National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA)

Minutes of the NALA Board

Meeting details:

Date:	14 May 2025
Time:	2pm
Venue:	Online via Zoom

Attendee details:

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

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

Items discussed:

1. Welcome
• MK opened the meeting, noted the apologies and established if we had quorum. Quorum was reached.

- MK summarised the agenda and the decision items.
- MK reminded other Board members to register for the AGM if they had not already done so. She enquired with NALA staff if there was any events or speakers organised as part of it. CEO advised we had invited President Michael D. Higgins but unfortunately, he was unavailable. She advised on the running order and the challenge in getting people to attend.

2. Conflicts of Interest

- No conflicts of interest were noted.

3. Minutes of the 12 March 2025 Meeting

- MK summarised key points from the minutes.

4. CEO report including 2025 Draft work plan

Noted:

- CEO referred to the paper provided which summarises the current position on activities. She noted the following updates:
  - Discussions are taking place with ALL office about a new financial literacy project which will include a reprint of NALA resource “Making Cents”. We are proposing to pitch it at L2 or preparing for L3. CEO presented on financial literacy earlier in the year and the proposal is to pitch this to pillar banks. No progress will be made until formal approval is received from the ALL Office. The Board and CEO discussed the issues some face around opening bank accounts and what is happening in the charity and financial industry in this space.
  - The LWN Strategic Review report will come to the next Board meeting. She gave a brief update on the demand for LWN. The Board discussed.
  - NALA received a recommendation for Level 1 validation subject to six conditions and two recommendations.
- CEO made a presentation on a funding proposal with Rethink Ireland from the HiDigital fund worth €70,000 over 18 months. NALA’s proposal is to support LWN

activity that fits the criteria of the fund which is geared towards digital literacy for older people. The Board enquired about and discussed approaches to the activity.

Agreed:

- The Board approved the proposal to apply for the Rethink HiDigital Fund.

5. Management Accounts to 31 March 2025

Noted:

- MK reminded the Board that at the last meeting a budget was approved. However, SOLAS have since increased the salaries funding by 5.5% meaning a revised budget is needed.
- JM took the accounts as read. He referred to the 2025 funding application and the increased salaries funding that had been granted thereafter. The NALA budget has been updated to reflect.
- Approval to grant a pay increase to all staff by removing the historic 35/37th adjustment to staff salaries is being sought.
- JM gave an update on the cash position, and that the state savings from An Post have been liquidated and are now in NALA's main account.
- JM asked the Board to consider the proposed revised total budget of €2,822,286 including a salaries budget of €2,060,353 to remove the 35/37th adjustment in NALA's current 1 October 2023 pay scales, follow on actions and a forecasted budget shortfall of €29,405 to be covered from unrestricted reserves.
- MK clarified that the SOLAS salaries funding only covers SOLAS funded staff and to apply the pay increase to all staff unrestricted reserves must be used. She further noted that there are sufficient funds available in reserves to do so and to ensure NALA retains its approved reserve balance. She highlighted that the same situation is likely to arise next year, and the reserves would begin to be eroded, therefore NALA will need to start generating income from elsewhere. She mentioned that it had been considered by both the ARF and LSPG and it is recommended to approve.

- CEO added that during our mid-year reporting to SOLAS there will be an opportunity to apply for funding reallocation which could reduce the deficit, but this is not guaranteed.
- The Board noted the management accounts.

Agreed:

- The Board approved the proposal to remove the 35/37th adjustment and cover the budget shortfall from unrestricted reserves.
- The Board approved the revised budget.

6. Subcommittees – minutes, documentation and items for decision

6.1 Audit, Risk and Finance Subcommittee

6.1.1 Draft Minutes of the 22 April 2025 meeting

Noted:

- MK gave a brief overview of the pension situation and updates
- The Board noted the minutes

6.1 Items for decision

6.1.1 Trustee Code of Conduct

Agreed:

- The Board approved the Trustee Code of Conduct

6.1.2 Gifts and Hospitality Policy

Noted:

- The Board discussed the practice and the wording around providing a gift to a departing Board member. It was acknowledged that we need to document something. It was noted that is why the wording of “may”, “up to” and “recognition of service” was chosen. Various options were discussed, and it was agreed to keep it as proposed.

Agreed:

- The Board approved the Gifts and Hospitality Policy

6.1.3 Data Protection Policy

Agreed:

- The Board approved the Data Protection Policy

6.2.4 Appointment of 2025 Auditor

Agreed:

- The Board agreed to reappoint Forvis Mazars as auditor for another 3 years subject to member approval at the AGM.
- The Board approved the fee.

6.3 Literacy and Staff Policies and Governance Subcommittee

6.3.1 Draft Minutes of the 30 April 2025 Meeting

Noted:

- MK gave a summary of the minutes.
- The Board noted the minutes.

6.4 Items for Decision

6.4.1 NALA Child Safeguarding Statement

Agreed:

- The Board approved the Child Safeguarding Statement

6.4.2 Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Agreed:

- The Board approved the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

6.4.3 Easter privilege days

Agreed:

• The Board approved the proposal to remove the two Easter Privilege Days and convert them to two additional annual leave days in 2026
6.5 Student Subcommittee - Draft Minutes of 27 March 2025 meeting
Noted: • MK summarised the points from the minutes. • MK enquired if there was any progress on the appointment of a new student member. CD advised the recruitment is still ongoing. • CD noted that the Athlone Student Day went very well and positive feedback was received. • CD noted that the Student Subcommittee trialled out a new machine to assist people with visual impairments to vote. CD was impressed by the machine and noted it would be of value to people with other difficulties such as dyslexia. CEO noted it is being brought to the Electoral Commission for consideration to ensure voting is more accessible. • MR added in relation to membership of the committee that an unsuccessful candidate for Board membership has expressed an interest in joining the SSC and MR has passed the information onto our Literacy Student and Development Officer.
7 AOB
• CEO noted we may try do the next Board meeting in person on 25 June.

Next meeting details:

Date:	25 June 2025
Time:	2.00pm
Venue:	TBC

Actions arising from this meeting:

Item	Action	Person Applicable	Due By

Approval of minutes:

Chairperson's signature:	Secretary's signature:
Margaret Kelly	Aoife Foley
Date: 21 May 2025	**Date: 21 May 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.

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Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

SOLAS learning works

ALL Adult Literacy for Life