

## RAIDIÓ TEILIFÍS ÉIREANN

Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of RTÉ  
held on Thursday, 17 February 2022 via Zoom

**Present:** Moya Doherty (Chair)  
Anne O'Leary  
Susan Ahern  
Robert Shortt  
Deborah Kelleher  
Daire Hickey  
David Harvey  
Ian Kehoe  
PJ Matthews  
Connor Murphy  
Dee Forbes, Director General

**In Attendance:** Anne McManus, (For Paula Mullooly, Group Secretary)  
Richard Collins, Chief Financial Officer  
Eimear Cusack, Director Human Resources

- 1. Minutes of Meeting**  
The Minute of 2 December 2021 was approved.
- 2. Matters Arising from the Minutes**  
SA queried whether a document that tracks matters arising from one meeting to next would be useful for the Board. The Chair stated that she would discuss with the DG and PM.
- 3. Declarations of Interest**  
None.
- 4. DG's Report**

### Covid Response

The DG brought the Board through her Report. The DG stated that the organisation is now going in the right direction but that the impact of the Omicron variant was swift and caused severe pressure which, in turn, caused the organisation to have to take serious steps. The DG noted that some content had to be stood down, antigen testing was made mandatory for all individuals coming on-site, this was a successful measure as it caught many cases which may have caused further problems. The DG stated that Operations and News, in particular, were badly affected by the outbreak of Omicron. The situation is still precarious with those areas suffering high numbers of Covid cases. The DG stated that the protocols in place will remain for the foreseeable future and, while mandatory antigen testing ended this week, everyone has been asked to remain vigilant. The DG stated that the situation will be kept under review and continue to be monitored going forward. The DG noted that RTÉ is preparing for the launch of its hybrid working model and implementation is to begin after Easter. The DG also noted that there was a big take up for the scheme.

## Marketplace

The Chair noted that Geraldine O'Leary could not attend the Board Meeting but will be at the next meeting in March. The Chair MD invited D Hickey and IK to tell the Board what they are hearing in the marketplace in Ireland and abroad.

## Content

The DG pointed out that Raidió na Gaeltachta turns 50 in April. The DG noted that RnaG holds a very important place for Irish language communities around Ireland and in RTÉ. The DG stated that a concert in An Tulach Connemara is being planned to celebrate the past 50 and next 50 years. The line-up includes the NCO, Altan, Iarlaith OLionaird and there will be more information at next meeting. The DG stated that it is expected to be a great celebration and example of RTÉ's commitment to the language. The Chair noted that the concert was planned for the 2nd of April and suggested that Board members attend.

The DG stated that while the TV market is falling year on year with more numbers turning to streaming, RTÉ is trying to maintain its share and that share is growing. The DG noted strong performances from Fair City, Tommy Tiernan Show, First Dates, Crimes & Confessions and RTÉ Investigates. The DG also noted that Dancing With The Stars was back to good start after having had tough first weeks with COVID related problems.

In relation to Drama, the DG noted that it is doing well with "Smother" with Season 2 doing very well on the Player. In relation to Fair City the DG noted it is up 63,000 viewers and 6 share points. First Dates it was noted is up on 2021 and in relation to Sport, the combination of the GAA Hurling and Football Leagues and the International Rugby 6 Nations

Championship got off to a great start. The DG stated that the Partnership between RTÉ and Virgin is working very well for both sides.

In relation to Radio, the DG noted that the JNLRs were out last week and pointed to a strong performance from Radio 1 and Lyric was holding very strong with many programmes gaining listeners. In relation to the Player, the DG stated that it was seeing growth up 30% year on year. The DG also highlighted that the next series of “Kin” is now progressing with funding from AMC on board. The Chair complimented the DG on the drive to position RTÉ as a leader in Drama. The DG stated that the Deputy Head of Drama (David Crean) and Dermot Horan are now acting Heads of Drama and doing really good job. The DG noted that the story must be strong and the necessary funding mechanism in place for success. The Chair suggested that D Crean and D Horan be invited to meet the Board to give an insight into their work.

PJM complimented the team behind the Brian Friel documentary describing it as outstanding and stated it was brilliant to see how RTÉ was treating important Irish writers of national and international significance.

#### Public Affairs

The DG stated that the submissions to the Joint Oireachtas Committee and Public Accounts Committee were robust and welcomed the opportunity to put the licence fee back on the agenda. The DG noted that the numbers on evasion level are shocking and the debate is ongoing. The DG also noted that The Future of Media Commission is also on the political agenda and reports from the Irish Times suggest that the Government has accepted all the recommendations in the report and will recommend that Revenue collect payment but more will be known by end of this Q1. The DG stated that members of the Joint Oireachtas Committee asked about the status of the Report and noted that there was general recognition that the system is broken. In relation to the Buildings in Donnybrook, the DG noted that they are architecturally important and RTÉ has now been informed that the TV Building, the Restaurant, Admin Building, Radio Building and the Scene dock are all on the list of protected structures. The DG stated that RTÉ has submitted a Heritage Significance Report in consultation with Scott Tallan Walker. RTÉ’s report recommends that the protection should only relate to the façade of buildings (except for the staircase in the TV building) and that RTÉ must be able to update internals when necessary. The DG stated that she will update the Board with the relevant documents and RTÉ does not expect to hear further on the matter until later in the year. IK stated that it would be a significant issue if RTÉ could not upgrade internals of existing buildings to ensure they were fit for modern broadcasting. RS noted that the orchestra space in the Radio Building is unique and everyone should be cognisant of that.

#### 5. HR Update

*(Richard Collins and Eimear Cusack joined the meeting)*

#### SCOPE

The DG referred to the paper presented to the Board setting out the background to the SCOPE process. The DG stated that it was a very detailed and complex process.

EC stated that it is a statutory process regarding the insurability of employment of individuals providing services over the years to RTÉ. EC noted that there is no statute of limitations in relation to the process and that it has emerged in the press that SCOPE are taking a broader view than the Evershed's process in terms of examining those who have in the past or are providing services to RTÉ. EC stated that SCOPE meet with individuals and ask them to complete a questionnaire, then complete the same questionnaire with a representative from RTÉ HR and a manager. SCOPE use that information to make a decision. EC stated that there is 21 days within which to lodge an intention to appeal and no timeline has been set for the hearing of appeals. EC also stated that RTÉ is cooperating fully with the process.

AOL noted that the process will be discussed at next meeting of ARC.

The DG noted that other companies are going through similar processes but not on the same scale. The Board then discussed the process and various approaches.

*(EC left the meeting)*

## 6. Finance Update

*(Richard Collins joined the meeting)*

### Estimated Outturn 2021

RC brought the Board through the financial presentation.

### Budget 2022 update

RC stated that Licence Fee income was an outstanding matter at the end of the year as RTÉ was waiting on the Department to set An Post targets.

### January 2022 Management Accounts

The Chair asked about the forecasting and whether it was optimistic and the Board discussed this. The Chair noted that GOL will be at the Board Meeting in March and suggested that the Head of TV, Radio, and Digital sales also attend. CM suggested that the chart showing 2022 against 2021 should show 2022 against budget.

## 7. Statement of Strategy Process (DG)

The DG outlined the Briefing Memo on the Statement of Strategy process noting that RTÉ is obliged to prepare it every 5 years in conjunction with the BAI. The DG stated that RTÉ is waiting on the publications of the Future of Media Commission which will impact strategy. The DG stated that the Statement looks at the long-term and short-term horizon for RTÉ and that it ultimately goes to the Minister and BAI for approval. The Chair stated that it was important that the message got across at the JOC and PAC meeting that what needs to be sorted can only be done if there is support for certainty of funding for RTÉ.

## 8. Board Effectiveness Assessment (*paper only*)

The Chair stated that the Board will look at closely this. SA noted that members are to complete the form individually and that there is an external component. SA stated that 2023 might be too far out and that it would be good to capture the Assessment by the end of 2022 before there is change in the

Board. AOL stated that it would be good to ask PF or PM to speak to the Board about the requirements of Directors in relation to conflict of interest, declarations etc. AOL noted a helpful publication by KPMG and suggested a seminar so that the Board is educated on fiduciary and legal requirements. The Chair stated that she would raise it with PF.

CM asked when the questionnaire should be completed. The Chair stated that she would speak to PF and update the Board. DK stated that other markers should be considered for the questionnaire, for example in relation to diversity. MD stated that she would speak to PF and if the Board had any more questions to email them to her, in order to make the assessment as effective as possible.

9. **Broadcasting site at Glencolmcille, Co. Donegal**

AMcM referred to the Memorandum and Deed of Rectification circulated to the Board in relation to a broadcast transmission site at Glencolmcille, Co. Donegal which set out an error in the previous Deeds and the necessity to execute a Deed of Rectification to register title. The Board unanimously approved the execution of the Deed of Rectification.

**Proposed: Anne O’Leary**  
**Seconded: Susan Ahern**

10. **Committees**

Audit & Risk Update

AOL updated the Board on the meeting of ARC on 14th February. AOL noted that PM was not present so the Legal Update was left until a later time. AOL noted that there was an interesting discussion with PF in relation to cyber-attacks. AOL stated that the risk assessment is flagged as red and that cyber-attacks on top of all risk registers. AOL stated that a new EU Directive has introduced a Code of Practice whereby Pensions are required to have someone from internal audit and that PF is happy to do this. AOL noted that it will not have any impact on the discount rate. AOL noted that ARC discussed the ERP project with EC and RC and that this will need further discussions with Finance and Technology. AOL stated that a high point of the meeting was the presentation from Mike Byrne, 2<sup>nd</sup> Chair who gave a very impressive presentation of what 2<sup>nd</sup> do, their future plans and their risks. AOL stated that she has asked for this presentation to be sent to other Board members.

Audience Council

PJM told the Board that the Council last met in November 2021 and would be meeting again today. PJM noted that the work of the Board had been hampered due to Covid. PJM noted that it was a roll-over Council and that Rachel Lysaght had been appointed as a Project Manager to help deliver the presentations required under the Broadcasting Act. PJM stated that the legislation concerning the Board is unclear that they are in the early stage of preparing its work for next cycle which is to be presented to Minister by June 2022. PJM stated that the Council is also in the review process of its last presentation. PJM stated that it is hoped to have the Council invited onto site shortly and that its work is ongoing and on track.

II. **Any Other Business**

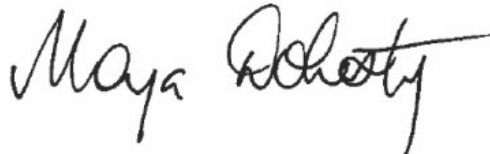
The Chair noted that PJM, Chair of the Programme Committee for the past 5-6 years is stepping aside as Chair but will remain on the committee. DK will take over as Chair. MD noted that AOL has offered to stay on as Chair of ARC and welcomed this.

The Chair asked the Board to send her an email if they would like a presentation on any topic as the Board Agendas are fluid it is open for members to contribute to the Agendas.

The DG confirmed that the transfer of NSO had taken place. The DG noted that great colleagues had departed but that a conclusion had been brought to a

process which secured the long-term future of the NSO. The DG stated that the transition was smooth but had been tricky to navigate. The DG noted that RTÉ and the NSO will continue their strong relationship and that it was important to thank NSO for its contribution to RTÉ over the years and wished it well.

There being no other business the meeting concluded.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Maya Scholey', written in a cursive style.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chair

Next Meeting: 24 March 2022