

Irish Council for Bioethics
Comhairle Bitheitice na hÉireann

Minutes of Council Meeting
Thursday 7th February 2008

In the Chair:	Dr Dolores Dooley
Present:	Dr Alan Donnelly; Professor Andrew Green; Professor Linda Hogan; Dr Richard Hull; Professor Cliona O'Farrelly; Professor David Smith; Mr Stephen McMahon; Mr Asim Sheikh; Dr Darina O'Flanagan.
Apologies for absence:	Dr Peter McKenna; Professor John Vincent McLoughlin; Professor Richard O'Kennedy.
Also present:	Dr Siobhán O'Sullivan; Ms Emily de Grae; Dr Stephanie Dyke; Mr Paul Ivory.

1. Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting were adopted and signed.

2. Report from the Scientific Director

Dr Siobhán O'Sullivan informed the Council members that Mr Paul Meade, winner of the Council's National Playwriting Competition, had submitted the second draft of his play to the competition's steering committee, which was scheduled to meet at the end of the month. Dr O'Sullivan explained to the members that a staged reading of the play, followed by a discussion of the bioethical issues it raises, were planned for later in the year. Dr O'Sullivan added that she intended to approach her European partners at the upcoming National Ethics Councils meeting in Slovenia regarding possible sources of funding for the staging of Mr Meade's play.

Dr O'Sullivan informed the Council that the proceedings of the environmental ethics policy conference had been published and widely distributed. Videos of the conference presentations had also been uploaded onto the Council website and could now be viewed online. The Council agreed that these steps will ensure that the ethical issues raised at the conference reach a wider audience.

Dr O'Sullivan told the Council members that the Law Reform Commission had expressed an interest in organising a joint conference with the Council on the subject of Advance Healthcare Directives and that this would most likely be scheduled for September 2008. It was agreed that this would be a very valuable collaboration.

3. Biometrics

The rapporteur group reported that the stakeholder meetings for the biometrics project had been very successful, with all parties expressing enthusiasm about the Council's involvement in the development of biometric technologies. It was decided that radiofrequency identification technology, as well as the exclusion issues associated with enrolment in biometrics programmes, would be addressed in the Council's report. It was also agreed that the Council's 2008 policy conference would address the topic of biometrics and be scheduled to coincide with the launch of the Council's document on the subject (October/November 2008). The biometrics information leaflet, prepared by the secretariat to assist the focus group consultations and to add to the Council's bioethics information leaflet series, was discussed and approved by all members present.

4. Stem cell research

It was agreed that the Council would engage with the media at the launch of the stem cell research opinion document, with a view to stimulating public discussion of the ethical issues discussed in the report. It was agreed that the secretariat would put together a press package and liaise with the rapporteurs in advance of the launch.

5. Any Other Business

No other business was raised.

6. Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 3rd April 2008, at 10.30 am.