

**MINUTES OF THE EIGHTIETH MEETING OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
HELD ON 21 JUNE 2010 AT 10.30 A.M. IN THE CASSINI ROOM, ARMAGH
PLANETARIUM**

Present: His Grace, the Most Reverend A.E.T. Harper, (Chairman),
Professor R. Oudmaijer, Professor A. Hibbert, Mr S. Shields,
Professor P. Dufton, Mr A. Peoples, Mrs P. Wilson, Mr E.
Donnelly and Professor M. Merrifield (by telephone link)

Apologies: Dr F. Byrne, Professor T. Ray and Archdeacon R. Hoey

In attendance: Professor M. Bailey, Dr T. Mason and Mr L. Young

Members of the Committee confirmed that there were no conflicts of interest arising from the matters to be discussed at the meeting.

1. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

- 1.1. The Chairman congratulated Professor Oudmaijer on his promotion to a full Professorship at the University of Leeds.

2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12 FEBRUARY 2010

- 2.1. The minutes of the meeting were approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record of the meeting.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Mr Young referred to the following matters;

- 3.1. Minute 2.1 - The draft Observatory and Planetarium Strategic Plans are due to be completed by September 2010.
- 3.2. Minute 2.3 - The arrangements for the Observatory and Planetarium to join the Northern Bank pool are progressing.
- 3.3. Minute 2.4 - Legal advice has been obtained on the implications for the organization of the recent NICS Equal Pay agreement.

4. DIRECTORS' INTERIM REPORTS AND RISK REGISTERS

Professor Bailey referred to the following matters:

- 4.1. Details of the Observatory's Key Performance Indicators (KPI) and trends in various performance indicators for past years are detailed in the Report. The year 2009/2010 was a very successful year for external grant income. All KPIs for 2010/2011 should be achieved with the possible exception of refereed publications, which have been lower than the peak in the last two years.
- 4.2. DCAL funding for the new Library, Instruments and Historic Archives building has been deferred due to constraints on capital spending.
The grounds work for the Variable Star Telescope project has been largely completed. It is anticipated that the remaining works and commissioning of the telescope will be completed by autumn 2010.
- 4.3. The draft budget for 2010/2011 is included in the Report. Projected DCAL income for the year is £1,027k core Resource funding (uplifted from previous years), £25k

MINUTES
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
21 June 2010
Page 2

- core Capital funding and a proportion (£201k) of the organization's joint Non-Cash funding of £450k. The 2010/2011 Business Plan has been approved by the DCAL.
- 4.4. Three requests have been made to the June 2010 monitoring round. These are to provide additional resources for (a) repairs to the main pathways in the Grounds and Astropark, (b) an upgrade in the data storage and backup capacity, and (c) the costs of the implementation of the NICS Equal Pay agreement.
 - 4.5. The former Leverhulme Professor, John Landstreet, has been appointed Visiting Astronomer with effect from 19 March 2010.
 - 4.6. Mark Bailey and Miruna Popescu have been individually awarded a "Certificate of Appreciation" for their contribution to the Universe Awareness Programme.
 - 4.7. Included in the Report are images of the 22 November 2009 fireball recorded by the Observatory's Polar Bear Survey Telescope and of the unique minor planet 2007 UR2 obtained using the Faulkes Telescope North. Gavin Ramsay's research group obtained further telescope time for the Rapid Temporal Survey and to monitor AMCVn systems and also obtained time on the NASA "Swift" satellite to monitor how UV and X-ray fluxes vary over the course of an outburst of the KL Dra system. Tobias Hinse and John Southworth (University of Keele) have obtained 27 nights on the telescope at Vainu Bappu Observatory in India to carry out photometric follow-up of transiting extrasolar planets.
 - 4.8. Details of the conferences, workshops and meetings attended by staff are in the Report.
 - 4.9. The STFC has awarded the Observatory a quota of one STFC-funded studentship for students beginning in 2010/2011 and a three-year visitors' grant at a level of £15k.
 - 4.10. Miruna Popescu has developed, together with the Armagh Rhymers Educational and Cultural Organization a new outreach programme called OASES ("Over us All the SEIfsame Sky"). Funding from the European Union's PEACE III Programme has been awarded for the programme and this will provide £15k to support the Observatory's costs. Miruna Popescu is to be congratulated on an excellent collaborative project
 - 4.11. The Observatory is a partner in a major EU-funded programme to promote UNAWE, which will extend International Year of Astronomy 2009 activities for a further three years. It is expected that the Observatory will receive approximately €200k of the total project funding (€1.9m) to support UNAWE activities in the UK.
 - 4.12. The Armagh Public Library Archivist, Thirza Mulder, has begun a new project, externally funded in collaboration with the Armagh Public Library, to improve the documentation and storage condition of the historic library, archives and astronomical museum collection material. Mrs Wilson noted that the Observatory had applied to the Pilgrim Trust and suggested it should consider applying for additional funds from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. The Observatory is very appreciative of the work of Carol Conlin and Dean Patrick Rooke from the Library on this project which is of great value to the Observatory.
 - 4.13. There are many strands to the Observatory's programme of Science in the Community including the supervision of school-age and undergraduate students, providing lifetime opportunities for an adult with complex needs and delivering a series of public lectures. Martin Hendry (University of Glasgow) delivered a talk "Did We Really Land on the Moon" on 13 May 2010 to a large audience in St. Patrick's Trian, Armagh. The fifth Armagh Heritage Day "From Earth to Sky- Reflecting on Armagh's Heritage Through Time", organised by the Armagh Visitor Education Committee was held on 19 May 2010. The speakers included Professor Jim Mallory (Queen's University Belfast), Dr Greer Ramsey (Armagh County Museum), and Professor Mark Bailey (Armagh Observatory).
 - 4.14. No funds were available for the Observatory to refurbish the sculpture "Turning Point", made by artist Brian Connolly, for installation in the Observatory Grounds. It is now intended that the sculpture will be brought to Armagh by the Armagh City and District Council, for probable installation in the Mall.

MINUTES
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
21 June 2010
Page 3

- 4.15. The Observatory's press releases and media citations continue at a very high level. These illustrate the Observatory's very high public profile on the UK and international stage.
- 4.16. Future scientific and other events at the Observatory include the 4th International MiMeS Workshop 26 – 30 July 2010, the Fireball Data Workshop, 15-16 September 2010, the 15th Annual Atomic Data and Analysis Structure Conference 3-6 October 2010 and the Robinson Lecture 18 November 2010.
- 4.17. Following a review of the Observatory's procedures for recruiting foreign nationals, the UK Border Agency informed the Observatory that they will maintain the organization's "A-rating". Aileen McKee is to be congratulated for the very significant amount of work she has done on these records and procedures.
- 4.18. The Observatory provided Child Protection training to staff and students to raise awareness of these issues. The Safeguarding Policy and Procedures have been audited and approved by a DCAL consultant and issued to staff and students.
- 4.19. There have been a large number of revisions to the current book of policies due to changes in legislation, new government guidance, reviews and audits.
- 4.20. The latest version of the Observatory's Risk Register was presented to the Audit and Risk Management Committee and is appended to the Report.
- 4.21. The Observatory Health and Safety Officer reports that there have been no reportable accidents since the last meeting of the Committee with only two minor incidents to report. Testing of the Observatory's Disaster Response Plan revealed a problem with the water pressure at the fire hydrant. This has been remedied.
- 4.22. One Freedom of Information request was received and replied to on the day of receipt.
- 4.23. There was one complaint from a member of the public attending one of the Observatory's public lectures about difficulty hearing the speaker. The complaint was answered by the Director.
- 4.24. The organization has been informed that its current designation as a single "Minor" body for Whole of Government Accounts would continue for 2009/2010.
- 4.25. The Observatory's VOIP telephone system was compromised during the early morning of 10 June 2010 and a total of 192 calls were made to a series of Bulgarian mobile telephone numbers costing the Observatory approximately £800. The Fraud Response Plan was implemented, the DCAL Governance Support Unit and the auditors were informed and additional controls were put in place on the day to close the loop-hole in the system.
- 4.26. The Observatory's draft 2010/2011 Business plan was formally accepted by the Department in April 2010 and the Annual Report for Calendar Year 2009 and Financial Year 2009/2010 was completed during May 2010. These reports are on the Observatory website.

During discussion of the Observatory's Interim Report Mr Peoples said that consideration should be given to seeking an audit of the procurement processes the Observatory is obliged to follow to establish whether best value is obtained. In addition the Observatory should complete the Strategic Plan as soon as possible as this will be very important in discussions with the Department going forward.

Mrs Wilson said that the Observatory should have a series of projects to put forward should surplus Government funds become available, particularly at the end of the financial year.

MINUTES
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
21 June 2010
Page 4

Mr Shields commended the Observatory on its participation in the OASES project funded under the Peace III programme. This programme provides a great opportunity for cross-community and inter-school activities and for working towards a shared space and future. Bringing people together in this manner promotes the values of the Observatory and Planetarium.

Professor Merrifield said that the Observatory had had an outstandingly good year, but that grant income available over the next few years will probably be reduced considerably. The Observatory needs to plan to mitigate the likely loss of income from this and other research council sources.

Professor Bailey presented the Observatory Risk Register and the Quarterly Assurance Statement which had been submitted to the Department. During the discussion of the Risk Register Mr Peoples said that all operating risks of significance and not just those relating to the DCAL's requirements should be included and actions to treat the risks should be audited periodically. It was also remarked that consideration should be given to re-ordering the identified risks.

Dr Mason referred to the following matters in his Report:

- 4.27. There is a growing risk of major breakdown due to the ageing projection equipment. Parts are increasingly hard to source and considerable reliance is now placed on the Director to remedy faults. This issue must be addressed in the coming year.
- 4.28. The 2010/2011 Planetarium Business Plan has been approved by the Department.
- 4.29. The Planetarium has similar problems to the Observatory over the procurement processes which have to be followed. The process is cumbersome, slow and costly. During discussion of this matter the Committee agreed that the Director should collate the facts surrounding this issue and bring the matter in the first instance to the Audit and Risk Management Committee.
- 4.30. The Key Performance Indicators for 2009/2010 and the latest figures to date are included in the Report. The Director will meet with the DCAL statistician to consider how the statistics on the website can be refined. This will enable us to better understand the areas in which advertising is most effective.
- 4.31. A new show for nursery age children "the Little Yellow Star" has been developed. This will run for 10 minutes at noon each day and will be free of charge. A further show "the Violent Universe" has been introduced.
- 4.32. Work continues to develop new workshops for Key Stage 3 and 4 children.
- 4.33. Discussions have been held with a potential supplier of software which will show the night sky on i-phones and i-pads.
- 4.34. The Planetarium Risk Register is included in the Report. The risk associated with the ageing projection equipment will be increased.
- 4.35. The three new Education Support Officers (ESO) are performing well. In response to a continuing demand for outreach visits an additional ESO is being trained in this work.
- 4.36. As President of the International Planetarium Society (IPS) the Director will attend an IPS conference in the last week of June 2010 hosted by the Planetarium Science Centre in Alexandria, Egypt. The conference will attract 350 delegates from all over the world.
- 4.37. Discussions are in hand with the European Space Agency to renew their displays in the Planetarium's exhibition area.
- 4.38. Details of the advertising spend to date are included in the Report.
- 4.39. There are no Health and Safety issues to report.

During discussion of the Planetarium Report Mr Peoples said that his comments on the Observatory Risk Register applied equally to the Planetarium. The Committee agreed that the

MINUTES
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
21 June 2010
Page 5

issue of the ageing projection equipment and the increasing incidence of breakdown could cause serious damage to the Planetarium's reputation. Mr Peoples asked that this matter be considered by the Audit and Risk Management Committee.

5. REPORT OF THE ACTING CHAIR OF THE AUDIT AND RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (ARMC)

Professor Hibbert referred to the following matters:

- 5.1. The papers submitted to the last meeting of the ARMC on 8 June 2010 are included in the Committee papers.
- 5.2. A replacement is needed on the ARMC for Mrs Hogg whose term of office as a DCAL representative ended on 31 March 2010. Consideration should also be given to increasing the membership of the ARMC to reduce the risk of failing to obtain a meeting quorum.
- 5.3. The Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) will give an unqualified opinion on the draft Annual Report and Accounts 2009/2010. Minor presentational changes requested by the DCAL and the NIAO have been implemented and DCAL Governance Support Unit will prepare a submission to the DCAL Permanent Secretary seeking formal approval of the Annual Report and Accounts.
- 5.4. The NIAO raised two Priority 1 matters, namely (i) the need to resolve the issue concerning whether the NICS Equal Pay agreement applies to Observatory and Planetarium staff on the same grade as those NICS staff covered by the agreement; and (ii) the need to resolve the issue concerning the payment of subsidised pension contributions for certain Planetarium staff. One of the NIAO representatives at the ARMC meeting said that no taxation liability will arise from the past practice of subsidising staff pension contributions.
- 5.5. A Business Case will be submitted to the DCAL on the Equal Pay issue and a response is awaited from the DCAL on the Planetarium's proposal to resolve the subsidised pension contributions issue.
- 5.6. The Directors have agreed to prepare their draft Strategic Plans by September 2010 as noted earlier.
- 5.7. The recommendations arising from the 2009/2010 Internal Audit were fully considered by the ARMC. The Internal Audit assurances for all areas examined were satisfactory with one substantial assurance for the Observatory's performance measurement system. The ARMC was satisfied with the assurances given and the management responses to the audit recommendations.

(Mr Peoples left the meeting at 1.05 pm.)

After further discussion of the ARMC report the Committee agreed that: (i) the Annual Report and Accounts 2009/2010 be adopted by the Committee subject to the incorporation of the minor amendments proposed by the DCAL and the NIAO and that the Directors be authorised to sign the accounts when DCAL permission is received to progress to that stage. The Annual report and Accounts will also be sent to the Board of Governors for their comments; and (ii) Mr Donnelly will be appointed to the ARMC. Mr Peoples had indicated his willingness to serve on the ARMC provided he was able to participate in meetings by electronic means such as video conferencing rather than having to attend. The Committee agreed to appoint Mr Peoples to the ARMC on this basis. This will increase the membership of the ARMC to five.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 6.1. The new performance appraisal system proposed for the Directors by the DCAL was discussed. The Committee agreed that the DCAL appraisal system and forms should

MINUTES
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
21 June 2010
Page 6

be used for 2010/2011, amended as appropriate to take account of the particular circumstances of the organization. The appraisals will continue to be carried out by members of the Management Committee/Board of Governors with the appropriate professional expertise to make judgements on the Directors' performance. Professor Hibbert and Professor Oudmaijer will continue to alternate in this role. The appraisal forms will be sent to the Chairman for his comments. The Committee noted that as the Directors are employed by the Governors of the Armagh Observatory and Planetarium the responsibility for the Directors' appraisals must remain with the organization.

- 6.2. The Committee agreed that Dr Byrne, Professor Oudmaijer and Mrs Wilson in addition to the Directors and the DCAL representative, would join the committee for the selection of the new Administrator and authorized the panel to progress the paperwork and schedule for this appointment, with the objective of having a replacement in post by 1 March 2011.
- 6.3. Professor Hibbert informed the Committee that the DCAL was currently advertising for new DCAL representatives on the Management Committee and Board of Governors.

7. DATE OF THE NEXT MEEETING

The next meeting will be on 18 November 2010 starting at 3.00 pm.

The meeting ended at 2.00 pm.

Signed as a true record of the Meeting

.....
His Grace, The Most Reverend A E T Harper OBE BA
Chairman of the Management Committee

Dated: 18 November 2010