
MINUTES of the BOARD MEETING
Held on Tuesday 28th July 2020 at 10.30 a.m.
Via Video Conference Call

Present: Lord Edward Faulks (Chairman)
Rick Hill
Anne Lapping
Matthew Lohn
Ian MacGregor
Charles McGhee
Mehmuda Mian
Ruth Sawtell
Claire Singers
Martin Trepte
Charlie Wilson

Attending: Charlotte Dewar – Acting Chief Executive
Vikki Julian – Communications Manager
Michelle Kuhler – PA/minute taker
Tonia Milton – System and Office Manager
Lauren Sloan - Joint Head of Complaints

Observers: Brendan McGinty, New Board Member
Charles Garside, New Board Member
Edward Gray, New Board Member
Lara Fielden, Committee Member

1. Welcome and Apologies

There were apologies received from Barry McIlheney.

2. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 23 June 2020 were approved.

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Chairman's Report - oral

The Chairman informed the Board that it was the last meeting for Rick Hill, Anne Lapping, Charles McGhee and Charlie Wilson and thanked them on behalf of the members of the Board and staff for their contributions. He also expressed gratitude to them for their personal support through some difficult times since his start at IPSO.

The Chairman welcomed as observers and new Board members Lara Fielden, Edward (Eddie) Gray, Charles Garside and Brendan McGinty.

He noted that the recruitment for the Head of Standards and Regulation would shortly resume and that IPSO's finances continued to be in a good position.

The Chairman finished by informing the Board that it would shortly be announced that he would be leading an independent inquiry on the judicial review system.

6. Acting Chief Executive's Report

The Acting Chief Executive introduced her report with an update on recruitment. After an effective hiring freeze for several months, the recruitment of the Head of Standards and Regulation would shortly resume, as would recruitment of a new Complaints Committee member to replace Lara Fielden. She thanked Claire Singers for her assistance in making suggestions about new places to advertise to reach a more diverse pool of candidates.

She informed the Board that the Staff Survey for the second quarter had shown significant improvement in virtually all areas, particularly on communication. She thanked the management team for all their hard work and noted that management training had been very helpful. She emphasised the need to maintain the improvements and improve further.

She update the Board on progress with preparing for publication research commissioned by IPSO on reporting of trans issues. After a pause due to Covid, the Executive proposed to resume this work.

The Board noted the report and agreed that the Executive should resume work preparing for publication of the trans research.

7. Complaints Report

The Head of Complaints updated the Board on complaint statistics and noted that complaints volume had been very high, with large numbers of complaints relating to Covid-19 and Black Lives Matter. She explained operational steps taken to address the impact on the staff.

She explained that new checks had been brought into effect to improve quality control, on a weekly and monthly basis. This would soon be supplemented by a restoration of external quality checks.

The Board noted the report.

8. External Affairs Report

The Head of Communications introduced her report, flagging up work done to engage with organisations on domestic violence.

She noted that the new business plan gave priority to two communications areas: promoting the mark and harassment services. These would be the focus for the remainder of the year.

The Board noted the report.

9. Risk Reporting at IPSO

The Acting Chief Executive introduced the report, which outlined proposed changes to IPSO's risk management processes, including a revised risk register.

The Board welcomed and approved the proposed risk policy and agreed to adopt the new approach, subject to some amendments.

The Acting Chief Executive then updated the Board on operations during Covid-19. She noted that there were no intentions to return all staff to the office in the immediate future, but she was in the process of making preparations for more staff to return on an individual basis.

The Systems and Office Manager presented to the Board a risk assessment conducted on office working and Covid-19. She noted that staff had had input into the plans from the start. She also provided feedback on the thoughts and feelings from staff on returning to the office.

The Board noted the report and measures taken and proposed.

10. Finance and Performance Reports

The Acting Chief Executive updated on the Board on IPSO's financial position. She noted that cash flow remained strong and IPSO continued to make its targeted cost savings.

She introduced a redesigned performance report, based on the interim strategy approved by the Board.

The Board noted the reports.

11. Report from Audit and Risk Committee

The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee, Matthew Lohn, introduced the report and commented on the audit process.

He explained that the Audit and Risk Committee recommended that the Board review its choice of auditors in 2020.

The Board formally approved the 2019 draft accounts and letter of representation. It agreed to tender for new auditors.

12. Proposed guidance on the reporting of Islam and Muslims in the UK

The Chairman introduced the item and handed over to the Communications Manager, who gave a chronological update to the Board on IPSO's work on the guidance to date.

The Board discussed the process and proposed draft in depth. Board members provided their comments and feedback on the guidance.

The Board formally agreed that the Executive should proceed with preparing the guidance for publication.

13. Any other business

There was no other business.

14. Confidential item

All IPSO staff left the meeting.

15. Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as being on Tuesday 15 September 2020.

Michelle Kuhler
PA to Chairman and CEO