

THE MACFARLANE TRUST

A meeting of the Board of Trustees held on Monday 25 January 2016 at 11.00am at Alliance House, 12 Caxton Street, London SW1H 0QS.

PART A

PRESENT	Roger Evans	(Chairman)
	Paul Biddle	
	Matt Gregory	
	Vanessa Martlew	(by telephone)
	Alasdair Murray	
	Jamie O'Hara	
	Patrick Spellman	
IN ATTENDANCE	Jan Barlow	(Chief Executive)

800.16 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

801.16 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 October 2015, which had previously been circulated in draft form, were agreed as a correct record.

802.16 Matters arising from the minutes other than those itemised separately on the agenda

Former minute 787.15 – The board noted the letter which had been sent to the Department of Health following the last board meeting, emphasising again that the level of funding which the Department was allocating to MFT annually was less than what was required. The letter also brought to the Department's attention again that if additional funding was not forthcoming, 2016/17 would be the last year in which MFT could continue to make up the shortfall from reserves. Otherwise, there would have to be a reduction in the level of support to beneficiaries.

GOVERNANCE

803.16 Board membership

VM's term of office was due to come to an end at the end of January 2016. In the light of the ongoing uncertainty about the future, it was agreed that it would not be appropriate to attempt to recruit a new trustee at this time. It was therefore unanimously agreed that VM's term of office should be extended for a further year, to January 2017, or until any governance changes were implemented by Government.

FINANCE

804.16 Current financial position

The board received the financial position as at 31 December 2015. This showed an underspend to the end of the period of £36,459 compared with budget.

Underspends against a number of budget lines were noted. If expenditure continued in line with forecast, it was projected that the operational deficit at the end of the financial year would be less than originally projected. In relation to the cash flow forecast, it was noted that it would be necessary to draw down in the region of £200,000 from the investment portfolio before the end of the financial year, in addition to funds drawn down previously, to cover the gap in funding from the Department of Health.

The current position was noted.

805.16 Investments

The Board received the report of the Trust's investments as at 31 December 2015 and noted that performance for the 3 months to 31 December had been ahead of benchmark.

WELFARE

806.16 Grants Committee

- i) The board received the minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2015. PS advised the board that during the course of the year, the Committee had noted that the cases it was considering at meetings continued to be complex.
- ii) The board received the minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2015. It was noted that the Committee had agreed the use of a medical doctor to give additional input in benefits cases that required medical expertise when being presented before tribunals.
- iii) The board received the minutes of the meeting held on 16 December 2015. It was noted that the issue of Power of Attorney had been discussed at the meeting, and that it had been agreed to provide proactive advice to beneficiaries on this issue where appropriate.
- iv) The board received the management information pack which included the consolidated grant schedules up to and including 31 December 2015.

807.16 Political developments, including Department of Health consultation document "Infected Blood: reform of financial and other support"

The board received a report setting out the latest developments, including the meeting of staff with the Department of Health on 9 November 2015, and for part of which the Minister had attended; the statement which the Minister had made to the House of Commons on 16 December 2015; and the final recommendations which had been published by the Scottish Review Group in December 2015. The board report had been written and circulated prior to the announcement on 21 January 2016 that the Department of Health consultation on the future of support to those infected with HIV and Hepatitis C as a result of contaminated blood was being launched. DH were inviting responses to the proposals by 15 April 2016.

The board wished to make it clear that they would be responding to the document as consultees and were not part of the devising of the proposals and the issuing of the document. The board was concerned that initial indications were that very many MFT beneficiaries would be worse off financially if the recommendations were implemented, as well as losing non-financial support which they had traditionally received.

JB had circulated a briefing note and the consultation document to board members on 21 January. At the meeting, JB set out the key points in the proposals and the implications for MFT beneficiaries. Following extensive discussion, it was agreed that MFT should write to all beneficiaries to brief them about the document and highlight what the proposed changes would mean for them in terms of future financial support. It was also agreed to prepare a formal response to the consultation. This might be done in conjunction with the other Alliance House entities, and this would be discussed with the other Chairs; JB was currently in the process of setting up a meeting between RE, herself, Chris Pond and Peter Stevens. It was noted that the 12-week consultation period would close on 15 April 2016.

MANAGEMENT

808.16 Chief Executive's Report

There were no other items to report that weren't already covered elsewhere on the agenda.

809.16 Any other business

There was no other business.

810.16 Date of next quarterly meeting

Monday 25 April 2016, 11am