

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

**Minutes of Council Meeting**  
**Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> September 2008**

- In the Chair:** Dr Dolores Dooley
- Present:** Dr Alan Donnelly; Professor Andrew Green; Professor John Vincent McLoughlin; Dr Darina O’Flangan; Professor Linda Hogan; Dr Richard Hull; Mr Stephen McMahon; Professor Cliona O’Farrelly; Professor David Smith.
- Apologies for absence:** Professor Richard O’Kennedy; Dr Peter McKenna; Mr Asim Sheikh
- 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 Scientific Director**

Dr O’ Sullivan informed the Council that the Irish Council for Bioethics was incorporated on Wednesday the 6<sup>th</sup> of August 2008. The Transfer of Undertaking/Secondment Agreement had also been finalised between the Council and the Royal Irish Academy. Dr O’Sullivan also stated that several insurance policies had been acquired for the new company, including public/employers liability insurance as well as Directors and Officers insurance. Dr O’ Sullivan reported that the ICB was also seeking advice in relation to registration for corporation tax, registration with the Revenue Commissioners as an employer and VAT registration.

Dr O’ Sullivan also informed the Council that the incorporation of the ICB had lead to the implementation of new company policies which included the General Terms and Conditions of Employment, a new IT policy which is inline with the Data Protection Act 1998/2003, a Bullying and Harassment Policy, and a Grievance and Disciplinary Policy.

Dr O' Sullivan also informed the Council that the secretariat were currently negotiating a move from their current offices located in a serviced building in Harcourt Street, to Dublin 1 at the end of December.

Dr O' Sullivan reported that now that the ICB was incorporated, all arrangements for future employees would be dealt with internally by the ICB including payroll arrangements. Dr O' Sullivan also told the Council that the ICB web-site was to be upgraded so it could be maintained internally by secretariat staff who were to receive a half day training session in the new system.

### **3. Report From Chair on Directors Meeting**

The Chair informed the members that the first Directors meeting had taken place on Wednesday the 3<sup>rd</sup> of September 2008. Dr O' Sullivan reported to the Directors on issues pertaining to the recent incorporation. The Directors had considered the pro's and con's on seeking charitable status for the ICB and on balance it was decided the ICB should seek Charitable Status and the Directors instructed Dr O' Sullivan to undertake same.

The Directors reviewed the ICB expenditure in 2008 and discussed the estimates submission for 2009. The body of the remaining discussion revolved around membership for the 3<sup>rd</sup> term of office for the ICB. Due to the commitment and the excellence of the current membership the Directors were delighted to reappoint those members who had expressed their interest in continuing their membership of the ICB. Due to the resignation of 4 members during the second term of the ICB the Chair informed Council members that the Directors had prepared a short list of potential candidates to supplement the Council membership. In the coming weeks the Directors will approach these candidates to establish their availability/willingness to serve on the next Council.

### **4. Biometrics**

Dr O' Sullivan reported to the Council that the first draft of the section on Biometrics Technologies had been given to Rapporteurs on Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> of June, 2008. Dr O' Sullivan also informed the Council that the World Bioethics Forum had this year, chosen Biometrics as its break thru subject and imagined that the ICB paper may become a reference paper for other national bioethics bodies in the future. Dr O' Sullivan informed the Council that the ICB Policy Conference 'Biometrics: Enhancing Security or Invading Privacy was taking place on Wednesday the 26<sup>th</sup> of November 2008 at the RCPI on Kildare Street.

Dr O' Sullivan also informed the Council that the first full draft of the Biometrics document to Council will be presented on Thursday the 4<sup>th</sup> of December 2008 with a possible launch of the document in April 2009. The Council paid tribute to the heavy workload being undertaken by the Secretariat.

### **5. ICB Budget 2009**

Dr O' Sullivan informed the Council that she had received a circular on the issue of the estimates 2009 from the department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment and the key provisions of the circular included that the expenditure for 2009 cannot exceed that provided in 2008 and the cost of inflation must be absorbed within this fixed allocation. In addition, payroll costs are to be reduced by 3%, expenditure on consultancy, advertising and public relations must be reduced by 50% and where appropriate, savings are to be achieved through administrative efficiencies.

## **6. Collaborations with External Organisations**

Dr O'Sullivan reported that the ICB was involved with a number of collaborations with external organisations, which has resulted in valuable exchange of expertise.

Ms Emily De Grae informed the Council that a date had been set with Farmleigh House for the production of the winning play by Mr Paul Meade in association with Fishamble Theatre in Farmleigh House on the 29<sup>th</sup> of January. Ms De Grae reported that she had been approached by Agtel, a science based production company with regard to filming the play with the subsequent possible airing of the play on terrestrial television.

## **7. Evaluation of Second Term of Office of ICB**

The Council discussed various aspects of the methodology employed by the Council during its second term. There was a consensus that the system of rapporteur groups worked well and should be continued. The council also broached the idea of the rapporteurs editing the ICB reports on top of the copy editors and the secretariat thus ensuring another level of quality control in relation to ICB reports. The Council felt that bi-monthly meetings were adequate and should be continued. The Council agreed that consensus decision making had heretofore served the council well and should be continued.

The Council agreed that the process of consulting the public prior to the drafting of documents was a valuable one. However, it was acknowledged that these type of consultations were not as wide ranging as might be desired. The Council agreed that it would be worthwhile to explore innovative ways of consulting/reaching the general public going forward.

The Council discussed what the key mission of the ICB should be going forward. It was agreed that maintaining the dual role of stimulating public debate on bioethical matters as well as advising policy makers should be continued. Nonetheless, due to the limited resources of the Council it was agreed that the primary focus of the ICB should be to contribute to policy debates at a local and national level.

## **8. Any Other Business**

The Chair informed members of the Council that the November 6<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Council had been cancelled

**9. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be on **Thursday, the 4<sup>th</sup> of December 2008 at 3.30pm.**