National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA)

Minutes of the NALA Board

Meeting details:

Date:	13 May 2026
Time:	2:00 pm
Venue:	Online via Zoom

Attendee details:

Chairperson:	Margaret Kelly (MK) - Online
Present (Charity Trustees)	Ciaran Casey (CC), Eleanor Neff (EN), Elma Teahan (ET), Geraldine Mernagh (GM) Maria O'Gorman (MOG), Paula Tiller (PT), Trish Nolan (TN) Sarah Shaughnessy (SS), Tom O'Mara (TOM)
Quorum:	☒ Yes ☐ No
In attendance (Others):	Colleen Dube, CEO, Jonah Mudehwe, Finance and Corporate Services Manager (JM), Fiona McGowan, Governance and Compliance Officer (FMG)
Apologies:	Catherine Devlin and Michelle O'Driscoll

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 acknowledged there was a quorum.

2. Conflicts of Interest
• No conflicts of interest were declared.

3. Minutes of the 25 March 2026 Meeting
• MK summarised key points from the minutes. GM acknowledged thanks for the posted Board packs.   **Agreed with no changes and awaiting funding updates.**

4. CEO report including 2026 Draft work plan
Noted: • On track with workplans and projects progressing due to funding.   • Literacy Development and Outreach Officer DR is moving forward on the literacy audit plan.   • NALA Guidelines for Good Adult Literacy Work need updating, Research and Policy Officer AC has commenced an internal scoping process to support the work. This could include a series of principles in line with the Universal Design of Learning framework.   • CD is spending time engaging with relevant politicians who can influence the direction of the Adult Literacy for Life (ALL) strategy, mainly Minister Marian Harkin, who attended NALA's student day on 23 April. CD liaised with Minister Harkin's private secretary, and a meeting has now been confirmed for Tue 16 June.   • CD is in the process of scheduling a meeting with the Tánaiste's Special Advisor to discuss and seek updates on the ALL strategy implementation, clarify a status on the mid-year review which was meant to be commissioned and to seek updates on the National Programme Officer Director.   • In relation to the progress report, Read Speaker will be embedded into the overall NALA website which is due to be deployed in the coming weeks.   • Feedback on the Tutors Forum was very successful as it provided good networking opportunities, however the general topic of conversation was about the cutbacks to provision. In relation to public controversy on cutbacks in a particular ETB, TOM

asked if the reviews on the ETB's mid-year funding was undertaken, and if so, the ETB should have been aware of the issue earlier and suggested that operational governance should have been in place. CD confirmed that all governance structures were not necessarily all connected.

- CD and Learning Strategy and Education Manager, EC, are involved in the expert provision working group and the final report was submitted on 27 April to the acting executive director in SOLAS for review.
- CD confirmed that she has a meeting in the diary on 22 May with the new CEO of SOLAS.
- CD received confirmation this morning that the President has agreed to be NALA's patron.
- MK asked about the outreach work with the drug community groups, CD confirmed there is ongoing engagement with different groups regarding literacy awareness, training, workshops and support.
- CD confirmed that NALA is part of the community and voluntary pillar with 31 other organisations and have reinstated bilateral meetings with Government departments, of which, the most active is the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, who met yesterday. During the meeting a discussion arose around the public expenditure budgetary process, which CD challenged and received no definitive answer. Funding will be flatlined and each department will have to take cuts and make contributions to public expenditure.
- Joint staff and board meeting on Tuesday 23 June, morning slot for staff only then lunch and the afternoon for staff and Board members, together, to discuss and explore challenges and opportunities in terms of future direction for NALA. GM asked about the relationship between the ALL office and NALA.

Agreed:

- CD will be in touch with the incoming Chairperson / Vice Chairperson to join her in the Tánaiste special advisor meeting.

5. Governance

Noted:

5.1 Update on AGM

- 22 people registered for the AGM as of today. Noted as we very close to quorum, reminders going out to members on Tuesday 19 May. Student Subcommittee meeting tomorrow and FMG has been invited to attend the AOB section to remind, invite and encourage the students to attend the AGM and explain the proxy voting option, for individuals if they are not able to attend.

5.2.1 Artificial Intelligence Policy

- Current policy on the agenda reflects all the updates from the Board and previous subcommittee meetings. Approval was agreed before being submitted for pE editing. It was agreed this policy should also be presented to the student subcommittee along with the opportunity for AI training.

6.2.1 Verbal Update from Student Day 23 April 2026

- Students raised concerns about the unavailability of courses; therefore, they were directed to NALA courses.
- Reviewed the registration forms and made suggestions for improvement, such as an appendix to explain the terminology and phrases. It was noted that the forms have to be completed numerous times for different courses, and students wondered if their details could be kept on file to save re completing the forms.
- Need to recruit new students for the student subcommittee.
- The student day had 4 workshops, which were Understanding Money, Talk to NALA, Keeping Well and Cookies, all workshops were successful.
- Registration process was changed which seemed to work very well.
- Deirdre Ryan and Sarah Gilmartin both spoke at the student day and Minister Marian Harkin attended as an invited guest.
- Evaluation forms were read out and 70 evaluation forms were completed, 144 people attended in total and 123 were students mostly from Dublin city and county.
- One learner said she had to move courses 4 times due to accessibility issues.

Agreed:

- AI Policy agreed by the Board.

6.2 Audit, Risk and Finance Subcommittee

Noted

- 6.2.1 Minutes of 23 April 2026 meeting
- 6.2.2 Management Accounts to March 2026
- ET explained that at the end of 2025 NALA had a certain amount of money that they owed to SOLAS however SOLAS confirmed that their Board had approved reallocation of over expenditure on staff costs and agreed to reduce funds refundable to them. This was good news for NALA but the question was how it should be reflected in the annual financial statements. NALA reached out to Aedín Morkan in Forvis Mazars who confirmed that the amendment is not material and therefore we do not need to update the accounts. SOLAS also confirmed that no adjustment should be made to the financial statements. Good news for NALA as we got to retain the funding approx. €20k and don't have to amend the financial statements.
- Discussion on the reserves policy and investment policy for the next meeting in May. Also management are exploring deposit account options. CD confirmed that NALA is applying to be a designated charity on Payzone, so NALA will be a listed charity one can donate on the platform. That same link will be on the AIB mobile App too, from July.
- JM provided an update on the management accounts to 31 March 2026.
- Q1 budgeted restricted income was €633,719 and the actual was €633,441, almost bringing the two at par. Q1 total budgeted income was €697,969 and the actual was €696,820.
- JM went through a summary of expenditures for Q1 which covered the salaries, funded projects, restricted projects, admin costs, facilities costs and total expenditure. It was noted that we have a surplus of €9,748 which is mainly due to a timing difference. The cash balance at the end of March which fell to a record low of €525,702. This was due to SOLAS not releasing any grants until 2nd April

2026. Therefore, Q1 was funded by NALA's reserves. The second tranche of grants came in at the end of April.

- JM spoke about the Balance sheet at the end of Q1 which comprised of fixed assets, current assets, current liabilities and the total assets are €1,066,302 which are composed of unrestricted reserves, restricted reserves and the current year surplus.

- JM spoke about long outstanding debtors, of which approximately 85 per cent of invoices came across from 2025. There are 10 invoices with a combined debt of €5,727, which were outstanding at the end of 2025. It was initially thought some of them could be written off as bad debts, but it does not appear like that would be the case. The finance and Plain English teams are pursuing the debts and there is now active communication with the debtors with most having confirmed that they are processing payment. A sticking point across most of the debts was that no purchase order numbers had been provided when the order for services was placed. The purchase order process has now been rectified.

6.3 Literacy and Staff Policies and Governance Subcommittee

Noted:

- 6.3.1. Draft Minutes of 24 April 2026 meeting with a discussion on agenda topics for CD's upcoming meeting with the Minister and to include the students' voices in the meeting. Mid-term review of ALL strategy went out to tender with a deadline of Mid-May.

- 6.3.2 Adult Safeguarding Statement now renamed to the Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedure. Discussion arose around retrospective reporting and that current concerns will be reported.

Agreed:

- 6.2.2 Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy with no further amendments

- 6.3.3 Environmental Sustainability Policy with no further amendments

- 6.3.4 Board Manual with the following amendments

◦ Page 17 under the subcommittees especially the LSPG to also note the word 'Governance' ◦ Page 19, of the Board Manual reads "Board meeting papers to be sent at least 10 days prior to the meeting". This should be changed to "Board meeting papers should ideally be sent out 10 days prior to the meeting"
7 AOB
• CEO noted that we received Margaret Hanrahan's resignation from the Board on 24 April 2026 and the updates have been reflected with the Companies Registration Office (CRO). • Also noted was the departure of Maria O'Gorman who was thanked for her last 9 years. • Also, our Chairperson Margaret Kelly, was thanked by the CEO for her 6 years of strategic shepherding and constructive and collaborative professional working relationship.

Next meeting details:

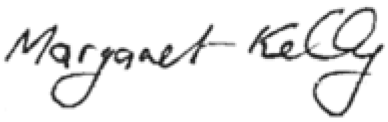
Date:	Date of next Board meeting, provisionally noted for 24 June 2026
Time:	2.00pm
Venue:	TBC

Actions arising from this meeting:

Item	Action	Person Applicable	Due By
4.0	CD will be in touch with the incoming Chairperson / Vice Chairperson to join her in the Tánaiste special advisor meeting	CD	16 June 2026

6.3.4	Page 19, of the Board Manual reads "Board meeting papers to be sent at least 10 days prior to the meeting". This should be changed to "Board meeting papers should ideally be sent out 10 days prior to the meeting" Page 17 under the subcommittees especially the LSPG to also note the word 'Governance'	FMG	12 June 2026

Approval of minutes:

Chairperson's signature:	**Secretary's signature:**
	
Date: 25 May 2026	**Date:** 25 May 2026
Margaret Kelly	Fiona McGowan

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
MABS	Money Advice and Budgeting Service
NCI	National College of Ireland
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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Registered Charity Number: 20020965
CHY (Charity) Number: 8506

Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

SOLAS
learning works

ALL
Adult
Literacy
for Life