

Confirmed
Extraordinary General Meeting
MINUTES OF THE ONE HUNDRED & NINETY SEVENTH MEETING OF THE
COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL BOARD HELD ON WEDNESDAY 25TH APRIL AT
1PM IN EQUALITY HOUSE

2984/18 **Present:** Mr Peter Osborne (Chair), Ms Libby Keys (Board Member), Ms Kasia Garbal (Board Member), Mr Don MacKay (Board Member), Very Reverend Norman Hamilton (Board Member), Ms Delia Close (Board Member), Mr Noel McKenna (Board Member).

2985/18 **In Attendance:** Ms Jacqueline Irwin (CEO), Mr Gerard McKeown (Director of Finance and Personnel), Mr Paul Jordan (Director of Funding and Development), Ms Gemma Attwood (Policy Officer).

2986/18 **Apologies:** Mr Rory Campbell (Board Member), Ms Sheila McClelland (Board Member).

2987/18 **Observers:** Mr Jamie Warnock (TEO)

2988/18 **Welcome and Introduction**

The Chair thanked Board Members for attending the Extraordinary General Meeting

2989/18 **Standards Checks**

(a) *Members should declare any conflict of interests in any discussions where decisions were required.*

(b) *Members need to register any offers of gifts or hospitality since the last Council meeting.*

Nothing to declare

2990/18 **Minutes** CRC/197/04/18/01

Page 8: The Board agreed that the final line before the action on page 8 should read 'Board Members discussed this issue and were not content to proceed'

Page 9: Date of next meeting should read '6th June 2018'

On completion of changes, Board are content to adopt the minutes.

2991/18 **Matters Arising**

i) Proxy voting

During the previous meeting a Board Member asked Mr G McKeown to review the CRC's rules on proxy voting. Mr G McKeown examined the rules and presented to the Board the procedures for Proxy voting:

- A member can appoint a proxy and either instruct them how to cast the absent Board Members vote, or the proxy can instruct themselves how to vote during a Board Meeting.
- These decision should be recorded in writing. The Board Member should write to their proxy, appointing them as a proxy, and, if applicable, instructing them how to vote on their behalf.
- The proxy has to be a current board member.
- Mr G McKeown instructed the Board that there is a formal template for proxy voting in the Articles of Association.
- Mr G McKeown stated that while Board Members can appoint a proxy, 5 Board Members would still need to be present at the meeting to be quorate for ordinary business.

Chair stated that while the position is now clear, he does not see the proxy vote as particularly useful.

Ms J Irwin stated that the proxy vote provides a use to any individual Board member who is unable to attend a meeting, at which a vote they felt strongly about was taking place.

ii) Media Grant

Ms J Irwin updated the Board on an issue raised during the previous meeting regarding a media grant recipient's request to receive payment before the completion of all necessary steps.

Following the Board's agreement not to proceed with the request, Ms J Irwin stated that the issue had been resolved, using normal procedures.

Mr G McKeown explained that arrangements were in place for procedures for fast tracking the claim to process the payment.

2992/18 Correspondence

i) Letter re: Pay Remit Delay CRC/197/04/18/02

Chair presented to the Board a letter he had sent, drafted by Mr G McKeown. This letter was addressed to Mr Mark Brown TEO regarding staff pay remit and pension delay. The response was received on Tues 24th April. The letter stated that TEO is trying to resolve the issue, and that there are plans to meet with the Department of Finance.

Mr J Warnock explained that for the 14/15 pay remit, DoF have received all documents requested.

The Chair queried whether 15/16, 16/17, and 17/18 pay remits would be resolved when the 14/15 is resolved.

Mr J Warnock explained that each year is a different process, and that once 14/15 had been resolved DoF would begin looking at the following years' pay remit. The Board asked, if these pay remits are all processed and accepted, what affect that would have on CRC accounts.

Mr G McKeown stated that CRC had made provision in the accounts totalling £84,000 which appears on the balance sheets. Therefore, this will not have an effect on budget for the year. when CRC gets approval, this money will be drawn down from TEO.

ACTION: Revisit Pay Remit at next Board Meeting.

A Board Member asked whether the payment to staff members will include interest.

ACTION: Mr G McKeown to enquire whether the payment would include interest.

ii) **Letter re: budget**

CRC/197/04/18/03

Mr G McKeown stated that the budget would be discussed later in the meeting, and the letter was therefore noted.

2993/18

Chair's Business

The Chair informed Board Members of the events he had attended since the previous Board Meeting:

- Peace Monitoring Advisory Group Meeting
- Attended the Interviews for the recruitment of Director of Community Engagement
- British Irish Secretariat St Patrick's Day event
- Trade Union meeting re: staff morale
- Suffolk and Lenadon Interface Group award ceremony – handed out award
- Spoke at Community Relations in Schools conference
- Spoke at TASCIT workshop
- David Steven's Memorial Lecture – of which Johnston McMaster gave lecture, and Eileen Weir was presented with this year's Community Relations Exceptional Achievement Award.
- Met DUP representatives regarding funding in East Belfast.
- Launch of 3 Faiths Forum
- Spoke at conference in Kosovo via skype.

Upcoming meetings and events:

- Meeting TASCIT with Paul Jordan Thurs 26th April
- Attending All Ireland Dialogue on Brexit
- Meeting Green Party MLA & BCDA
- TBUC Forum 22nd May

A Board Member asked how peace is measured by the Peace Monitoring Advisory Committee.

Ms J Irwin explained the 4 areas 4 areas used as indicators in the Peace Monitoring Report:

1. Sense of Security
2. Equality
3. Political process
4. Social cohesion

She also advised that the researchers use open sources of data, including Government data and statistics, and 3rd party research.

She highlighted that this research is independent of CRC which is there to support the delivery of the process. She stated that the report receives good feedback from local and international audiences. The original idea behind the research was to bring a connection between what people believe to be happening and what was actually happening in terms of a wide range of issues relating to stability and peace.

2994/18 **Proposal to Amend Articles of Association** CRC/197/04/18/04

The Chair introduced the proposed amendment which has been circulated twenty one days prior to the Extraordinary General Meeting.

Mr N McKenna proposed the following amendment to the CRC Articles of Association:

“17. No business shall be transacted at any meeting unless a quorum is present. Five persons entitled to vote shall be a quorum”

Ms L Keys seconded the proposal.

All Board members present voted in favour, with no abstentions.

Proposal was passed.

2995/18 **CEO Report** CRC/197/04/18/05

Ms J Irwin presented an update to the Board and made particular reference to the following:

Operational Plan and Budget

- Operational Plan – Subject to Board approval of the draft budget today, the Operational Plan would be updated and submitted to TEO
- She suggested that at the next Board meeting, it would be useful to have a discussion with Members about where CRC should be prioritising and spending its grant funds.

ACTION: Board Meeting 6th June – Board will discuss how CRC should be prioritising and spending its grant funding (12:30 talk from GRO, 1-2pm Funding, 2-4pm Ordinary business)

- It was agreed that the next Board Meeting will take place in Lisburn and Castlereagh Council area – where the Good Relations Officer will present an overview of Good Relations work in the area.
- TEO
- The CEO on the Urban Villages Grant Award panel and a panel to review plans for Tackling Paramilitarism
 - She advised that Paul Jordan sits on TEO's Ethnic Minority Fund panel and central Good Relations Fund
 - She highlighted a number of other meetings with TEO.

DfFA

- The CEO attended an event organised by Govt of Ireland to mark 20years of the Good Friday Agreement – 'A Further Shore' and the following other events:

Belfast City Council

- The Freedom of the City award to President Clinton and Senator George Mitchell
- The premier of 'Hear my Voice' documentary – The CEO recommended this film, if the Board get the chance.
- The CEO has taken up a seat on Belfast City Council Shared City Partnership and been asked to re-join the Belfast City Council Bonfire Strategic Interagency Group

CRC Advocacy strategy

- The CEO advised that 3 papers would be presented to the Board today: Housing, Education, and Children & Young People. Previously the Board had asked that CRC policy staff compile general policy position briefings on a number of issues for Board Members for easy reference.
- The CEO reminded members that the next TBUC Engagement Forum will take place on 22nd May on the theme of Collaborative Working.
- The Scoping Study on bonfires has not made further progress and remains with Belfast City Council for distribution to Solice.

Press and Publicity

- The CEO was Interviewed by South Korean TV Station MBC – as part of documentary on Northern Ireland Peace Process in the context of processes going on between North and South Korea.

Ms L Keys commented that it was great the CEO was interviewed, that they were given an idea of CRC work – the quiet work that has gone on in the background for years.

Other meetings

- The CEO has presented to number of international visitors:
 - Delegation from Columbia
 - Swedish students visit
 - Met with Chief Human Rights Commissioner of Turks and Caicos, she was very interested in the work of CRC and its contribution to building good local relationships.

The CEO attended the Peace Monitoring Advisory Group Meeting 9th March. The authors have yet to produce the draft text for review by members of the Advisory Group.

The CEO also attended the following meetings:

- Meeting of the Decade Roundtable
- NI Federation of Housing Association's Advisory Group meeting
- Spoke at conference on Peace Building 20yrs on from Good Friday Agreement at Trinity College Dublin.
- Community Foundation NI Conference
- NI Strategic Migrant Forum meeting

-The CEO advised that 2nd interviews for Director of Community Engagement had taken place and CRC are now in a position to make an appointment – subject to references.

- In relation to Staff Development and moral raising, she updated members that a team building event took place on 10th April:

- a. Turas East Belfast Mission – tour of East Belfast in context of Irish language.
- b. Falls Community Association – meeting to discuss their work.

She advised member that the, Chair, Director of Finance, HR Manager, and herself met with Unite the Union.

Chair thanked Ms J Irwin for her work and presenting this report.

2995/18

Funding and Development

i) **Core Funding Review**

CRC/197/04/18/06

Ms D Close exited the meeting due to Core Funding Review discussion

Mr P Jordan informed Board Members that the Core Funding Review Panel met on the 13th April to consider the appeals relating to the 2018/2018 Core Funding

Programme. The Review Panel consisted of 2 CRC Board Members and an independent Chairperson.

5 Reviews were heard, 4 dismissed and the Panel have referred the upheld review to the Board for further consideration.

Mr P Jordan stated that under CRC procedures a review panel can to base their Review on whether the Board's original decision was:

- A decision no reasonable person would have made on the information provide, and/or
- Substantial or material breach of NICRC's policies or procedures.

Mr P Jordan informed the Board that An Gaeláras' review request was upheld by the review panel. He read the following decision of the Review panel: "The Panel notes the basis of the appeal as being that the Board's decision was unreasonable. The Panel considered the reduction in the score for VFM, and concluded there was evidence of a reason for the reduction. The Panel then noted the reduction of the methodology score by four points. The Panel considered whether there was evidence for the amount of reduction, including viewing the draft minutes of the Board meeting on the 21st Feb. The Panel felt there was no evidence for the amount of the reduction in the scores. On this basis the panel was unable to determine that the amount of the reduction was reasoned, and therefore the panel upheld the appeal. N.B by "amount" of reduction the Panel means it has no evidence as to why the Board disagreed with the original scores and what was the basis for calculating the reduction as four points".

Mr P Jordan stated that the Board are being asked to consider their original decision.

There are two options available to the Board

- To uphold score and explain 4 point reduction
- Board agree new score

Mr P Jordan explained that if the organisation's scores remained as the Board originally proposed, CRC would still be in a position to fund them.

The Chair asked Mr P Jordan to consult the Terms of Reference for clarity on decision of the Review Panel and what the next process would be.

Mr P Jordan consulted the Terms of Reference and stated that 'The Review Panel would make a recommendation to uphold or reject the review. If they recommend a decision to go back to the Board, the Board will discuss and make a decision, and this will be forwarded to the review panel'.

The Chair clarified that the decision of the Review Panel was therefore to make a recommendation that the Board look again at this decision.

The Board agreed to increase the score originally agreed by the Board, by 2 points, bringing their total up to 74.

They stated that that they could not reinstate the 4 marks because there was still concern around:

2. Their proposal to engage with the 'Old Scots Presbyterian Church'
3. There may be overlap on the work undertaken using CRC Core funding and under their Heritage Lottery Funding and Peace IV funding.

The Board asked that these issues are answered as a condition of grant.

ACTION: CRC funding staff to look again at process of Board Core Funding decision and Review Panel – and revise Terms of Reference.

ii) **Funding Sector Report**

CRC/197/04/18/07

Mr P Jordan highlighted the following items from Funding Sector Report to the Board:

- Have been visiting North Belfast groups and preparing to issue contracts
- North Belfast Memorandum of Understanding – changes have been made. The strategic direction of the fund remains with TEO. Mr P Jordan meets with the Department to score the applications. CRC issue letters of offer, however, it remains a closed scheme.

The Funding Sector Report was noted by the Board.

2996/18

Budget 2018/2019

CRC/197/04/18/12

Mr G McKeown presented to the Board CRC's draft budget for 2018/19. The paper presented sets out the previous budget for 17/18, the percentage variance, and the projected spend.

Mr G McKeown made particular reference to:

- 3% cut to budget this year. Which is less than anticipated
- £2.3 million to grants.
- Mitigate cuts to grants so they only see 1.4% cut
- Putting more into grants this year than last
 - This was achieved due to £69,000 saving through staff costs i.e. VES
- CRC had an increase in operating cost expenditure
- Core funding receiving £1,267,869 - this will enable the funding of reserve applicants.

A member of the Board asked why 'contribution to overhead' is up 8%. Mr G McKeown explained that this was due to staff member's position being reclassified as DFAP, when they were previously classified as Comms.

Mr G McKeown summarised the budget, stating that for every £1.00 CRC receives, 87p goes to grants and programme expenditure, and the remaining 13p is spent on overheads.

Board approved CRC's 2018/19 budget.

2997/18

Report from Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

a) Verbal update from Mr D MacKay, in Chair's absence.

- Mr D MacKay informed Board Members that at the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meeting on the 12th April, it was agreed that the Risk Register should be altered to reduce the rating of 'Resources' from red to amber. This was due to the positive progress CRC have made on: VES; 18/19 Budget; and the closure of the transfer to the Victims and Survivors Service Pensions Scheme.
- Audit of IT controls is complete and found to be satisfactory
- NIAO presented their Audit Strategy. They stated that on the 'no better, no worse' guidance, they have not qualified this issue in the past and do not foresee doing so this time.
- General Data Protection Regulations – on track. Ms D Close highlighted that Chair of ARAC congratulated CRC for their preparation on GDPR.

b) Minutes of Audit and Risk Assurance Committee of 22nd Feb 2018

CRC/197/04/18/16

The Minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee 22nd Feb 2018 were noted.

2998/18

Community Engagement

a) Policy Papers

CRC/197/04/18/08

Ms G Attwood reminded Board Members that they had previously asked for a policy papers to be produced, setting out CRC's position on a number of key issues.

Ms G Attwood presented Board Members with 3 papers

- Housing
- Education
- Children and Young People

She explained that these reports would have the following structure:

- Overview – data on stats/reports
- Policy Context
- CRC Policy Comment – statements CRC might have made publically/at events/ evidence sessions
- CRC Support – What we fund relating to the theme

Board expressed their approval of the format. Chair suggested that CRC could take a stronger line, be more ambitious on issues.

A discussion followed regarding how shared housing is done in Northern Ireland. Chair stated that CRC should be making strong statements on these issues. Bring in individuals from agencies and departments to speak about areas to help inform, and compile strong position.

Ms J Irwin reminded Members that CRC would need to present an opinion underpinned by evidence. She explained that most of CRC's policy work is already done in collaboration.

Ms G Attwood stated that housing cannot be looked at in a silo. Lots of different issues from community to educational provision can influence housing.

The Board welcomed the format of the policy papers, and asked for a section on 'Statement of Ambitions' to be added.

ACTION: Ms G Attwood to add 'Statement of Ambitions' to template for Position Papers.

The Board agreed that the next three Policy Papers should focus on:

- Flags
- Parading
- Interfaces

b) Sector Reports

i) Communications

CRC/197/04/18/09

The Communications sector report was noted by the Board.

ii) Policy CRC/197/04/18/10

The Policy sector report was noted by the Board

2999/18 Finances and General Purposes

i) Management Accounts 17/18 CRC/197/04/18/11

Mr G McKeown presented to the Board Members the 2017/2018 Management Accounts.

There is expected to be a £35,000 (1% underspend). This is well within the tolerance of 1.5%.

CRC were able to increase funding to grants by 2%. This was due to extra funding in June Monitoring Round and saving.

Mr G McKeown thanked Mr P Jordan and Ms T Wilson, who put in place new procedures for monitoring expenditure at the end of the year which seem to be operating well.

Ms G McKeown reiterated that these Management Accounts have not yet been subject to audit.

The Chair asked about the difference between 'adverse' and 'favourable' expenditure. Mr G McKeown explained that expenditure is categorised as 'favourable' if it goes directly to Community Relations Activities, such as grants. 'Adverse' expenditure is all expenditure which does not go to Community Relations activities, such as administrative costs.

ii) Pay Remit

Mr G McKeown reminded Board Members that CRC have prepared the pay remit paperwork, and submitted everything that DoF have requested.

Ms J Irwin stated that she had previously suggested to TEO about convening a meeting of all organisations awaiting pay remit decisions delayed by the DoF guidance on FD (DFP) 08/14 , however there was no movement on this.

Ms J Irwin stated that CRC was asked to provide a legal opinion on the 6%, which CRC has submitted. The TEO was also asked to provide their own legal opinion. The Department Solicitors Office has provided this to DoF, which she had been informed, mirrored the legal opinion which CRC had received.

iii) Fair Employment Monitoring Return. CRC/197/04/18/13

Mr G McKeown presented the latest Fair Employment Monitoring Return to the Board. CRC have advertised for three posts this year, making two appointments.

He drew attention to the over-representation of individuals who declare themselves as women from the Catholic Community, in recruitment applications.

ACTION: Mr G McKeown to follow up with ECNI to determine if CRC need to be taking action over the over-representation of Catholic Women in recruitment applications.

The Board noted the Annual Fair Employment Monitoring Return, which will then be forwarded on to ECNI.

iv) Health and Safety

Mr G McKeown informed the Board that there were no health and safety incidents to report during the months of March and April.

He stated that a health and safety audit had taken place, and CRC is not expecting any adverse comments.

v) Sickness Absence Report

CRC/197/04/18/14

Mr G McKeown presented the Sickness Absence Report to Board Members, highlighting that CRC no longer have any staff off on long term sick leave. One member of staff who has since returned to work, met with Occupational Health who concluded that CRC was required to take no action and the staff member was fit to return.

vi) Union Meeting Update

CRC/197/04/18/15

Mr G McKeown stated that at the previous Board meeting, members discussed correspondence from Unite the Union.

The CEO, Director of Finance and Personnel, and HR Manager met with a representative from the Union.

He presented a report on the issues the union raised at the meeting. The following options were considered:

-Labour Relations Agency – Mediation service. This is the Union’s suggested resolution.

-INSPIRE – Stress Audit. Staff already have access to free confidential counselling service

-Independent Consultant – An independent consultant could create a bespoke solution for CRC.

ACTION: DFAP to discuss the options with the union and come back to the Board with a recommendation

Ms K Garbal commented that it would be difficult for CRC to rectify any issues without the union providing specific examples/issues. However, she stated that a stress audit is common practice

Ms J Irwin stated that all staff members take part in Health and Safety training, and part of this is an anonymised stress audit.

The anonymous results of the stress audit were presented in the last page of the paper to the Board.

Ms J Irwin stated that all staff had replied to the stress audit, however not all sections were mandatory, and the forms did not distinguish between personal stress and work related stress.

The Chair noted that there was no mention in the paper of the staff morale raising activities already underway.

ACTION: Mr G McKeown to add 'continue with staff morale raising activities' to options.

3000/18

AOB

Nothing raised

3001/18

Date of Next Meeting

6th June – 12:30 – Lisburn and Castlereagh Council