

NATIONAL ADULT LITERACY AGENCY (the “Company”)

Minutes of the 42nd Annual General Meeting of the Company held at the Ashling Hotel, Parkgate Street, Dublin 8 on the 13th day of May 2023 at 11am.

Present:

Officers: Margaret Kelly (Chairperson), Maria O’Gorman (Vice-Chairperson), Ciaran Casey (Honorary Treasurer), Pat Ayton (Honorary Secretary).

Officials In attendance: Colleen Dube, NALA Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Aoife Mulhall (NALA), Elaine Mullen (NALA), Michelle Reade (NALA), Paul Cahill (NALA), Sandra Peel (NALA), Aedín Morkan (Mazars).

29 other voting members and 7 other non-voting attendees.

Commencement

The event commenced at 11am when Colleen Dube, NALA’s Chief Executive Officer welcomed attendees. She introduced the NALA staff that were present and available to provide any help necessary. She informed the attendees that there was a photographer at the event and to let NALA staff know if they did not want to be photographed.

Colleen introduced Yvonne McKenna, Director of the Adult Literacy for Life (ALL) Strategy, Programme Office to provide an update on the strategy.

Presentation

Yvonne McKenna gave a presentation on the ALL Strategy.

Remarks

Margaret Kelly, Chairperson of NALA’s Board, made some remarks in response to Yvonne’s presentation. She noted it was heartening to see Literacy for all becoming a reality. The journey is just starting and she looks forward to its implementation. She thanked Yvonne on behalf of all in attendance.

There was one question from the audience enquiring if NALA could be taking on too much. Colleen responded and acknowledge that this could happen if NALA isn’t careful. NALA is trying to focus on certain areas over the last couple of years.

Formal Proceedings

Margaret formally called the AGM to order. She noted that a quorum (the minimum number needed) of voting members were present and that the business of the meeting could begin. She provided an overview of the agenda for the AGM and explained that questions would be taken after each agenda item. She explained that Members of NALA who are eligible to vote have been given a card to hold in the air when asked to vote.

Minutes of the 2022 Annual General Meeting

Pat Ayton, Honorary Secretary, gave a summary of the 2022 AGM minutes and noted that the full version of minutes was available on NALA's website.

The minutes were adopted.

Directors Report and Financial Statements 2022

Ciaran Casey, Honorary Treasurer introduced the Director's Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2022 for the review and consideration of the members. He outlined that the Director's Report and Financial Statements which had already been approved by the Board.

Ciaran introduced Aedín Morkan, Mazars' Audit and Quality Assurance Partner to provide a commentary on the audit of the 2022 Financial Statements.

Aedín's noted the following in her summary of the Financial Statements:

- NALA's Financial Statements were prepared using Financial Reporting Standard (FRS) 102, Charity Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) and with the Companies Act 2014 and are fully compliant with those standards.
- The Financial Statements are prepared on a going concern basis which means that NALA's management and Directors and auditors, Mazars, have considered the ability of NALA to operate for a period of 12 months following the date of approval of the financial statements and have concluded that there is no significant uncertainty regarding their being able to operate.
- Mazars conducted a full scope statutory audit of the financial statements in line with international standards and have issued a full clean unmodified unqualified audit report.
- The Statement of Financial Activities showed:
 - Income of €2,862,675 generated in 2022;
 - Expenditure of €2,689,995 incurred in 2022; and

- a surplus for 2022 of €172,680 and accumulated funds of €956,230.
- The Balance sheet shows the restricted funds balance of €92,592. This means that these funds can only be spent on specific work. The unrestricted funds of €863,638 can be spent on any projects to advance NALA's charitable objectives.
- The Cash flow statement shows the movement of funds for the year and total cash balances at year-end of €1,107,131, an increase of €239,646 on 2021.

This concluded Aedín's commentary on the Financial Statements.

There were no questions.

Reappointment of Mazars as Auditors for 2022

- Ciaran Casey recommended the approval of the reappointment of Mazars as Statutory Auditors for 2023.
- This resolution was approved by the Members.
- Ciaran also recommended members authorise the Directors, to agree the remuneration of the Auditors for 2023.
- This resolution was approved by the Members.

Review of Company Affairs 2022

- Colleen Dube, NALA CEO, gave an overview of the Company Affairs for 2022.
 - She referred to NALA's Annual Report and highlighted 2 targets that were not met by NALA in 2022. These related to call volumes and numbers attending events. These was due to there being no national awareness campaign that had been expected and a return to in-person events which have yet to return to pre-Covid levels.
 - NALA had 2,483 Members in 2022 including students, people working in education, small and large organisations and interested members of the public.
 - An overview of the work NALA has done with individuals over the phone, through the Learn with NALA website, education centres, Student Development Fund, events and learning resources
 - NALA's work with organisations who deal with the public, through Literacy Awareness Training, Health Literacy Training and the Plain English Training and editing service
 - Public policy and engagement with policy makers and the general public through the media, policy submissions, research and public events.

- Colleen then informed of some more recent developments within NALA:
 - 2 of NALA's staff members had been seconded to the SOLAS Adult Literacy for Life Program Office. She thanked Clare McNally and Helen Ryan for all their work with NALA and acknowledged the value they will bring to the ALL Strategy.
 - Colleen welcomed the new Communications, Advocacy and Outreach Manager, Michelle Lynch and new Adult Literacy Educator, Cait Cooney.
 - NALA is recruiting for a Literacy Development and Outreach Worker and a Research and Policy Officer to replace Helen Ryan and Tina Byrne, who recently retired from NALA.
 - NALA has focussed on its people and processes to with the recruitment of outreach workers and Learn with NALA staff and recent updates and improvements to NALA's building, policies and Staff Handbook.
 - As Members are aware, NALA is hoping to make changes to its Constitution Members will be kept informed.

There were a number of questions from the audience:

- An attendee enquired whether NALA's services were accessible. Colleen outlined that NALA's online platform and phone service are accessible. She commented that the physical facilities in Education and Training Boards (ETBs) are outside of the control of NALA but that they do try to make them as accessible as possible.
- The attendee further enquired about the provision of Irish language Literacy services. Colleen confirmed that NALA does not provide that service. There is another organisation, BRACA, who focus on Irish and information for that organisation can be provided if necessary. Margaret Kelly added that this is an issue with the ALL Strategy that it doesn't appear to cover Irish Literacy but that NALA just could not take that on.
- Another attendee asked if the drop in caller numbers to the phone line was a result of a drop in the use of phones. Colleen outlined that it appears to be directly related to the lack of an awareness campaign based on experience from previous campaigns. Colleen added that local campaigns such as local radio are needed. She commented that numbers to the Freetext service do appear to be reducing regardless of campaign activity. She further added that NALA has a dedicated LWN Support Phone line now which means learners requiring support with the service no longer need to call the general Freephone line.
- Another attendee asked if posters could be placed in Post Offices. Colleen outlined that is not as simple as placing a poster but NALA is working with An Post to do some form of information campaign.

- The next person to ask a question first complimented NALA on their budget and work on tutor pay. They then asked in the lack of SNA's in ETBs is something NALA could advocate for. Colleen said they were not aware of the issue but can start making some enquiries.
- The next question was in relation whether NALA could help with legal language or environment language. Colleen stated what environmental literacy is not something NALA engage in but with a new strategic planning cycle coming up, what NALA focus on would be considered. In relation to legal literacy, NALA does encourage the legal sector to consider it but there is resistance. The ALL Strategy does make a commitment for the public sector generally to use more plain language.
- The final question related to banks and doctors. Colleen noted that NALA has done work on health literacy and the ALL Programme Office is trying to add staff to that area. One of the target areas is young doctors and pharmaceutical companies.

Election and Re-election of Officers and Directors

Michelle Reade, Governance and Compliance Officer, updated members on matters related to the Board and governance of NALA.

- Michelle thanked:
 - the CEO, Staff and members of the Board and Subcommittees of NALA for keeping pace with all the governance and statutory requirements
 - Kevin Kelly, who was previously on NALA's board but continued as the Chairperson of NALA's Audit, Risk and Finance Subcommittee
 - Elma Teahan, Board member, for taking over this responsibility.
 - all the members of NALA's Subcommittees
 - the ambassadors and students who have worked with NALA and shared their experiences and encouraged others to seek help
 - Lynne Keery for her valuable insight and contribution to the work of NALA.
- Michelle informed Members:
 - Since the 2022 AGM there were no co-opted Directors appointed to the Board
 - Lynne Keery, is now leaving the Board
 - Vacancies arose for:
 - Vice-Chairperson
 - Honorary Treasurer
 - 2 Director Positions
 - Nominations were sought from Members and there was only one candidate for each vacancy, therefore there will be no election necessary.

- Maria O’Gorman was nominated for the Vice-Chairperson position and was unopposed. Her proposer was Bernie Broderick, and this was seconded by Michelle O’Donnell.
 - Ciaran Casey was nominated for the Honorary Treasurer position and was unopposed. His proposer was Pat Ayton, and this was seconded by Lynne Keery.
 - Catherine Devlin was nominated for a director position. She was proposed by Margaret Kelly, and this was seconded by Pat Ayton.
 - Paula Tiller was nominated for a director position. She was proposed by Dr. Eleanor Neff, and this was seconded by Maggie O’Sullivan.
- Members will be asked to formally approve their appointment to the Board.
 - All nominations received were checked to ensure the nominee was eligible to serve on the Board and that their proposers and seconders were all current members and therefor eligible to make the nomination.
 - The nominees will now introduce themselves and outline why they want to serve on NALA’s Board.
- Maria O’Gorman, Ciaran Casey, Catherine Devlin and Paula Tiller addressed the Members.
 - Maria O’Gorman was re-elected as Vice-Chairperson
 - Ciaran Casey was re-elected and Honorary Treasurer
 - Catherine Devlin was re-elected as a Director
 - Paula Tiller was elected as a Director

Future thinking

Margaret Kelly shared some thoughts on NALA’s priorities for the coming year. She noted that in March 2023, NALA’s Board agreed a very ambitious work plan to advance NALA’s objectives and she will highlight a few:

- Pay and conditions: NALA will continue to raise the issue of tutor pay and conditions with the Minister until resolved. NALA believes that fair pay and conditions are an essential part of any quality service and it is vital that these issues are resolve.
- Reaching the hard to reach:
 - Following on from NALA’s Prison Peer Literacy Program, NALA has delivered two follow on programmes in Portlaoise Prison and are currently developing further prison literacy programs in 7 new prisons
 - The Literacy Development and Outreach Worker is developing links with traveller organisations, drug services and community groups to see how NALA can meet

their needs

- Colleen is working closely with Government department and agencies and financial institutions to advance the recommendations in the Financial Literacy Report.
- Referral Protocol: NALA has implemented a direct referral protocol with City of Dublin and Dublin Dun Laoghaire ETBs. NALA will be collaborating with the ALL office to ensure that this is implemented in other ETBs before any new awareness campaign.

Margaret handed over to Colleen to speak about International Literacy Day (ILD). Colleen informed Members that NALA is currently developing its programme for ILD in September that will include a series of events around the country. NALA has received sponsorship from An Post that will enable NALA to do additional events and enhance promotional activities.

Colleen opened the floor to any final questions or suggestions from the attendees. There were none.

Closing Comments

That concluded the business of NALA's 2023 AGM. Margaret Kelly, NALA Chairperson thanked all the attendees for their support and their voting. She commented that collectively we can continue to work in partnership to improve the lives of adults with unmet Literacy needs. She brought the meeting to a close and invited the attendees to the restaurant for lunch.

Pat Ayton

Company Secretary

Date