NOTE OF THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT ART ADVISORY GROUP MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY MARCH 26 2008

Present: Robin Harper MSP, Chair
Ted Brocklebank MSP
Liz Lochhead
Ian McKee MSP
Jeremy Purvis MSP
Fiona McDougall, Art Curator/ Exhibitions Manager

In attendance: Alan Rennie (Minutes)

Apologies: Patricia Ferguson MSP

Minutes of last meeting

1. The Chair reiterated the original decision regarding the Ronald Rae Lion by the previous Art Advisory Group and clarified the decision of the new SPCB to explore a loan of the granite lion, for display in its current venue in the grounds of Historic Scotland, for two – three years. He noted that a period of two years should be offered in the first instance. The Chair also confirmed that two of the external expert members of the group had resigned.

   Action: Art Curator / Exhibitions Manager to write to Ronald Rae’s representative with loan agreement for two year period.

Membership of Art Advisory Group

2. The Group was asked to offer suggestions for two new external members of the group, with the agreed recommendation that one of the new members should be sought from a national collections background, and that the other member be actively engaged as a practicing artist.

   It was agreed that National Galleries of Scotland should be contacted with a view to enquiring whether someone would like to sit on the Group. Suggestions were made for an artist member of the Group from within the artists represented in the Parliament Art Collection and it was agreed suggestions should be made to the Chair.

   Actions: Group to make suggestions for new artist members to the Chair in advance of the next Meeting.
Discussion of AAG Paper 2008/001

3. The Chair opened up a discussion of this paper, with regard to the status of the Art Collection, its constitution, the role of the Group, devolved funding, as well as the acquisition of art for pass-holder and office areas. Members sought further information on and discussed the following:

- Status of the Parliament Art Collection – a need for the Group to make recommendations to the SPCB with regard to, the need for a constitution, confirmation of its legal status, charitable status, membership of the Accreditation Scheme etc. **Action: Recommend to SPCB that they consider the current constitution and status of the Art Collection.**

- Provision of advice to MSPs – it was noted that there may be a need for clarity of where support and advice for MSPs may be sought, for instance, where they are offered loans of artworks by external individuals or institutions – the Art Curator confirmed that there was already an SPCB position on the display of art in MSP offices but that she would feed back the Group’s views via line management. The Group agreed they may further discuss the possible need for increased support and resources for MSPs in this area. **Action: Art Curator to seek advice from the Head of the Events and Exhibitions Team and report back.**

- Current remit of the Acquisition and Disposal Policy – the Group discussed possible ways of developing the policy. In addition to a need for creative thinking as part of its processes, some initial ideas mooted were a Holyrood Prize for young artists, working with partner libraries, an artist in residence programme. It was agreed to consider further as part of the review of the Acquisition Policy.

- Budgets of other parliaments – The Group discussed some comparative parliament collecting budgets, viewing this as a possible gauge for the Scottish Parliament acquisitions budget – it was noted that the budget under discussion was purely an acquisitions budget. It was further discussed that there would be benefit in requesting some additional budget towards supporting particular art projects they may wish to develop. The Group agreed that they would seek a budget from SPCB, primarily for acquisitions but also to support arts-related projects. **Action: Recommend to SPCB that they seek a dedicated budget for acquisitions and support.**

- ‘Easyart’ scheme - – The Art Curator explained what the scheme involved, promoting discussion of a potential successor. The Group
discussed ideas for a future scheme, highlighting a desire to include works of a similar standard to the publicly displayed Collection; ideas included the acquisition of limited edition prints or works by recent graduates. The Group agreed that any such works would be considered as part of the permanent collection.

Timescale for review of SPCB Acquisition and Disposal Policy

4. The Group were invited to agree a timescale for a review of the current status of the SPCB Acquisition and Disposal Policy, as well as for setting new priorities for collecting. The Group agreed to meet on two more meetings prior to the Summer Recess.

Action: Group to forward comments and suggestions with regard to the Acquisitions and Disposal Policy before the next meeting.

Acquisition and Loan Proposals from Members

5. The Group was invited to forward their comments on to the Chair, copying in the Art Curator, with further discussion required at forthcoming meetings. The outstanding proposals would be included as an agenda item for the next meeting. Action: Art Curator

It was noted that Fergus Ewing MSP had written to the Group to offer the loan of a portrait by David Donaldson of Winnie Ewing. The acquisition of portraits of distinguished former MSPs was in principle favoured by the Group, however it was recognised that location within the Scottish Parliament building should be at the discretion of the Group and the SPCB and not at the request of the lender. It was also agreed that in addition to subject-matter, works should be considered from the point of view of artistic merit for inclusion in the Parliament Collection. The Group agreed to start negotiations with Fergus Ewing MSP on borrowing the David Donaldson painting of Winnie Ewing. Action: Art Curator

Update from Art Curator / Exhibitions Manager

6. The Art Curator related to the Group the following:

- The public tours of the art collection would be launched later in the year; this tour would be an interim approach with other possibilities for art tours being developed in the future

- It was hoped that a publication on the Art Collection, to coincide with the Parliament’s 10th anniversary, would be launched later in the session
It was noted that a draft Emergency Plan for the Art Collection existed and that it would be developed and rolled out over the next six months.

**Any other business**

7. The Group discussed possible ideas to tie in with the 10th Anniversary of the Parliament and with the Year of Homecoming. One idea was the possibility of an outreach project or exhibition that recognised the achievements of Scots overseas. The Art Curator advised that the SPCB is currently looking at 2009, and will advise when consideration has been given. The Group wished it to be recorded that they would be keen on marking this anniversary in some way. **Action: Art Curator**

The Group requested that a complete set of dates for future meetings be issued through to the end of the year. **Action: Exhibitions Officer**

**Date of next meeting**

8. To be issued within the next fortnight. **Action: Exhibitions Officer**