

Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee, BAIS, which took place in room 102, Birkbeck College, Malet Street, London, on Saturday, 8 September 1990 at 1.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Ruth Dudley Edwards (in Chair), George Boyce, Emrys Evans, Eamonn Hughes, Uli Kockel (representing Patrick Buckland), Anne Laurence, Oliver Mc Larnon, Séamus Mac Mathúna, Jonathan Moore, Jim O'Hara, Bob Purdie, Shaun Richards, Kate Thompson, George Watson, Seán Hutton.

APOLOGIES: Paul Bew, David Cairns, Nesson Danaher, Siobhán Uí Néill.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: There was some discussion as to whether this item should be taken, as it was a Special Meeting. The Ex Dir suggested that they formed a record to which speakers might wish to refer during this meeting and it would be preferable that their correctness should be established at the outset. Emrys Evans thanked the Executive Director for a fair and good account of the meeting and moved that they be accepted. Seconded by George Watson. The Chair drew attention to the following matters in the minutes: p. 3 second last paragraph, last line, "agenda item 10" should read "agenda item 8"; p. 5, second last paragraph, "there were three BAIS representatives on the Board of Irish Studies" should read "there were three BAIS representatives on the Steering Group, JEP"; with regard to p. 6 paragraph three "The Chair left the Chair to say that the motion was directed against the Chair", what she should have said was "that the motion should be directed against the Chair". With this clarification and the previous corrections, the minutes were accepted and signed.

As this was a Special Meeting only two items were on the Agenda: (1) the BAIS/(University of) Liverpool relationship; (2) BAIS general strategy, the working of subcommittees and the future of the Newsletter.

THE BAIS/(UNIVERSITY OF) LIVERPOOL RELATIONSHIP: The Ex Dir tabled documents: "The structure of the BAIS/Liverpool relationship" [Document 1]; "Joint Education Programme: Relationship between the Institute of Irish Studies and BAIS" [Document 2]; the agreed document setting up a N-W Advisory Fundraising Committee [Document 3]; and "Relations between BAIS and Institutions on behalf of which/in co-operation with which it may engage in fundraising" [Document 4]. He also tabled a document setting out "The structure of BAIS", a copy of the "Mission Statement" of BAIS, and his "Summary of recommendations from Officers' Meeting of 9-10 July 1990 (Points drawn out by facilitator)".

The Chair suggested that Document 4 might form the basis for a resolution at the end of the discussion on this issue.

After some initial discussion, Emrys Evans asked that the Ex Dir take the meeting through the documents on the BAIS/Liverpool

relationship. The Ex Dir explained that a special relationship between BAIS and Liverpool had grown up, dating from before his appointment: the Institute at Liverpool has been described as the "flagship" of the movement. He went on to outline the structural relationship between the Association and the Institute.

The Chair represented BAIS on the Board of Irish Studies at the Liverpool Institute. Initially the emphasis of BAIS had been very much on higher education. Then Patrick Buckland had made a proposal for a "bottom up" strategy for the development of Irish Studies. This was the Joint Education Programme - proposed as a joint venture between BAIS and the Institute, and which was to develop programmes for schools. Nothing was very closely defined in this arrangement for quite some time. A structure developed, but there were differences concerning the nature of this and the relationship of the two parties within it. This had led to negotiations between the Officers and Patrick Buckland which resulted in Document 2, which was approved by the Executive on 11 November. The Steering Group set up under this document was an advisory body, although clause 3 of the document also clearly referred to joint decisions on various matters. Asked what was meant by "strategy", in that clause, by Emrys Evans, the Ex Dir gave it as his opinion that this meant the broad lines on which the programme operated.

There was some discussion regarding the possibility of interference in the internal affairs of the university being involved through BAIS's involvement with the JEP. This turned on whether the JEP was solely involved with the development of programmes for schools. The Ex Dir pointed out that since the document had originated with Patrick Buckland, he, evidently, did not see the issue of interference arising out of the relationship as defined in it.

The Ex Dir went on to refer to the document drawn up by the Officers following discussions with representatives of the Institute, under which a North-West Fundraising Advisory Committee had been set up to assist with a N-W Fundraising Programme [Document no. 3]. Members of the committee would be identified by the Director of the Institute of Irish Studies; and the structural link with BAIS in this was through a member of the Fundraising Advisory Group, an informal group of which the Chair, Vice-Chair, Ex Dir, and two of BAIS patrons with business experience, formed the core. The Committee could act outside the N-W in certain circumstances.

Some members of the Executive found the document unclear and "nebulous". The Treasurer pointed out that the document had been drawn up at a time when relations between BAIS and the Institute were strained and it was an attempt to maintain what both parties regarded as an important relationship. The Vice-Chair said that what BAIS had tried to do was to give as much carte blanche as possible while still retaining some influence. The committee had been deliberately called a North-West Fundraising Advisory Committee to indicate its regional responsibility. The Treasurer

stressed that the regional rather than the institutional identification of the committee was significant. He felt it important to keep the liaison/relationship between BAIS and institutions/projects seeking funding, as there should not be a free market in fundraising. Bob Purdie said that the document gave BAIS control over the one thing it could control: the use of its name. Séamus Mac Mathúna said that there was a danger of undermining BAIS by giving away the right to use the Association's name in fundraising.

In reply to a request from Séamus Mac Mathúna for clarification, the Treasurer said that the committee was advisory to the North-West fundraising programme. This raised the question what was that programme and how did one gain inclusion in it. At the time the document was concluded there was only one institution in the North-West engaged in fundraising and that was Liverpool, and the intention of those from the Association who met with Patrick Buckland was to produce a document that did not reduce the North-West to the Institute of Irish Studies at Liverpool.

There was a recognition that the impreciseness of the document could be explained by its context: the need to devise a formulation which would be acceptable, at that point in time, to both sides in the discussions.

Séamus Mac Mathúna wanted it clarified that there was a North West Fundraising Advisory Body which is more or less independent of BAIS. The Chair regarded this as a fair interpretation of the document, but the key point for BAIS was the control of the use of the Association's name. She hoped that this would be the first of many regional fundraising initiatives. BAIS hoped to delegate as much as possible. The Vice-Chair referred to the hope of BAIS that other bodies/institutions would be associated with this initiative in the North-West.

Séamus Mac Mathúna expressed his continuing concern about the implications for BAIS, as a national fundraising organisation, of the arrangements in Document 3.

There followed an open debate and Emrys Evans voiced some concern about the undercurrents of the meeting. He wanted to know if the motives of BAIS were entirely pure, or were questions of power and influence involved.

RELATIONS BETWEEN BAIS AND INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION ON BEHALF OF WHICH/IN CO-OPERATION WITH WHICH IT MAY ENGAGE IN FUNDRAISING

The Chair now moved to Document 4, which represented the considered view of the Officers. George Watson moved acceptance of Document 4 and Bob Purdie seconded this proposal.

Emrys Evans proposed that the document be discussed section by section. This was agreed.

Clause 3: Clarification was sought on the sentence beginning, "It

will, however, be the responsibility...." It was explained that this was a saving clause: the institution in question would be responsible for the accuracy of statements made in a proposal. Clause 8 of the original document (Clause 9 in final document) stated that firm proposals must have gone through the necessary institutional vetting procedures. Clarification was sought on the opening sentence of the clause. It was made clear that the Association was not going to be involved as a consultant or external assessor to institutions.

Clause 4: Clarification was requested. The Vice-Chair explained that the clause was intended to make clear that, while BAIS would fundraise for specific projects, it would not engage in general, non-specific funding.

Oliver McLarnon proposed that the order of Clauses 4 and 5 should be reversed. This was agreed.

Clause 7, second sentence (in square brackets) - proposed addition by the Ex Dir: It was proposed that this should become a separate clause, Clause 8, and that existing Clause 8 become Clause 9. This was agreed.

Clause 9: "concerning" was changed to "proposing". The Treasurer moved an amendment, and George Watson amended the proposed amendment, to alter clause 8 to read as follows: "Correspondence proposing specific projects, or requests for fundraising support, must originate, and have been approved, institutionally; and have passed through the institution's internal committee structure."

Uli Kockel raised the question of proposals from free-lance individuals. The Ex Dir assumed that this document concerned proposals from institutions of higher education. The title of the document was amended to insert "of Higher Education" between "Institutions" and "on behalf". Oliver McLarnon suggested that "normally" be inserted between "must" and "originate" in Clause 9. This was agreed.

The amendments to Clause 9 were accepted.

The last three lines of the document, in square brackets, were deleted.

The document was adopted as amended.

STRUCTURE OF BAIS/LIVERPOOL RELATIONSHIP

The Chair then threw the BAIS/Liverpool Relationship [Document 1] open to discussion. She said that the question to be asked in re the existing BAIS representation on the Board of Irish Studies at Liverpool University was how would the Association regard an invitation to be represented on similar boards in other institutions. Emrys Evans felt that representation was good from a PR point of view exercise. Eamonn Hughes felt that if an institution requested such representation it should be considered. Séamus Mac Mathúna instanced the Institute of

Irish Studies in Belfast, where bodies concerned with the promotion of Irish Studies would be represented. The Ex Dir pointed out that the Board was concerned with internal university affairs, an area where members of the Executive felt that BAIS could have no input.

Conference Secretary proposed the deletion of point 1 in this document (in effect, that BAIS cease to be represented on the Board of Irish Studies). This was seconded by George Boyce and agreed by the meeting.

Point 2 - the link through the JEP - was then considered. The Chair asked: did BAIS want to be involved in the running of the JEP or should the Association subcontract - helping to raise money and receiving periodic reports, rather than being directly involved?

The Ex Dir said that the JEP gave BAIS access to teachers; and that institutions/bodies with which BAIS was associated would have an interest in the JEP, especially as in-service training developed. For both these reasons he felt that BAIS should continue to be represented within the JEP.

Anne Laurence felt that BAIS might have one representative on the JEP. Conference Secretary said that BAIS might well be dubious in the future about getting involved in joint projects; but the Association was involved here in the funding of a post. He felt that there should be representation. Ex Dir, on point of clarification, stated that when BAIS contemplated the renegotiation of the structure of the JEP it has decided to seek representation which would ensure some degree of influence.

Emrys Evans regretted that more thought was not being given to how BAIS could support institutions like Liverpool through its involvement. Séamus Mac Mathúna said that much depended on the extent to which BAIS wished to be involved with the Institute. Did it want that degree of involvement in the JEP set out in clause 1 (e) and 3 of Document 2? Did BAIS want to facilitate the provision of school programmes, or did the Association also want to actively participate in that programme.

George Watson proposed that BAIS retain its representation, reducing it to one. The Vice-Chair suggested that there be no change in numbers for the moment.

Conference Secretary and Emrys Evans proposed that there should be no change in BAIS membership in the JEP. Emrys Evans moved that alternates be allowed if in conformity with the constitution of the Steering Group. Both these proposals were agreed.

The Chair proposed no further discussion of the third aspect of the BAIS/Liverpool relationship - the North-West Fundraising Advisory Committee - which had been discussed already. Séamus Mac Mathúna proposed that the Officers examine Document 3 and provide the Executive with a gloss on it. This was agreed.

BAIS STRATEGY, THE WORKING OF SUBCOMMITTEES, THE FUTURE OF THE NEWSLETTER

The Conference Secretary suggested that the discussion of the overall strategy of BAIS be left to the new Executive Committee. This was agreed.

BAIS LECTURES

George Watson spoke about the lecture series and their cost and wondered if the money could not be spent more efficiently in other ways. He was concerned with making an impact on a British audience, and on members of the "Establishment", in addition to the Irish community. He put forward a number of alternatives: seminars offered as a service; insertion of Irish elements into existing Adult Education/Extra Mural courses; cultural events as a means of networking with influential people/prospective sponsors; one big annual lecture with a prestigious speaker, e.g. Seamus Heaney, before an invited audience.

The Conference Secretary felt that the lecture series should continue in the present format: they resulted in good publicity. The question of audiences was then discussed and to whom the lectures were directed. Were we bringing in the Brits, should we be bringing in the Brits? - the Chair asked.

The Ex Dir reported positive results from Manchester where audiences were mixed, though made up largely of people from the University and Irish communities. A spin off from the lectures was that Manchester now wanted to continue its own series, as Liverpool had done. He felt that the lecture series could be run economically if a good local organiser, a good catchment area, and local speakers and chairpersons could be identified, with perhaps one key speaker from outside. Local sponsorship might be available to cover costs, if a beginning was made early enough. The Chair pointed out that the lectures did allow BAIS to achieve its objective of presenting a plurality of points of view to audiences throughout Britain.

Emrys Evans expressed strong reservations about the assumptions which he felt lay behind George Watson's proposals, which he felt lay too much towards the "Establishment". The lecture series could reinforce the identity of first and other generation Irish people in a positive and necessary way. The Vice-Chair felt that among BAIS's commitments was a commitment to the Irish community, of which BAIS had no need to feel ashamed. The Newsletter Editor felt that George's suggestions were worth exploring.

Ex Dir felt that BAIS could have met both ends of the scale in the lectures. A reception could have been organised, for example, in connection with Archbishop Eames's visit, in order to network.

George Boyce felt that the suggestion made by Anne Laurence of suggesting that existing Adult Education courses should contain an Irish component was a good one. He felt that lectures about

Celtic/Medieval History/Literature would be popular.

The general feeling was that the lectures should continue and a vote of thanks to George Watson for his efforts in organising the lecture series was proposed by Emrys Evans, seconded by the Treasurer, and adopted.

The Newsletter Editor proposed that the lectures be continued with the proviso that sponsorship should be sought on the lectures "scaled down" to a less costly format.

The Chair said that the Officers would look at George Watson's proposals.

SUBCOMMITTEES

Bob Purdie referred to the work of subcommittees. The Chair was concerned about how to get work done if there were no volunteers. The Vice-Chair pointed out that the Compulsory Education Subcommittee and the Cultural Subcommittee had had not worked, for varying reasons. The Vice-Chair and the Ex Dir emphasised that the lack of a Cultural Subcommittee had been a serious matter, with its impact on the possibility to network in connection with fundraising.

After some discussion, Bob Purdie proposed that:

(a) wherever possible the Executive organise activity through subcommittees involving non-Executive committee members;

(b) where a subcommittee has failed to report meetings or activity over a six-month period, it will be automatically dissolved and its functions will revert to the Executive Committee;

(c) in fulfilling the functions of the dissolved subcommittee, the Executive Committee will seek to revive a functioning subcommittee.

These proposals were seconded by Oliver McLarnon, and carried.

George Watson asked whether there should be a Lecture Series Subcommittee. The Ex Dir suggested that the responsibility for the lecture series could be exercised from within the Cultural Subcommittee, to which an appropriate person could be co-opted.

NEWSLETTER

The Newsletter Editor reported that he no longer had the facilities to produce a Newsletter. He asked what form the Newsletter should take in the future.

The Ex Dir said that it was important to have a journal of record. There was the possibility of the Newsletter carrying advertisements, which was important in showing that BAIS was seeking to make the Association as self-sufficient as

possible.

Various suggestions were made: The printed Newsletter should be scaled down and information disseminated by duplicated bulletins up to four times a year. The Newsletter could go upmarket if financing through advertisements/sponsorship were available. As regards book reviews, Irish Studies in Britain and the Irish Literary Supplement carried book reviews. There was some doubt as to whether the Newsletter should also be carrying them.

The Vice-Chair felt that it ought to constitute a forum for readers containing articles, letters, accounts of events; and that, as such, it would serve an important function.

The Ex Dir suggested producing a high quality magazine once/twice a year and a bulletin of information three or four times a year.

It was suggested that this also be discussed at an Officers' Meeting.

AOB

Uli Kockel spoke of the remarkable progress of Irish Studies in Germany.

The Conference Secretary proposed a motion congratulating Strawberry Hill on its new Irish Studies Course and wishing it every success. This was seconded by the Newsletter Editor, and agreed.

The Conference secretary reported that arrangements for the BAIS Biennial Irish Studies Conference were progressing well. Ex Dir stressed the importance of seeking sponsorship at an early date.

The meeting closed at 5.30 p.m.

Appendix

RELATIONS BETWEEN BAIS AND INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION ON BEHALF OF WHICH/IN CO-OPERATION WITH WHICH IT MAY ENGAGE IN FUNDRAISING

- 1 The promotion of the study of Ireland and its people represents the shared interest between BAIS and such institutions.
- 2 In all such arrangements, BAIS will respect the academic freedom of such institutions. Staffing, resource issues and internal management will be regarded as issues outside the Association's remit. The role of BAIS will be that of a facilitator.
- 3 BAIS will advise or comment, to the best of its ability, on fundraising projects submitted to it. It will, however, be the responsibility of the institution submitting a particular proposal to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in the proposal and its appropriateness to secure the ends in view.
- 4 BAIS may fundraise in co-operation with a specific institution for specific purposes which are in line with the Association's objectives.
- 5 BAIS will not undertake general funding on behalf of any institution.
- 6 In a situation where BAIS identifies a particular strategic need relating to the objectives of the Association, it may either initiate action directly under its own supervision or seek competitive bidding from institutions.
- 7 Appropriate reporting procedures will be agreed at the outset concerning specific projects on behalf of which the Association engages in fundraising on behalf of, or in co-operation with, a specific institution.
- 8 In a situation where BAIS seeks competitive bidding for a specific project from institutions, the agreement drawn up at the outset may include, in addition to an agreement on reporting procedures, a statement of the circumstances under which the agreement may be terminated by either party.
- 9 Correspondence proposing specific projects, or requests for fundraising support, must normally originate, and have been approved, institutionally; and have passed through the institution's internal committee structure.