

National Adult Literacy Agency	
Draft Minutes of the NALA Board	
Date:	13 December 2023
Time:	11.00am – 1.30pm
Venue:	MS Teams

Chairperson:	Margaret Kelly (MK)
Present (Charity Trustees):	Aoife Foley (AF), Catherine Devlin (CD), Ciaran Casey (CC), Eleanor Neff (EN), Elma Teahan (ET), Frances Ward (FW), Trish Nolan (TN)
Quorum:	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
In Attendance (Others):	Colleen Dube (CEO), Paul Cahill (PC) (Finance & Corporate Services Manager), Michelle Reade (MR) (Governance & Compliance Officer), Jonathan O'Rourke, 2into3 (JOR)
Apologies:	Maria O'Gorman (MOG), Paula Tiller (PT), Pat Ayton (PA), Tom O'Mara (TOM), Maurice Sammon (MS)

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

1. Strategic Plan update
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Before the formal proceedings of the meeting, JOR provided an update and facilitated a discussion on the Strategic Planning process and current insights from the consultation phase. JOR left the meeting following this segment.
2. Welcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MK formally started the meeting. She apologised for the late change to venue from NALA Offices to MS Teams.
3. Conflicts of Interest
There were no conflicts of interest identified or declared.
4. Draft Minutes of 22 November 2023 Board Meeting
<p>NOTED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MK summarised the minutes of the previous Board meeting.

Matters arising:

- MK asked if there was an update on the █████ ALL Innovation Project. CEO informed the Board that NALA had raised some concerns with this project and had encouraged the project lead to contact the ALL Office. This has now happened and an extension has been given to the project until 4 February 2024.
- MK informed the Board that she was made aware the day previous that there is an additional €1m in the budget in 2024 for the ALL program which is not a significant amount.
- MK enquired if there was any update on the QQI Blended Learning Guidelines. CEO advised that NALA had met with a representative from QQI yesterday who is leading this from their side. NALA has also raised it with SOLAS and had a productive meeting with QQI, SOLAS and AONTAS and an agreement in principle has been made on the way forward to implement the guidelines and continue with business as usual activities. NALA is working on the program of work for the Education, Training and Assessment Subcommittee.
- MK formally recorded our thanks to Maurice Sammon who will be leaving the Student Subcommittee

AGREED:

- The minutes were approved.

5. 2023 Work Plan and Implementation Framework**NOTED:**

- MK noted that the Work Plan notes a few delays. CEO clarified that most of these were self-initiated projects which can be carried forward into 2024. The main reasons are capacity and pressures of other work.
- CEO also noted that there has been a lot of work has been completed or is on track for completion as scheduled.
- CEO did highlight one action under objective 4 regarding our ICT and system infrastructure. This action was delayed due to issues with unreliable broadband in the estate. This issue is scheduled to be resolved by the installation of a new rooftop broadband system. This should be operational after Christmas.

6. 2024 Budget and SOLAS Funding Allocation Request (FAR)

6.1 Detailed Summary of 2024 Budget and SOLAS Funding Allocation Request (FAR) and 2023 – 2024 comparison

NOTED:

- CEO referred to the paper which provides a summary of all the interactions with SOLAS and those interaction continue on an almost daily basis.
- CEO highlighted that:
 - our budget has been flat-lined and costs are increasing
 - SOLAS has agreed for LWN's costs that have previously been in CORE to be included in the separate LWN budget to provide a truer / consolidated picture of the costs / activities. Assurances have been given that this will not jeopardise the funding for LWN
 - SOLAS / NALA agreed in principle to reallocate the Student Development Fund to expand NALA's student day programmes as ETBs now have dedicated funds for these activities to offset increased operational / in person event costs that need to be covered in the flat-lined funding. This will also free up the primary member of staff working on the fund to focus on outreach work. The Student Development Fund is very valuable to students and centres but is a time-consuming and resource heavy to administer.
 - There are 2 new projects under the ALL Strategy funding. One is an expansion of the Prison Literacy work. It will be resourced through existing staff. The other is a Plain Language project. That figure is currently subject to change but is separate funding.
- MK highlighted that the salaries budget does not include any provision for potential wages' negotiation cost increases during 2024 or the removal of the 35/37th that has been removed with effect from 1 July 2023 in general civil service grade. She enquired if there are any scheduled pay increases in the public sector. PC informed her that there are negotiations underway between unions and the civil service. PC also reminded the Board that SOLAS does not consider us as part of the civil service and NALA will have to consider what it does in the event of wage agreements in the civil service.
- MK enquired about our reserves. PC informed the Board that this budget allows us to continue to meet our reserves targets and make a deposit into the sinking fund.
- CEO further highlighted that NALA has raised with SOLAS on a number of occasions that they need to consider implementing 3-year strategic performance agreements with their designated agencies as they have done with the ETBs. This need was accepted and

recognised, although when this might happen remains unknown. She has gained some insight into the reason NALA's funding is flat-lined is down to the way the funding goes to SOLAS for agencies which is different to how ETBs are funded.

- CEO called on CD if she had any specific questions, in particular in relation to the change to the Student development Funding. She didn't but recognised that it was enjoyable to work on but that there was never enough funding to give something to all applicants.

AGREED:

- NALA's draft budget and SOLAS / ALL funding requests.

8. Subcommittees – minutes, documentation and items for decision

8.1 Audit, Risk and Finance Subcommittee

Agenda Item 8 was taken next to allow for all the Finances to be dealt with together.

8.1.1 Draft Minutes of 28 November 2023 meeting

NOTED:

- ET informed the Board that there is a meeting scheduled for tomorrow with a new potential candidate to join the AR&F. The candidates experience is predominantly in Compliance with ██████████ which aligns to what the AR&F are currently looking for in terms of expertise.
- PC enquired if our auditors had been in touch regarding a meeting. ET confirmed they had.

8.1.2 31 October, Management Accounts reviewed by the ARF, 28 November 2023

NOTED:

- PC informed the Board that:
 - these set of accounts are the same as would have been presented to the Board on 22 November and the ARF on 28 November
 - they remain on target and we have received most of our funding, apart from a small amount of additional ALL funding
 - we are in the process of closing out projects and expending funds for November and December.
- PC reminded the Board of the previously reported underspend on salaries which will not be

treated as income at year end and will be treated as a creditor in our balance sheet to be returned to SOLAS in 2024.

8.1.3 Revised 2023 Year-end Forecast

- MK referred to the forecast and asked the Board if there were any questions. There were no questions.

7. Governance

7.1 Draft Board Effectiveness Survey

AGREED:

- The Draft Survey was agreed subject to the answer options being changed to a range of 1-5 rather than Yes/No to give a more detailed view.
- MR informed the Board that the survey will issue before Christmas. She highlighted that it will be anonymous and encouraged honest responses.

7.2 Update on Revised Constitution and Procedural Rules

NOTED:

- MK informed the Board that this item did not have a paper as the Constitution Working and Advisory Group (CWAG) only met yesterday. At that meeting there was agreement on what was to be recommended to the Board for approval. MR shared the content for consideration on screen. She provided a summary of what the current Membership Structure is in terms of fee and voting rights, what the Board had agreed in December 2022 and what the CWAG is recommending now.
- CC enquired if there had been feedback from large organisations on the fee amount. MK referred to one piece of feedback received from one ETB but there is no evidence of a reluctance from ETBs to pay this. CEO added that we will be revisiting the benefits of being a member as they have changed over time. Large organisations are a small proportion of our membership. She added that we are on the cheap side when compared to other membership organisations.
- MK added that by keeping the fee and voting structure essentially the same for now will help us to communicate the breadth of changes to our Members at the EGM. However, the changes to the Constitution will result in it being an easier process if NALA wants to change these in the future.
- FW enquired about the rationale for the 3 votes. MK advised that it is the current arrangement. One reason to leave it as it is, is to ensure that our more informed Members

have a balance of power in voting.

- MR informed the Board that the agreed arrangement will be added to the Procedural Rules document which will come back to the Board for approval at the meeting on 1 February.

AGREED:

- The Board agreed the following proposal from the CWAG:

Category	Subcategory	Fee	Votes
Individual	Individual – with fee	€25	1
	Individual – fee waived	€0	1
Organisational	Small Organisation (Local Operations)	€50	3
	Large Organisation (County, Regional, National or International Operations)	€150	3

- The Communications Plan and relevant communications are to be sent to the Board at the 1 February Meeting also.

8.2 Student Subcommittee - Draft Minutes of 30 November 2023 Meeting

NOTED:

- CD also wanted to thank Maurice for his contributions to the Student Subcommittee
- CD informed the Board that a new member has also been welcomed to the committee, a LWN student, Mairead.

9. AOB

- None

Next Meeting

Date: 1 February 2024

Time: TBC

Venue: TBC

Actions Arising from This Meeting:			
Item	Action	Person Applicable	Timeframe

<i>Margaret Kelly</i> 28 February 2024	
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)
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