

Irish Council for Bioethics
Comhairle Bitheitice na hÉireann

Minutes of Council Meeting
Thursday 6th April 2006

In the Chair: Mr Dermot Gleeson

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

Apologies for absence: Mr Conor Brady.

Also present: Dr Siobhán O'Sullivan; Dr Stephanie Dyke; Mr Paul Ivory.

1. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 2nd February 2006 were adopted and signed.

2. Matters arising

The correspondence from the Medical Council's ethics committee concerning possible dates for a meeting with the Irish Council for Bioethics to discuss the Council publication *Human Biological Material: Recommendations for Collection, Use and Storage in Research 2005* was noted.

3. Report from the scientific director

The Scientific Director informed the members that Professor Osterhaus had accepted the Council's invitation to give the Council's 3rd annual public lecture on November 2nd 2006. The Council agreed that this year's annual lecture should be delivered outside of Dublin and arrangements will be made to host it in Cork. The Scientific Director proposed that a poster competition be organized amongst second level students to produce the design of the posters and leaflets, which will be used to publicise the event. The members approved this proposal and it was agreed that the competition should be advertised in schools in the first week of September.

The Scientific Director requested the members' views on holding a competition for playwrights to write a stage play focusing on bioethics. The members felt the project could be an interesting endeavor, however it needed to be further explored. It was suggested that the secretariat prepare a detailed proposal on this issue, drawing on the experience of other Irish and international theatre projects.

The Scientific Director reported on the National Ethics Committees forum she and Mr. Paul Ivory attended in Vienna on 9-10th March 2006. The discussion primarily focused on UNESCO's recently published *Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights*, the issue of stem cell research, and the question of engaging the public regarding bioethical issues. Dr. O' Sullivan reported that the Irish Council for Bioethics had been chosen to present their outreach work to the NEC members as an example of good practice in this area.

Dr. Richard Hull reported on the Centre of Bioethical Research and Analysis (COBRA) Galway Symposium - Moral Theory and Health, sponsored in part by the Council. The meeting was well attended by a multidisciplinary audience.

The Scientific Director announced that the secretariat were still working on the new design of the Council website and expect it to be launched early May.

The Irish Council for Bioethics Term of Office Report 2002-2005 was distributed to the members.

4. Stem Cell Report

The members discussed the proposal for public information and consultation process drafted by the secretariat on the subject of stem cell research in Ireland. The strategy document received widespread support from the members. Members volunteered to act as rapporteurs for the Council's work on stem cell research.

5. Advance Directive Report

Rapporteurs on the advance directive project reported to Council that they had their first meeting on March 23rd 2006, at which terms of reference for the project were drafted and a list of stakeholders to be consulted were identified. The Council unanimously approved the draft terms of reference tabled by the rapporteurs.

6. Scoping Document for Infectious Disease Report

Due to time and resource constraints, the Council agreed to limit its project on infectious disease to a discussion paper rather than a full report. It was agreed that their goal would be to stimulate a discussion in Ireland of the issues raised in the excellent report of the Canadian pandemic influenza working group from the University of Toronto Joint Centre for Bioethics: *Stand on Guard for Thee: Ethical Considerations in Preparedness Planning for Pandemic Influenza*. Several members of the Council volunteered to act as rapporteurs for the Council's work on infectious disease.

7. **Date of next meeting**

Thursday June 15th 2006 at 10:30am.
