

MINUTES

Committee: *Council*

Date: *Friday 28th June 2019*

Venue: *The Pavilion, Stormont*

Present: *Ms. Heather Cousins– Chair
Mr. Bertie Ellison – Vice Chair
Mr. Michael Carson – Treasurer
Mrs. Lynda Sloan - Elected
Mr. David Reilly – Social Club Rep
Mr. Colin McWhirter – Elected
Mr. Gavin McCann – Regional Rep
Ms. Geraldine Heaney – Regional Rep
Mr. Brian Murphy – Elected
Mrs. Karen McConnell – Regional Rep
Mr. Brian Vincent – Regional Rep
Mr. Val Russell – Elected
Mrs. Kitty Brown - Regional Rep
Mr. Chris Heatley – Pavilion based Sports Club Rep
Mr. Tom Kennedy – Elected
Ms. Caron Alexander-Elected*

In Attendance: *Mr. Gerry Kelly – CEO
Mr. Kieran McGarrigle – Director of Corporate & Customer Services*

Apologies: *Mrs. Siobhan Smyth - Regional Rep*

1.0 Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 1st March 2019 were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

Ms. Cousins extended a warm welcome to new Council members Caron Alexander and Tom Kennedy who were elected to Council in March 2019.

2.0 Matters Arising

The membership meeting between the membership team and Mr Russell took place in May 2019. A further meeting has been scheduled for September 2019.

All other actions set out in the minutes of the previous meeting had been completed.

3.0 Executive Report

Mr. Kelly gave a summary of the performance of the Association for the period and highlighted a number of points in the report which are set out below.

3.1 Business Plan 2019

By way of background, and for the benefit of new Council members, Mr Kelly explained that the Executive Report to Council is designed to reflect the progress against the business priorities as set out in the 2019 Business Plan.

3.2 Capital Development

A funding application was submitted to Sport NI on 24th May 2019 for funding to support the proposed new multi-sports facility at the Pavilion Complex.

The application includes separate sports development plans for six sports to be hosted at the Pavilion Complex.

Mr Kelly indicated that he is reasonably positive about the success of the 670+ page application which is being assessed by Sport NI. The outcome of the application will be known sometime August 2019.

If we are successful, the next stage of the process will require the preparation of a business plan including our proposals on match funding to support the project.

3.3 NICS Accommodation

Mr Kelly reported on the NICS Accommodation Review and by way of background explained that the purpose of NICSSA's involvement with the review and the engagement with SIB is to ensure that wellness space is incorporated into the new NICS accommodation requirements.

He confirmed that he was working with DAERA to provide wellness space in Ballykelly House for staff and NICSSA members.

In addition, and as part of working relationship with the Stormont Estate, he reported that the Association was working closely with DOF in providing a cafe service at the new children's play park within the Stormont Estate.

3.4 Membership Events

A number of very successful events were delivered during the period including a ski trip to Andorra involving 22 members and the Easter Extravaganza Family Event which was a huge success with over 600 people in attendance.

A family event will be held at Jungle NI, Moneymore in August with plans to provide transport from different regions to make the event accessible to all members who might wish to attend.

3.5 The Pavilion

Each of the business areas at the Complex have performed very well during the period covered by this report with bar, catering and conferencing revenues all up on the same period in 2018. The delivery of the catering facilities at the children's play is proving to be very successful with revenue exceeding initial business case expectations.

3.6 Membership Benefits

New membership benefits such as the discounted Omniplex Cinema tickets are proving very popular with members. The membership team are working at ways to further develop the benefits offering to members.

3.7 Health and Wellbeing

Demand from clients for the delivery of health and wellbeing services and activities continues to grow apace with increased demand for exhibitions, health talks and roadshows. This includes the delivery of services outside of the NICS to organisations such as Viridian, AIB and Belfast City Airport to name but a few.

3.8 Activ

Activ continues to show a modest growth with additional morning fitness classes proving to be popular with members.

3.9 Other Events

The Pavilion Complex played host to a number of high profile cricket fixtures including Ireland v Afghanistan in June and we will be hosting Ireland v Zimbabwe at the beginning of July for three one day fixtures. We also hosted the pipe band championships in May 2019.

3.10 Training and Development

A training needs analysis has been carried out across all staff within the organisation to determine their skills, strengths and skills gaps. As a consequence we have delivered specific training to address the gaps that were identified through the exercise.

3.11 Marketing and Communications

The Marketing and Communications Plan is currently being rolled out with a number of key priorities taking centre stage-most notably the development of a new website, extended use of social media platforms and review of the organisation's brand.

3.12 Organisational Efficiency

Cost savings continue to be made on energy use- evidenced by £6K saved on lighting as a consequence of installing LED lighting throughout the Pavilion Complex in January 2019. We have also managed to retain our current insurance premium for the third year as a result of a very favourable claims position.

3.13 Questions and Comments on the Executive Report

Mr. Ellison expressed his appreciation to NICSSA staff for all of their efforts and achievements in delivering on the Association's priorities during the period.

Mr. Murphy commented that the organisation should take stock of its current position given that it now provides its services to a much broader customer base particularly in the context of how we communicate with internal and external stakeholders.

Action: Mr. Kelly to arrange to meet with the Executive Board regarding internal and external Communications.

Mrs. Brown requested that the meeting between the Regional Reps and the Membership Team take place before the next Council meeting in September 2019.

Mr. Murphy requested that he is present at the meeting with the Regional Reps and Membership staff.

Action: Membership Team to arrange to meet with regional reps before September 2019 Council Meeting.

Mr. Carson asked if the Association are actively trying to recruit younger members of the NICS. Mr. Kelly explained that we currently attend regular induction days in building such as the Plaza in Belfast and have been successful in recruiting new younger members who work for the NICS. We also have regular roadshows across the country for the purpose of the recruitment of new members and retention of existing members.

4.0 Finance Report

Mr. Carson referred Council to the Treasurers Report and Profit and Loss account which were circulated to all Council Members.

He explained that overall income is up on the same period in 2018. Subscriptions are up as membership has increased marginally during the period. PlayBall income is also up on the same period last year due to an increase in the sale of advertising space around the pitches and an increase in pitch bookings.

Expenditure is in line with expectations and estimates and reflects cost control measures for each area of expenditure.

The cost of staff salaries remain at the same level as last year despite a pay increase in 2019.

On the balance sheet the reserve account is building up again following a fall last year. This is important as the account provides a cash reserve safety net for the organisation.

On loan liabilities, Mr. Carson explained that the First Trust loan £1.2M was paid off in August 2018. The current Bank of Ireland loan which was £1M now has a balance of just over £300K.

On the interest free Carbon Trust loan to facilitate the installation of LED lighting, there is a £26K balance which together with 2 small loans for Gym equipment and the refurbishment of the Cricket Ireland Office will finish within the next 12-18 months effectively freeing up £30k per year.

The meticulous management of our repayments has created a very close relationship with the Bank of Ireland and placed us in a very sound position for future borrowing.

All of the accounts and financial records are regularly audited by Mr. Carson.

4.1 Questions and Comments on the Treasurers Report

Mr. Heatley asked for clarification on where rental revenue showed on the Income. Mr. Kelly replied under Facilities Charges including Sports Hire subhead. Mr. Heatley also asked where does utility charges show in Expenditure. Mr. Kelly replied under the Pavilion Complex subhead. Finally Mr. Heatley asked if the cash reserve is part of the overall Current Assets figure. Mr. Carson confirmed that it is part of the current assets total.

Responding to a point on the likely return on investment from capital development, Mr. Kelly explained that capital development brings in an additional revenue that facilitates the repayment of borrowing and goes some way to subsidise other business areas within the organisation. The organisation is completely self-sufficient with all revenue that is generated from business activities used to contribute to the delivery of services and activities to members. The investment in capital development also facilitates organisational growth and provides a platform for the long term sustainability of the organisation.

Mr. Ellison asked if Mr. Carson had an idea of the likely borrowing requirement to take forward capital development plans. Mr. Carson explained that in the current position that the Association could service a £2.2-£2.5 million loan. He confirmed that this could be topped up from additional funding from third party users of the new facility. Mr. Carson added that the amount of borrowing will also be influenced by the interest rate offered by the bank on the borrowing. Mr. Kelly suggested that other funding options may exist such as the Financial Transactions Fund.

Mr. Ellison commented that the provision of new changing facilities at the complex are the responsibility of DOF. Mr. Kelly confirmed that the department have surveyed the changing area for the purpose of completing some structural building work on the changing facilities. This work has been put on hold until further detail can be provided through the business plan as to the exact requirements.

Mr. Carson added one final point to his report stating that the issue of accrued leave compensation which is an issue within public sector at the moment does not apply to the Association.

5.0 HR Issues

Mr. Kelly informed Council that staff recruitment to fill vacant posts was an issue given the small pool of people within NI seeking employment. Ms. Cousins asked if consideration had been given to using the apprenticeship scheme. Mr. Kelly agreed to explore the scheme in more detail.

Action: Mr. Kelly to investigate further opportunities within the apprenticeship scheme.

Mr. Kelly also informed Council that as part of business plan we will be looking at the staffing structure within the organisation with a view ensuring that it is fit for purpose now and for the future.

Mr. Carson added that there is a possibility that Sport NI will provide funding for a new staff member for 3 years as part of the capital development programme.

6.0 Strategic Issues

Mr. Kelly reported on the meeting with DoF and in particular the issues that were discussed, including access and egress arrangements at the Pavilion Complex.

The issue has been ongoing with the department for almost 4 years and continues to be unresolved with the sticking point being around boundaries and responsibilities.

The license agreement between NICSSA and DOF for the occupation of the Pavilion Complex was also discussed and in particular the review of the licence. Part of the terms of Sport NI funding includes a requirement for a minimum of a 21 year licence. Currently we are on the limit of that with only 21 years remaining on the existing licence. A number of meetings have taken place between Ms. Cousins, Mr. Ellison and Mr. Kelly and DOF representatives Paul Wickens initially and then with NICSHR Jill Minne and Michael Cooke to discuss a range of issues around the relationship with the Department. The conclusion of those meetings was an agreement to review the relationship between both parties at a more strategic level which will take into account the wider relationship with the NICS and property issues including the licence. Mr. Kelly will progress the issues with Michael Cooke who agreed to establish a project group to review the relationship between the Department and NICSSA.

6.1 Questions and Comments on the Strategic Issues

Mr. Reilly asked if there was any progress on the issue of access and egress arrangements. Mr. Kelly replied that discussions with DOF are positive and he expressed some optimism that the issue could be resolved. He confirmed that the Association is helping the estate with car parking for users of the Children's Play Park.

7.0 AOB

Mrs. Alexander suggested that she may be able to assist with membership processes by simplifying the administration of membership particularly the completion and submission of membership forms online. She would like to look further into processing new memberships and will follow this up.

Action: Ms. Alexander will follow up with the Membership Team on a possible IT solution for processing membership applications online.

8.0 Date of next meeting

The next Council meeting will be on Friday 27th September 2019.

Action Required	Para no	Responsibility	Timescale
1. Mr. Kelly to arrange to meet with the Executive Board regarding internal and external Communications.	3.13	Mr Murphy and Mr Kelly	Before September Council meeting 2019
2. Membership Team to arrange to meet with regional reps before September 2019 Council Meeting	3.13	Membership Team	Before September Council meeting 2019
3. Mr Kelly to investigate further opportunities within the apprenticeship scheme.	5.0	Mr Kelly	Before September Council meeting 2019
4. Ms. Alexander will follow up with the Membership Team on a possible IT solution for processing membership applications online.	7.0	Ms Alexander	Before September Council meeting 2019