

**Minutes of a meeting of the Charitable Trust Funds Committee held on
Monday, 20th October 2025 at 09.30 a.m.**

PRESENT

Mr R. Lynas, Non-Executive Director (Chair)
Mrs G. Browne, Non-Executive Director

IN ATTENDANCE

Mrs V. Toal, Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development
Mrs A. Rutherford, Assistant Director of Financial Services
Ms L. Esler, Charitable Trust Funds Manager
Mr D. McClements, Director of Surgery and clinical services
Mrs T. Reid, Director of Medicine and Unscheduled Care
Mr J. McEntee Interim Assistant Director, Mental Health Services (MS
Teams)
Mrs M. Donnelly, Interim Assistant Director, Specialist Child Health &
Disability
Mrs M. McAlister Assistant Director of Older People's Services
Mr P. O'Neill Communication Specialist
Mr B. Creighton Committee Secretary (Minutes)

APOLOGIES

Mrs C. Marks, Executive Director of Finance, Procurement and Estates
Mrs M. Corkey, Non-Executive Director/Committee Chair
Mrs F. Jones, Corporate Financial Accountant

1. CHAIR'S WELCOME

Mr R. Lynas welcomed everyone to the meeting especially Mr D McClements, Mr P O'Neill (and his communications expertise) who were attending their first meeting and, and noted the apologies above.

Mr R. Lynas advised that he would be chairing today's meeting in the absence of Mrs M. Corkey.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Mr R. Lynas asked members to declare any potential conflicts of interests in relation to items on the agenda. None were received and the business of the meeting proceeded.

3. CHAIR'S BUSINESS

None.

4. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 23rd June 2025

The minutes of the meeting on 23rd June 2025 were previously approved via email and presented to Trust Board on 25th September 2025.

5. MATTERS ARISING

All actions have been completed.

6. CHARITABLE TRUST FUNDS SPENDING PROPOSALS DIRECTORATE BUDGETED VS ACTUAL EXPENDITURE TO 31ST AUGUST 2025

Ms L. Esler, and the directorate representatives provided a detailed update on the current and planned expenditure of the Charitable Trust Funds, addressing low spend figures, outlining upcoming projects, and clarifying the status of business cases and capital works across various directorates.

Ms L. Esler presented the report on actual spend versus planned expenditure for the year, noting that spend appeared low due to a slow start at the beginning of the year, but activity has since increased with more business cases progressing and additional spend expected before the next meeting.

Ms M. McAlister outlined the plan Adult Community Services has to spend allocated funds on equipment, including physio expenditure and new equipment for the acute care at home team, as well as building

refurbishments such as en suite facilities in statutory homes, with work ongoing with Estate services.

Mrs M. Donnelly reported on major spend areas, including the extension of the special care baby unit at Daisy Hill (currently out to tender), development of an outdoor space at Blue Bell House, and updates on training equipment and business cases in progress.

Mrs T. Reid stated the progress with the dementia garden project and advised that plans have been developed for a bereavement room, with work on both initiatives moving forward and expenditure expected to continue as planned.

7. COMMUNICATION UPDATE

Mr P. O'Neill and Ms L. Esler discussed ongoing efforts to improve communications around Charitable Trust Fund projects, including strategies for better project identification, recent promotional activities, and plans for more consistent branding and engagement tracking, with input and suggestions from other committee members. Mr P. O'Neill highlighted challenges in ensuring that communications about projects clearly identify them as Charitable Trust Fund initiatives and described a two-pronged approach with Ms L. Esler to reinforce this requirement in all promotional materials. Recent communications have included a video on the Sunflower Room at South Tyrone Hospital and a social media campaign about cancer therapy sessions, with plans to highlight six major projects in depth over the next 12 months using a combination of video, articles, and social media posts. Mrs Browne commented that the video showcased an excellent use of funds which was very much in line with a patient focus approach.

Mrs V. Toal suggested incorporating the Southern Trust donations logo more prominently in videos and articles to build public familiarity and brand recognition. Mr P. O'Neill agreed to implement in future communications. Mrs Toal asked the Communications Team to check the Trust's website to ensure that the Just Giving link is working.

Mr P. O'Neill confirmed that engagement statistics from social and internal channels will be tracked and reported to the committee, with the aim of using this data to inform future content and promotional strategies.

Mr R. Lynas referred to the £50 donation made by a service user for missing an appointment and suggested there might be an opportunity to use this to publicly highlight the costs of missed appointments. On a governance point he also asked about the controls covering withdrawal of CTF funds and for clarification of the debtors` position. Mrs L Esler explained that multiple authorised and recorded signatories signed each withdrawal request. She also pointed out that the `debt` was actually monies still to be recovered from Gift Aid.

Actions: Communications Team

8. UPDATE ON STAFF SUPPORT FUND

Mrs V. Toal spoke to this item stating Estates had advised that they intended to proceed with a Modular extension solution for a Health Hub at the Bannvale site in Gilford but unfortunately, Historic Buildings N.I., who advise the Planning Service, have advised that they are not in favour of this proposal, largely due to the adjoining presence of the listed building which this proposed extension will be attached to. Accordingly, the Trust is unable to proceed with this proposal. Mrs V. Toal reported that Estates are due to retender the scheme again before the end of October in the hope that there will be a positive outcome to enable the scheme to commence. She advised she would keep the Committee updated.

9. FINANCE REPORT FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31ST AUGUST 2025

Ms L. Esler presented the report and guided members through the detail. In particular, she pointed out that for the 5 months ended 31st August 2025, income of £300k was received. A large proportion of the income (58%) received during the period was received from NHS Charities Together. Donations excluding grant funding have increased against the same period last year by £22k. Mrs Browne asked about the £1.5m for the Bannvale work which is not now taking place and was assured that the funds are in an interest bearing account.

In relation to rationalisation of funds, currently there are 196 funds, compared to 200 at 01 April 2025.

- 20 of these have a balance less than £400
- 59 have a balance in excess of £10k

There are no funds with a balance below £50 at 31 August 2025. As previously approved by the CTF Committee, funds with a balance of below £50 will be moved to the Directorate wide fund to reduce the number of funds.

Utilisation of the many historical funds continues to be encouraged, with a focus on spend of the smaller value funds of under £1000.

The Charitable Trust Fund Manager continues to encourage spend of the legacy funds where possible. This is encouraged when reviewing CTF applications and where it is possible that spend may be in line with the purpose of the donations.

Work has completed on identifying and collecting information on each of the current charitable trust funds as part of the CCNI registration preparations with DLS. This included reviewing original documentation relating to the opening of the fund, and where this was not available, building a picture of the donations and spend through the financial history of the fund. The CTF Manager and DLS continue to work closely on this project.

In relation to expenditure, there were 3 requests for expenditure that were deemed unsuitable for use of CTF for the period 1 April 2025 to 31 August 2025 and members noted the finer detail.

10. UPDATE ON CTF FINANCE WORK PLAN

Ms L. Esler updated the Committee on progress with the finance work plan, including the near completion of a video for digital screens, efforts to close legacy funds, publication of positive stories, and ongoing focus on spending out legacy funds in preparation for CCNI registration.

Ms L. Esler stated Training for Trustees was delivered, and work is ongoing with HROD to develop a training resource re CTF for Learn HSCNI, with continued support and advice provided to fund managers navigating the application and authorisation processes currently. A review of corporate procedures is also underway as new governing documentation will be needed as part of CCNI registration, with reference to BHSC documentation.

11. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2026

The committee work programme was approved.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

Mr R. Lynas recorded his thanks to everyone for their contribution to today's meeting.

The meeting concluded at 10:15 a.m.