

National Adult Literacy Agency	
Minutes of the NALA Board	
Date:	27 April 2022
Time:	4.30pm-7pm
Venue:	Virtual (Zoom)

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

2. Conflicts of Interest
None
3. Minutes of 9 March 2022 Board meeting
<p>AGREED:</p> <p>The minutes for the meeting held on 9 March 2022 were approved.</p> <p>Matters arising</p> <p>NOTED:</p> <p>Action 4.1 from 9 March 2022:</p> <p>CEO was to seek update on the status of certification for Level 1 courses on LWN. An update on the evolution of NALA’s online learning provision and certification was provided in the Board Pack.</p>
4. CEO’s Report
<p>4.1 2022 Draft Work Plan and Implementation Framework</p> <p>NOTED:</p> <p>CEO provided an update on the 2022 Work Plan and implementation.</p>

4.2 Members Survey

NOTED:

- the 10% response rate was low
- In relation to the following Member recommendations
 - that NALA campaign for better childcare and eldercare arrangements to prevent this being a barrier to education, it was noted that this was not fully in line with the purpose and resources of NALA.
 - While the Board members agreed that better employment terms is key to attracting and retaining the best tutor talent, it goes beyond the purpose and resources of NALA.

AGREED:

- Interested Board members to request further information on the survey from the CEO

4.3 Update on ALL Strategy and AGM Update

ALL Strategy

NOTED:

- 06 April 2022: Chairperson emailed and posted a letter to Minister Harris to outline the Board's concerns regarding the lack of progress on the establishment of the Programme Office / implementation of the Strategy, request an urgent update and to ensure that NALA receive the first tranche of 2022 funds from SOLAS. No response was initially received.
- 19 April 2022: CEO requested and received an acknowledgement of the letter from the Minister's office.
- 11 May 2022: An update meeting has been scheduled between the Ministers office and SOLAS.
- Board members discussed the lack of progress and potential actions that could be taken to apply pressure for progress.

AGREED:

- Chair and CEO to discuss / decide most appropriate follow up communication

AGM

NOTED:

- CEO advised AGM preparations are well underway and progressing as outlined in the cover note.
- **Election Buddy** was being used for the voting at the AGM. This results in a need for us to stick to AGM agenda and schedule to enable the Election Buddy emails to issue to members at the right time to allow them to vote in time. A trial run will be held in NALA in advance.

5. Finance Report

5.1. Management Accounts – January – March 2022

NOTED:

- PC presented a financial update and referred to the accounts circulated with the Board papers.
- 25% of our core funding for 2022 has now been received, along with partial for funding for the Student Development Fund and Learn with NALA (LWN).
- The partial funding received for LWN is consistent with the revised LWN funding request included in NALA's final funding application for 2022. It remains unclear if funding will be received for the Literacy Development Program as none was included in this tranche of funding.
- MK enquired whether that having received only 3 months funding at this stage is sufficient to continue operating normally. PC advised our reserves are okay and we expect to get the next tranche in June based on previous years' experience.
- It was raised whether action should be taken to ensure the funds are received earlier going forward, as this is meant to be the case. It was agreed a number of years ago by the SOLAS Board that an advanced tranche of the funding would be received in January, but this is not happening.

AGREED:

- Chair and CEO to discuss / decide most appropriate follow up communication

5.2 Building Momentum Pay Deal Update

NOTED:

- During 2021 NALA realigned its salaries' structure to the then current public pay structure and agreed to honour the various further increases planned under the Building Momentum Pay Deal
- The Public Sector have implemented the 2nd phase of the deal as of 1st February 2022. This was a further 1% pay rise, initially believed to be a local bargaining fund, but it seems that 1% has been paid across all grades
- There are indications that unions may be looking to cancel the further 1% increase, due to be paid in October 2022, to enable further negotiations for a different agreement due to the Cost of Living crisis.
- KK advised that he is aware that the February 1% was not paid to all public sector employees such as teachers where it was used instead to bridge the gap for new teaching entrants. However, it was likely paid to all staff of the equivalent grades as NALA employees.
- NALA are looking for Board approval to implement the February 1% pay increase, subject to confirmation of SOLAS approval of NALA's funding application for 2022. If approved by the board this will be paid at a future date when the funding has been confirmed and the 2nd tranche of funding has been received. It was agreed that the increase will be paid in the July salaries and will be backdated to 1 February 2022.
- KK raised the difference between NALA and Public Sector working hours, with NALA staff working 35 hours per week and the Public sector working 37. He noted there are indications that the Public Sector could move back to the 35 hour working week this year.
- CEO explained that NALA agreed during Haddington Road to move to the 35 hour work week and as a result NALA staff are paid 35/37ths of the salary for their pay scale. If the public sector move back to a 35 hour work week and NALA were to fully align to the pay scales the full year cost would be about. €110,000 which has not been budgeted for. The two original 1% pay increases under Building Momentum have been budgeted for.
- PC outlined that NALA Holiday arrangements are different and could be amended to partially cover the increased costs of the new alignment. It was also noted that there are other differences between NALA and the public sector such as holiday and privilege day arrangements and pension arrangements. The current management of NALA were not present for these arrangements when negotiated originally. NALA may need to do a root and branch review of NALA terms and conditions and suggest changes that could defray some of the additional cost of full alignment with the public sector pay scales, should NALA choose to align.
- This is not yet a confirmed development and will be monitored and brought back to the

Board should there be further developments.

- The Board have a crucial role and legal responsibility regarding the decision to continue to align to Public Sector Pay arrangements or otherwise.
- MK noted we should look to ensure we have a reviewed and have up to date sick leave policy. CEO advised this is being done as part of the Staff Handbook.
- CEO noted that there is also a small number of staff who are not aligned to the Public Sector pay scales and there is some outstanding work to be done

AGREED:

- 1% pay increase to be paid to NALA staff, preferably in July, back dated to February 1, when funding is received
- Management to revert with an updated on pay alignment at the September 2022 Board meeting

5.3 VAT Review Update

NOTED:

- PC and CEO noted that there is no update. Mazars have followed up with Revenue seeking a response to our submission of 24 March 2022. Mazars will continue to press them for a response

AGREED:

- Management to keep the Board informed.

5.4 SOLAS internal Audit Update

NOTED:

- On 24 March 2022, SOLAS had advised NALA that a review of SOLAS funding to grant-aided organisations had been included in their Internal Audit Plan for 2022. It was to commence in early April. NALA CEO responded with some relevant facts and questions SOLAS responded to the CEOs email on 4 April 2022. There has been no further correspondence and it would appear SOLAS are behind schedule.
- MK asked about NALA Internal Audit arrangements – were there any arrangements to do thematic internal reviews. PC advised that this was an agenda item at the February Audit, Risk and Finance (ARF) Subcommittee meeting

AGREED:

- following the results of the latest statutory audit, there was no area that would benefit from an internal audit.
- Audit, Risk and Finance (ARF) Subcommittee meeting to consider need for internal audit at the next June meeting and it will remain on the agenda twice yearly.

6. GDPR**NOTED:**

- CEO provided background to the 4 Policies that are presented to the Board for approval:
 1. Data Protection Policy
 2. Nala.ie Privacy Statement
 3. Learn with NALA Privacy Statement
 4. Help My Kid Learn Privacy Statement

They were due to be brought to Board in March but required further update having gone through further review with Mazars and Plain English editing. They are now ready for Board review and approval.
- CEO also advised that Cookie Statements were now being prepared which contain additional information that would not be included in the Privacy Policies and
- PA asked about the reference in the NALA Data Protection Policy (page 5) to not using "...your data to damage you unfairly". It was clarified that this reflects situations where data may need to be shared with authorities if a crime was committed for instance. This may cause damage but it would not be an unfair use of the data. This was accepted.
- MK asked about the level of data we gather on Learn With NALA and if it is enough. CEO explained that we gather only what we need and have a legal basis to collect. This was accepted.

AGREED :

- Following policy documents (agenda items 6.1-6.4)
 1. Data Protection Policy
 2. Nala.ie Privacy Statement
 3. Learn with NALA Privacy Statement
 4. Help My Kid Learn Privacy Statement
- CEO to arrange for policies to be uploaded on NALA's websites and circulated to staff

7. Student Subcommittee

7.1 Minutes of 5 April 2022 Meeting

NOTED:

- CD provided the following updates on Student Subcommittee
 - The subcommittee wishes to have a presence at the Ploughing Championship. CEO and MK voiced their support of this.
 - Empowerment Program running is for 5 weeks – 2 hours per week
 - A training day happened in April and a report was prepared and sent to MM (Membership Officer). CD is having a session with the trainer and MM in May as CD missed the training day.
- CEO enquired around the applications received by the Review Committee for Student Development Fund. CD advised there were many and there are a lot of applications for outdoor activities. KK enquired about timeline for applicants being informed of a decision. The Review Committee have sent recommendations to CEO and decisions should be made by next week and communicated.

8. Any other Business



8.1 The meeting was temporarily interrupted due to NALA employees having some technical issue but was restarted quickly. The video recording of the meeting begins only after the interruption. While the issues were being resolved MM opened a discussion the engagement process with QQI and the difficulty this will mean to any new groups delivering literacy.

- It was noted that not all courses need to be accredited but the engagement process with QQI is so difficult at present, it may be hard to get any accredited programs.
- CEO also mentioned a meeting NALA had with QQI. It was requested by QQI regarding the broad standards they are developing linked to European Lifelong Learning Model on Literacy. NALA requested further clarification on the process to date and is awaiting further information. CEO will keep the Board informed.
- MK provided insight into the two different cultures in European Commission on vocational training, the skills industry and the education industry. If QQI are trying to combine or consider both, this will be a challenge as they don't often align.

8.2 CEO noted that this the last Board meeting before the AGM, and formally thanked the trustees who are now leaving the board. MK seconded that and gave a special note of thanks for KK for chairing the ARF Subcommittee. The meeting was brought to a close.

Next Meeting	
Date:	29 June 2022
Time:	To be confirmed
Venue:	To be confirmed following AGM and consultation with new Board

Actions Arising from This Meeting:			
Item	Action	Person Applicable	Timeframe
4.2	Interested Board members to request further information on the members' survey from the CEO	Directors	Ongoing
4.3	Chair and CEO to discuss / decide most appropriate follow up communication regarding the ALL Strategy	Chair / CEO	May 2022
5.1	Chair and CEO to discuss / decide most appropriate follow up communication with SOLAS regarding NALA's funding	Chair / CEO	May 2022
5.2.	1% pay increase to be paid to NALA staff, preferably in July, back dated to February 1, when the Budget is approved and the 2 nd tranche of funding has been received	PC	July 2022
5.2	Management to revert with an update on pay alignment at the September 2022 Board meeting	PC / CEO	September 2022
5.3	Management to keep the Board informed of the VAT Review	PC	Ongoing
5.4	Audit, Risk and Finance (ARF) Subcommittee meeting to consider the need for internal audit at the next June meeting and it will remain on the agenda twice yearly.	PC	June / ongoing
6	CEO to arrange for GDPR policies to be uploaded on NALA's websites and circulated to staff	CEO	May 2022

 29 June 2022	 29 June 2022
Chairperson's Signature and date	Secretary Signature and date
MARGARET KELLY	PATRICIA AYTON