

NOTE OF THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT ART ADVISORY GROUP MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 25 JUNE 2008

Present: Robin Harper MSP, Chair
Ted Brocklebank MSP
Patricia Ferguson MSP
Fiona McDougall Art Curator / Exhibitions Manager

In attendance: Ruth McPake (Minutes)

Apologies: Liz Lochhead
Ian McKee MSP
Jeremy Purvis MSP

Minutes of last meeting

1. It was requested that the day of the meeting be rotated to give Members more opportunities to attend.

ACTION: Art Curator / Exhibitions Manager to amend date of next meeting, alternate dates of future meetings and monitor attendance with view to revising future dates if necessary.

Canongate Wall

2. An addition to the Canongate Wall to mark the 10th anniversary was discussed. It was noted that none of the existing quotes are by female writers and that north-east Doric is not currently represented.

The Group also discussed a number of other possible writers for consideration, including Sorley MacLean, Robert Fergusson, Charles Murray and John Milne.

It was suggested that the public should be involved at constituency level and that all MSPs should have the opportunity to be involved in encouraging their constituents to make suggestions relevant to their local area, which could be presented to the selection panel. It was suggested that the Scottish Poetry Library and the Story Telling Centre may be appropriate partners for the project.

ACTION: Art Curator / Exhibitions Manager to draft project proposal and circulate to all members of Group for comments and input.

Creative Residency

3. The Group discussed the SPCB's decision to look at proposals to be developed by the Group for a three year Creative Residency programme. Focusing on the proposal for year one of the residency, resulting in a piece of work for the landscaped area, the group discussed approaching a preferred artist or group of artists. The group was in agreement that the residency should be developed as an opportunity for an artist at an earlier stage in their career.

It was suggested that the proposal should include scope for seeking sponsorship, and that a full proposal should be drafted and circulated in order to be ready for consideration by SPCB.

The decision was taken to involve some external expertise in the decision making process, possibly a representative from Creative Scotland. The Group was keen not to narrow the possible artistic outcome by inviting advisors from any particular field of art.

It was noted that the Group had concerns over the integrity of the architecture if the final piece was to be a permanent addition to the grounds and it was agreed that architectural integrity would need to be considered and represented in the decision process.

The Group was in full agreement that the brief should be as flexible as possible with no commitment to the work being a permanent fixture in the Parliament, but rather leaving scope for a temporary installation.

ACTION: Art Curator / Exhibitions Manager to draft project proposal and circulate to all members of Group for comments and input.

Purchase Offer

4. The Group noted the offer to purchase from a current exhibition but while they noted that the artist should be considered for inclusion in the Parliament's Art Collection, it was agreed not to progress a purchase from the remaining works in the show. It was agreed to respond to the gallery suggesting that they may be interested in the future and noting that it would be useful to have prior warning of exhibitions.

ACTION: Art Curator / Exhibitions Manager to advise Chief Executive's Office of Group's views.

Feedback from SPCB

5. Feedback was provided from the SPCB meeting regarding their endorsement of the Group's recommendation not to purchase the Mary Queen of Scots statue for the landscaped areas.

It was noted that the SPCB had asked the Art Advisory Group to strengthen the Acquisition and Disposal Policy to make it clear that only artworks being commissioned by the Parliament would be placed in the landscaped areas. It was noted that this was entirely appropriate given the approach to delivering a world-class architectural setting for the new Parliament. The Chair asked the Art Curator / Exhibitions Manager to circulate a note of this strengthening and clarification of the policy to all members of the Group for consideration.

ACTION: Art Curator / Exhibitions Manager

Dates for visits

6. The Group agreed to visit a number of sites over two dates in July / August.

ACTION: Art Curator / Exhibitions Manager to contact sites and to circulate dates.

Exhibition Proposal

7. This was moved to the agenda for the next meeting.

Date of next meeting

8. Tuesday 23 September, 13.00