

National Adult Literacy Agency	
Minutes of the NALA Board	
Date:	9 March 2022
Time:	4.30pm-7pm
Venue:	Virtual (Zoom)

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

<b>2. Conflicts of Interest</b>
None
<b>3. Minutes of 8 December 2021 Board meeting</b>
The minutes for the meeting held on 8 December 2021 were approved.
<b>Matters arising</b>
<b>NOTED:</b>
<b>Item 5.1.1 from October 2021 minutes was discussed:</b>
The importance of resuming face:face, 1:1 tuition which is still happening in ETBs according to a recent ALAO survey. The ongoing provision / importance and drop off of volunteers and the financial impact of same was to be raised with the Minister by NALA. It was flagged to him in advance of the January meeting but was not discussed as he had to leave earlier than anticipated. However, it was also noted that it appears volunteers and tutor training are returning gradually across ETBs.
<b>4. CEO’s Report</b>
<b>4.1 2022 Draft Work Plan and Implementation Framework</b>
<b>NOTED:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CEO presented the 2022 Work Plan and Objectives noting that it is designed to make the</li> </ul>

plan more manageable for Board and staff; to see the totality of the work that NALA is undertaking, to report success indicators, and to time reporting in with Board meetings.

- The Work Plan was informed by Board approved objectives and consultation with ETBs, NALA Staff and Members.
- MK queried a need for a revised strategy publication, CEO advised a short strategy statement could be published if deemed necessary.
- CEO highlighted some minor wording changes to the Strategic Objectives, to which there was no objections by the Board.
- CEO went through the details of the proposed Work Plan under each objective.
- MK raised a query regarding status of QQI certification for Level 1 courses on LWN and Board discussed the value of advocating or otherwise for Level 1 certification.

**AGREED:**

- 2022 Work Plan; Objectives, Supporting Projects / Success Indicators and format
- CEO to seek update on the status of certification for Level 1 courses on LWN

**4.2 Update on ALL Strategy**

**NOTED:**

- CEO advised not much more to note other than what has been provided to Board in cover note:
  - Since last Board Meeting CEO and Chair met with Minister Harris.
  - There was a meeting of the ALL Implementation Strategy Group and CEO has submitted feedback to the Department of Further and Higher Education, as was requested of that Group.
  - There was a meeting of the Interim ALL Working Group in which they discussed plans for recruitment to the Program Office and no formal update has been received since that meeting.
- CEO opened to the attendees if anyone in the education sector had any other updates:
  - LK and MK provided some insight to the types of candidates that are being recruited and noted that secondments are being sought rather than recruiting through open competition.
  - PA queried if either meeting mentioned above was minuted - CEO advised none received and suggested contacting Minister Harris for an update on implementation.
  - MOG questioned whether the Cost of Living and Ukraine crises could result in cutbacks to the ALL strategy, CEO noted the funding is already there and the delays in

implementation seem to relate to capacity rather than funding.

- Noted that SOLAS are actively working on the Regional Coordinator Role.
- The Active Inclusion Manager in ETBI has been recruited.

**AGREED:**

- CEO to draft letter to Minister Harris from the Chairperson seeking an update on the implementation of the ALL strategy

**4.3. 2022 Financial Update**

**NOTED:**

- PC presented a financial update and referred to the accounts circulated:
  - the focus had been on getting the financial statements completed and the Audit completed but now NALA is looking forward.
  - It was noted that the draft budget presented to Board in December has been revised and the rationale provided. The Total projected surplus has been revised down by c.€20k to €183, 840
- MK queried Cashflow from SOLAS:
  - PC outlined the process for funding from SOLAS and that some funding is expected towards the end of March 2022.
  - PC noted it is on the rolling agenda of the Audit, Risk and Finance Subcommittee to review the Reserves Policy.

**5. Sub-committee reports and minutes**

**5.1 Literacy and Staff Policies and Governance Subcommittee**

**5.1.1. Draft Minutes of 16 February 2022 Meeting**

**NOTED:**

MK advised the Board of a change she requested to the minutes of the 16 February Meeting to reflect accurately what was agreed in relation to the Working from Home (WFH) Allowance. There had been agreement to withdraw the WFH allowance but disagreement as to when to withdraw it. The minutes to be approved are per the pack with one minor amendment as suggested by MK.

**APPROVED**

**5.1.2. Employment Contracts**

**NOTED:**

CEO provided update on the current open positions

## AGREED

- all new contracts with effect from 10 March 2022 will be offered on 3 year fixed term basis subject to 6 month probation, satisfactory performance, continued funding unless there are any other reasons affecting the term of the appointment
- the following terms / expiry dates for the positions currently being recruited:

Position	Term Start and Expiry Dates
Governance & Compliance Officer	3 years 14 March 2022 13 March 2025
eLearning Content Creator	21.5 months 14 March 2022 31 December 2023
Data & Systems Officer	Maximum 21.5 months To be confirmed 31 December 2023
Digital Marketing, Information and Content Officer	3 years To be confirmed To be confirmed
Literacy Development and Outreach Worker	3 years To be confirmed To be confirmed

- all fixed term contract renewals for current staff with effect from 10 March 2022, not eligible for a contract of indefinite duration (permanent), will be offered a fixed term contract for a longer period until they are eligible for a contract of indefinite duration (permanent) subject to ongoing satisfactory performance, continued funding unless there are any other reasons affecting the term of the appointment

### 5.1.3. COVID-19 Response Plan and Return to Work Protocol

#### NOTED:

CEO outlined it was updated to reflect new Covid Guidelines and will be an ongoing document to reflect public health guidelines.

#### AGREED:

- COVID-19 Response Plan and Return to Work Protocol

### 5.1.4 Hybrid Working Policy

#### NOTED:

- CEO presented Hybrid Working Policy:
  - Robust Hybrid Working Policy was developed and drafted in anticipation of the Government's Right to Remote Working Bill that will require employers to have a policy in place
  - The policy proposes that employees will spend 2 days in the office and 2 days at home with the 5th day to be negotiated with their manager.

- The policy aims to ensure consistency across teams and includes the proposed changes to the WFH allowance for all staff. MK elaborated on the dates chosen for the withdrawal of the WFH allowance:
  - Per Building Momentum, there is a 1% pay increase, subject to negotiations on productivity, to be paid from 1st February, negotiations likely to continue until July, and therefore 1st stage of withdrawal from WFH allowance not proposed until July.
  - Another 1% pay increase is due across the board in October, and that is the rationale for the date of October for the complete removal of the WFH allowance. CEO noted she was unaware of current status of the February 2022 proposed increase and had requested an update from the Union for the NALA-SIPTU meeting on 10 March
  - KK provided insight from his knowledge of how it may be applied. However, no need at present to discuss further as just raising it in the context of providing a rationale for the dates chosen for the withdrawal of WFH allowance.
- PA enquired if all roles in NALA are suited to the Hybrid Policy, CEO advised they are. Individuals / propose remote work areas would need to be assessed for their suitability but the posts themselves are suited to Hybrid.
- CEO recommended consideration be given to the return of a certain amount of in person Board meetings following the AGM and subject to the COVID situation and the technology available.

#### **AGREED**

- Hybrid Working Policy
- Board to agree schedule of in person and virtual meetings after the AGM
- 27 April 2022 meeting to be held on line

#### **5.1.5. AGM and Amendments to the Constitution**

##### **NOTED:**

- CEO noted there was a need to revise the Constitution and outlined a potential timeline for revision. Requested input from Board members as to any parts of the Constitution they feel should be reviewed. It was noted that terms of office will be included in the review.
- KK proposed NALA consider that a seat on the Board is reserved for a member of the ALOA and AEOA. This was supported by FW, MOG, LK, PA and CR. CEO and KK noted care would be needed around such an arrangement to ensure no issue arose around representation and that any member of the Board would be appointed to represent NALAs interests not that of the ALOA and or AEOA. Any other bodies that may prove beneficial to NALA to have a member of on the Board to be considered.
- PA and MK temporarily left the meeting to enable the remainder of the Board to discuss if they wish to support PA and MK's re-election as Honorary Secretary and Chairperson at the 30 April 2022 AGM. This was supported by the Board.

**AGREED**

- CEO and Literacy and Staff Policies and Governance (LSPG) Subcommittee to further review the Constitution / seek legal advice and propose a course of action / amendments to be brought to the 2023 AGM
- Chairperson's vote of thanks and appreciation for all Directors that are leaving the Board
- Mary Maher to propose and Ciaran Casey to second Margaret Kelly as Chairperson and Pat Ayton as Honorary Secretary by the 25 March 2022 closing date for nominations to be elected to the Board
- Kevin Kelly to propose and Pat Ayton to second Elma Teahan and Frances Ward as Directors by the 25 March 2022 closing date for nominations to be elected to the Board
- CEO to advise Board members of logistics of nominations

**5.2 Audit, Risk and Finance Subcommittee****5.2.1 Draft Minutes of 22 February 2022 meeting****APPROVED****5.2.2 2021 Audit Report****AGREED**

- Following two recommendations to be implemented
  1. Journal entries to be approved by the CEO on a monthly basis
  2. Gifts policy to be updated in 2022
- In accordance with SORP, annual leave balances will be reflected in the financial statements from 2022

**5.2.3 2021 Financial Statements****AGREED**

- 2021 Financial Statements to be signed by the Chairperson and the Treasurer on behalf of the Board
- The signed 2021 Financial Statements be recommended to the Members at the 30 April 2022 AGM for adoption

**5.2.4 2021 Letter of Representation****AGREED**

- The letter of Representation from the Directors to Mazars be signed by the Chairperson and the Treasurer on behalf of the Board

**5.2.5 2022-2024 Audit Fee Proposal****NOTED:**

- PC outlined the fee proposal from Mazars and the background to same.
- Cost should not be the only factor in appointing an auditor. An important consideration is the continuity of audit staff during the proposed three years 2022-2024 and it was noted that the Mazars' proposal gave assurance on this point.
- Mazars have been very thorough and comprehensive in their approach and their original and current fee proposal is very competitive

**AGREED**

- To recommend to the Members at the 30 April 2022 AGM that Mazars' be reappointed as auditors for the period 2022-2024
- Subject to Members' approval at the 30 April 2022 AGM, NALA to reappoint Mazars for the period 2022-2024 based on the proposal and fee of €8,000 plus VAT

**5.3 Education, Training and Assessment Subcommittee**

**5.3.1 Minutes of 23 February 2022 meeting**

**APPROVED**

**5.3.2 Teaching and Learning Policy**

**AGREED**

- Teaching and Learning policy, version 02

**5.4. Student Subcommittee**

**5.4.1. Minutes of 6 December 2021 Meeting**

**APPROVED**

**5.4.2 Minutes of 18 January 2022 Meeting**

**APPROVED**

**5.4.3 Draft Minutes of 23 February 2022 Meeting**

**APPROVED**

**NOTED:**

- CD provided update on the Student Sub-Committee:
  - a new Student has been welcomed on to the Sub-Committee
  - an issue with a student not being allowed to where a visor in his ETB and leaving the service had been raised / explored by the Subcommittee
  - Sub-Committee is preparing for Student day in May in Dublin, as there has been no student days since 2020.
  - Sub-Committee is preparing for a stand at the Ploughing Championships in September.
  - Sub-Committee is preparing the Student Development Fund
- MK enquired if the Sub-Committee has any recommendations for Students for elections to

the Board at the AGM and to ensure there are proposers and seconders for same. CEO noted that Margaret Murray will get in touch with some of the Students in relation to same.

#### 5.4.4. Student Development Fund Annual Report

#### AGREED:

- The Board to forward ideas for the 2022 Student Fund feedback topic by 31 March 2022 to Margaret Murray telephone 01 412 7928, email [mmurray@nala.ie](mailto:mmurray@nala.ie).

#### 8. Any other Business

None

#### Next Meeting

**Date:** 27 April 2022

**Time:** 4:30 – 7:00 pm



**Venue:** Zoom

#### Actions Arising from This Meeting:

Item	Action	Person Applicable	Timeframe
4.1	Seek update on the status of certification for Level 1 courses on LWN	CD	27 April 2022
4.2	Draft letter to Minister Harris from Chairperson seeking an update on the implementation of the ALL strategy	CD / MK	27 April 2022
5.1.2	Reflect updated terms of contracts in NALA's staff handbook / contracts	CD / PC	Ongoing / June 2022
5.1.5	Review the Constitution / seek legal advice and propose a course of action / amendments to be brought to the 2023 AGM	CD/ MK	February 2023
5.1.5.	Monitor / manage Board nominations	CD	25 March 2022
5.2.2.	Implement the following arising from the 2021 Audit Report 3. Journal entries to be approved by the CEO on a monthly basis 4. Gifts policy to be updated in 2022 5. In accordance with SORP, annual leave balances will be reflected in the financial statements from 2022	CD / PC	31 December 2022
5.2.3	2021 Financial Statements to be signed by the Chairperson and the Treasurer on behalf of the Board	PC / MK / CC	31 March 2022
	The signed 2021 Financial Statements be recommended to the Members at the 30 April	CD / PC	30 April 2022



	2022 AGM for adoption		
5.2.4	The letter of Representation from the Directors to Mazars be signed by the Chairperson and the Treasurer on behalf of the Board	PC / MK / CC	31 March 2022
5.2.5	Recommend to the Members at the 30 April 2022 AGM that Mazars' be reappointed as auditors for the period 2022-2024  Subject to Members' approval at the 30 April 2022 AGM, NALA to reappoint Mazars for the period 2022-2024 based on the proposal and fee of €8,000 plus VAT	CD/ PC / CC  CD/ PC	30 April 2022  1 June 2022
5.4.4	The Board to forward ideas for the 2022 Student Fund feedback to Margaret Murray telephone 01 412 7928, email <a href="mailto:mmurray@nala.ie">mmurray@nala.ie</a>	Board	31 March 2022

	
Chairperson's Signature and date	Secretary Signature and date
MARGARET KELLY	PATRICIA AYTON
27 April 2022	27 April 2022