and then a meeting with sponsor department to discuss the agreement which should be in place from April next year. .

**AP6: CEx to set up a Board session to review the partnership agreement**

**AP7: CEx to arrange a meeting with sponsor department to discuss the partnership agreement.**

### **d) Legal Update**

Update noted. Following a query the Head of Compliance & Enquiries provided an update on criminal proceedings related to a charity investigation which were now concluded.

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

Issues noted.

## **11. AOB**

Following a suggestion it was agreed to include an evaluation of the meeting agenda item on the next agenda and then take a view if this would become a regular item. It was agreed Commissioners would meet informally with staff after the December Board meeting for refreshments.

Meeting ended at 12.30.

### 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</b>
77 (AP1)	04/11/19	1	Minutes of Board Meeting No 76 to be published on CCNI website.	HCorpS	Underway
77 (AP2)	04/11/19	5	Arrangements for administrative changes to update the register of charities to be implemented	HCS	Underway
77 (AP3)	04/11/19	7	Draft strategic plan foreword to be updated.	HCorpS	Underway
77 (AP4)	04/11/19	7	Finance and Travel procedures to be revised to reflect procedure and claim form for Commissioners to be reimbursed for additional working time.	HCorpS	Underway
77(AP5)	04/11/19	9	Generic email signature to be amend and published.	HCS	Underway
77 (AP6)	04/11/19	9	CEx to set up a Board session to review the agreement.	CEx	Underway
77 (AP7)	04/11/19	9	CEx to arrange a meeting with sponsor department to discuss an agreement.	CEx	Underway
76(AP5)	23/09/2019	7	Circulate latest Transformation project briefing	HCorpS	Underway
76(AP6)	23/09/2019	7	Develop the monthly management accounts to include additional comparative information on staff compliment	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
72(AP3)	25/03/2019	4	Arrange briefings and board development sessions when remaining board appointments made.	CEx	Underway
56-12	12/12/2016	18	MOU with CRA to be drafted	HCS	Underway