

**Irish Council for Bioethics**  
*Comhairle Bitheitice na hÉireann*

**Minutes of Council Meeting**  
**Friday 12<sup>th</sup> January 2007**

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

**1. Minutes**

The minutes of the previous meeting were adopted and signed.

**2. Report from the Scientific Director**

Dr O'Sullivan informed members that the National Playwriting Competition had received substantial media coverage since its launch in December. Ms de Grae informed Council that, to date, 55 entries had been received from both professional and amateur writers from Ireland, Northern Ireland, the UK and from as far a field as Canada, the USA and China. She also informed members that subject matter was varied. Both Dr O'Sullivan and Ms de Grae expressed optimism that a good shortlist could be formed at the competitions next steering committee meeting set for 9<sup>th</sup> February. Dr O'Sullivan reported that as a result of the competition, she had been approached by the Abbey Theatre with a request to participate in their Abbey Talks programme during their staging of A Number (a play about cloning and personal identity) by Caryl Churchill. Dr O'Sullivan proposed that she give a pre-performance presentation on the science and ethics of cloning and invited members of the Council to contact her should they be interested in participating in a post-performance panel discussion. Council approved the proposal.

Dr O'Sullivan informed members who were unable to attend the November meeting that Council had decided to utilise new and innovative methods of communication, like the playwriting competition and film project, to engage the general public and raise awareness/discussion of bioethical issues.

Dr O'Sullivan reported that the RTÉ radio series had been rescheduled for September 2007. She re-iterated the series would take the form of recorded town hall meetings and would be held in regional locations e.g. Athlone, Waterford and Nenagh.

The relocation of secretariat offices was discussed. Dr O'Sullivan apologised to Council for any inconvenience caused by the late distribution of documents relating to the meeting explaining that the secretariat had been given short notice of their move. Dr O'Sullivan informed Council that the new offices were very satisfactory. She also stated that the restructuring of the Council should be complete by March 2007.

Dr Dyke addressed Council regarding increased website activity since it was redesigned in May 2006. Members congratulated Dr Dyke on the success of the new look website, in particular, the high download rate of Council reports as well as the interest in the site from people all over the world.

There followed a discussion regarding the topic and timing of the 2007 policy conference. Council agreed that the conference should focus on the issue of ethics and the environment. The point was raised that nanotechnology, waste management and carbon trading should be included in the programme for Ethics and the Environment. It was agreed that the conference should be held in September/October and it was suggested that it could coincide with an episode of the RTÉ radio series based on a similar topic.

Dr O'Sullivan reported that she had received a request from the Medical Council for information regarding the ICB's work programme. Dr O'Sullivan stated that she responded to the request with a letter outlining the work programme of the Council for 2007.

Finally Dr O'Sullivan proposed the 10<sup>th</sup> of May 2007 as a possible date for the Council to have a joint meeting with the Norwegian Council. It was agreed that this date was acceptable.

### **3. Stem Cell Research**

It was agreed by all rapporteurs that the stakeholder meetings were informative and worthwhile. The point was raised that feedback from stakeholders themselves was also very positive.

Dr O'Sullivan informed Council that Ms de Grae had been in contact with RTÉ's Late, Late Show to pitch the public consultation on stem cell research as a topic for inclusion in an upcoming show. Ms de Grae stated that she had spoken to a producer from the show and had received broadly positive feedback but was waiting to be contacted with a more concrete answer. Members responded positively to this initiative, acknowledging the Late, Late Show as an ideal way to communicate with the broader community.

### **4. Advance Directives**

There followed a discussion regarding the final draft of the advance directive report. Council members, in the main, were very happy with the draft but requested some minor textual changes to be made before the report went to print. Members were informed that

the launch date had been set for 14<sup>th</sup> February 2007 in Newman House, 85 St Stephen's Green.

**5. Any Other Business**

The Chair asked members to contact the secretariat to inform them of any difficulties they had in relation to the meeting dates proposed for the remainder of 2007.

**6. Date of next meeting**

Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> March 10:30am, venue to be confirmed.