

National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA)

Minutes of the NALA Board

Meeting details:

Date:	11 December 2024
Time:	2.00pm – 5.00pm
Venue:	Zoom

Attendee details:

Chairperson:	Margaret Kelly (MK) - Online
Present (Charity Trustees)	Elma Teahan (ET), Michelle O'Driscoll (MOD), Aoife Foley (AF), Eleanor Neff (EN), Trish Nolan (TN), Paula Tiller (PT), Maria O'Gorman (MOG), Tom O'Mara (TOM), Ciaran Casey (CC)
Quorum:	☒ Yes ☐ No
In attendance (Others):	Colleen Dube (CEO) – NALA Boardroom Jonah Mudehwe (Finance and Corporate Services Manager) – NALA Boardroom, Michelle Reade (Governance and Compliance Officer) NALA Boardroom
Apologies:	Margaret Hanrahan (MH) and Catherine Devlin (CD)

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

Items discussed:

1. Governance Training
• MK opened the meeting and introduced Andrea Shupinski from Carmichael who is going to provide an hour-long training session on Finance and Understanding Financial Statements. • Andrea provided training for the attendees.
2. Meeting Welcome
• MK opened the formal meeting. • MK recommended a further session on the NALA accounts with JM. CD added that we have the new pre-Board Meeting Information Sessions which have yet to be used by members of the Board. • MK noted we have a quorum.
3. Conflicts of Interest
• No conflicts of interest were identified.
4. Minutes of 23 October 2024 Meeting
Noted: • MK summarised the minutes of the last meeting. Agreed: • The minutes were approved
5. CEO Update
5.1 2024 Work Plan and implementation Framework Noted: • CEO referred to the OECD Survey of Adults Skills which was published yesterday. • She noted the data still needs to be looked at in more detail, but it is showing that literacy levels are down and there is a greater need in the area of literacy, numeracy has stayed largely the same. A new category of adaptive problem solving was captured and Ireland is showing below the EU average. She gave an overview of the

media appearances she has made. She informed the Board that NALA have reached out to the major political parties. She noted that three of the Board have volunteered to join a working group to engage in political engagement. She invited discussion from the Board.

- PT noted that it highlights for her the need to reach those with a Level One need.
- TOM added that overall, there appears to be some huge gaps in Ireland and with a new government incoming it is hard to see if the problems will be sufficiently addressed. MOG added that the Government cannot create a new department, but they can make move responsibilities around to create that space. MOG further added that she may be able to establish a senior contact within Fianna Fail to establish the procedure for engaging in talks.
- EN enquired if this was a good opportunity to push for a clearer picture on what literacy provision is available and taking place. CEO advised that she has just recently received a snapshot of literacy provision that was done in conjunction with the RLCs and ETBs from June 2024. It has raised a number of questions, and it was discussed at yesterday's Management Meeting. It was decided that CEO will write to SOLAS to clarify its accuracy and if the report can be cited and shared further. It did not take account of non-ETB provision, and it appears that NALA is doing more literacy provision than 14 of the 16 ETBs with a considerably smaller budget.
- CD added that the survey results highlight issues that are beyond the scope and capability of NALA to address.
- The Board discussed further.
- MK enquired who were the volunteers for the working group on political engagement. CEO confirmed it was MK, TQM from the ARF Subcommittee and EC from the LSPG Subcommittee. NALA's Research and Policy Officer is also part of the group. CEO will contact MK after the meeting to set something up.
- CEO noted that NALA was not shortlisted for the Good Governance Awards and the feedback has been received. MR advised that she is aware the standard is much higher and the feedback received this year will be more difficult to implement. The section we got the lowest score was Strategy and Impact and that is difficult to perfect.

- CEO also noted that:
 - the contract for the LWN Organisational Review has been awarded to a company called People Password and an initial meeting is being held tomorrow
 - with regards to recruitment, CEO advised that the position for Membership and Funding Development Officer will be readvertised with interviews provisionally scheduled for January.
 - NALA is currently in the process of gathering all the relevant data for and from the 2024 Work plan to inform the 2024 impact report.
 - there is still no confirmation from SOLAS regarding end of year reporting or the funding allocation request for 2025.
- MK enquired about the reference to getting an ICT consultant and if there are funds available for it. CEO confirmed the cost is approximately €1,000 for someone to support us in preparing a tender for our ICT provider which will happen next year.

5.2 2025 Work plan development and schedule of meetings and rolling agenda

NOTED:

- CEO advised that the 2025 Workplan will contain the ongoing business as usual items and some new strategic activities and other projects.
- LWN is a challenge due to increased demands and limited staff. There are two key QQI compliance projects which will in themselves be a big drain on resources. NALA is scoping this out and may need to consider getting external assistance and may be included in the funding proposal from SOLAS and may require a request to the Board to use some funds from Reserves.
- Following query from MK, CEO confirmed that making efficiencies in the other teams will not assist with LWN team.
- MK referred to the schedule of meetings for 2025 and the proposed rolling agenda. CEO added the subcommittees have considered their respective rolling agendas.
- CEO also added that we are going to endeavour to circulate Board papers 10 days in advance during 2025, increased from the previous 7 days.

- MR advised the Board in relation to the AGM that there is a change to the Companies Act 2014 which will allow for AGMs to be held virtually. This is a permanent change following on from the temporary change that was made to allow online meetings during the COVID-19 pandemic. MR is currently reviewing the specific requirements to ensure we can comply with the requirements. The provisional date for the AGM is Wednesday 21 May 2025.

AGREED:

The Board approved the schedule and rolling agenda.

6. Student Subcommittee – Draft Minutes of 19 November 2024 meeting

NOTED:

- CEO advised that CD is not here today. CEO mentioned a couple of different workshops being considered for the Student Days:
 - Financial literacy
 - AI
 - Misinformation/media literacy
- It is also being considered following discussion with the committee and local centres to hold two Student Days before June as September has not been working out well.

7. Audit, Risk and Finance Subcommittee

7.1 Draft Minutes of the 26 November 2024 ARF meeting

NOTED:

- MK enquired if the Prize Bonds had been moved yet. MR advised that action is with her and she is looking into this at present.
- MK also enquired about the Internal Audit Framework that will be created and referred to the Board for approval. MK noted her understanding was that MR had previously agreed to conduct spot checks. MR explained that the ARF agreed to create a policy or Framework to support the future activities and help identify if and when external assistance may be required.

- MK further enquired about the Cybersecurity incident and CEO explained the incident and where it occurred. MR further outlined where these incidents will now be captured. Cyber and other risk events now have their own register through where they will be managed accordingly. MK sought clarification is any data had been breached or accessed. MR confirmed it had not. MK asked that this is made clear on the register. TOM enquired if there is a Cybersecurity Business Continuity Plan. MR advised that NALA has one BCP covering all scenarios.

7.2 Management Accounts to 31 October 2024

NOTED:

- The Board noted the Management Accounts

7.3 Garda Vetting Policy

AGREED:

The Board approved the Garda Vetting Policy.

8. Literacy and Staff Policy and Governance subcommittee - Draft Minutes of the 27 November 2024 meeting

NOTED:

- MK gave a summary of the key points from the minutes.
- MK enquired if DW had been contacted about his ongoing membership of the committee.
- MR confirmed that he has confirmed he is stepping down.
- The minutes were noted.

9. Education, Training and Assessment Subcommittee

9.1 Draft Minutes of the 28 November 2024 ETA meeting

NOTED:

- The board discussed the updates in relation to the Academic Integrity Policy and the situation regarding verifying identity. CEO advised there was no proposals confirmed at present.

9.2 Proposal regarding term of Chairperson

NOTED:

- The Board discussed the proposal for calculating the term of the Chairperson of the subcommittees as EN has just been appointed to the Chairperson of the ETA during her current ETA term.

AGREED:

Where a person is appointed as the Chairperson of a subcommittee, they are appointed as the Chairperson for the remainder of their current 3-year term of that subcommittee which may be less than 3 years.

10.AOB

NOTED:

- CEO suggested the Board considers meeting in person and having lunch sometime in the Summer as December does not appear to be suitable.

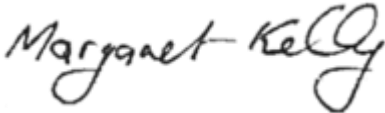
Next meeting details:

Date:	12 March 2025
Time:	2.00pm – 5.00pm
Venue:	Zoom

Actions arising from this meeting:

Item	Action	Person Applicable	Timeframe
7.1	Ensure the cybersecurity incident log clearly reflects that there was no breach of personal data.	MR	Immediate

Approval of minutes:

Chairperson's signature:	Secretary's signature:
	
Date: 12 March 2025	Date: 12 March 2025
Margaret Kelly	Aoife Foley

Glossary of terms

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
BAU	Business as Usual
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 and 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)
RLC	Regional Literacy Coordinator
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

The National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) is a charity and membership based organisation. We work to support adults with unmet literacy, numeracy and digital literacy needs to take part fully in society and to have access to learning opportunities that meet their needs. NALA does this by raising awareness of the importance of literacy, doing research and sharing good practice. We also provide online learning courses and a tutoring service to adults. We lobby for further investment to improve adult literacy, numeracy and digital literacy skills.

National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA)

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Registered Charity Number: 20020965

CHY (Charity) Number: 8506



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

SOLAS
learning works

