

TIMG Report No. 3 - August 2020

Introduction

In June 2018 National Council agreed to the establishment of a Governance Oversight Group, now called the Transition Implementation Monitoring Group (TIMG), to act as an independent group for an initial three-year period to oversee the implementation of the governance proposals adopted by National Council in October 2018.

The TIMG is to monitor and report on progress on implementing the governance changes every 6 months.

The TIMG is not involved whatsoever regarding any other matters being considered by the Board of Directors and is not responsible for evaluating the performance of the board or any individual directors. Its primary function is to act as an independent group to report on the implementation of the governance proposals by the Board of Scouting Ireland from October 2018 to October 2021 to ensure that they are being implemented in accordance with the spirit of the support papers presented to National Council in support of the proposals and, to report on progress to the members of the company and other key stakeholders.

TIMG Membership

The membership of this group comprises:

1. A former National Officer of Scouting Ireland or the former associations – Martin Burbridge.
2. Two independent persons who understand how Boards of not for profit charitable organisations/companies should work – Jerry Kelly and Sean Coughlan.
3. Up to two other independent persons to be co-opted to the group to ensure that it collectively has the necessary skills, capabilities, and experience to undertake this role effectively – Nicky Bowman

The TIMG may adopt its own processes and procedures consistent with the duties assigned to it.

TIMG Methodology

In preparing this report the TIMG carried out a very detailed review of the Governance proposals approved by National Council on 6 October 2018 to determine whether or not, the proposals have been faithfully implemented. The TIMG sent a list of questions on every section of the governance proposals support paper together with a list of documents required by the TIMG to the Board in April 2020

The Board responded directly to the TIMG's questions in addition to providing a set of supporting documentation. In arriving at its conclusions, the TIMG has also taken into consideration the report carried out by Ms B McManus on behalf of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs.

The TIMG has reviewed the comprehensive answers and documents received from the Board in arriving at the conclusions set out below.

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TIMG Conclusions

1. It is important to acknowledge the difficult circumstances in which the Board of Directors had to work since taking office. There is no doubt that additional pressure has been added due to the Covid19 pandemic.
2. The TIMG can confirm that very substantial progress has been made in implementing the Governance proposals with regard to the formation of Board Subcommittees, development of policy documents and organisational restructure.
3. The TIMG has previously reported that it is concerned that there are a number of areas where the work of various sub-committees will overlap and may give rise to confusion. The Board has revisited the terms of reference of the sub-committees and core teams and has now combined some of them with a view to eliminating possible overlap and resultant confusion. However, the TIMG suggests that these arrangements need to be monitored on a frequent basis to ensure that they work as intended by the Board.
4. The Board has confirmed that they have met with the National Youth Representatives on a number of occasions and that work is underway to decide how best to proceed. The TIMG is of the view that establishing the National Youth Assembly, as set out in the governance proposals approved by the EGM on 6 October 2018, would be a better approach and would provide a more structured framework for developing new initiatives on Youth Empowerment.
5. The decision to appoint staff members to all Head of Department positions rather than initially have a mix of staff and volunteers differs from the GRG recommendation. The Board's reasons for doing so have been outlined in her report by Ms. McManus, however, the TIMG is still concerned that this will continue to be problematic and will need to be continuously monitored by the CEO and the Board.
6. In addition, the TIMG has concerns with implementing the softer elements of the proposals such as:
 - The Board leading the development of suitable structures to provide support to Scout Groups through County and Provincial Support Hubs. It is noted that a Working Group was recently put in place for a review of the Provincial Support hubs and a similar approach is needed to develop an appropriate County Support Structure also. It is of the utmost importance that the resulting structures are designed to provide services and support to Groups rather than to serve other purposes.
 - Working in a collegiate manner for example:

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- particularly through the Motions Committee, to ensure that Scout Group submissions can be tabled for discussion at general meetings of the company rather than being rejected on technicalities;
- ceasing the practice of some Board Members making public statements or appeals in their capacity as Board Members.
- the TIMG is pleased to note that a governance transition bulletin was issued recently and exhorts the Board to continue to communicate progress on transition implementation more frequently than heretofore.

The TIMG urges the Board of Directors and the members of the company to redouble efforts to work cohesively to ensure the transition implementation is completed effectively. It is also of critical importance to completion of the transition that the points raised by Ms. McManus are addressed satisfactorily without further delay.

TIMG Role

As stated in the introduction the primary function of the TIMG is to act as an independent group to report on the implementation of the governance proposals by the Board of Scouting Ireland. It was envisaged that this group would monitor implementation of the transition from October 2018 to October 2021.

However, the group is now of the view that it has served its purpose and would not be able to provide any further added value to the process by continuing to monitor implementation of the transition any longer.

Consequently, this is the final report of the TIMG.

Martin Burbridge Jerry J Kelly Nicky Bowman Sean Coughlan

24th August 2020