

**Minutes of Board Meeting No. 98 held on Monday 16 May 2022 at 9:30am at The Mount Conference Centre, Belfast**

**Present:**

Nicole Lappin, Chief Charity Commissioner (Chair)  
Gerard McCurdy, Deputy Chief Charity Commissioner  
Kieran Donaghy, Charity Commissioner  
Séamus Magee, Charity Commissioner  
Alan Hunter, Charity Commissioner  
Patricia Kelly, Legal Commissioner  
Hugh McKeag, Charity Commissioner

**In Attendance:**

Frances McCandless, CEX  
Aubrey McCrory, Head of Corporate Services  
Punam McGookin, Head of Charity Services  
Rossa Keown, Head of Compliance & Enquiries  
Ciara McCann, Minutes  
Maria Curry, Boardroom Apprentice  
Nicola Fisher, Finance & Admin Manager

**Apologies:** None

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**1. Minutes of Board Meeting 97, 21 March 2022**

Following discussion the minutes of the Board Meeting held on 21 March 2022 were agreed as a true and correct record, as proposed by Patricia Kelly and seconded by Kieran Donaghy.

The Board reviewed the action points and noted the Chair of the HR Committee had identified strategic HR issues for the next Board meeting. The Board also noted that the HR Committee would discuss training for Board and Committee members.

**AP1: Minutes of Board Meeting No 97, 21 March 2022 to be published on CCNI website.**

**2. Conflicts of Interest**

No conflicts were noted. The Chair advised that should a potential conflict arise, it may be declared at an appropriate time during the meeting.

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

The Chair highlighted that she had two recent meetings with sponsor department including the new Grade 7. The Chair thanked all Commissioners for their help with a recent complaint. The Chair highlighted that she had completed the Chief Executive's appraisal and agreed objectives for 2022/23.

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

The Chief Executive highlighted the Commission's budget position and briefing by the new Permanent Secretary at a recent Department for Communities (DfC) Arm's Length Body forum. The Chief Executive outlined a potential timeframe for developing the new strategic plan, including a formal consultation process, which was discussed with DfC. Following discussion it was agreed to seek views from the stakeholder forum and arrange a Board strategic planning event in the early autumn.

**AP2: Board strategic planning event to be arranged in the early autumn.**

#### **5. Policies and Processes**

##### **a. 2021/22 Annual Report text**

The Head of Corporate Services introduced the draft text and a range of feedback and suggestions were received. Following discussion the draft report was agreed, subject to amendment, as proposed by Alan Hunter and seconded by Gerard McCurdy.

**AP3: Annual report text to be finalised for consideration at the June Board meeting.**

##### **b. Legal Update**

The Head of Charity Services introduced the report and updated Commissioners on current legal issues. The Chief Executive introduced the section setting out a new tribunal appeal which Commissioners agreed to defend following consideration of legal advice and risks as proposed by Séamus Magee and seconded by Hugh McKeag.

##### **c. Business Plan 2022/23 Final draft**

The Head of Corporate Services introduced the final draft plan to the Board and highlighted a number of planning and budget assumptions. A discussion took place regarding registration and casework priorities and the need to take into account the changing nature and complexity of remaining registrations in relation to corporate risks. A series of changes were identified to the plan, following queries, before the draft plan was agreed for submission to sponsor department, subject to amendment, as proposed by Séamus Magee and seconded by Gerard McCurdy.

**AP4: Draft business plan to be finalised and submitted to sponsor team for approval.**

##### **d. Communications Plan**

The Head of Corporate Services introduced the plan to the Board highlighting the main objectives to be delivered. Commissioners noted the plan was very comprehensive and thanked staff for their work. Following discussion it was agreed to further develop the format of the action plan to reflect prioritisation, with quarterly updates to the Board on progress and that an amended plan would be considered at the June Board meeting, as proposed by Kieran Donaghy and seconded by Hugh McKeag.

**AP5: Draft communications plan to be brought back to the Board in June.**

**e. Amended complaints policy**

The Chief Executive outlined changes to the policy and internal manual. The Board noted further guidance is still awaited following the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman's (NIPSO) review of public sector complaint handling processes. A number of queries were addressed and plans for training were highlighted. Following consideration, the complaints policy was agreed, subject to minor amendment, as proposed by Kieran Donaghy and seconded by Séamus Magee. The internal manual was agreed, subject to minor amendment, as proposed by Hugh McKeag and seconded by Patricia Kelly.

**AP6: Amended Complaints Policy version 7.0 and internal manual version 6.0 to be implemented going forward.**

**AP7: Training in complaint handling and trauma-informed practice to be arranged.**

**f. Options for register display of accounts**

The Head of Compliance and Enquiries introduced the paper noting the register status was currently switched off and a number of options for future development were highlighted. Commissioners agreed, following proposal by Gerard McCurdy and seconding by Alan Hunter, to adopt option 3 ie the display will remain switched off while changes are scoped out regarding implementing a related recommendation from the Independent Review of Charity Regulation.

**g. Plans for developing an engagement strategy**

The Board welcomed the plans for developing an engagement strategy.

**h. Review of Action Plan from Review by Independent Counsel**

The Board noted the progress thus far and discussed when committee structures are revised a future committee might undertake more detailed work. For the time being it was accepted this item would be kept on the Board agenda with more some amendments to the status update column. Internal audit assurances on complaint handling were noted.

**AP8: Action plan reporting to be amended.**

**6. Reports from sub-committees**

**A&RA Committee**

**a) Minutes of meeting No 51 – 1 March 2022**

The minutes of the A&RA Committee held on 1 March 2022 were approved for publication as proposed by Gerard McCurdy and seconded by Hugh McKeag.

**AP9: Minutes of meeting 1 March 2022 to be published on website.**

**b) Review of Risk Management Policy and Assurance framework**

The Head of Corporate Services outlined the background and outcomes of the review. Following discussion a series of changes were agreed to the policy as proposed by Hugh McKeag and seconded by Gerard McCurdy.

**AP10: Amended Risk Management Policy to be highlighted to staff and implemented going forward.**

**c) Draft 2022/23 corporate risk register.**

The A&RA Committee chair introduced the paper and outlined the approach to drafting new risks related to delivery of new business plan objectives. During discussion an additional risk related to the complexity of remaining registration work was identified and the risks were agreed, subject to amendment, as proposed by Alan Hunter and seconded by Gerard McCurdy. The Board requested all actions related to the new risk register be completed and circulated to A&RA committee for consideration by correspondence before the June Board meeting.

**AP11: Corporate risk register to be finalised by A&RA committee for consideration by the June Board meeting.**

**d) Review of Fraud & Bribery**

The A&RA Committee chair advised the Board of the outcome of the review. Following discussion it was agreed to adopt the amended assessment reflecting removal of the closure process as proposed by Alan Hunter and seconded by Hugh McKeag.

**e) Drafts accounts 2021/22**

The Chair thanked Nicola Fisher, Finance & Admin Manager, for attending the meeting. The Finance & Admin Manager introduced the draft accounts and outlined the basis of the accounts preparation. An overview of the financial position and cash flows, and detailed expenditure and supporting notes was given. A number of queries were addressed. The Board thanked the Finance & Admin Manager and staff for their work and the quick turnaround of the draft accounts. The draft accounts were agreed, subject to minor amendment, as proposed by Hugh McKeag and seconded by Patricia Kelly.

**AP12: Amended draft accounts to be submitted to Northern Ireland Audit Office for audit.**

**f) Draft Governance Statement**

The Chief Executive presented the draft statement which was agreed for inclusion in the finalised annual report and accounts as proposed by Kieran Donaghy and seconded by Gerard McCurdy.

**g) A&RA Annual Report**

The A&RA committee chair outlined the report and the Board noted the committee's work during the year.

**h) Internal Audit Plan 2022/23**

The A&RA Committee chair introduced the proposed plan and detailed the areas to be covered in assignments one and two. The plan was adopted as proposed by Kieran Donaghy and seconded by Gerard McCurdy.

**i) Internal Audit 2<sup>nd</sup> Assignment report 2021/22**

The A&RA Committee chair outlined the areas assessed as part of the second audit assignment noting a further satisfactory assurance rating with no priority one, two priority two and one priority three recommendations.

**j) Internal Audit Year-End Report 2021/22**

The A&RA Committee chair introduced the year-end report and the Board noted the overall satisfactory assurance rating and no priority one recommendations. The Board commended staff for their work.

**Schedule 1 Decisions**

**k) Commissioner registration decisions March 2022**

Noted.

**l) Commissioner registration decisions April 2022**

Noted.

**m) Note of Schedule 1 Committee - 11 March 2022**

Minor amendments to be made to the notes.

**n) Note of Schedule 1 Committee – 8 April 2022**

Noted.

**7. Charity Services Report**

The Head of Charity Services introduced her report and highlighted a minor change to the Publication Policy which was adopted as proposed by Patricia Kelly and seconded by Alan Hunter. A further minor change to the Registration manual in terms of suspending the Called Forward Protocol was agreed as proposed by Gerard McCurdy and seconded by Hugh McKeag.

**AP13: Amended Publication Policy version 6.0 to be implemented going forward.**

**AP14: Amended Registration manual version 17.0 to be implemented going forward.**

**8. Compliance and Enquiries Report**

The Head of Compliance and Enquiries introduced their report and highlighted a range of work areas and progress of cases including some high profile cases which had previously received media attention.

**9. Corporate Service Report**

The Head of Corporate Services introduced their report. A range of issues and current challenges were highlighted along with details of progress at year end against the business plan performance targets and actions.

**10. Issues for next meeting 16 May 2022**

- Issues from HR committee
- Final annual report & accounts

- Annual equality progress report
- Annual review of Board Operating Framework, Code of Conduct and Standing Orders
- Review Board annual agenda
- CEx performance objectives
- Strategic planning process outline
- Stakeholder Forum update
- Board effectiveness action plan update
- Decision re making a complaint regarding a closed charity

### **11. Agreement to share Board papers with DfC**

Proposed by Séamus Magee and seconded by Patricia Kelly.

#### **AP15: Board papers to be shared with DfC.**

### **12. AOB**

The Board discussed the next Board meeting in June and agreed this would be held in person.

Meeting ended at 13.20 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</b>
98 (1)	16/05/2022	1	Minutes of Board Meeting No 97, 21 March 2022 to be published on CCNI website.		Complete
98 (2)	16/05/2022	4	Board strategic planning event to be arranged in the early autumn.		Underway
98 (2)	16/05/2022	5a	Annual report text to be finalised for consideration at the June Board meeting.		Complete
98 (4)	16/05/2022	5c	Draft business plan to be finalised and submitted to sponsor team for approval.		Complete
98 (5)	16/05/2022	5d	Draft communications plan to be brought back to the Board in June.		Complete
98 (6)	16/05/2022	5e	Amended Registration Policy version 6.0 and internal manual version 17.0 to be implemented going forward.		Underway
98 (7)	16/05/2022	5e	Training in complaint handling and dealing with trauma to be arranged.		Underway
98 (8)	16/05/2022	5h	Action plan reporting to be amended to include status updates.		Complete
98 (9)	16/05/2022	6a	Minutes of meeting 1 March 2022 to be published on website.		Complete
98 (10)	16/05/2022	6b	Amended Risk Management Policy to be highlighted to staff and implemented going forward.		Underway
98 (11)	16/05/2022	6c	Corporate risk register to be finalised by A&RA committee for consideration by the June Board meeting.		Complete

98 (12)	16/05/2022	6e	Amended draft accounts to be submitted to Northern Ireland Audit Office for audit.		Complete
98 (13)	16/05/2022	7	Amended Publication Policy version 6.0 to be implemented going forward.		Underway
98 (14)	16/05/2022	7	Amended Registration manual version 17.0 to be implemented going forward.		Underway
98 (15)	16/05/2022	11	Board papers to be shared with DfC.		Complete
97 (8)	21/03/22	5g	Future Board training to be referred to HR Committee agenda.	CEx	Complete
97 (13)	21/03/22	6g	HR Committee chair to suggest to the Chief Commissioner strategic HR issues for inclusion in the Board agenda twice a year.	HR Chair	Complete
95 (2)	20/12/2021	3	A&RA committee to take forward co-opting a qualified accountant.	Séamus Magee	Underway
95 (10)	20/12/2021	6g	Hybrid working policy to be implemented on a pilot basis as permitted by Executive pandemic restrictions.	HCorps	Underway
94 (3)	15/11/21	5a	Corporate Social Responsibility policy to be developed as part of the next strategic planning process.	HCorpS	Underway
94 (9)	15/11/21	6	Implementation of changes to Ordinary Parental Leave policy to be negotiated	HCorpS	Complete
93(8)	18/10/21	7	Organisational approach to safeguarding to be developed.	CEx	Underway
92(6)	27/09/21	5b	Existing MOUs to be reviewed.	HChS	Underway
92(14)	27/09/21	6d	Office recovery plan to be implemented.	HCorpS	Underway
90(8)	17/05/21	5d	Impact of the Stakeholder Forum to be measured via the Research Strategy.	HChS	Underway
90(10)	17/05/21	6b	Information on other regulators' risk register approaches to be collated for Board risk workshop.	HCorpS	Underway

89(3)	22/03/21	4	A session on the transformation project and organisational risks to be organised and independent member of A&RAC Committee to be invited to attend.	HCorpS	Underway
88(3)	25/01/2021	4	Demo of risk assessment framework to be arranged for Commissioners.	HCorpS	Complete
85(3)	09/11/20	3	Commissioners are to join in on staff welfare events.	HCorpS	Underway
85(5)	09/11/20	4b	New enquiries 'concerns about charities' on line form to be implemented	HCE	Underway
83 (6)	22/06/2020	7	Séamus Magee to raise, through the A&RA Chairs' forum, the need for those using the NICS shared ICT services to have software to effectively support remote working.	S Magee	Complete