

## **Minutes of Internet Watch Foundation Board Meeting**

At London School of Economics, Room V1101, Tower 2, St Clements Lane, London  
on Thursday 7th November 2002 at 11.30 am

**Present:** Roger Darlington (Chair), Emma Ascroft, Charlotte Aynsley, John Carr, Howard Lamb, Sonia Livingstone, Claire Milne, Roland Perry, Jim Reynolds, Camille de Stempel, Mark Stephens (joined the meeting later),  
**IWF Staff:** Peter Robbins (Chief Executive), Brian Wegg  
**Apologies:** None

### **Item 1- Apologies and introduction**

The Chair welcomed Charlotte Aynsley to her first IWF Board meeting and thanked Sonia Livingstone for hosting the two-day meeting. There were no apologies and Mark Stephens would be joining the meeting shortly.

### **Item 2 - Minutes of last Meeting**

Board approved the minutes of the last meeting held on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> July 2002.

### **Item 3 - Matters Arising**

Item 3(i) The meeting noted that the review of the 48-hour notification delay for UK material was ongoing and the Chief Executive reported on his discussions with police. Board members stressed the importance of this issue and a report on progress would be received as a matter arising at the next meeting. The Code of Practice will need to reflect the outcome of the review on this issue.

**ACTION:** Board asked Camille de Stempel to prepare a presentation on web based groups for the next Board meeting.

Item 4(a) In the light of Dr Tim Drye's presentation to Board, members felt the web site reference to DataTalks's independent review must stress the sound methodology and the statistically random basis, independent of content, that was used to select files for newsgroup monitoring. The executive needs to ensure that there is periodic independent review built into the policy application.

Item 7 ACTION: IWF Secretariat to ensure all consultees receive copies of our Working Group reports.

Item 9(a) The meeting noted the legal advice with regard to IWF notifying third parties of URLs which contain illegal content. A number of related issues still needed clarification and a further paper outlining a proposed approach would be brought to a future Board meeting.

### **Item 4 – Chair's report**

Chair introduced his report and invited questions. In answer to a query the Chair pointed out that he had consulted all Board members about a replacement on the Board from the Education sector and the majority had been in favour. The term of the new appointment is subject to the outcome of the current review.

### **Item 5 – Chief Executive's report**

The Chief Executive introduced his paper, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting and invited questions.

Chief Executive clarified the IWF's financial position pointing out that although the Home Office grant last financial year had been used for specific projects, the money had saved the IWF. He stressed that he had made putting the IWF on to a more viable financial footing one of his highest priorities and the projected cash flow indicated an improved position with only a small deficit likely as the financial year closes.

The Chief Executive pointed out the changes, which he had made in order to ensure an effective Hotline and a more robust organisation. The successful implementation of the newsgroup policies and the DataTalk review had reduced the workload in regular newsgroup monitoring substantially but over the last year the number of reports received by the Hotline had risen from 872 in a month to a current figure of 2366 per month.

Some Board members found the additional information previously provided about press coverage of the IWF helpful.

**ACTION:** a) Board to receive a regular report on IWF web site hits  
b) Executive to investigate the options and costs of a media reporting system.

In answer to a question the Chief Executive pointed out that the IWF had already introduced a more formal approach to staff appointments and checks. Counselling was carried out regularly and was available to staff at any time on request. The Chief Executive said that yesterday's additional paper on staff issues, which had been tabled, was a valuable contribution to organisational development but he did not want Board members to believe we were unaware of these issues and doing none of them. Some of the proposals in yesterday's paper were ideals, which the IWF should aspire to and Board must eventually take a view on but Board must be aware of how difficult it would be to achieve all of them unless substantial additional funding was made available. The meeting noted that the Chief Executive had already implemented a number of the planned changes in personnel and organisational practice.

Board noted the new IWF website which had been developed as sponsorship for the IWF by KAN, a Cambridge based consultancy, and the free communications consultancy report which had been completed by staff from Standard Life. Board asked to be kept informed of any developments on a communications strategy, including a presentation at a Board meeting.

## **Item 6 – Working Groups next stages**

The following timetable was agreed for each of the Working Groups:

1. Allow around 10 days to respond to issues and fine tune draft reports
2. Circulate final draft to all consultees, including external
3. Receive comments by 16<sup>th</sup> December 2002
4. Amend and issue final reports by mid- January 2003

Chair and Chief Executive would meet the DTI and Home Office in order to raise all the issues identified in yesterday's discussions where an input was required from government. A list of the issues to be raised would be circulated to Chairs of Working Groups.

Chair felt that the final draft reports should be made available on the web site as a link from the meeting notes of the 6<sup>th</sup> November. Board members were asked to try and avoid a repeat of some of the difficulties which had occurred in the past through debates via email on list server.

The Chair and Chief Executive withdrew from the meeting for the last two items and Mark Stephens took the Chair.

### **Item 7 – Feedback on Chair’s appraisal**

Board acknowledged the feedback document issued by the Vice-Chairs and the self-appraisal carried out by the Chair. The meeting noted that there was no process in place to review the Chair’s performance and acknowledged the work which had been carried out in order to develop an appropriate approach. Following further discussion the meeting concluded that:

- An appraisal process should be in place for the Chair
- Annual targets should be set
- The self-appraisal was a valuable contribution to the process but its circulation should be restricted to the immediate appraisers
- At present the two Vice-chairs were the most appropriate appraisers
- The Governance Working Group should pick up the process issues raised, including the role of the Board in the appraisal

### **Item 8 – Chair of IWF Board**

Board noted the paper circulated by the Chair. In order to avoid pre-empting any outcome from the current IWF review the following way forward was agreed with regard to the post of IWF Chair:

- (i) It was unanimously agreed that the Chair’s present contract is extended until the end of September 2003.
- (ii) The Chair should withdraw from any Governance Working Party discussion, which is solely about the role of the IWF Chair. That said, the Chair will be entitled to make appropriate written submissions to the Working Party on this topic.
- (iii) If following review a new or revised job description for the Chair is approved by the Board then a comparison will be carried out and the Board will consider any differences and conclude whether they consider them significant. Before which decision the Chair shall be afforded the opportunity to make representations as to his view as to the substantiality of the alterations. The final decision on whether any changes are significant will be that of the Board excluding the Chair’s vote.
- (iv) If the new job description is considered to contain significant alterations then the post will be advertised with the existing post holder able to apply if they wish to do so.
- (v) If the Chair’s job description is not significantly changed by Board then a decision will be taken on whether to offer the existing post holder a further three-year term of office based on assessment of the Chair’s performance.

### **Item 9 – Any other business**

There was no additional business.

### **Item 10 – Date of next meeting – Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> February 2003**

The meeting closed at 1-50 pm.