

NATIONAL ADULT LITERACY AGENCY (the “Company”)

Minutes of an 39th Annual General Meeting of the Company held virtually through GotoWebinar on the 2nd day of September 2020 at 5pm.

Present: Mary Bambrick (MB), Chairperson, David Heylin (DH), Pat Ayton (PA)

Viewers: 49

Quorum:

There being a quorum present, the meeting proceeded to business of the meeting.

Opening Address

Mary Bambrick, Chairperson of NALA’s Board welcomed everybody. MB noted that NALA Honorary Treasurer, David Heylin and Patricia Ayton, NALA Honorary Secretary were present in the building to meet the quorum for the meeting. She acknowledged that this was a busy time for educators and that recent times have highlighted the digital divide and difficulties of in relation to this. She added that this has highlighted the importance of the work NALA does. She also 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.
- Trusted Charity Level 2 that was awarded to NALA in August. MB noted that a huge amount of work was done by the organisation for this.

Minutes of the 2019 AGM

Pat Ayton gave a summary of 2019 AGM minutes and noted that the full version of minutes are available on website.

The minutes of the 2019 AGM were then proposed by Mary Bambrick and seconded by David Heylin.

Financial Report 2020

David Heylin, NALA Honorary Treasurer introduced the Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2019. He commended Mazars on the completion of the statutory audit and the work they had done. He noted that two separate internal audits were completed in 2019 and both went very well. He highlighted the growing income from the Plain English Service and commended NALA and Plain English team on the development of this. He commented on the surplus in the financial statements, which related to the capitalisation of Learn with NALA. He noted that the copy of cash flow statement shows very little change in the cash balance at end of year and that this also ties in to the reserves policy. He added that the balance sheet shows no major changes in figures.

It was resolved that the Directors' Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2019 as presented to the meeting be received and that the Financial Statements be hereby proposed by Pat Ayton and seconded by Mary Bambrick.

It was further resolved that the Company's auditors', Mazars, Chartered Accountants & Statutory Audit Firm would continue in office in accordance with Section 383(2) of the Companies Act 2014 and the Directors be authorised, by a quorum, to fix the remuneration of the auditors for the year ending 31 December 2020. This resolution was proposed by Pat Ayton and seconded by Mary Bambrick.

Board Nominations 2020

Mary Bambrick introduced the board nominations by noting that the board is made up from membership, and sometimes they co-opt certain skill sets onto the board. She highlighted that the current board is made up of students, educators, and individuals from the corporate world and she highlighted that this mix of people ensures they take into account a number of different aspects in their decision making.

She stated that as the number of candidates was not more than the number of positions vacant, no elections were required. The following positions on the Board of NALA were filled:

Chairperson: Margaret Kelly (proposed by Mary Bambrick and seconded by Pat Ayton). As the number of candidates was not more than the number of positions vacant there was no election for Chairperson.

Honorary Treasurer It was noted that no nominations were received and this position remains vacant. It was further noted that the board will be co-opting to fill this position. Mary Bambrick added that the board was lucky to have David Heylin as Treasurer, who brought his skills and expertise to the organisation. She informed the meeting that David Heylin will be staying on the NALA Audit and Finance subcommittee.

Honorary Secretary: Pat Ayton (proposed by Mary Bambrick and seconded by David Heylin) - As the number of candidates was not more than the number of positions vacant there was no election for Secretary.

Members on the Board:

- **Ann Tuohy Halligan** (proposed by Mary Hanna Hourigan and seconded by Declan Burgess)
- **Gwen Redmond** (proposed by Kevin Kelly and seconded by Sheila Donnellan)
- **Hazel Cryan** (proposed by Louise Canavan and seconded by Kevin Kelly)
- **Kevin Kelly** (proposed by Mary Bambrick and seconded by David Heylin)

Mary Bambrick gave a warm welcome to all board members and noted Ciaran Casey was also a recent addition to the board not long before lockdown. She thanked the

outgoing members Louise Canavan, David Heylin, Liz O'Sullivan and Noel Phelan and highlighted that their input has been really appreciated.

Mary Bambrick also took the opportunity to say goodbye to Inez Bailey and thank her on behalf of the board, membership and staff. She highlighted the 25 years of work that Inez carried out in the area of adult literacy and commended her on always striving for a better service on the whole. She wished Inez the best and noted that a recruitment campaign was ongoing for the role and hopefully they will have some exciting news in the coming weeks.

Overview of the work of NALA

Dr Inez Bailey, former CEO of NALA, gave a review of the activities and highlights of the year and half. She noted that it was lovely to be able to have a virtual AGM and the opportunity to reflect on the year and NALA's achievements.

She highlighted the following achievements in NALA in relation to stakeholders and areas of work:

- **Individuals**

She informed the meeting of the awareness raising that was done in relation to informing individuals about ETB adult literacy services available to them. She noted that in 2019, this was heavily supported by RTE, who helped NALA bring a lot of advertising material out to a wider audience. She added that a large amount of calls were received in relation to this and many people also contacted NALA through the website. She highlighted that the phone service still caters to a segment of people and also noted that 630 information packs were sent out in 2019. She further noted that there was an 84 percent success rate in how effective the campaign has been. She informed the meeting that in 2019, 1320 people received QQI certificates and that there has been an increase in individuals using Write On. She highlighted that in light of COVID-19 Learn with NALA has proved to be a very useful resource.

- **Practitioners**

She informed the meeting of how NALA has been supporting practitioners across ETB's and in other settings. She noted that Fergus Dolan has been leading a team of others in providing professional development.

- **DLS Service**

She noted that 220 learners received sessions through the distance learning service and this has also been very important during the COVID-19 period to support individual's continuous learning.

- **Professional development work**

She informed the meeting that a lot of this has been available on the website and through webinars.

- **Student work**

She noted that in 2019, a large number of centres applied for the student development fund and also commented on the large numbers attending the student development days. She added that NALA are continuing to publish distance learning worksheets. She also commented on the Student Subcommittee and how impactful it has been in advancing agenda items that they know will have gains for other students. She noted that this subcommittee meets seven times during the year and has 16 members.

Help My Kid Learn

She explained how this website enhances children's learning and that the Ezine every month reaches 850 people. In addition to this she noted that there has been 220,000 views on the Help My Kid Learn website during the year.

- **Organisations**

She updated the meeting on the Plain English Service and noted that nearly 800 people took on Plain English training in 2019. She further noted that this service has been growing from strength to strength and that public sector organisations have been realising the benefit of using this in their work. She also added that the Plain English awards sponsored by PWC have been a great success. She also informed the meeting of the progress NALA has made in the health sphere, in supporting pharmacies and GPs. She explained the audit process which highlights to these organisations how clear their communications are and the crystal clear mark that is received when organisations do well. She noted that there is clearly a growing interest in area of health literacy and that NALA are trying to spread the word on what it is and its importance in relation to improving health outcomes.

- **Policy**

She noted that in 2019 NALA did a lot of work in this area, and in building up NALA's advocacy work with politicians with the view that there would be a general election.

- **Membership**

She noted that the membership went from strength to strength, and how they have opened up a free membership category, which has subsequently increased membership without losing any income. She noted the corporate members and ETB's but also highlighted that they have literacy centres, youth reach centres, traveller organisations and are keen to grow the membership in this way.

- **New Strategic Plan**

She informed the board on the planning that went into the new strategic plan in 2019 and how as an organisation NALA recognised the areas in which they needed to focus on such as;

- Working with Solas on new developments in improving literacy

- Bringing more literacy and numeracy into community and healthcare settings
- Ensuring NALA are still conducting relevant research
- Working with wider FET strategy. She highlighted the meeting that was held at the end of July with Minister Simon Harris (Minister for Further and Higher Education). She added that NALA's whole of government approach was presented and the Minister seemed keen to get behind the new strategy going forward.

Inez thanked everyone and highlighted that she was delighted to get the opportunity to present and deliver this piece of work to the meeting.

Closing Comments and Questions.

It was noted that no questions were received virtually but all questions welcomed through info@nala.ie.

Mary Bambrick, outgoing NALA Chairperson, gave a sincere thank you to all board members, staff and membership. She encouraged people to consider joining the board.

She highlighted the importance of NALA in the education sphere, particularly in light of recent circumstances. She noted that a wide range of students have embraced distance and blended learning however it's important to note that there are learners out there that have struggled with this. In this way, she noted the importance of NALA's work in relation to the whole of government approach.

She added that for International Literacy Day NALA have a wide range of events running online and all details are available on the website.

CHAIRPERSON.....

Date:.....