NOTE OF THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT ART ADVISORY GROUP MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 7 FEBRUARY 2008

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

In attendance: Alan Rennie, Exhibitions Officer (Minutes)

Apologies: Richard Calvocoressi, Alison Watt

Appointment of Chair

1. The Art Curator invited the members to appoint a Chair for the group. After some discussion Robin Harper MSP was nominated, whereby Robin accepted.

Minutes of last meeting

2. Noted.

Induction for new members

3. By way of induction, the Art Curator provided information to members on the following:

- Governance of the art collection – the current position was described and it was noted.

- Funding for new acquisitions – the current position was noted and some examples of other Parliaments' annual budgets for acquisitions were provided. It was further noted that on 13 February 2007, the previous Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body (SPCB) had asked for any future proposals to be provided in the context of what would be an appropriate budget for this session.

- Acquisition Policy – the Art Curator provided information on the Acquisition and Disposal policy, including the 'mission statement', collecting areas and approach to gifts. It was noted that it would be useful to review the existing policy and agree key priorities for developing the collection in the context of a policy.
• **Pending Acquisitions** – Information was provided to the Group on the existing commitments, proposals and research that had been taken forward by the Art Curator on behalf of the previous Group. It was noted that two further proposals would require consideration by the Group in due course. One was a proposal put forward by a former member of the Group, and the other an unsolicited proposal by the representative of the sculptor Ronald Rae, which had been considered by the previous Group and the SPCB. The Group agreed to consider this offer under Discussion.

**Proposals for 2009**

4. The Art Curator suggested some proposals for the commissioning of new work in light of 2009 being the Parliament’s 10th anniversary and invited the Group to consider the anniversary and bring forward proposals at the next meeting.

**Action: All members**

**Discussion**

5. The Chair invited members of the Group to introduce themselves and give a short description of their background and interest in the arts.

6. The Chair opened the Meeting for discussion. Members sought further information on and discussed the following –

• Role of the group, procedural issues, whether the Group should appoint a Spokesperson to speak on behalf of the Group and media relations.

• It was noted that the Group fulfilled an advisory role to the SPCB.

• It was noted that an acquisition policy existed and it was suggested that the group needed to review this and agree overall priorities before making decisions about any individual proposals.

• It was emphasized that the Parliament art collection should be committed to representing Scotland’s leading artists and craftspeople.

• The Group sought further information on loans policy and the Art Curator provided clarification of current loans to Parliament, from both institutions and individuals. The resource implications of loans were also noted. It was agreed loans were a useful way to enhance the existing collection from time to time.
• The Group noted that the acquisition policy stated no obligation to accept gifts and noted that in order to shape the collection they should be initiating possibilities.

• There was a discussion of the rotation of the existing collection and it was noted there was a need to consider whether any new locations existed for artworks.

• It was noted that loans and rotation both had implications for storage resources.

**Action: All members**

7. It was noted that the SPCB had remitted all pending acquisitions to the new Art Advisory Group.

_Ian Hamilton Finlay_

The Group discussed the work of the previous Group in researching and negotiating an additional work for the collection by the late artist Ian Hamilton Finlay. The Group noted the status of the work with Ian Hamilton Finlay’s estate and the importance of this artist and of representing his work in the collection.

_Ronald Rae_

The Group were provided with background information on this further offer to acquire this piece and the Chair asked members to note the reasons for the decisions of the previous Art Advisory Group.

It was noted that the piece was being offered as a ‘free loan’ not as a gift.

Members of the Group noted the interest in this sculpture from both within and outwith the Parliament.

Various views were expressed, including concern about the offer not being solicited by the Parliament and that its acceptance could set a precedent which was not in keeping with the aims of the current acquisition policy, including for example a commitment to commissioning work in response to the architectural setting and commissioning work that responded to the unique nature of the Parliament as a newly devolved legislation.

The Group agreed to recommend to SPCB not to acquire the sculpture for the Parliament’s permanent collection or for display in the Parliament’s landscaped gardens. The Group also agreed that the Art Curator should
explore the possibility of it being retained for a further period in its current location and report back to the Group and SPCB.

**Action: Art Curator**

**Update from Art Curator**

8. Due to time constraints Art Curator agreed to update by correspondence.

**Action: Art Curator**

**Any other business**

9. The Group agreed to consider the existing Acquisition Policy and discuss at the next meeting. At the request of the Group, the Art Curator agreed to provide information on the Parliament’s Exhibitions Policy at the next meeting.

10. The Group noted that they wished to discuss possibilities for supporting graduate and postgraduate artists at the next meeting.

11. The Group agreed to discuss funding at the next meeting. It was noted that a paper on the status of the art collection and acquisitions would be going to SPCB in 2008.

**Action: Art Curator**

**Date of next meeting**

12. The Group agreed to meet again within one month.

**Action: Exhibitions Officer**