

Irish Equity Annual General Meeting March 29th 2015, Liberty hall Theatre

The meeting was opened by the outgoing President Padraig Murray who welcomed everybody and held a minutes silence in remembrance of the deceased members. The president then went on to outline the procedures for the meetings and invited participants to sign up for FIA events taking place in Liberty Hall in June.

The minutes of the Previous AGM of April 13th 2014 were read as were the minutes from the general meeting held on November 2nd 2014. Both sets of minutes were adopted on a proposal from Nuala Kelly and seconded by Siobhan Harty.

Matters Arising

Rynagh O Grady asked about the newsletter and the issuing of information from the Executive meetings and said this the newsletter was not really what had been envisioned by the request for information from the executive meetings. The meeting agreed that after each meeting a list of attenders and the agenda items discussed would be circulated to members.

Rynagh also asked about the development of the policy for the Arts & Culture Sector and the Sector organiser informed the meeting that the heads of policy had been developed and the policy motions from this AGM would form part of the body of that policy.

The President then made his address outlining the work of the union to date, the issues of priority and calling for unity of purpose and direction as well as support for the policy making motions set forth on the agenda.

The business of the meeting then moved to the presentation of motion number 1 which was moved by Alan Howley.

That the membership repeal the motion passed at the AGM 2012 which sought to remove Irish Equity from membership of SIPTU and affiliate ourselves with Equity in the UK.

This motion was formally seconded by Stephen Tadgh. As there were no speakers to the motion and motion was put to a vote and carried with 5 against and 3 abstentions.

The Sectoral Organiser then gave her report and responded to a number of questions and clarifications on same.

The business of the meeting then moved to the presentation of motion number 2 which was moved by Gerry O Brien on behalf of the Executive Committee.

We call on the AGM to instruct the executive committee to ensure that all agreements entered in to on behalf of the membership make provision for the equitable remuneration for the exploitation of the performers work and implements fully the protections afforded to professional performers under the Irish Copyright Legislation.

This motion was seconded by Pat McGrath and the mover responded to a number of queries and clarifications. The motion was then put to a vote and carried unanimously.

Motion number 3 was moved by Eimear Morrissey on behalf of the Executive Committee.

We the Executive call on the AGM to adopt as policy the inclusion of an auditing clause in any future agreement containing royalties and residuals fees so as to allow for the auditing of production companies, national and international, to ensure that the returns of the production companies are correct and payments are in line with the agreements negotiated with the union.

This motion was seconded by Pdraig Murray and carried unanimously.

Motion number 4 was moved by Ann Russell on behalf of the Executive Committee.

We the Executive call on the AGM to ensure as a matter of policy that the union is provided with the budget and resources to put in place the administrative structure necessary to track, implement and protect our rights nationally and internationally, when contracts that provide for equitable remuneration for the exploitation of the performers work have been achieved.

This motion was seconded by Gerry O'Brien who responded to some questions and clarifications. The motion was then put to a vote and carried with 6 abstentions.

Motion number 5 was moved by Gerry O'Brien on behalf of the Executive Committee and formally seconded by Sharon Coade.

We the Executive call on the AGM to adopt as policy the intention to pursue through the courts of this, or any other jurisdiction, any action necessary to protect the rights of the performer as enshrined in any agreement negotiated by the union, where those rights are breached

There was an addendum also proposed by Gerry O'Brien and seconded by Denis Conway to add the following to the motion;

To this end we also call on the meeting to agree to the retention of the services of a legal firm specialising in international copyright and performance law to advise Equity as necessary in its negotiation of an agreement for its purpose and that will allow for equitable remuneration of the artist's work both nationally and internationally.

The addendum was put to the vote and unanimously carried. The full motion including the addendum was then put to the vote reading as follows;

We the Executive call on the AGM to adopt as policy the intention to pursue through the courts of this, or any other jurisdiction, any action necessary to protect the rights of the performer as enshrined in any agreement negotiated by the union, where those rights are breached. To this end we also call on the meeting to agree to the retention of the services

of a legal firm specialising in international copyright and performance law to advise Equity as necessary in its negotiation of an agreement for purpose and that will allow for equitable remuneration of the artist's work both nationally and internationally.

This motion was unanimously carried.

Motion number 6 was moved by Pdraig Murray on behalf of the Executive Committee.

In order to have the decisions and policies made by the Irish Equity membership at their AGM provided with the same status as SIPTU policy decisions, the Executive Committee of Irish Equity call upon the AGM to put a motion to the Arts & Culture Sector that one of their motions will be allocated to Irish Equity for each SIPTU biennial conference so that decisions from the Equity AGM may go forward to the SIPTU national conference for adoption as policy.

On a proposal from Rynagh O Grady and seconded by Barry McGovern the motion was adjusted to change ***“the Executive Committee of Irish Equity call upon the AGM to put a motion to the Arts & Culture Sector”*** to read ***“the AGM of Irish Equity call upon the Executive Committee to put a motion to the Arts & Culture Sector”***

The adjustment was put to the vote and unanimously carried. The full motion including the addendum was then put to the vote reading as follows;

In order to have the decisions and policies made by the Irish Equity membership at their AGM provided with the same status as SIPTU policy decisions, the AGM of Irish Equity call upon the Executive Committee to put a motion to the Arts & Culture Sector that one of their motions will be allocated to Irish Equity for each SIPTU biennial conference so that decisions from the Equity AGM may go forward to the SIPTU national conference for adoption as policy.

This motion was unanimously carried.

Motion number 7 was moved by Billy Traynor.

Given the status of artists relative to other workers and many methods that they employ so as to be working such as creating their own productions, engaging agents and seeking out work themselves, the AGM call on the Executive to engage with the Department of Arts Heritage & the Gaeltacht and the Department of Social Protection with a view to creating a greater understanding of the working life of actors, and to agreeing the appointment of a formal liaison that would work within and between the Departments and with Irish Equity to prevent the harassment of actors at their local employment offices.

This motion was formally seconded by Stephen Tadgh and there was a discussion about the wording and intent of the motion. On a proposal by Glenda which was seconded by Eimear

Morrissey the line ***“to agreeing the appointment of a formal liaison that would work within and between the Departments and with Irish Equity to prevent the harassment of actors at their local employment offices*** was adjusted to read ***to agreeing the appointment of a formal liaison that would work within and between the Departments and with Irish Equity to ensure respect and dignity of actors at their local employment offices.***

This adjustment was put to the vote and carried so the motion reading as follows was put to the vote;

Given the status of artists relative to other workers and many methods that they employ so as to be working such as creating their own productions, engaging agents and seeking out work themselves, the AGM call on the Executive to engage with the Department of Arts Heritage & the Gaeltacht and the Department of Social Protection with a view to creating a greater understanding of the working life of actors, and to agreeing the appointment of a formal liaison that would work within and between the Departments and with Irish Equity to ensure respect and dignity of actors at their local employment offices.

This motion was unanimously carried.

Motion number 8 was moved by Pauline Cadell.

That the AGM calls on the Executive Committee to pursue as a matter of policy the payment of at least Equity rates by Film Companies and Theatre Companies who are publicly funded.

This motion was formally seconded by Siobhan Harty and unanimously carried.

Motion number 9 was moved by Eimear Morrissey on behalf of the Executive Committee.

That this Annual General Meeting of Irish Equity sends members of Equity Northern Ireland solidarity and support in opposing the dreadful cuts to the arts, particularly to theatre now being proposed in Northern Ireland’s cultural sector. Cuts of this nature on live performance, either side of the border, affect the cultural industries across the island, with the potential to damage both economies and threaten recorded media activity in television and film, by reducing the critical mass of work opportunities that allows performers to develop and grow their skills and expertise. Irish Equity supports the call Equity Northern Ireland has made to Members of the Northern Ireland Assembly to intervene before the cuts are implemented and establish a moratorium, to allow a longer term examination of the impact of these cuts.

This motion was formally seconded by Elaine Reddy and carried with one abstention.

The business of the meeting then moved on to the Elections.

Padraig Murray was re-elected President of the union unopposed.

Gerry O Brien was re-elected Vice President of the union unopposed.

The following members were elected to the Executive Committee unopposed.

1. Eimear Morrissey
2. Ann Russell
3. Bob Kelly
4. Stephen Tadgh
5. Elaine Reddy
6. Brian Murray
7. Sharon Coade
8. Freda King
9. Dick Leary

The President thanked outgoing committee member Will Irvine for his work with the union and explained that Will do not go forward for the Executive due to pressures of work. It was agreed that the remaining place would remain available for the Executive to fill by co-option.

It was agreed that the existing trustees and appeals board would be returned also.

As a matter of any other business Laurence Foster raised the issue of RTE archive Rights and the meeting was informed that the Committee had twice written to RTE on this matter as was actively pursuing it.

Denis Conway noted that it was a positive development that the union was now united in purpose and that the set of policy motions passed at the meeting was quite historic. He also noted that a slippage in purpose in the future however could see a return of the same demands again.

That concluded the business of the meeting.