

Minutes of 37th NALA AGM

Saturday, 14 April 2018 – Midlands Park Hotel, Portlaoise, 10.30am – 1.30pm

Attendance: 68

Opening Address:

Trevor Moore, Chairperson of NALA's Board welcomed everybody. Opening Address reflected on:

- The significant variety of activities NALA was engaged in over the past year
- The governance framework which underpins the work of the Board
- Thanked the outgoing Board members for their contributions
- Commended the outgoing members of the student sub-committee for their sterling efforts
- Applauded the large numbers of members who bravely put themselves forward for election to the Board

Standing Orders Committee:

The Standing Orders Committee was selected.

The committee was proposed by Patrick Hallinan and seconded by Liam Aherne.

Minutes AGM 2017:

Sonia Weafer, Honorary Secretary, presented the minutes of the 2017 AGM to the meeting. The minutes were proposed by Ann Nicholas and seconded by Laura Foley.

(No Questions were asked)

Financial Report 2017:

Thomas McManus introduced the Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2017, outlining the Director's responsibilities as regards the financial statements highlighting how seriously the directors take their responsibilities. He highlighted the recent positive Internal Audit conducted by Barr Pomeroy on the effectiveness of the Internal Financial Controls at NALA and congratulated Fawzia, Inez and the staff at NALA for their dedication and excellence in maintaining proper records and financial transactions.

He referred to the adequacy of Reserves at NALA and that the directors have assessed the risk profile at NALA and assessed that single source funding from SOLAS is a significant risk. He outlined that management are aware and have plans in place to mitigate this risk through other income generating activities.

Thomas introduced Jon Byrne of Brown, Murphy and Hughes, Chartered Accountants and Auditors to NALA to take the meeting through the audited accounts. Jon detailed how the Annual Report is again presented voluntarily in compliance with the Charities SORP (Statement of Recommended Practice). Jon then went through the Auditor's Report.

Three resolutions were proposed and seconded:

- The adoption of the 2017 Audited Accounts. Proposed by Patrick Hallinan and seconded by Laura Foley.
- The reappointment of Brown, Murphy and Hughes as Auditors to NALA for the financial year ended 31st December 2018 was Proposed by Patrick Hallinan and seconded by Marian O'Reilly.
- The ability of the Board of Directors at NALA to determine and agree the fees for the Auditors for the financial year ended 31 December 2018. Proposed by Ann Nicholas and seconded by Pat Ayton.

Changes to the NALA Board:

The following has been elected to the vacant position on the Board of NALA.

- **Chairperson:** Ms Nuala Glanton (proposed by Trevor Moore and seconded by Tony Maloney)
- *As the number of candidates did not exceed the number of positions vacant there was no election for the above position on this occasion.*
- **Ordinary Members on Board:** As the number of candidates was more than the positions vacant, an election was held. From 61 votes the following individuals were nominated to the Board:
 - Kevin Kelly
 - Louise Canavan
 - Ann Sweeney
 - Noel Phelan

Nuala Glanton, as the new Chairperson of NALA, introduced herself:

- *It is an absolute honour to have the opportunity to serve as Chairperson of NALA.*
- *NALA is a very professional organisation, the team is professional, friendly and expertly directed by Inez Bailey*
- *The Board of NALA is responsible for the governance of the organisation – has overall responsibility for how it operates. We have a great Board, with varied skills and experience. You can rest assured as a member that there is good governance in NALA. The Board meets regularly and the priorities at the moment are GDPR and the reengaging with QQI.*
- *Literacy is a fundamental human right. It is about equality. It is scandalous that in Ireland in 2018, 1 in 6 Irish adults has difficulty with basic reading and writing.*
- *We have seen tremendous changes in the FET sector over the last few years and a more strategic, coordinated approach to the sector is welcome. However we need to make sure that when we are reporting on inputs and outputs that we don't forget the person, the learner and their needs. This is where all providers, the ETBs and NALA can work together to ensure that the learner remains central.*

Overview of the work of NALA in 2017 and launch of NALA's Summary Annual Report for 2017

Inez Bailey, CEO of NALA, gave a review of the activities and highlights of the year.

To follow is a summary of the presentation:

Our achievements in 2017 – a summary

Individuals

We raised awareness of adult education services and helped people improve their literacy and numeracy.

- **900** people got QQI accreditation through our Distance Learning Service
3,080 Level 2 minor awards
570 Level 3 minor awards
- Our information helpline staff referred **800** callers to ETB adult education services
- We sent **870** information packs about adult education services to members of the public
- We distributed **30,000** promotional leaflets and **2,400** posters through ETBs and at awareness raising events nationwide
- An evaluation of our awareness campaign showed that **two in three** people who have literacy or numeracy difficulties saw or heard our campaign.
- We did interviews and raised awareness about literacy on **17** national and regional radio shows, **one** TV show and in **80** national and regional newspapers
- Our social media followers liked, reacted, commented on or shared our stories about literacy **483,000** times

Further Education and Training (FET) tutors

We helped to improve the quality of teaching.

- **530** people attended our professional development events
- **128** FET practitioners took part in our integrating literacy workshops
- **215** learners received **2,200** learning sessions with our distance learning tutors
- **New online learning content** for writeon.ie was developed to help students move from QQI Level 2 to Level 3
- We carried out research to show why literacy matters to Irish society

- **93** tutors from **30** adult education centres received training on how to use **writeon.ie**
- We produced **10** distance learning worksheets and they were downloaded **1,500** times
- Our professional development event videos were watched **452** times

Students

We represented the views of adult literacy students and supported their learning.

- **1,400** students took part in learning activities funded by our Student Development Fund
- **66** adult education centres received grants from our Student Development Fund
- **174** people attended our student days in Dublin and Kilkenny
- **7** NALA Student Subcommittee meetings were held – this is a national committee of adult literacy students
- **15** students carried out awareness raising events as part of our learner ambassador programme
- **60** students and tutors attended a reception hosted by President Michael D Higgins in Áras an Uachtaráin

Parents

We helped parents support their children's literacy and numeracy development.

- **178,000** people used our website helpmykidlearn.ie
- **1,700** people received our monthly [helpmykidlearn](http://helpmykidlearn.ie) e-zine
- We got **16,000** clicks, reactions, comments or shares on our Facebook page for helpmykidlearn.ie

Organisations

We worked with organisations to help make their services more accessible to people with literacy needs.

- **1,000** people took our plain English training and improved their communications skills
- **118** organisations used our Plain English Editing and Training Service
- **68** pharmacies and **5** general practices now have the Crystal Clear mark
- We delivered **4** health literacy workshops to healthcare professionals and spoke at **2** conferences about health literacy
- We helped **4** local authorities to improve their communications
- **50** companies and organisations entered our Plain English Awards which were sponsored by Mason Hayes & Curran. The awards were covered in **3** national newspapers and on **3** national radio shows

- We produced a new publication called **Plain English and the law** that highlighted how unclear communication resulted in costly court cases
- **1,000** members received our updated A-Z Plain English Guide to Political Terms

Policy makers

We worked to make sure the views of adults with literacy and numeracy needs are heard by policy makers.

We published a numeracy briefing paper to inform the steps to be taken to increase adult numeracy teaching and learning.

We also developed a scoping paper – **Ireland can do better** – to create a vision for improving lives through better adult literacy, numeracy and digital skills over the next 10 years. This drew from other research we carried out to show why literacy matters to Irish society

We also made **3** written submissions to the Government in 2017. In our submissions we recommended:

- increased investment in the Skills for Work programme and workplace basic education
- a targeted paid learning leave programme for employees in work with less than a Level 4 qualification to develop their basic literacy and numeracy skills
- a national professional development programme to integrate literacy and numeracy support into further education and training
- a family literacy, numeracy and language strategy with a focus on disadvantaged communities

Membership

NALA membership up by 97% in 2017 NALA had 2,224 members in 2017. This represents a 97% increase in members since 2016. The biggest increase was in free membership, which grew from 730 in 2016 to 1,825 in 2017. The number of large organisation members also increased during this time from 54 in 2016 to 65 in 2017. Income from membership fees was €24,650 which is a 18% increase from 2016.

Keynote address:

Minister for Justice and Equality, Charlie Flanagan TD, made a keynote address.

Closing Comments

Trevor Moore, Chairperson, paid tribute to the outgoing members of the Executive and invited everyone to lunch.