National Adult Literacy Agency	
Draft Minutes of the NALA Board	
Date:	26 October 2023
Time:	2.00pm – 4.30pm
Venue:	Avila Carmelite Centre and Zoom

Chairperson:	Margaret Kelly (MK)
Present (Charity Trustees):	In person: Aoife Foley (AF), Ciaran Casey (CC), Frances Ward (FW), Paula Tiller (PT), Trish Nolan (TN), Pat Ayton (PA),Tom O'Mara (TOM), Online: Elma Teahan (ET)
Quorum:	◉ Yes ○ No
In Attendance (Others):	Colleen Dube (CEO), Paul Cahill (PC) (Finance & Corporate Services Manager), Michelle Reade (MR) (Governance & Compliance Officer)
Apologies:	Catherine Devlin, Eleanor Neff, Maria O'Gorman, Maurice Sammon, Tracey Reilly

Please see Glossary of Terms at the end of this document for guidance

1. Welcome

The meeting commenced at 14.13pm.

It was agreed to reorder the agenda to address key decision items first.

MK welcomed everyone and summarised the agenda.

2. Conflicts of Interest

There were no conflicts of interest identified or declared.

3. Draft Minutes of 28 June 2023 Board meeting

NOTED:

- MK summarised the minutes of the previous Board meeting

- MK requested some changes to the minutes:

  - From: …MK and PA gave the background to this and clarified this was in lieu of being able to join NALA's scheme immediately.

  - To: …MK and PA gave the background to this and clarified this was in lieu of not being able to join NALA's scheme immediately.

○ From: ...MK added that while it may not be reflected in detail in the minutes from the last Board meeting, all that was discussed would be fully documented in the papers for the last Board meeting.

To: ...MK added that while it may not be reflected in detail in the minutes from the last Board meeting, all that was discussed would be fully documented in the proposal put to the Board on 3 May and was approved at that time.

AGREED:

- The minutes were approved subject to the above changes.

4.	CEO's Report

4.1 Work Plan and Implementation Framework

NOTED:

- There are no significant changes or updates since the last board meeting and the actions in the Work Plan remain largely on track. Anything behind schedule is due to third party contractors or a reprioritisation due to other work taking precedence and will be carried over to 2024 where necessary.

- A meeting was held with SOLAS on 24 October 2023. The main purpose was to have strategic dialogue with the ALL office. The meeting was between the ALL Programme office and NALA's senior management team to discuss what we could mutually work on. No definitive proposals came from the meeting. It was established that there are opportunities to join together on learner engagement, outreach and literacy awareness. CD noted that she visited the ALOA in October and it was evident that literacy services are very stretched. More collaboration would help improve this. As NALA's funding from SOLAS will be flat lined and there is no visibility on funding from ALL office, this will impact quantifiable outputs as costs are going up. This point was made to SOLAS. A follow up meeting is scheduled for the 7 November with SOLAS's Director of Executive Transformation and Agency Grants staff. We are still awaiting the SOLAS funding guidelines and clarification on whether NALA's funding will continue to fall under the FET Strategy or will it shift to the ALL Strategy. PC noted that the timings of the FARR process has disimproved following an improvement last year. The ALL Strategy implementation group are due to meet on the 22 November. CD referred to the agreed action from the LSPG minutes to write to the Minister, she cautioned that she is uncertain that it will yield any results and suggested this be revisited after the meetings with SOLAS.

- CD referred to the next items from the update regarding Partnerships. NALA's interaction

with An Post continues. There was a meeting with An Post on 24 October. An Post spoke about their Money Manager App and CD encouraged An Post to widen the audience for this App and to widen their definition of vulnerable customers and to promote literacy awareness among their staff. CD connected An Post with the Department of Finance who have developed a financial literacy strategy. The Board discussed the various initiatives underway with the IBCB, BPFI and pillar banks regarding supporting customers to open bank accounts online. CD informed the board that a proposal is in with the BPFI regarding a public awareness campaign but this would need resources from each of the pillar banks and An Post. NALA is also chasing An Post for details on the impact of the Unlocking Life campaign but this is not available yet.

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CD is seeking input and approval in principle to make an application given this is a strategic decision and we are in the process of our strategic planning. CD informed the board of potential project ideas as we do not have one off the shelf. The Board discussed at length the benefits, opportunities and disadvantages of progressing with this given the apparent direction of our strategy, capacity in NALA and in our plain English service, ███ █████████████████████████████████. The general consensus was that this aligns with NALA's strategic goals and expertise and is a good opportunity.

AGREED:

- CD to progress the application with ████████████████████████ and assess the feasibility from an operational perspective

4.2 Report of September Promotional Activity

NOTED:

- CD provided an overview of the paper.

• The board discussed the historic and current relationship NALA has with An Post.

5. Subcommittees – Minutes, documentation and items for decision

5.3 Audit Risk and Finance Subcommittee

- PC presented the AR&F agenda items

5.3.1 Draft minutes of the 10 October 2023 Meeting

NOTED:

- MK enquired about the changes to the Statement of Internal Financial Control. PC clarified that role titles will be updated but segregation of duties remain.

- MK also enquired about our financial position. PC confirmed we are on track and referred to the management accounts.

- MK further enquired about the reference to using Boardmatch to find a new member. PC clarified we will take this work in house and an advertisement for the position has been drafted.

- The minutes were noted

AGREED:

- MK raised the matter of the recent pay increases on 1 March and 1 October. She noted while the Board discussed and approved these in 2022 during the budget discussions, she recommended explicit approval of these now. The Board reapproved these pay increases.

5.3.2 Management Accounts

NOTED:

- PC referred to the management accounts and clarified that they are now up to date to the end of September. He noted that SOLAS have yet to comment on the current salaries underspend.

- PC provided a brief summary of the accounts.

5.3.3 Draft 2024 Budget

NOTED:

- PC clarified that the decreases in administration costs for 2024 is due to:

- o Movement of the printing of resources to another budget line

- o A reduction in depreciation

- TOM enquired about the LWN contract and licensing fee. CD provided information on the background and status of the contract, licensing and how it is funded by SOLAS.

AGREED:

- The draft budget was approved

5.3.4 Charities Regulatory Authority 2023 Filing

NOTED:

- MR summarised the documents being presented to the Board

AGREED:

- CRA filing

- CRA Compliance Record Form

5.3.5 Mazars Letter of Engagement for 2023 Statutory Audit

NOTED:

- PC informed the Board of the timeline for the audit.

AGREED:

- The Board approved the letter.

- MK signature will be added to the letter.

5.4 Literacy and Staff Policies and Governance Subcommittee

5.4.1 Draft minutes of the 11 October 2023 Meeting

NOTED:

- MK summarised the minutes and the minutes were noted.

- TOM enquired about the projects that the ALL Office had gone out to tender on that were referred to in the minutes. He asked if NALA had considered tendering for any of these projects. CD confirmed we didn't tender as we weren't invited to tender directly. There were three that aligned with NALA's services relating to health literacy, plain English and literacy awareness training. However, the technical requirements specified in the requests for tender did not align with NALA's capabilities.

5.4.2 Updated Staff Handbook

AGREED:

- The updates to the Staff Handbook were approved

5.2 Education, Training and Assessment Subcommittee

5.2.1 Draft Minutes of the 28 September 2023 meeting

NOTED:

- CD summarised the ETA minutes in the absence of EN.

- CD referred to the draft QQI Quality Assurance Guidelines for Blended and Fully Online Programmes. NALA had sought update on the status of the guidelines and they were subsequently published. There is a meeting being scheduled with QQI to discuss these. NALA are currently reviewing the guidelines, however initial indications are that they are geared towards third level and blended learning.

- The minutes were noted.

5.2.2 Programme approval, development, evaluation and review subcommittee

NOTED:

- MK referred to page 5 of the proposed policy and the Board's role in approved programmes. The Board discussed this requirement and whether this was the appropriate level of approval. The Board considered if they should approve any or all programmes, new programme development areas or accredited programmes only. It was suggested that the intention was new accredited programmes.

- PA enquired about NALA's professional development programmes, their audience and if they are accredited. CD confirmed they are not accredited and they are undertaken by ETB practitioners and more recently is reaching a wider audience.

AGREED:

- The policy was approved subject to clarification of the wording to "new accredited programmes".

5.1 Student Subcommittee

5.1.1 Report on 14 September 2023 Development Day

NOTED:

• CD gave an overview of the report of the day. The report was noted.

5.1.2 Draft minutes of 5 October 2023 Meeting

NOTED:

- CD summarised the minutes.

- The Board discussed the recruitment of members to the Student Subcommittee and what steps could be taken to help recruit engaged learners such as, allowing a person to attend a meeting before they agree to join, engage with ALOs to source engaged learners or promote Student Subcommittee membership as a stepping stone to going forward for a position on the Board of ETBs. Changes to the literacy services has made it more challenging to source literacy learners.

7 AOB

Remaining 2023 Board Meetings

NOTED:

- The next meeting is online on 22 November 2023

- The meeting on 13 December will be in person and lunch has been booked for 2pm. Board members were asked to let us know if they cannot join in person.

6 Review of Effectiveness

- The board discussed what worked well and what did not work well and any suggested changes. The following feedback was gathered:
  - o Nice to have an opportunity to meet in person
  - o 2 Board members suggested that the afternoon is better for in person board meetings

- MK informed the Board that we will be revisiting Board Effectiveness, and a survey based on the CRA template will issues in due course.

- CD informed the Board that she is plotting out the schedule of meetings for 2024 and hopes to bring this to the next Board meeting. In 2024 the Board will trial 2pm – 5pm for the meetings.
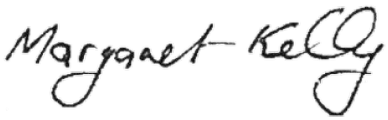
Next Meeting	
Date:	22 November 2023
Time:	4.30 pm

Venue:	Zoom	

Actions Arising from This Meeting:			
Item	**Action**	**Person Applicable**	**Timeframe**
	None		

Margaret Kelly 22 November 2023	
Chairperson's Signature and date	Secretary's Signature and date
MARGARET KELLY	PATRICIA AYTON

Glossary

Acronym	Full Description
ALL	Adult Literacy for Life
ABEDiLi	Adult Basic Education Digital Literacy project
AGM	Annual General Meeting
AEO	Adult Education Officer
AEOA	Adult Education Officers' Association
ALO	Adult Literacy Organiser
ALOA	Adult Literacy Organisers' Association
ARF	Audit, Risk and Finance Subcommittee
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CITO	Check In, Take Off
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CRA	Charities Regulatory Authority
CRO	Companies Registration Office
DLS	Distance Learning Service
DFHERIS	Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science
DPER	Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
ERS	ERS IT solutions
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
ETA	Education, Training & Assessment Subcommittee
ETB	Education and Training Board
ETBI	Education and Training Boards Ireland
FBF	Furthest Behind First
FET	Further Education and Training
IBCB	Irish Banking Culture Board
ICT	Information Communications Technology
LAT	Literacy Awareness Training
LSPG	Literacy and Staff Policies and Governance Subcommittee
LWN	Learn with NALA
PMDS	Performance Management Development System
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Q1, 2, 3, 4	Financial Quarter 1 (January – March), 2 (April - June) 3 (July – September) 4 (October – December)
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SIPTU	Services Industrial Professional and Technical Union
SOFA	Statement of Financial Affairs
SORP	Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) on Accounting and Reporting for Charities
TUI	Teacher's Union of Ireland