

ULSTER SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT LTD

(Company Limited by Guarantee and not having a Share Capital)

Minutes of a Board of Directors Meeting

Wednesday 31st March 2021 at 10.30am

Via video conferencing

ULSTER SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT LIMITED

Present

Mr W Leathem	Chairman
Mr D O'Hara	Director
Ms J Cowan	Director
Mr R Havlin	Director
Mrs Sarah Wakfer	Director
Mr Damian Duffy	Director
Mr W Atkinson	Chief Executive
Mr D Cowan	Head of Employment Services
Mr S Jackson	Head of Manufacturing & Recycling
Mr S Ballentine-Kearns	Head of Finance/Company Secretary

Apologies

Apologies received from Mr R Donnelly.

1. Conflicts of interest

1.1 SMT perceived conflict in relation to Pension scheme.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 24 FEBRUARY 2021

- a. Approval
- b. Matters Arising
- c. Actions

Point 5 "should be considered"

Approved by Board.

3. Chairman's Report

3.1 Quarterly meeting with Sponsor Branch

No confirmation regarding GiA allocation for 2021/22 (no changes anticipated).

No update re: Mackeys. Sponsor team to meet Board on 14th April for induction and Departmental Strategy.

Accountability meeting with Minister Hargey still being requested.

Dept will not meet Deficit of Pension Liability – this will need to be discussed in regards to transition plan. Mr O'Hara clarified that we as a Board have a position that without this in place, we would not proceed – Mr Leathem agreed.

3.2 Mr Leathem appointed as Vice-Chairperson of Arts Council and appointed to Board of Consumer Council.

Mr Ballentine-Kearns to send conflict of interest form to Mr Leathem.

3.3 Corporate email addresses for all Board members to be set up by 1st June.

3.4 Mr Leathem 1:1 catchups to be set up between Chairperson and individual Board members.

3.5 Adult safe-guarding training reminder.

3.6 Meet the Team process over next 3 months (Apr21-Jun21) – from 12pm-12.30pm at each Board meeting. Agreement from Board.

4. Written procedures

4.1 Recognition payment ratified by Board members.

4.2 Additional Pension payment ratified by Board.

5. Pension Scheme Update

5.1 Currently with DoF before going to Minister. Mr Atkinson reiterated point about the transition plan being untenable without the Pension Scheme closure.

6. Chief Executive's Report

6.1 Cardboard recycling awarded by M&EA council. Mr Atkinson explained this may allow targeting of other councils going forward.

6.2 Transition plan – business sustainability analysis due by Dept. No budget in place, decision due in next few weeks. This may delay the transition by up to 12 months.

6.3 Debenture – formal confirmation that debenture has been removed and will move balance sheet by approx. £800k.

6.4 Honorarium provision – up to 10% of salary. Ms Cowan to email through a few minor adjustments. Board agreed procedure.

Mr Ballentine-Kearns to resend amended procedure.

6.5 Return to normal practice (Post Covid) – Health and wellbeing currently being reviewed. Mrs Wakfer queried the use of Mental Health Champions as part of review. Mr Atkinson confirmed we did and are looking into external support for this also (Mental Health/First Aid). Mr Duffy mentioned a rota system and Mr Atkinson clarified that we have been factoring this into our current situation for 6/7 months.

6.6 150th Anniversary update – Board decision to hold off until next year to organise celebration event due to current restrictions. Some fundraising events can go ahead but some cannot. It was agreed to push our plans to be based on guidelines throughout Apr21 – Apr22.

6.7 Ballymena business case – formal approval received from Department. Mr Atkinson explained process going forward. Board agreed with proceeding as planned.

6.8 DAERA and BCC for £290k of capital support. Carpet Shredding – application for funding to NIEA from BCC.

6.9 ES Contract – legal options being sought by USEL. Mr Leathem queried if we can ask for sight of information to explore why we were not awarded. Mr Atkinson explained no further information will be provided unless we submit a legal challenge. Mr Duffy explained the process that as an NDPB we should not have needed to tender and believes that DfC needs to be made aware of this. Mr Atkinson explained that he has raised this point several times.

The Board agreed not to submit a legal challenge and Mr Atkinson and Mr Leathem will pick this up post Board meeting.

7. Finance & HR report

7.1 The Directors reviewed the summary financial position vs budget for January. This showed a £8k deficit in the month (excluding ES).

7.2 Mr Ballentine-Kearns gave a summary of the performance in the month and explained our YTD position (excluding ES).

	Usel KPI	Usel February 2021	Usel Mar 20 – Feb 21
<i>Absenteeism rates - short term</i>	3%	0.81%	0.5%
<i>Absenteeism rates - long term (+4 weeks)</i>	2%	0.84%	1.7%

7.3 No further updates on HR

Mrs Wakfer queried the need for some further HR KPIs, in particular to staff well-being. Mr Atkinson explained the use of the staff survey. Mr O'Hara and Ms Cowan commented on this matter and feel the Board is well informed on HR matters. Quarterly update from HR by Mrs Foster going forward as part of Board meeting.

Mr Duffy left meeting at 12.30pm.

a. Draft action log

8. Adult safeguarding issues – to note (if applicable)

No issues to report.

9. Health & safety update

No issues to report.

CPD have sought quotes for a timber specialist regarding the roof at the back.

10. Risk Management/Register

No questions from Board.

11. ARAC TOR, Agendas and Work Plan

Mr O'Hara discussed all relevant documents and the Board ratified these and they will be adopted going forward.

Internal audit meeting on 8th April with RSM.

ARAC training to be discussed with Mrs Wakfer and Mr Ballentine-Kearns.

Final TOR to be included on website.

12. Finance Committee TOR

Amend to meet 6 times/annum. Include in next months for ratification.

13. PSCF Membership

Board agreement to apply.

14. New policy review – Draft Adoption Leave Policy

Ratified and adopted from today's meeting.

15. Any Other Business

15.1 Board development plan to be discussed in coming months.

15.2 Committee structure – organisation development/governance/policies committee in line with ARAC and Finance Committee.

15.3 Test drill of policies – to be discussed at next meeting.

15.4 Solicitors response regarding ES contract to be sent to Board members.

15.5 Workable extended for 12 months (confirmation received). STRIDE has not yet been confirmed.

15.6 Executive assistant role parked for a few months.

15.7 COVID contingency plan to be updated.

15.8 department to issue a report on those with disabilities working throughout COVID. To be sent to Board in the future.

16. Date of next meeting

Wednesday 28th April 2021 at 10.30am.