

National Adult Literacy Agency	
Minutes of the NALA Board	
<b>Date:</b>	26 October 2022
<b>Time:</b>	4:30pm – 7:00pm
<b>Venue:</b>	Virtual (Zoom)

<b>Chairperson:</b>	Margaret Kelly (MK)
<b>Present (Charity Trustees):</b>	Aoife Foley (AF), Catherine Devlin (CD), Ciaran Casey (CC), Eleanor Neff (EN), Frances Ward (FW), Maria O’Gorman (MOG), Maurice Sammon (MS), Pat Ayton (PA), Tom O’Mara (TOM), Trish Nolan (TN)
<b>Quorum:</b>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
<b>In Attendance (Others):</b>	Colleen Dube (CEO), Paul Cahill (PC) (Finance & Corporate Services Manager), Michelle Reade (MR) (Governance & Compliance Officer)
<b>Apologies:</b>	Lynne Keery (LK), Tracey Reilly (TR), Elma Teahan (ET)

<b>1. Welcome</b>
CEO and MK opened the meeting and outlined the order of the agenda given some Trustees may be late in joining.
<b>2. Conflicts of Interest</b>
None
<b>3. Minutes of 28 September 2022 Board meeting</b>
TOM noted that he was to forward on sample Board Code(s) of Conduct and would do that following this meeting.  The minutes for the meeting held on 28 September 2022 were approved.
<b>4. CEO’s Report</b>
<b>4.1 2022 Work Plan and Implementation Framework</b>
<b>NOTED:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CEO provided the following summary of the Work Plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Similar to the last meeting on 28 September, the majority of work is on track or complete.</li> <li>○ We received our Funding Allocation Request two months early from SOLAS and the</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

management team needed to prioritise it over other items to ensure the budget request was complete on time

- A strategic review of ICT systems went out to tender. There were 3 responses. Following meetings with the companies, the contract has been awarded in principle to a company called Technology Transformation Group (TTG) subject to reference and tax status checks. We hope to commence working with them in the next couple of weeks
- A tender went out today (26 October 2022) for a research report on users and their experiences of the Learn with NALA (LWN) platform since it launched in March 2022. The purpose is to get insights into who is using the platform, why people are using it, the impact and their experiences and so on. It will inform the ongoing development requirements for the platform. The closing date for applications is 11 November 2022
- Research on Financial Literacy is due to be published in the next few weeks and the Board will be notified of the launch.
- LWN and the Distance Learning Service remains very busy
- One of our Adult Literacy Educators has resigned. She will not be replaced for the time being and her work / learners are being transferred to other members of the ALE team.
- The Annual Family Learning conference is on 24 November 2022. The CEO encouraged Board members to register
- EU project meeting took place in Waterford last week. That project remains on track and online content is expected to be published in early 2023
- We are in discussions with PortLaoise Prison to do some Literacy Awareness training in the prison
- Literacy Awareness training is ongoing in various sectors, slow to kick off in some sectors but we remain busy
- MK enquired about the Irish Banking Culture Board (IBCB) and if we were supporting them with the bank closures and whether time is running out to support that:
  - CEO noted that the communications from banks are ongoing. The IBCB are on our Financial Literacy Advisory group and CEO reached out to them to establish if we could support, through the Banking and Payments Federation (BPF) with communications to vulnerable customers, perhaps through Financial Literacy Training with BPF staff
  - CEO has provided a link to the BPF to our LWN course on Literacy Awareness
  - CD shared the details of the very poor experience she had herself with the process for switching banks and how the experience was not suitable for those with literacy or digital literacy issues. She raised with her ETB and at the NALA Student Subcommittee
  - CEO noted NALA are monitoring this situation. The Banks are putting arrangements in

place to support vulnerable customers but it seems to come down to staff in individual branches whether those supports are provided. NALA are awaiting results of research in order to approach BPF and IBCB with this as evidence. The Department of Finance (DOF) are also creating a Financial Inclusion Strategy. NALA sits on that group.

- CEO gave a summary of events that have occurred recently that NALA representatives attended.
- The following items will be covered later in the meeting when all attendees have arrived at the meeting:
  - 4.2. 2023 SOLAS Funding Allocation Request Cover Sheet
  - 4.2.1 2023 Draft SOLAS Funding Allocation Request

## **5 Subcommittees – minutes, documentation and items for decision**

### **5.2 Education, Training & Assessment Subcommittee (ETA)**

#### **5.2.1 Draft Minutes of 10 October 2022 Meeting**

##### **NOTED:**

- CEO summarised the minutes noting the meeting focussed on:
  - the revised Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Subcommittee
  - updates on QQI and
  - External Parties Policy
- When reviewing the TOR it was established that some members of the ETA have now served the maximum terms noted. However, the Board have the power to extend a term on the Subcommittee.
  - Patricia Ayton (Board Member) would like to continue serving on ETA until her Board term is up
  - Marian O'Reilly (not a board member) would also like to be reappointed to the ETA
  - Tony Moloney, Mary Bambrick, Michael Duffy and Leo Casey have finished their terms on the ETA and are not seeking reappointment
  - NALA are actively trying to recruit additional students to join the ETA also
- MK sought opinions on the need for Subcommittee term length. CEO suggested that to ensure rotation there should be term limits but Board should retain flexibility. CEO also noted that the term lengths in the TOR will be amended to be consistent with any changes that get approved for the Board term lengths in the ongoing review of the Constitution.

#### **5.2.2 Recommended for approval**

##### **1. Revised Terms of Reference and Membership**

**AGREED:**

- Revised ETA Terms of Reference
- Reappointment of Patricia Ayton and Marian O'Reilly to the ETA

**2. External Parties Cover Note and Policy**

**AGREED:**

- External Parties Policy

**5.3 Student Subcommittee**

**5.3.1 Draft Minutes of the 11 October 2022 Meeting**

**NOTED:**

- MS provided an update on the proposed workshop in Tramore that he has sought funding for:
  - A quote has been received from a facilitator of €600
  - Catering will cost €200
  - A request to provide an overnight stay for the facilitator was declined due to the proximity of the locations being travelled between
- An overall cost of €800 was deemed reasonable by the Board. CEO advised that some expenses for travel could be provided to the facilitator
- MK noted the question raised by the Student Subcommittee in the draft minutes regarding bank charges for tapping. CEO explained it can depend on the bank account type you have on whether you get charged. MK suggested NALA raise this when interacting with various bodies on the bank closures and financial literacy
- MS provided an update on the Student Day in Cork. He noted it was fantastic and feedback received from Students was very good and very useful in terms of ideas for future days. CD noted how well organised it was.

**5.1 Audit, Risk and Finance Subcommittee**

**5.1.3 Charities Regulator Authority Filings Recommended For Approval**

**NOTED:**

MR provided a background to the filing and documentation:

- There are 2 parts to the Annual filing:
  - Details taken from our 2021 Annual Report and Financial Statements relating to the activities and financial affairs for 2021

- A declaration on compliance with the Charities Governance Code
- The 2 documents provided to the Board for approval are:
  - NALA Charities Regulator Annual Report: A copy of what will be submitted online with the Charities Regulator
  - NALA Charities Regulator Compliance Form: A copy of our compliance record form which we keep to satisfy ourselves we are compliant
- MK noted that this must be available upon request from the Charities Regulator
- MK enquired about the format of the NALA Charities Regulator Annual Report document. MR clarified that the details contained within it will be entered online following approval so the colours used to highlight certain values in the document presented to the Board will not matter
- TN enquired about the 2022 dates used for evidence on the NALA Charities Regulator Compliance Form. MR explained that while the first part of the submission (financials and activities) relate to 2021, our declaration of compliance is up to the date of submission. Therefore, we must be satisfied that we are currently compliant.

**AGREED:**

1. NALA Charities Regulator Annual Report
2. NALA Charities Regulator Compliance Form

**5.1.4 Policies Recommended For Approval Cover note**

**NOTED:**

- MK pointed to the new elements of the Protected Disclosures Act now contained in the updated Protected Disclosures Policy, relating to what constitutes “penalisation” in the Act and Policy. She was concerned that staff involved in a disciplinary or underperformance matter could avoid the necessary penalisation of those matters by raising a protected disclosure
- MR advised that there are clauses in the Act that remove normal disciplinary matters and personal grievances from the scope of the legislation

**AGREED:**

1. Complaints Policy
2. Protected Disclosures Policy and Procedures

### **5.1.1 Draft Minutes of 10 October 2022 Meeting**

The minutes were noted.

### **5.1.2 Management Accounts**

PC provided a brief overview of the management accounts.

The management accounts were noted.

## **4.2 2023 SOLAS Funding Allocation Request (FAR)**

### **NOTED:**

- MK explained that SOLAS had requested the FAR early this year and that is why there isn't a lot of time to review it.
- CEO provided more background and context.
  - The request would usually have been sent to NALA in mid-late December
  - The budget would have usually went to the AR&F before coming to the Board for approval
  - The decision would then be provided in May – July the following year
  - This year we received the request on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2022 with a deadline of 31<sup>st</sup> October 2022
  - CEO immediately made enquiries when the request was received including whether we could have a small extension which SOLAS declined
- CEO and two managers met with SOLAS on 20 October and enquired about the following items:
  - If there is expected to be funding available to meet our expected staff salary increases of approximately €400,000 as a result of:
    - Annual Increments
    - Public Sector Pay Agreement
    - Reversion of Haddington Road working hour agreements (37 to 35 hours).

SOLAS did not give an indication of the answer to this

- There is no mention of the ALL Strategy in the request.

SOLAS advised they would send a new document with a tab for ALL Strategy funding requests

- CEO outlined how they approached the FAR for 2023:
  - CEO and PC have spent time, in conjunction with the other managers working out ways we could implement the pay increases
  - Proposal is to request an additional €317,000 from SOLAS for the totality of our activities for 2023. The breakdown can be seen in the DRAFT SOLAS Funding Allocation Request (Document 4.2.1)
  - In relation to pay, NALA is proposing to implement it in a phased way by:
    - Paying 2022 Public Service Pay Agreement increases out of NALA's surplus funds
    - The remaining increases, we propose to request from SOLAS. However, this can be funded by requesting an additional €57,000 in our Core Funding from SOLAS
- CEO directed the Board to now refer to the cover sheet and explained the summary table within it
- CEO then referred the Board to the DRAFT FAR and explained the format
- MK sought initial agreement from the Board that NALA were seeking funding expansion in the correct areas/activities for 2023. The Board agreed
- PC and CEO explained the table in the coversheet relating to the proposal for funding the pay increases required to keep in alignment with the public sector
- MK reiterated that the proposal to pay the 2022 pay increases out of our surplus funds will not negatively impact our cash position at the end of 2023. We have a healthy contingency fund which is increasing this year and will increase next year. It was clarified that the pay increases would be paid out of unrestricted reserves
- FW and CC sought clarification on various aspects to ensure understanding on the proposals and the background, these items were discussed in detail
- The importance of maintaining pay alignment with the public sector was discussed
- PA sought further clarification that our reserve balance would remain satisfactory. PC advised that it would stay within our policy on reserves. PA asked what the outcome would be if SOLAS requested that we pay a bigger portion of the funding needed to retain pay alignment from our reserves. The Board noted that this would need to be looked at separately if it were to happen. However, it is felt that that scenario will not arise
- TOM enquired if there was any possibility that staff would receive any pay increase before Christmas 2022. PC advised that this will not be possible until we have a decision on 2023 FARR. CEO noted we will continue to engage with the Union on the matter and keep them

up to date with our plans.

**AGREED:**

- NALA's 2023 FAR submission to SOLAS including:
  - €1,776,359 to cover existing Core, Learn with NALA, Furthest Behind First pay costs including all increments due in 2023, all ER PRSI and 10% pension contributions, recently agreed national pay agreement increases and the removal of the 35/37<sup>th</sup> adjustments backdated to 1st July 2022
  - €198,000 increase in 6 new ALL initiatives
- €47,338.00 from NALA's unrestricted 2022 reserves to pay the €4,305 for the 1% previously agreed / budgeted for the Oct 2022 pay increase plus the recently agreed 3% back dated to February 2022 totalling €43,033

**6. AOB**


- MS will speak to Margaret Murray, NALA to progress the student workshop request.
- PA will be unavailable for the next Board Meeting.

**Next Meeting**

<b>Date:</b>	7 December 2022
<b>Time:</b>	11:00 am to 1:30 pm
<b>Venue:</b>	NALA Offices, Sandford Lodge Lunch afterwards in Layla's, Ranelagh at 2pm

**Actions Arising from This Meeting:**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Person Applicable</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
5.1.4	Protected Disclosures Policy to be added to staff handbook on 1 January 2023	MR	Jan 2023

 7 December 2022	
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Chairperson's Signature and date	Secretary Signature and date
MARGARET KELLY	PATRICIA AYTON