

Wednesday, 13 June 2002

In the Chair: Professor P. Fottrell

Also present: Dr D. Dooley; Dr M. Fitzgerald; Dr P. Flanagan; Dr M. Lawler; Dr N. O'Brien; Professor A. Scott; Professor J. J. Strain; Professor P. Whittaker;

Apologies for absence: Professor E.P. Cunningham; Mr M. Dempsey; Mr D. Gleeson; Professor P. Hannon; Canon K. Kearon; Professor C. Kelleher; Dr T. McGleenan; Dr P. McKenna; Ms M. Mulvihill; Professor F. O'Gara; Professor R. O'Regan; Mr Asim Sheikh;

Also in attendance: Mr P. Dempsey

1. Minutes

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

2. Matters Arising

A decision on what form the members' declaration of interest should take was deferred until the next meeting at which Dr T. McGleenan would report.

The Council was informed that Dr Sandy Thomas, would address the July meeting of the Council on the work of the Nuffield Council for Bioethics (of which she is director) and best international practice. It was decided therefore to defer discussion of procedures for the Council and best international practice until then.

It was decided that a strategic plan and work programme be prepared so that the Council could seek additional funding from bodies such as Science Foundation Ireland and the Wellcome Trust.

It was decided that the Council should be launched officially in September and that the Tanaiste, Ms Mary Harney TD should be invited to officiate.

3. Correspondence

The following letters were circulated and discussed:

Mr Michael Griffith, Chief Executive of Fighting Blindness noting his disappointment that there was no representative from the Research Charities Group on the Council.

Mr P. Dempsey informed the Council that he had spoken and corresponded with Mr Griffith and reassured him that although his organisation did not have representation on the Council that they would have ample opportunity to have their input into the work of the Council. Dr M. Lawler added that he was on the

Medical and Scientific Advisory Board of Fighting Blindness and would inform Mr Griffith of his membership of the Council.

Mr John O' Reilly, Secretary of the Pro-Life Campaign requesting information about the Council's membership and qualifications, terms of reference, budget and the role of the Academy.

The Council agreed that Mr P. Dempsey should reply to Mr O' Reilly's letter as soon as he had gathered together all the information requested.

Dr P.J.O'Mahoney of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland suggesting that the Council establish a working group to consider the issue of GM Foods.

The Council agreed to deal with this under items 4 & 5.

4. Briefing papers

The Council discussed the briefing papers submitted by Professor E. P. Cunningham, Dr Dolores Dooley, Dr Margaret Fitzgerald, Professor C. Kelleher; Dr Mark Lawler, Dr P.J. O'Mahoney and Mr Asim Sheikh at length.

5. Programme of Work

Dr P. Flanagan agreed to prepare a note for the next meeting as to how best the Council can communicate with the public. He also agreed to consult with the EPA re: environmental issues that might come under the remit of the Council.

Dr M. Lawler agreed to formulate terms of reference for a working group on Biological Collections in conjunction with Mr A. Sheikh and the HRB.

Dr D. Dooley agreed to prepare a position paper on Genetic Technologies for the September meeting. She will liase with Professor E.P.Cunningham, Dr P. McKenna and Dr T. McGleenan.

Professor P. Whittaker agreed to formulate terms of reference for a working group on GM foods. He will liase with Professor F. O' Gara, Professor S. Strain, Dr Margaret Fitzgerald, Dr P. Flanagan, Mr M. Dempsey and Dr P.J. O' Mahoney (FSAI).

Dr M. Fitzgerald agreed to liase with Professor C. Kelleher on the issues raised in her discussion document re: data collection for medical, health and nutrition research

6. **Any other business**

The closing date for the post of Scientific Director is 28 June 2002 and it was hoped that interviews could take place prior to the July meeting of the Council. Professor P. Whittaker also kindly agreed to join the appointment panel which also includes: the Chairman, Professor E.P. Cunningham, Dr M. Fitzgerald, and a nominee of the Academy.

It was decided to invite Onora O'Neill, author of *Autonomy and Trust in Bioethics* to give a public lecture at the Academy at some date in the future. Mr P. Dempsey to investigate dates.

7. **Date of next meeting**

The next meeting of the Council will take place at 10.30 am on Thursday 11 July 2002 in Academy House. Thereafter the Council will meet on the 2nd Thursday of each month (except August) until the Council is fully up and running.