

ULSTER SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT LTD

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

Minutes of a Board of Directors Meeting

Wednesday 16th December 2020 at 10.30am

Via video conferencing

Present

Mr W Leathem	Chairman
Mr D O'Hara	Director
Ms J Cowan	Director
Mr R Donnelly	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	Company Secretary

Apologies

No apologies

Mrs Wakfer and Mr Duffy were welcomed to the Board.

Mr Duffy stepped out for fire alarm at 10.35am.

1. Conflicts of interest

1.1 A perceived conflict of interest relating to the pension redesign for the SMT.

1.2 A perceived conflict of interest was noted by R. Donnelly who has taken up an associate role with SIB NI.

1.3 Mr O'Hara noted a COI in relation to AOB.

2 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 25 NOVEMBER 2020

2.1 Minutes approved (one minor change)

2.2 Actions completed or to be addressed throughout meeting

2.3 Approval to look into a management level 2 pay scale by SMT.

Mr Ballentine-Kearns to send out list of previous 36 months internal audit areas and send out vote.

3 Chairman's Report

- 3.1 Recognition & congratulations for Industrial sewing team for award nomination – supporting NI Key workers.
- 3.2 New Minister for DfC – Minister Hargey.
- 3.3 Induction meeting held Monday 14th Dec for 2 new Board members.
- 3.4 Board training required for Ms Cowan, Mrs Wakfer and Mr Duffy.
- 3.5 Quarterly Assurance meeting scheduled for 17th December 2020.
- 3.6 Nomination of new ARAC Chair – Mr O'Hara and Mrs Wakfer nominated new Vice-Chair, to be ratified at next ARAC meeting.
- 3.7 Mr Duffy has been appointed as Finance Director (DfC to liaise with DoF for TOR).

4 Pension Scheme Update

Within CEO's report.

5 Chief Executive's Report

- 5.1 Pension provision – redesign returned from Dept. Mercers will answer a number of responses. Agreement from Board to utilise resources to help pay down pension liabilities.
- 5.2 Business case regarding automated bailer discussed.
- 5.3 Budget – Mr Atkinson explained potential opportunities for 2021/22 which we should know more about by next month. Mr Atkinson gave an overview with our budget excluding these potential opportunities.
- 5.4 Tender submission for QUB and NIHE made. Potential for an on-site shredding truck rental from River Ridge – ongoing discussions.
- 5.5 Structural Change – Mr Atkinson discussed the PPF levy reduction. A move to a Public Corporation (PC) from an NDPB may impact this status with a financial detriment to our pension costs. The Board decided to hold off until new financial year on any decision until we know more about the PPF and what the impact on the pension revaluation will have.

Mr Duffy requested that a cloud document base is set up to allow all Board member to access.

The tailored review was discussed with the new members of the Board.

Mr Atkinson and Mr Ballentine-Kearns to send out ongoing review documentation to new Board members.

5.6 150th anniversary – after staff engagement, a gala event would be preferred with charity alignment relating to past and present representation within USEL. The Board agreed to book a date towards the end of 2021. A budget of £20k was approved.

A working group to be set up and draft plan will be discussed in January meeting.

A brief break for 10 minutes, followed by introductions by the Board and SMT to new members.

6 Finance & HR report

6.1 The Directors reviewed the summary financial position vs budget for September. This showed a £1k surplus in the month.

6.2 Mr Ballentine-Kearns gave a summary of the performance in the month and explained our YTD position.

Mr Ballentine-Kearns to set up a meeting with Mrs Wakfer and Mr Duffy regarding the management accounts.

	Usel KPI	Usel November 2020	Usel Dec 19 – Nov 20
<i>Absenteeism rates - short term</i>	3%	1.9%	1.2%
<i>Absenteeism rates - long term (+4 weeks)</i>	2%	0%	3.52%

6.3 No further updates on HR

7 Adult safe guarding issues – to note (if applicable)

7.1 Mrs McCann has been appointed as new adult safeguarding champion.

7.2 Mr Duffy queried if an AccessNI check was required for Board members. Mr Atkinson explained that the Board are appointed by Minister. Mr Cowan explained that as the Board will have no contact with the individuals and would not be legally required to be checked.

Mrs McCann to send link regarding safeguarding training for Board and to check need for AccessNI checks.

8 Health & safety update

8.1 One member of staff is self-isolating.

9 Risk Management

9.1 No changes made since November meeting.

9.2 Mr Duffy questioned if USELs risk “appetite” has been discussed.

Mr Duffy will provide Mr Leathem and Mr Atkinson documents relating to assessing the risk appetite.

9.3 Mr Havlin highlighted if there was a risk for importing/exporting due to Brexit. Mr Jackson explained that the environmental bill will cover us for movement to UK and explained that we have no exports for finished goods outside NI.

10 Draft policies/strategies for:

10.1 Approval in December Board:

10.1.1 Stress at work - approved

10.1.2 Paternity - approved

10.1.3 Data loss prevention – a few minor amendments – approved.

10.2 Review in December Board:

10.2.1 Young people and adult safeguarding

10.2.2 Young people and adult safeguarding COVID 19 addendum

10.2.3 TFS – Positive Behaviours

11 Staff engagement survey update

Mr Ballentine-Kearns to send staff survey results to the new Board members.

12 Any Other Business

Mr O'Hara left due to perceived COI.

12.1 Mr Atkinson gave background to pension query regarding an ES employee.

This was discussed and the Board agreed that no further action by SMT is required but will be mentioned at Quarterly assurance meeting.

Review of auto-enrolment for those who have opted out on a 3 yearly basis

13 Date of next meeting

27th January at 10.30am (also strategy day), potentially at Belfast Met – 20/25 attendees. Mechanism for online attendance also.