

THE MACFARLANE TRUST

A meeting of the Board of Trustees held on Monday 29 April 2013 at 10.15am at Alliance House,
12 Caxton Street, London SW1H 0QS

PRESENT	Mr R Evans	(Chairman)
	Mrs E Boyd	(Chair of NSSC)
	Mr A Burgess	
	Ms K Evans	
	Ms E Jackman	
	Dr V Martlew	(Medical Trustee)
	Mr R Mishcon	
	Mr P Spellman	
IN ATTENDANCE	Ms J Barlow	(Chief Executive)
	Mrs L Haigh	(Finance Manager)
	Miss C Hogan	(Administrative Secretary)
APOLOGIES	Mr M Gregory	
	Ms R Riley	(Head of Support Services)

PART A

605.13 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from RR and MG; MG had provided the Chairman with his comments on item 609.13 by email.

606.13 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2013 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

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

RE informed the board that the minutes of the last Partnership Group (PG) that took place on 4 March would be presented to the next meeting of the board, once they had been agreed. RE and JB will be attending the forthcoming PG meeting in Basingstoke on 9 May. RE encouraged other trustees who may be available to attend.

WELFARE & SUPPORT SERVICES

608.13 National Support Services Committee

- (i) The board received the minutes of the meeting of the NSSC held on 9 January 2013.
- (ii) The board received the minutes of the meeting of the NSSC held on 13 February 2013. It was noted that RE was present for the start of this meeting.
- (iii) The board received the minutes of the NSSC meeting held on 13 March 2013. Referring to 556.13, EB advised that 5-6 additional grants for boilers had been taken up. EB asked whether the board would be happy for the level of bereavement grants to be increased from £3,000 to £3,500. This was agreed by the board.

(iv) Following discussion regarding guidelines for grant applications, it was agreed that JB and RE would draft a list of items that would be excluded from consideration of grants; these would be brought to the next meeting of the board in July.

Following the resignation of PS from the NSSC, EB suggested to the board that as EJ had attended several meetings as an observer she would be a suitable replacement. RE thanked PS for his contribution to the Committee. The board agreed that EJ should become the new member of the NSSC.

609.13 Proposed beneficiary to beneficiary letter

The board discussed the request for MFT to circulate a letter from a number of beneficiaries to all other primary beneficiaries to campaign for increased funding.

Following discussion, it was agreed that the MFT would be happy to send the letter out subject to a number of provisos:

- The letter would be signed by a named beneficiary/beneficiaries – it should not just be signed off “fellow primary beneficiaries”
- There should also be a name, postal address and email address in the letter to whom anyone who was interested could respond; the office would not handle any responses or enter into any discussions with beneficiaries about it
- MFT would write a covering letter to go with it, making clear that we had not passed any beneficiary’s name or personal details onto the authors of the main letter and that the content of the letter is down to the authors of the letter and does not reflect the views of the Macfarlane Trust. Our covering letter would also say that people should not feel compelled to respond.
- It was pointed out that there was a factual inaccuracy at the end of the sixth paragraph. It states “no up to date provision has been made since the original HIV payments”. The board felt that this was inaccurate, given the introduction of MFET.

It was noted that the letter would be discussed at the forthcoming PG meeting, which RE and JB would be attending.

FINANCE

610.13 2012/13 year end position

The financial position as at 31 March 2013 (subject to audit confirmation) was noted.

611.13 Investment Report

The board received a report on the Trust’s investments as at 20 March 2013. JB advised that a later report as at 31 March 2013 had subsequently been received, which showed a slightly increased level of reserves; the latter figure had been taken into account for the purposes of the other board papers.

The issue of when it would be appropriate to meet with the investment managers was discussed. It was noted that the level of investments and therefore return on investment, would decrease as funds were drawn down from the portfolio. It was agreed that it would be appropriate to meet with the investment managers and brief them on the intention regarding drawdown against the portfolio once we were clearer regarding timetables for this.

It was agreed to discuss investments further at a July meeting with a view to meeting the investment managers in the autumn. Consideration would also need to be given in relation to when/whether to put the service to tender again.

612.13

Financial Allocation & Budget 2013/14

(i) The board noted the 2013/14 allocation letter from the Department of Health dated 26 March 2013.

(ii) The board considered a paper outlining a number of options for the 2013/14 budget. Following discussion, the following was agreed:

- to increase regular payments to primary beneficiaries by 2.2% in line with the September Consumer Price Index with effect from 1 April 2013;
- to keep the benchmark for widows' payments at £19,000;
- to make a winter fuel payment on the same basis as 2012/13 ie; one payment per primary beneficiary household of either £500 or £250 for households with an income up to £37,900;
- to increase the grant budget for primary beneficiaries to £70,000; it was noted that this did not mean more grants could be funded but that it brought the budget more in line with the spend in 2012/13;
- not to fund beneficiary events in 2013/14;
- all other items as presented in the options papers. It was noted that the Chief Executive had been able to identify some cost savings in relation to management costs;
- It was noted that the agreed budget exceeded the allocation from DH by £800,000. This would be covered by a transfer from the reserves.

613.13

MFT Reserves

The board considered a report setting out recommendations on use of the MFT reserves. Following discussion, it was agreed:

- to make provision for deficits in 2013/14 and 2014/15 and liabilities which had been identified, but to lobby the Department of Health for increased funding in 2014/15 in the hope that this provision could be released back into reserves later;
- to make provision for 3 months' worth of spend in the form of a general reserve;
- to allocate the remaining £0.98m to fund health and mobility related repairs and improvements to property for beneficiaries. It was noted that the amount available was considerably less than that which had been identified as needed by the survey which had been carried out in 2012; however, property issues had been identified as the top priority in the survey.

It was agreed that between now and the July board meeting, JB would develop criteria against which applications could be assessed, together with an application process, for agreement at the July board. As previously agreed the full board would be involved in the process of distributing funds. It was noted that an additional full-time member of staff would be needed to administer the application and disbursement process, as the existing small team would not be able to cope with the significant additional workload that would be involved.

It was agreed that JB would draft a letter for the board to sign-off communicating the financial position, 2013/14 budget and reserves to beneficiaries.

MANAGEMENT

614.13 Communications Strategy

The board received a report from KE following the communications survey with beneficiaries. It was remarked that overall, the responses were quite evenly spread: whilst a large number had expressed dissatisfaction in certain areas, an equally large number had expressed great satisfaction. JB agreed to look at the proposed recommendations which had been highlighted.

It was agreed that thought would need to be given as to how a synopsis of the report could be presented at a future PG meeting, but that it was not appropriate to circulate the full report. KE was thanked for her work on this.

615.13 Chief Executive's Report

The board received the Chief Executive's report. It was noted that the CEO was currently in the process of renegotiating the lease at Alliance House for a further term.

616.13 Any other business

There were no other items raised.

617.13 Date of next meeting

29 July 2013, 10.15am