

Minutes of Internet Watch Foundation Board Meeting
Wednesday 21st May 2003 at 10.30 am.

NCH London Regional Office Turner House, 22 Lucerne Road, London N5 1TZ

Present: Roger Darlington (Chair), Emma Ascroft, Charlotte Aynsley (joined the meeting - 2pm), John Carr, Howard Lamb (joined the meeting - 12.15pm), Sonia Livingstone (joined the meeting - 11.10am), Claire Milne, Roland Perry, Mark Stephens, Nigel Williams.

IWF Staff: Peter Robbins (Chief Executive), Brian Wegg

Apologies: Jim Reynolds, Camille de Stempel

Item 1- Apologies and introduction

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted the apologies. Jim Reynolds had ceded his proxy vote to Sonia Livingstone and Camille had ceded her proxy to Howard Lamb. Chair asked the meeting to note that three Board members would be arriving late.

Item 2 - Minutes of last Meeting

Board approved the minutes of the last meeting held on Tuesday 11th February 2003.

Item 3 - Matters Arising

Members noted the items completed under the Action summary.

Item 4: The meeting noted that the review of the 48-hour notification delay for UK material was still ongoing. Chief Executive reported that it had not been necessary to delay any notifications and he only envisaged this being a possible difficulty over weekends. Board members noted the setting up of the new UK police unit and the need to reach agreement with them on notification procedures.

ACTION: Consult Board electronically once agreement achieved.

Item 6: The budget had been examined and signed off by a Board sub-committee.

Item 6: Board expressed some concerns about the present hyperlink to a software company from the IWF web site. Chief Executive explained the background and that following the web site update, the final layout was not as he had intended. Board members concluded that they supported the principle of such links but they should be clearly identified and separate from descriptive elements. There should also be links to independent assessment of the software and the nature of the link to a software company and any potential benefits to IWF should be openly described.

Item 6: Executive updated Board with regard to Newsgroup issues. The Panel had met and considered previous legal advice and the implementation of the newsgroup names policy. In accordance with agreed policy, the Hotline team were currently monitoring a tranche of "marginal" newsgroups in order to establish their content and context. Further legal advice had been commissioned and Panel to meet in late June and report to the July Board meeting. Board were notified that the CRB had replied to the request for checks on staff and Board members. John O'Brien, the Director, had determined that only Hotline staff would be eligible for checks and these would be a Standard disclosure. Board noted that any individual could obtain a disclosure about the data held on them via the DPA.

ACTION: Secretariat to write to Home Office urging a change in CRB policy to upgrade all IWF hotline and associated staff and Board members to Enhanced disclosures.

Item 4 – Chair's report

Chair introduced his report, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting. The meeting noted that the new Home Office Minister is Paul Goggins. Chair noted a request that he include information in his report about any international events.

Item 5 – Chief Executive's report

The Chief Executive introduced his paper, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting. He identified a number of important developments and potential partnerships, which would result in improved IWF efficiency, increased fund income and some important public relations opportunities.

(a) Subscribers

Board members noted the additional subscribers and present discussions the Chief Executive was having with potential members. Chair acknowledged the significant increase in membership subscriptions but reminded the Board that it was likely EU funding for the IWF would decrease in future years.

(b) Draft Corporate Plan

Board considered the draft plan, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting. In answer to questions the Chief Executive confirmed that he saw the document as a dynamic, rolling programme. Board welcomed the Corporate Plan as a key working document and suggested a number of amendments.

ACTION: The Chief Executive asked for any further comments on the draft plan to be made directly to him.

Board agreed to change the order of the agenda and the Chief Executive and Chair withdrew from the meeting with Mark Stephens taking the Chair for the next item.

Item 8 – IWF Review

(c) Chair of IWF Board

(i) Comparison of job descriptions:

Following discussions, Board concluded that the new Chair job description was not substantially different from the current version.

(ii) Chair appointment process:

It was noted that without the second Vice-chair present the meeting was no longer quorate. It was agreed that a vote would be taken and reported to the Chair who would call for a further vote on a motion. Mark Stephens made the following proposal, which was seconded by Howard Lamb:

“The present Chair be reappointed for 3 years for a second term, that term commencing 1st January 2003”

The motion was carried nem. con.

The Chief Executive and Chair rejoined the meeting. The vote was reported to the Chair who called for a further vote in order to ratify the resolution above and this was carried nem.con.

Item 6 – Income generation – IWF policy on appropriate funding

Chair referred to the paper, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting and asked for comments. Members concluded that the final section in the paper presented some useful guidelines but decisions may have to be taken by the Chief Executive on a case by case basis with a key consideration being the likely impact on the reputation of the IWF. Board to be consulted if there is any uncertainty. Board welcomed the wider use of the IWF logo but considered the need for the executive to set clear guidelines for its use by other companies.

Item 7 – Strategic report on mobile internet access

Board discussed the issues raised, noting the recommendations, particularly those which could help form the agenda for an IWF technical appointment.

Item 8 – IWF Review

a) ii) IWF Constitution

A number of amendments were agreed and, subject to these amendments, the draft was approved.

a) iii) Board members Handbook

A number of amendments were agreed and, subject to these amendments, the draft was approved.

8 b) Code of Practice – consultation responses

Board members noted the range of responses and asked that these be taken into account at the next Code Working Group meeting.

ACTION: Code WG meeting to be arranged.

Item 9 – Any other business

In answer to a question the Chief Executive confirmed that charitable status was identified as a strategic issue in the draft Corporate Plan under the accountability section.

Item 10 – Date of next meeting – The next Board meeting will take place on the morning of Tuesday 22nd July 2003.

The meeting closed at 3-20 pm.