

THE MACFARLANE TRUST

A meeting of the Board of Trustees held on Monday 27 April at 10.30am at Alliance House, 12 Caxton Street, London SW1H 0QS.

PART A

PRESENT	Roger Evans	(Chairman)
	Paul Biddle	
	Matt Gregory	
	Vanessa Martlew	
	Alasdair Murray	
	Patrick Spellman	
IN ATTENDANCE	Jan Barlow	(Chief Executive)
	Joyce Materego	(Director of Finance)
	June Omadoye	(Office Manager/PA)
	Victoria Prouse	(Director of Operations)

750.15 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Eileen Jackman and Jamie O'Hara.

751.15 **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

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

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

There were no matters arising not covered elsewhere in the agenda.

FINANCE

753.15 **Financial position**

The board received the financial position as at 31 March 2015.

JB advised the board that the position at the end of the financial year had been better than expected, with an actual overspend of £418k against the Government allocation compared with the projected overspend of £731k. As agreed at the board meeting on 12 May 2014, this was covered from the Trust's reserves funds. The reduced deficit had resulted from lower than budgeted expenditure on salaries, on regular payments and on grants. In relation to regular payments, the lower than expected deficit had been due to a number of beneficiaries changing bands; in relation to grants it was due to demand being lower than expected, although it was noted that since the newsletter had been sent out before Christmas, demand for grants had begun to increase.

RE thanked JB and her staff for all their hard work and achievements in 2014/15.

754.15 **Budget for 2015/16**

i) Allocation for 2015/16

The board noted the letter from the Department of Health confirming an allocation of £2.2 million for 2015/16, the same allocation as for 2014/15, which meant that no provision had been made for inflation.

The allocation letter drew the board's attention to issues relating to the Equality Act 2010; the other Alliance House charities had been written to in similar terms. JB believed that MFT was in compliance with all the requirements. It was agreed to consult the lawyers prior to responding to confirm this understanding.

ii) Budget 2015/16

The board considered the budget for 2015/16.

In the light of receiving the same allocation as for 2014/15, a very similar budget to that for the previous year was proposed. This allowed for provision for a winter fuel payment of £500 for primary beneficiary households with an income up to £15,200 and £250 for primary beneficiary households with an income between £15,201 and £37,900., and for regular payments to primary beneficiaries to be increased by 1.2%, the same level as the increase to MFET regular payments for 2015/16. It was noted that the budget for grants would be monitored carefully given the recent increase in grant applications.

The board approved the budget for 2015/16 and agreed to review the forecast against budget at the October meeting, together with a review of reserves.

755.15 Investments

The board received the report of the Trust's investments up to 31 March 2015.

JB advised the board that, as previously agreed, Robert Merrifield from Sanlam had been invited to the July board meeting. It was noted that performance against benchmark was lower than expected; this was possibly due to less active management of the portfolio during the period when equities were being realised in line with the decisions taken by the board in 2014/15. In response to a question from RE, PB advised that MFT's cash needs had been protected as a result of this. It was suggested that one possible topic of discussion with Robert Merrifield in July was whether it would be better to put the remaining investments into a common investment fund.

WELFARE

756.15 Grants Committee

- i)** The board received the minutes of the meeting held on 25 February 2015. It was noted that VP would discuss the issue of medical information in relation to benefits appeal cases with VM outside of the meeting. ACTION: VP
- ii)** The board received the minutes of the meeting held on 9 April 2015. It was noted that there had been an increase in requests for respite breaks, not all of which met the current criteria. This would be discussed further at the next Grants Committee meeting.

- iii) The board received the consolidated grant schedules up to 31 March 2015. JB advised the board that in future, information on grant turnaround times would also be presented to the board.
- iv) The board received the latest beneficiary statistics. JB advised that this information would now be presented to the quarterly board meetings, together with the consolidated grant schedules, grant turnaround times, and information about appeals against grant decisions. The board thanked JB for providing this additional information.
- v) Membership of the Grants Committee –The Board agreed that PB’s role as Chair of the Grants Committee would be formalised, following a period as interim Chair, and that PS and MG would continue as members of the Committee.

757.15 Political developments

The board received a report setting out recent events in relation to the launch of the Penrose report, the apology from the Prime Minister, and the announcement of a one-off, up to £25 million additional funding in 2015/16. The board had been briefed on the issues at the time. Department of Health officials had advised JB that no decisions about how the £25 million was to be spent would be made until after the General Election.

It was agreed that MFT would write to the new Minister once he or she had been appointed, requesting a meeting.

GOVERNANCE

758.15 Trustees

RE reminded the board that there was currently one trustee vacancy, for a position previously appointed to by the Haemophilia Society. However, it was agreed that following changes to the Trust Deed in 2012, and recent events, the Haemophilia Society would no longer be invited to appoint trustees to the MFT board.

It was agreed that recruitment to the trustee vacancy should be deferred, pending clarify about the future once a new Minister was appointed. However, the board was keen to make an appointment from amongst, or with a strong connection to, the beneficiary community at such time as an appointment was made.

MANAGEMENT

759.15 Chief Executive’s Report

The board received the CEO’s report.

It was noted that the 2015/16 census had been sent out, with a deadline for returning the forms of 29 May 2015. The intention was to finalise payments earlier than in previous years.

It was noted that the MFT audit would start on 6 May 2015; the accounts would be presented to the July meeting for approval.

RE advised that he and JB would be meeting Richard Finlay, interim Chair of the Caxton Foundation, the following week.

760.15 Any other business

There was no other business.

761.15 Date of next meeting

27 July 2015, 11am