



IRISH EQUITY AGM 2013

The President Pdraig Murray opened the meeting by welcoming all in attendance especially Patricia King SIPTU Vice-President and our guests from Equity UK Stephen Spence Deputy General Secretary (in place of General Secretary Christine Payne who was taken ill and could not travel), Malcolm Sinclair President and Louis Rolston, member of the Northern Ireland Council.

The minutes of the 2011 meeting were read and adjusted as follows

1. Adjust Vinnie McCabe's remarks on the hardship fund to refer to a time limit on the payment of benefit not a limit on the amount.
2. The reference to 2010 to be changed to 2011
3. Delete Dick O Leary's name once from the list of elected representatives as it appears twice
4. In reference to Sharon Coade, Will Irvine and Ann Russell remove the word elected as they were co-opted after the meeting.

The minutes as adjusted were adopted on a proposal from Nuala Kelly and seconded by Vinnie McCabe.

Rynagh O Grady responded to a question from Laurence Foster on AARO progress on the copyright issue by explaining that AARO are awaiting the publication of the review.

There were no other matters arising.

The President made his address and referenced motion 3 from last years AGM. He outlined the process of co-operation between Equity UK and SIPTU, the work of the subcommittee, the work with FIA and the international solidarity measures being taken. The president also thanked the Executive, the Equity Vice-President and the staff of the union for their work on behalf of actors throughout the year. He made a special mention for Laurence Foster who is not going forward for election for the Executive this year due to personal circumstances.

The Vice-President Gerry O Brien addressed the meeting and made reference to the undervalued status of actors in society and the difference of the acting profession from other professions. He also urged to meeting to continue with the struggle for improving the circumstances of actors outlining that it is only collectively that progress can be made.

The SIPTU Vice-President addressed the meeting and covered the issues raised last year. She outlined that the communications issues had been addressed and that SIPTU has engaged a London lawyer to pursue our complaint to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) on the Competition Authority position of preventing the union from collectively bargaining. The Vice-President also referenced the 2012 motion, the joint process with the UK and progress to date with actor's agreements. She then went on to outline the Equity engagement with the Department of Social Protection, the Arts Council and the meeting with the Minister for Arts, Heritage

and the Gaeltacht set for 7th November. The Vice-President finished by thanking Irish Equity members for their participation in the 1913 lockout commemorations.

The Sectoral Organiser Karan O Loughlin gave her presentation based on the content of the report handed out at the meeting (this can be read here in the member only section also). She emphasised the need for a redistribution of the payment structure in any new agreement to allow for the payment of royalties and usage fees. She also advised the meeting that agreement had been reached with SPI to apply the PACT agreement to all UK PACT productions being done in Ireland. SPI also now accept that any agreement for actors will have to include the payment of royalties and usage fees. The Sector Organiser concluded by thanking the President, Vice-President, Executive and union staff for their co-operation and work during the year.

The Guest Speakers then addressed the meeting.

Malcolm Sinclair, President Equity UK, referred to the current UK/Ireland process and spoke in support of the initiative saying he believed progress was being made. He urged members of Irish Equity to persist and participate.

Stephen Spence, Deputy General Secretary, Equity UK spoke about the status of actors in society and societies relationship to art. He outlined that although actors were different from other professions they were workers nonetheless and needed to be represented as such. Stephen also referred to the motion, the current process and the work of the sub-committee. He spoke in support of the current initiative and also urged those present to support the process.

Louis Rolston, member of the Equity Northern Ireland Council gave a brief address outlining his belief that progress had been made and prevailed upon those present to participate.

In thanking the guests and in view of the commemorative year that 2013 is for the trade union movement in Ireland, the President presented the UK guests with the book and DVD of Strumpet City, the book having been signed by the President, Bryan Murray and SIPTU Vice-President, Patricia King. As Louis Rolston was a late edition to the meeting the President presented him with a 1913 commemorative pack.

Elections

Padraig Murray was elected unopposed for the position of President.
Gerry O'Brien was elected unopposed for the position of Vice-President.

The following members were elected to the Executive

Elaine Reddy
Dick O Leary
Ann Russell
Bryan Murray
Sharon Coade
Will Irvine
Freda King

It was agreed that the Executive could co-opt other members for the 3 remaining places.

The following members were elected as Trustees

Eimear Morrissey
Annette Kelly
Ronnie Masterson

The following members were elected on to the Appeals Committee

Laurence Foster
Ann Kent
Kathleen Barrington

Under Any Other Business

Rynagh O'Grady raised the following issues

- An appeal for case studies for AARO on the effect of the Competition Authority position on the Industry
- The status of actors is unravelled by integration in to a scheme like TUS
- The input of members to the union directly affects the outcome. Members should be urging actors to join the union to give us power in numbers.

One member raised the issue of the Social Protection position on gross earnings versus net received pay after agent fees.

There then followed a robust discussion on the motion of 2012, the Equity UK position and the current collaborative process that is underway. There was an exchange of views as to whether the current process was in line with the motion. Equity UK advised the meeting that it did not have the capacity to represent actors in the Republic of Ireland and instead wished to support SIPTU in their efforts to rebuild Irish Equity. The President advised the meeting that there was to be another AGM on Palm Sunday, April 13th, 2014 at which progress would be reported and another general meeting this time next year to further evaluate the process.

Vinnie McCabe raised the issue of correspondence to the membership arising from the 2012 meeting and agreed on the request of the President to refer this matter for discussion by the Executive. The President agreed to inform Vinnie of the outcome of these discussions.

The President thanked everyone for attending, including the invited guests and that concluded the business of the meeting.