CONFIRMED

**MINUTES OF THE ONE HUNDRED & EIGHTY THIRD MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL HELD ON THURSDAY 29TH SEPTEMBER 2016 AT 1.00PM IN THE ANTE ROOM, EQUALITY HOUSE, 7-9 SHAFTESBURY SQUARE, BELFAST BT2 7DP**

**2753/16 PRESENT:**

Mr P Osborne (Chair), Ms L Keys, Mr R Campbell, Very Rev Dr N Hamilton, Ms D Close, Ms S McClelland, Mr N McKenna, Mr G Deane, Ms R McGlone

**2754/16 APOLOGIES:**

Mr B McAllister, Ms K Garbal, Mr D Mackay

**2755/16 IN ATTENDANCE:**

Ms J Irwin [CEO], Mr G McKeown [DFAP Director], Mr P Jordan [Funding and Development Director], Ms D MacBride [Cultural Diversity Director], Ms D McGlade [Policy Director], Ms T Gibson [Admin Officer, DFAP]

**2756/16 OBSERVER:**

None

The Chair welcomed members and advised that due to a change in the timetable for the Annual Report and Accounts this was not the AGM which is now timetabled for 12th December.

2757/16 STANDARD CHECKS:

*1****(a)*** The Chair reminded Members of the requirement to declare any

conflicts of interests in any discussions where decisions were

required.

*1****(b)***The Chair advised thatMembers need to register any offers of gifts or hospitality since the last Council meeting.

Mr G Deane and Ms L Keys declared a conflict of interest in relation to core funding.

**2758/16** The Board paid tribute to Mr J Law.

Joe Law was a staunch and fearless advocate for what was right, for the vulnerable and powerless. Joe understood the need for better community relations in a divided society and took his message of social justice and reconciliation to the most powerful and to the most difficult with equal passion and courage.

Joe spent his life within the trades’ union movement and will be sorely missed by those for whom he was a mentor, role model and teacher.

The Community Relations Council Board is shocked at having lost such a valued colleague when he had so much more to give to us and to this society. He will be sorely missed by everyone who had the opportunity and privilege to work with him. Our thoughts are with his family and his colleagues.

Joe leaves a powerful and enduring legacy in the people he influenced. The challenge to us is to mourn but also to celebrate his life – then organise as he would, to create a fairer and more caring society.

**2759/16 MINUTES:**

* Board Minutes [Paper CRC/183/09/16/**01** refers]

Minutes dated 29th June 2016 having been circulated were taken as read.

***Practitioners Award*** – The CEO asked members to forward any nominations to her in respect of this award. The closing date for nominations is 28th October. Information is available on the CRC website.

* Finance and General Purposes [Paper CRC/183/09/16/**02** refers]

Minutes dated 24th June 2016 having been circulated were taken as read.

Proposer: Mr N McKenna

Seconder: Ms D Close

* Policy and Communications [Paper CRC/183/09/16/**03** refers]

Minutes dated 12th May 2016 having been circulated were taken as read.

Proposer: Ms L Keys

Seconder: Mr G Deane

* Funding Committee [Paper CRC/183/09/16/**04** refers]

Minutes dated 7th July 2016 having been circulated were taken as read subject to a spelling correction to Mr P Osborne’s surname.

Proposer: Ms D Close

Seconder: Ms L Keys

**2760/16 CORRESPONDENCE:**

* Mr P Dean’s Resignation

[Paper CRC/183/09/16/**05** refers]

The Chair reported that Mr P Dean had handed in his resignation. Mr P Osborne expressed thanks to Mr P Dean for the contribution he had made since being appointed to the Board.

* Letter from Mark Browne, Accounting Officer, The Executive Office (TEO)

Mr P Osborne said a letter had been received from Mr M Browne in relation to the Governance Review. He said Ministers had agreed to the full implementation of the review of CRC’s Board and Governance arrangements. The letter was circulated to members for information.

Members discussed the possible implications of the changes to the Board and voiced some concerns. Mr P Osborne said members would have the opportunity to have a further conversation at a specially convened meeting to discuss the outcome of the reviews.

*Ms S McClelland joined the meeting at 1.40pm.*

Mr P Osborne added that an email was received from the Department in relation to the staffing review.

Ms J Irwin said that she would contact the Department to arrange a meeting to discuss both the Governance review and the staffing review.

*Ms D MacBride left the meeting at 1.45pm.*

2761/16 MATTERS ARISING:

* OFMdFM reviews (see above)
* Minutepad

[Paper CRC/183/09/16/**06** refers]

*Mr R Campbell declared a conflict of interest as Minutepad is one of his clients. He left the room at 1.47pm.*

Mr G McKeown provided members with some information including costings of the Minutepad software. He said the cost per meeting would be around £622, which he considered to be too expensive.

Members suggested exploring alternative options which will be discussed at the next meeting of the Board in November.

*Mr R Campbell returned to the room at 1.52pm.*

* North Belfast Strategic Good Relations Programme

[Paper CRC/183/09/16/**07** refers]

Ms J Irwin said the Memorandum of Understanding between Community Relations Council and the Executive Office was included in the Papers for the meeting for information purposes only.

**2762/16 CHAIR’S BUSINESS:**

The Chair provided a verbal update on recent meetings/events attended:

* Meeting with Junior Ministers
* British Irish Association Conference
* NICEM, Derry
* St Columb’s Park House
* CR / CA Week Launch, Girdwood
* Various CR/CA Week Events

Forthcoming events:

* BCT Seminar, Holywell
* Fermanagh Orange Event
* Let’s Talk Limavady
* CDM Craigavon
* CDM Causeway Coast

The Chair thanked members for attending the meeting with the Junior Ministers. He said the meeting had been useful. Members agreed, although some thought there could have been a broader discussion as much of the conversation was related to Summer Camps. Overall, members were encouraged by the meeting and the engagement by the Junior Ministers.

**2763/16 STRATEGIC / OPERATIONAL PLANNING:**

* Strategic Plan / Operational Plan

Ms J Irwin said that both the Strategic Plan and the Operational Plan had been approved by Ministers. A copy of the letter received from Ms G Killen, TEO, was circulated for members’ information.

* Performance Review

Ms J Irwin said the Performance Report was contained in the Annual Report and Accounts. She said the Annual Report and Accounts would not be discussed at this meeting as the audit wasn’t yet complete. She advised that the next meeting of the Board would be the Annual General Meeting when the Performance Review and the Annual Report and Accounts would be discussed.

**2764/16 FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES:**

* ***Management Accounts***

[Paper CRC/183/09/16/**10** refers]

Mr G McKeown, gave a brief overview of the 2016/17 Budget. He said that it was expected that the full budget allocation from TEO for the financial year would be spent.

He said there had been some underspends, overspends and alignments made and added that he would follow up with the budget holders and would reallocate resource where necessary.

* ***Cycle to Work Scheme***

[Paper CRC/183/09/16/**11** refers]

Mr G McKeown outlined the details of the Cycle to Work Scheme.

Members approved the Scheme.

* + - ***Health and Safety***
    - Mr G McKeown reported that there had been no Health and Safety incidents.
    - ***Equality Scheme***

[Paper CRC/183/09/16/**12** refers]

Ms J Irwin informed members that the Section 75 Report had been submitted to the Equality Commission on 31st August 2016. She said the additional reports to accompany the document were available if members wished to see them.

* + ***Premises – Belfast (MOTO) / Dungannon***

[Paper CRC/183/09/16/**13** refers]

Mr G McKeown explained that the Memorandum of Terms of Occupation (MOTO) was the tenancy agreement between CRC and the Equality Commission. He said it had been agreed in principle by CRC and the Equality Commission but because of the value (£91,000 per annum) it needed Board approval.

Members queried the cost, the square footage of CRC’s office space and the rental element of the annual fee. Mr G McKeown said he would seek this information and will forward to members.

Members approved the MOTO.

Mr G McKeown explained that one member of staff is based in Dungannon and for a short period of time had been located outside of the government estate but has recently been located to the Library in Dungannon which is part of the government estate.

* + ***SEUPB Update***

Mr G McKeown reported that this claim is still outstanding.

* + ***Pay Remit Update***

Mr G McKeown updated members on the status of the pay remit. He said the 2014/15 pay remit has gone to the Department. He added that the CRC’s Finance Department is currently working on the 2015/16 pay remit.

**2765/16 REPORT FROM THE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE:**

Mr R Campbell, Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee gave a brief overview of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting which took place on 15th September.

***Audit Investigations***:

Mr R Campbell reported that one group is currently being investigated. As instructed by TEO, CRC has contacted other funders and has heard back from Derry and Strabane Council, SEUPB and the Department of Foreign Affairs to say they have no outstanding issues with the group in question. CRC has written to the Chair of the group requesting an update on the group’s current position and is awaiting a response.

***Risk Register:***

Mr R Campbell said a discussion on the full Risk Register was postponed until the outcome of the audit was known.

***2015/16 Annual Report and Accounts (including the Governance Statement):***

Mr R Campbell informed members that CRC is working closely with NIAO to resolve the outstanding matter of the Pension Bulk Transfer. He said AON has been in contact to provide an updated report. He reported that the ARC members had discussed the pension bulk transfer and voiced concerns over it becoming an accounting/audit issue 4 years since staff transferred to the VSS. He said he would meet with NIAO next week to discuss this issue further.

***Internal Audit Report:***

Mr R Campbell reported that 10 out of the 12 recommendations raised in the Internal Audit Report had been fully addressed. The two outstanding issues were in relation to the 2 year review of the development programmes (not due for review until 2017) and the IT continuity testing. He added that the IT continuity testing would be carried out when the new IT system is in place.

He added that members of the Audit and Risk Committee also received updates on:

* Register of Audit (Internal & External) Recommendations
* ASM (Internal Audit) Contract Extension
* AFMD Guidance
* Direct Awards

*Mr G Deane left the room at 2.30pm.*

Mr P Osborne suggested that the report on the Audit and Risk Committee be included in the Board papers for information.

A brief discussion ensued in relation to the training for Audit Committee members and the requirement that a member of the Audit and Risk Committee have recent financial experience. Ms J Irwin said the Department had come back to say it was up to CRC to decide if the evidence produced was sufficient. She added that this matter would be taken forward in the recruitment of the new Board.

*Mr G Deane returned to the room at 2.50pm.*

*The Rev Dr N Hamilton left the meeting at 2.50pm.*

**2766/16 FUNDING:**

[Papers CRC/183/09/16/**14/15/16** refers]

Mr P Jordan, Director of Funding and Development, provided an update on the current status of the CRCD, Core, Pathfinder, Media, Publications and North Belfast Funding Schemes.

*Mr R Campbell left the meeting at 3.15pm*.

Mr P Jordan said the Information Session on Core Funding had gone well and that the feedback received was positive.

A discussion ensued in relation to the duration of the funding for Core funded groups with members suggesting moving towards long term funding which they felt would free up staff time to carry out development work instead of spending time looking at funding applications.

***Pathfinder Proposal:***

Mr P Jordan provided members with some background information in relation to North Belfast Interface Network, who until March this year had received Core funding. He explained when they were applying for a continuation to their core funding they had submitted an incomplete application form and therefore their application could not be assessed. He said the group were now applying for a Pathfinder grant. He proposed committing £24,000 to the group for a period of 6 months – October 2016-March 2017.

The Board agreed to fund the North Belfast Interface Network £24,000 for the 6 month period (October 2016 – March 2017).

***Grants Authorisation Levels:***

Mr P Jordan sought advice from the Board in relation to CRCD funding decisions. Members decided that the Chair should be involved in the decisions with another member of the Board chosen from a small pool of members.

*Mr G Deane declared a conflict of interest in relation to Core funding and left the room at 3.45pm.*

In relation to the decisions for core funding, all Board members will be involved in the decision making process (bar any member that has a conflict of interest).

Members discussed the possibility of changing the opening and closing dates of the core funded scheme. It was decided that it was too late to do this for the 2017/18 year but it could be looked at for the following year.

Members were concerned that if the groups were not going to receive funding, that they would need adequate time to issue protective redundancy notices to their staff. Members recommended telling the groups to put a notice out to their staff to say there is no guarantee of funding.

Members asked that the core funding decision meeting in February be brought forward a few weeks. Mr P Jordan said he would look into this and see if it was possible.

***Core Funding Scheme 2017/18***:

Mr P Jordan said a number of recommendations had been made by the Core Funding Review Panel in June. He presented a paper to the Board which addressed these recommendations. Mr P Jordan asked members for their approval of the new application form, guidance notes and scoring matrix.

Members discussed the possibility of adding a key to the scoring matrix, the option of having a 3 or 4 scoring mechanism, changing some of the wording on the scoring matrix and changing the timeframe.

Members approved the recommendations made by the panel, the new application form, guidance notes and scoring matrix in ***principle*** as at this stage the meeting was no longer quorate.

The Chair made a suggestion to reduce the number of members present to make the meeting quorate. He said currently it was too high for the number of members on the Board. He suggested discussing this at the Annual General Meeting in November.

*Mr G Deane returned to the room at 4.30pm.*

**2767/16 POLICY PAPERS:**

* Galvanising the Peace

[Paper CRC/183/09/16/**17** refers]

Ms D McGlade, Policy Director, provided members with some background information on the Galvanising the Peace Report. She said the report was a culmination of discussions with community groups and individuals in the sector. Ms D McGlade said CRC has no longer any involvement with Galvanising the Peace as TEO considers this work to be addressed through the Community Engagement Forum. Ms D McGlade added that the report was for noting only.

* Women and Peacebuilding

[Paper CRC/183/09/16/**18** refers]

Ms D McGlade provided some background information on this report for members. She said the paper focuses on outstanding issues in relation to women in community relations. She asked members to agree to the publication of the report and also to agree to a launch event with key stakeholders.

Members suggested working in partnership with the core funded women’s groups. Mr G Dean, said Holywell Trust could offer some help if it was needed. Ms D McGlade will discuss this further with Mr G Deane.

Members suggested amending the report as some relevant information on UN 1325 Resolution had not been included.

The report was agreed subject to the suggested amendments.

* Reconciliation

The Chair provided a verbal update on reconciliation. He said he wanted to talk to some people from the sector and would feedback to members at the next Board meeting.

* T:BUC Engagement Forum – Advice Paper

[Paper CRC/183/09/16/**19** refers]

Ms D McGlade said this paper was based on issues which arose from the March and June Community Engagement Forum meetings. She added that the report had gone to Ministers in draft form.

Members were concerned about the format of the paper, in particular the absence of an executive summary. Ms J Irwin advised that it was written in the format that the Executive Office had stipulated but said that she agreed that the format should be changed. Ms D McGlade is to change the format of the paper before sending the final version to TEO.

*Ms S McClelland left the meeting at 5.15pm.*

Members suggested developing a template so that all of the reports would have the same format.

**2768/16 CEO’S REPORT:**

[Paper CRC/183/09/16/**20** refers]

The CEO presented her report to the Board, highlighting the following:

* The CEO thanked all those involved in CR/CA Week, adding that a wash up meeting was planned with JComms, Dept of Communities, TEO and CRC.
* The CEO is currently doing a round of meetings with the core funded groups discussing issues around OBA, Programme for Government and Finance.

**2769/16 SECTOR REPORTS:**

These papers were noted for member’s information / updates on the main areas of programme work.

* Funding & Development Programme

[Paper CRC/183/09/16/**21** refers]

* Policy Programme

[Paper CRC/183/09/16/**22** refers]

**2770/16 AOB:**

None

**2771/16  PROPOSED DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS:**

The Chair thanked Board members for attending the meeting.

Details of Mr J Law’s funeral will be forwarded to members when they are known.

Friday 11th November 2016 @ 10.00am – Equality House

Thursday 22nd December 2016 @ 1.00pm – Equality House