

National Adult Literacy Agency	
Minutes of the NALA Board	
Date:	1 September 2021
Time:	4.30pm-7pm
Venue:	Virtual (Zoom)

Chairperson:	Margaret Kelly (MK)
Present (Charity Trustees):	Maria O’Gorman (M’OG), Pat Ayton (PA), Frances Ward (FW), Gwen Redmond (GR), Mary Maher (MM), Celia Rafferty (CR) Lynne Keery (LK),Ciaran Casey (CC)
Quorum:	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
In Attendance (Others):	Colleen Dube (CD) Niamh O’Connor (NOC) (Corporate Services Officer) Paul Cahill (PC) (Finance Manager) Michael Duffy (MD)
Apologies:	Kevin Kelly (KK), Elma Teahan (ET), Hazel Cryan (HC) Catherine Devlin (CD) Anna Touhy Halligan (ATH)

Approval of the minutes of the meeting on 23 June 2021
The minutes for the meeting held on 23 June 2021 were approved.
Matters arising:
MK informed the board that Mary Maher will be joining the Literacy and Staff Policies and Governance Sub-committee.
Declarations of conflicts of interest:
CC mentioned that as per the Audit, Risk and Finance Sub-committee minutes he will recuse himself from any specific discussion regarding NALA’s banking relationship with AIB in relation to NALA’s banking arrangements due to his employment with AIB.

CEO's Report

CD updated the Board on Technical Advisory Group's meeting on 26 August 2021. She informed the Board that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the communications plan for the strategy. She noted that they were given a draft Strategy document for this meeting and notified that the Strategy would be launched at 10am on September 8th. She further noted that she reached out to the Minister's Advisor who confirmed that this is the document that would be launched on the 8th and the proposed Programme Office would be based in SOLAS.

As requested by the Minister's Advisor, CD informed the board that NALA are currently drafting a response to this Strategy outlining questions and concerns, as it would not be comfortable endorsing the Strategy as it stands currently.

MK noted the Strategy has the potential to be a success but further discussions will have to take place.

MOG queried whether the launch date of the 8th is confirmed. CD noted that it was not set in stone yet.

MM highlighted the need for a massive public awareness campaign post Covid-19. CD confirmed that NALA has a budget for its own annual September campaigns only. She noted that in relation to the Strategy there is no organised or centralised communications strategy yet.

CD noted that the Direct Referral Protocol has not been finalised as NALA is awaiting GDPR advice and ETB personnel to return from holidays. FW and MM highlighted the importance of the referral and getting the GDPR aspect sorted. It was confirmed that referrals are occurring on an ongoing basis.

CD noted that she would keep the Chair and Board informed regarding the launch of the strategy.

Strategic Plan and Implementation Framework

CD highlighted the section in relation to the issues for board consideration:

EU Projects (CITO project and EBSN): CD noted that with the CITO project there have been challenges with the lead partner and that a revised work programme has now been agreed. She further noted the EBSN project has been delayed.

LWN (user success, impact measurement, course validation): CD noted that NALA's Research Officer has been on leave, but that they will be meeting to advance this work. She further noted that Elaine Cohalan (Innovation Manager) is leading on the LWN course validation work.

Plain English CD informed the board that service is at capacity and not in the position to take on new work.

CD also mentioned the plans for a membership strategy, IT services and digital media resourcing that NALA require and the GDPR work that is ongoing in NALA.

Sub-committee reports and minutes

Literacy and Staff Policies and Governance Subcommittee:

The minutes of the last meeting were approved.

Tutoring Service Proposal: MK gave the background in relation to the Tutoring service proposal and on recent issues with the service.

She noted that in relation to salary, they have used the Administration Officer scale which is used in NALA already. MM noted the scale was similar to the starting points of the teaching scale and the ETBI Adult Educator Role and therefore make sense.

CD gave some background in relation to the contracts that are currently in place with tutors and LSW's. CD noted that the part-time hourly rate is no longer effective for the management of the service or the learners. She further noted that this will be the evolving process over the next couple of months and legal advice will be sought from MHC. She informed the Board that the next steps will be to convene a meeting with tutoring staff pending receipt of legal advice, and explain that this is what we have agreed in principle. She noted that will be invited to lodge their expressions of interest for this revised role.

MOG noted that more information may need to be sought in relation to the restructuring and to revert once advice has been obtained. MK stated that NALA is not required to get sanction from SOLAS or the Department of Education.

The Board agreed the proposal in principle.

Audit, Risk Finance Sub-committee:

The minutes of the last meeting were approved.

Management accounts: PC noted that there is a delay with the July accounts and at the next meeting the Board will be looking at the latest accounts. He further noted the Plain English income is ahead by €51,000 and that the administration team are working to help the Plain English team to streamline the processes.

Internal financial controls document: CD mentioned the authorisation limits outlined in the document and the need to align the purchasing and payment policies. PC outlined the background behind the authorisation limits.

MK expressed concerns in relation to the separation of functions. PC noted that this is largely down to recruitment at the moment and that the segregation of duties is a priority. PC noted that they wanted the Sub-committee and Board input in the first instance but that this document would be coming to the Board again at the next meeting.

Banking arrangement and investment policy: PC introduced the document and noted that NALA did not previously have an Investment Policy and in the first instance they wanted agreement from the Board that we will have an Investment Policy that does not put capital at risk.

The Board approved the Banking Arrangements and Investment Policy as well as the new thresholds for authority to approve payments.

Student Sub-committee

MD queried with the Board whether a member whose term is up can continue to sit on the committee for a further 12 months in light of them finding it difficult to find new member at the moment. The Board agreed that an exception could be made in light of Covid-19. It was also considered important over time to widen the profile of membership on the student committee if possible to include younger learners, ESOL learners, Travellers and people with disabilities. When Michael tells us how many vacancies they have, the Board members who are working in centres will explore whether they know potential learners who would be willing and suitable.

Items for noting

Board opportunities: The Board were asked to contact Niamh O'Connor (Corporate Services Officer) if they are interested in taking any courses.

Any other business (AOB):

None

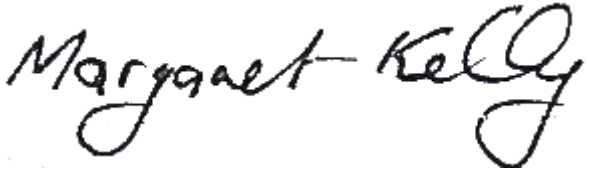
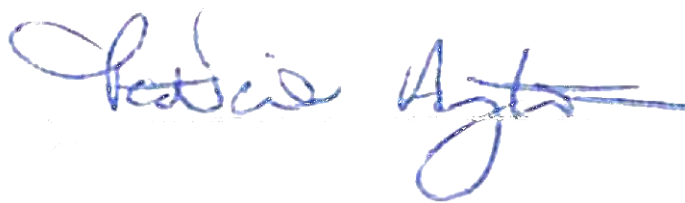
Next Meeting

Date: 20 October 2021

Time: 5pm – 7pm

Venue: Virtual

Actions Arising From This Meeting:			
Item	Action	Person Applicable	Timeframe
Internal Financial Controls document 6.4.3	PC to make document available in word version, to the board, so that they can propose any amendments in time to be considered for the next AFR Sub-committee. That Sub-committee would then circulate a revised draft at the next Board meeting.	PC	Next meeting

	
Chairperson's Signature and date	Secretary Signature and date
MARGARET KELLY: Oct 20 th 2021	PATRICIA AYTON: Oct 20 th 2021

