

MINUTES

Date of Meeting	15/02/2021	Ref	21/01/MO'D
Meeting	IBTS Board		
Present (Via Zoom)	Linda Hickey, Chairperson; Deirdre Cullivan; Brian O'Mahony; Dr Liz Kenny; Dr Sharon Sheehan; Deirdre Ann Barr; John Malone; David Gray, Dr Satu Pastila		
Apologies	Dr Sarah Doyle; Dr Ronan Desmond; Kate Williams		
In attendance	Orla O'Brien, Chief Executive; Dr Stephen Field, Medical & Scientific Director; Mirenda O'Donovan, Secretary to the Board		
#	Item	Notes/Action	
1.0	Welcome and apologies		
	The Chairperson welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted apologies from K Williams; Dr R Desmond and Dr Sarah Doyle.		
2.0	Conflicts of Interest		
	The Chairperson asked if anyone had a conflict of interest to declare in relation to today's agenda. No conflicts of interest were declared.		
3.0	Minutes of the Board meeting of 14th December 2020		
	The minutes of the Board meeting held on 14 th December 2020 were approved without amendment.		
4.0	Chief Executive's Report		
	The new format of the Chief Executive's Report was noted and the CE said that feedback from Board members on the format was welcome.		
4.1	Current significant issues		
	<i>COVID-19 response</i> – currently 4 positive cases and 9 staff on COVID related leave. At its peak 2% of staff tested positive. Staff have now registered for vaccine distribution on the HSE portal. Sick leave for 2020 was 5% The COVID/BCP group is still meeting on a weekly basis to monitor issues as they arise.		
	<i>NHO Governance arrangements</i> – a meeting was held with the HPRA at the end of November to progress this. The HPRA undertook to review the last draft of the agreement and send on their comments to the IBTS however, they were unable to do so and have asked instead that we review and update it at this time. The draft agreement is currently being reviewed and updated.		
	<i>Business Plan/Strategic Plan</i> – this is on the agenda as a substantive item, but there are currently 13 initiatives underway for Q1 of 2021.		
4.2	<i>Blood supply</i> – No major reduction in demand in the current lockdown. O negative issues remain very high at 14.7% of all blood issued.		
4.3	<i>Corporate</i> – a new PO has been appointed to the blood policy unit in the DoH. IBTS is seeking an introductory meeting in advance of the scheduled Governance meeting in March.		
4.5	<i>Risk Register</i> – the top risks were reviewed by the A,R&C Committee last week. There have been no issues for the IBTS re: Brexit to date.		
4.6	<i>Finance</i> – income for the first month of the year is down 12% on budget.		
4.7	<i>People and Culture</i> – IBTS has re-engaged with the recruitment specialists for the M&SD post. A report on annual leave carry over from 2020 was discussed. Staff turnover in 2020 was at 10.3%. The CEO noted that the Finance Committee have requested a quarterly		

	report on annual leave. The publication of the Government's policy on remote working for public sector employees was discussed.	
	<i>Environmental, Health and Safety</i> – there was a 40% drop in slips, trips and falls in 2020. A re-audit of the tissue bank laboratory is to commence shortly.	
4.8	<i>Regulatory</i> – there are 2 inspection reports from the HPRA – there were no major deficiencies and a number of other deficiencies and points to note. The IBTS response to the inspection reports has been submitted.	
4.9	<i>ICT issues</i> - contract has been signed for the managed ICT service and a supplier has been selected to work on the ICT strategy. New donors were down by 56% in 2020. The donor portal was discussed. The CEO explained that this could not be developed until the Semester Patch is implemented which is why an interim solution is being considered.	
4.10	<i>iLead</i> – another course is about to commence and the CEO advised that it was over subscribed. It was noted that this was very positive as it indicated a high degree of staff engagement.	
5.0	Medical & Scientific Director's Report	
5.1	<i>R&D</i> - ToRs for the R&D sub-committee have been amended. M&SD said these would now be reviewed by the Committee and if there are any proposed changes it would come back to the Board. The IBTS has joined the Blood Genomics Consortium which will be an important collaboration for the development of genotyping in transfusion medicine, particularly with recruiting donors of Afro-Caribbean descent to allow for better matching with Sickle Cell patients.	
5.2	<i>Pathogen Reduction</i> – this is now in procurement and will undergo a health economic analysis once the costs and impacts are clear.	
5.4	<i>Convalescent Plasma</i> – a grant of €1.9m has been received from the EC. A UK study published in January showed that CP had no material benefit to patients with late COVID-19 disease. The impact on patients with hospital-acquired COVID is now being examined. One unit of CP was collected in the NBC on Friday, however it did not have sufficient antibodies.	
5.5	Reintroduction of Irish plasma – NTAG will be utilised to carry out a consultation with clinicians on using Irish plasma. The CEO confirmed that the IBTS had not been contacted about assisting with the national vaccination programme and that a number of staff members had already commenced training to become vaccinators.	
6.0	Cork Centre Options appraisal	
7.0	Presentation on the BCP/Crisis communications planning	
7.1	R&RM joined the meeting for this item. The R&RM went through the presentation identifying the key elements of BCP currently active in the COVID-19 environment and the measures that have been put in place arising from previous experiences of real BCP events (Ex Hurricane Ophelia and the Beast from the East) as well as simulated exercises completed to test the BCP. The messaging system for urgent communications with staff via text and WhatsApp groups was also outlined. The Secretary to the Board outlined the role that social media and texts plays in direct communication with donors and the interested public. Late changes to clinic venues or opening times can	

	be communicated quickly and effectively to those impacted. The Secretary to the Board confirmed that direct messaging either through Twitter or FB is an increasingly favoured channel of communication from donors and that these communications channels are handled by marketing supported by Donor Services. The Chairperson thanked the R&RM and the Secretary to the Board for their presentation. The Chair of the A,R&CC added that the BCP and Emergency Response Plan would be reviewed as part of the Internal Audit schedule in July.	
8.0	Strategy Implementation Plan	
8.1	The CEO said that the Strategic Plan was currently with the DoH for comment and feedback before being prepared for publication. The implementation plan was presented with an emphasis on initiatives identified for commencement or commencement/completion in 2021. There are 101 initiatives in total, 17 of which will not be commenced until 2022. Progress will be reviewed on a quarterly basis. The Board acknowledged that this was an ambitious implementation plan and wished the CEO and senior management well with its progression.	
9.0	Business Plan 2021	
9.1	The CEO outlined the Business Plan for 2021. The 35 initiatives all identified come from the strategic plan. It was agreed that the CEO would strengthen the commitments to the green agenda. The plan was approved.	
11.0	Charities Regulator requirements	
11.1	The CEO reminded the Board that a private residential address for Trustees is a legal requirement under the Charities Act. The Secretary to the Board advised that this information would not be in the public domain and that she has been assured by the Charities Regulator that this information is retained securely by the Regulator. The Code of Conduct for Charity Trustees was approved and the Charities Governance Code Compliance Record was approved.	Charity Trustees Code of Conduct to be signed by each Board member and returned to the Secretary to the Board.
12.0	Code of Conduct for Board Members	
12.1	The Code of Conduct for Board Members was last revised and reviewed by the Board in November 2017 after the updated Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies was published. The Code of Conduct for Board Members was approved.	
13.0	Finance Committee meeting 28th October 2020	
13.1	Taken as read. D Cullivan briefed the Board on behalf of the Chairperson. The issue of Consultants back pay has been closed out. The operational deficit at year end was €1.74m. The C&AG has outsourced the external audit and this will commence in March. There was a shortfall of 12% in income for the first month of the year against budget. J Malone added that the year end deficit was worse than expected by approximately €800,000 against forecast €438k of which was due to the additional liability of increased carried over annual leave and the balance was a shortfall in the forecasted income.	

14.0	A,R&CC meeting 8th December 2020	
14.1	Taken as read. The Chairperson noted that Dr S Sheehan was welcomed as a new member to the Committee. Two audit reports were reviewed from the Internal Auditors findings for both were satisfactory with a small number of recommendations which have been accepted by management. IA tracker and outstanding items were discussed and a programme for implementation/close out has been agreed with management. Correspondence from OCAG on COVID-19 Guidance on internal controls was prepared by the FD and discussed by the Audit, Risk & Compliance Committee at its meeting last week. There were no major deficiencies arising from the HPRA inspections. The C&AG had no management issues to report for 2019. The Chair noted his thanks to the FD and his team for this outcome. The ToRs for the Committee have been revised and are currently being reviewed by the Internal Auditors before coming to the Board for approval.	
15.0	M&SAC meeting 9th November 2020	
15.1	Taken as read. The Chair advised the Board that the M&SAC are going to change the date of their meeting so that the Board can have sight of approved minutes in a timely manner. Pathogen Reduction is currently in procurement. The sero-prevalence study for COVID-19 among donors between February and September was discussed. The re-establishment of the Eye Bank project is ongoing. A patient transfusion leaflet is being looked at for plain English.	
16.0	AOB	
16.1	The Board were asked to consider changing the existing dates for Board meetings in April and November.	Secretary to the Board to circulate alternatives and confirm once agreed.
17.0	Date of next meeting	
17.1	The next meeting of the Board will take place on Monday 26 th April at 12 noon.	

Signed: _____

Date: _____