

Irish Council for Bioethics
Comhairle Bitheitice na hÉireann

Minutes of Council Meeting
Thursday 10th May 2007

In the Chair: Dr Dolores Dooley

Present: Professor Andrew Green; Professor Linda Hogan; Dr Richard Hull; Mr Stephen McMahon; Dr Peter McKenna; Professor Cliona O'Farrelly; Dr Darina O'Flanagan; Professor Richard O'Kennedy; Mr Asim Sheikh; Professor David Smith.

Apologies for absence: Dr Alan Donnelly; Professor John Vincent McLoughlin.

Also present: Dr Siobhán O'Sullivan; Ms Emily de Grae; Dr Stephanie Dyke.

1. Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting were adopted and signed.

2. Report from the Scientific Director

Dr O'Sullivan reported on the progress of the Council's national playwriting competition. She informed members that 10 shortlisted applicants had submitted dialogue and from these three finalists had been selected for interview. Dr. O'Sullivan informed members that interviews would take place on Thursday 17th May.

Dr O'Sullivan reported that ten prints had been received from NCAD students, all of which were of a very high standard. She informed members that a winner had been selected and that the framed prints would be ready by October. Members were also informed that all ten students had kindly made a gift of their work. It was agreed that an event should be held in October to thank the students for their gift and to publicise the project.

Dr O'Sullivan reported that preparations for the RTÉ radio series were continuing. Members were informed that six town hall meetings will be recorded in September at various regional locations and that the shows will be aired on RTÉ 1 in October.

Members were informed that the Annual Report 2006/7 would be sent out to key policymaker and interested parties in Ireland as well as to the ICB's NEC and Glocal Summit partners.

Regarding the planned visit by the Norwegian Bioethics committee, it was agreed that the meeting should coincide with the Council's next meeting on 13th September.

3. Stem Cell Public Consultation

Dr O'Sullivan informed members that the consultation had received a substantial response and she delivered a presentation outlining the preliminary results. The Council reiterated that as a public consultation rather than an opinion poll, the purpose of this consultation was to ensure that all of the issues/concerns expressed by members of the public are addressed in the final report.

It was agreed that the results of the consultation would be published, as an appendix, in the final report, as was the case with previous documents.

4. Influenza Pandemic: MRBI Report

Dr O'Sullivan informed members that the results of the MRBI Flu Pandemic research had been received. All members agreed that the results were very interesting and showed that there was a lack of public understanding of the issue. She informed members that the results would be published, with the proceedings from the 2007 policy conference "Ethical Dilemmas in a Pandemic".

It was agreed that going forward the Council should keep a watching brief on the public understanding of science and the role bioethics plays in science education.

5. Environmental Ethics Conference

Dr O'Sullivan informed members that all the speakers for the conference had been confirmed and that preparations for the event, which will be held in the RDS, were well underway.

6. Incorporation of the ICB

Dr O'Sullivan reported on the incorporation of the Council, which is currently being arranged and will hopefully be finalised within six weeks. She informed members that two directors had already been identified but that a third and final one was still needed. There followed a discussion regarding likely candidates.

Members were asked to inform the secretariat, whether they were willing to become members of the newly formed limited company. It was agreed that those who consented would be asked to sign the Memorandum and Articles of Association in due course.

7. Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 13th September, time and venue to be confirmed.