

Irish Council for Bioethics
Comhairle Bitheitice na hÉireann

Minutes of Council Meeting
Thursday 15th October 2009

- In the Chair:** Dr Dolores Dooley
- Present:** Professor Andrew Green, Dr Richard Hull, Dr Peter McKenna, Professor J.V. McLoughlin, Mr Turlough O'Donnell SC, Professor Cliona O'Farrelly, Professor Richard O'Kennedy, Mr Asim Sheikh BL, Professor David Smith, Dr Sheila Willis.
- Apologies for absence:** Professor Alan Donnelly, Dr Mary Henry, Mr Stephen McMahon.
- Also present:** Dr Siobhan O'Sullivan, Ms Emily de Grae; Mr Paul Ivory; Ms Emma Clancy.

1. Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting were adopted and signed.

2. Report from the Managing Scientific Director:

Dr O'Sullivan informed Council that she had attended the NEC meeting in Stockholm in September. The principal topics discussed at the meeting were synthetic biology, justice in healthcare allocation and ethics during a pandemic. The Dutch Council presented their latest opinion document on synthetic biology, which was well received by delegates, although there was some discussion with respect to the immediate relevance of this field of research. Dr O'Sullivan agreed to draft a briefing paper on this emerging area of research for the December meeting. The French Council presented their opinion document on the ethical considerations raised by a pandemic, while the Swedish Council presented their recent opinion document on how the Swedish healthcare system should allocate scarce resources in a just manner.

Dr O'Sullivan also informed the Council that she had been invited to join the ENRIO a recently formed European network concerned with scientific integrity and science governance. Dr O'Sullivan attended a meeting in Oslo on October 14th in which the various national models for supporting and investigating scientific integrity were extensively discussed. The Health Research Board, Higher Education Authority and

the Royal Irish Academy have recently called for implementation of a Scientific Integrity Structure in Ireland.

Dr O'Sullivan informed the Council that she had been invited by the EU Commission to join an expert group whose task was to develop ethical guidelines for FP7 funded researchers who were collaborating with developing countries. The work had now been completed and Dr O'Sullivan committed to circulating a copy of the guidelines to the Council.

3. Biometrics Opinion Document

The Chair, Dr Dolores Dooley thanked the rapporteurs and the wider Council as well as the secretariat for their work on the Biometrics document, which had been recently finalised and printed.

Due to budget constraints, it was decided to have a virtual launch of the document, which would be widely circulated to policy-makers and the media.

4. Begotten Not Made

The Council produced a printed version of the commissioned play *Begotten Not Made* in August. Dr O'Sullivan informed Council that she had circulated copies to NEC colleagues and that feedback had been overwhelmingly positive. Several NEC members had complemented the ICB for their innovative approach to stimulating public debate on bioethical issues.

Ms de Grae informed Council that the printed play would form the cornerstone of the application to the Wellcome Trust for funding to stage a full production of *Begotten Not Made*. This application was being made in conjunction with the playwright, Mr Paul Meade and Fishamble: The New Play Company and was due to be submitted in December.

Ms de Grae also informed Council that the ICB was currently in talks with RTÉ about the possibility of broadcasting an abridged version *Begotten Not Made* as a radio play. It had been suggested to RTÉ that a post play discussion with an expert panel could follow the play.

5. Pandemic Planning

Dr O'Sullivan informed Council that the ICB had been approached by the Department of Health and Children to lend its expertise in the drafting of an ethical framework for pandemic planning. It was envisaged that the framework would be completed by early December.

6. Future of ICB

Dr O'Sullivan informed the Council that despite the indication from the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment that a decision on the future of the Council would be taken in advance of the October 15th meeting, there had been no communication from the Department on this matter. It was agreed that a letter seeking clarity on the

future (or otherwise) of the Council should be sent to the Minister for Science, Innovation and Technology as a matter of urgency.

7. Dates Of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held in a private room in Dobbins Restaurant (15 Stephens's Lane, Mount Street, Dublin 2) on Thursday 3rd of December 2009 at 11.00am

The meeting will be followed at 1.00pm with lunch also in Dobbins Restaurant.