Minutes of a meeting of the Charitable Trust Funds Committee held on Monday, 30th March 2026 at 10 a.m.

PRESENT

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

IN ATTENDANCE

Mrs V. Toal, Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development
Mrs C. Marks, Executive Director of Finance, Procurement and Estates
Mrs A. Rutherford, Assistant Director of Financial Services
Ms L. Esler, Charitable Trust Funds Manager
Mrs F. Jones, Corporate Financial Accountant
Ms J. McFarland, Communications Team Representative
Mr B. Creighton Committee Admin (Minutes)

APOLOGIES

Mrs M. Corkey, Non-Executive Director/Committee Chair
Mr D. McClements, Director of Surgery and clinical services
Mrs T. Reid, Director of Medicine and Unscheduled Care
Mr C. McCafferty, Deputy Chief Executive, Director of SYPWS & Executive Director of Social Work

1. CHAIR'S WELCOME

Mr Lynas welcomed everyone to the meeting, noting that he would be standing in as Chair today.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Mr 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

No Chairs business was noted

4. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 26TH JANUARY 2026

The minutes of the meeting on 26th January 2026 were agreed as an accurate representation of the meeting.

5. MATTERS ARISING

It was noted that the Communications Team had lacked capacity to complete several actions until the recent new appointment of a member of staff.

Action - **Report on website traffic** – this report has not been produced yet and will be presented at the next meeting.

Action – **CTF Video Amendments** – The script for the CTF video has been updated following the Committee's feedback and the work is scheduled to begin re-recording.

Action – **Investigation Report/Trust Comparison** – with the expanded comms resource, this will be progressed for the next meeting.

6. COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

Ms Esler provided a verbal update to the committee, noting that the comms team haven't had sufficient resource in place until Ms McFarland arrived and had focused on essential support only, therefore items for today have not been progressed as of yet.

Some brief updates were provided:

Website updates have been started, and more substantial improvements are planned.

Ms McFarland has now met with the CTF lead to receive a full overview of the Fund's purpose, priorities and communication needs.

Plans are being developed to raise visibility of CTF, including showcasing capital projects with "before and after" material.

The CTF video re-recording is scheduled for Wednesday.

Ms Esler noted that the comms work will start to progress now there is a new comms person in post.

7. ANNUAL PROPOSALS FOR SPEND 2026/27

Ms Esler updated that during March, she met with Directors (except Mr McClements) to review their expenditure to date and discuss their plans for the coming year. Plans are presented as a summarised version currently, however, confirmation is awaited for some. Mrs Esler noted that Director for Mental Health and Disability, Mrs McGall, is not proposing a plan for this year as their funds are low and legacy funds are restricted in how they can be spent.

Mr Beattie has put forward his plan for Adult Community Services, including carrying forward capital projects that did not progress last year and new proposed spends, including equipment for Hospital at Home service.

Mr McCafferty has several capital projects brought forward to this year for Children and Young People's Service, that did not commence last year.

Acute have also had issues in progressing projects including delays due to retirements and transitions in senior posts.

Ms Esler noted that the final details are expected over the coming weeks.

Mrs Marks discussed that the Chief Executive is keen to progress a £1.3m investment in robotic assisted surgery equipment, noting that another trust has used legacy funds to purchase a similar system.

Mrs Marks and Mrs Toal noted that the current restrictions on legacy funds are limiting effective spend. Some categories are so narrow or low in value that meaningful projects cannot be delivered.

There is consensus within the Committee that once legal processes conclude, combining funds will allow more strategic projects.

Mrs Marks advised that directorates should plan ahead in terms of having access to legacy funds in this financial year.

Mr Lynas agreed with this suggestion, noting that being prepared is a good idea given that the Legacy pot is approx. £4m and Trust priorities need to be ready for approval when restrictions are lifted.

8. NEW CORPORATE POLICY AND PROCEDURES REGARDING CCNI REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

Mrs Rutherford reminded the Committee that the Trust is revising all CTF governance documents in preparation for updated legislative requirements and registration with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland (CCNI).

The document sets out the key governance around CTF, defining the charitable purposes of the Trust which would be ‘advancement of health’ and ‘advancement of education’. The Trust’s public benefits statement is detailed within the document and is on the website and on posters around the Trust.

Mrs Rutherford explained that the Trust Board is the corporate trustee and the document derails how they discharge their responsibilities.

Mrs Toal complimented the document and noted that she has some minor amendments which she will send via tracked changes. She raised a concern around consistency around references to ‘patient’, ‘service user’ and ‘client’ as all are used in the document.

Mrs Toal also requested if a definition of what SHINE is could be included as it’s referenced in the document. The document references that salary costs are not an appropriate use of CTF and clarity was sought around this as there are instances where staff have been paid money from CTF. Ms Esler clarified that CTF has never directly employed staff, any posts funded through CTF are Trust employees and their salaries are recharges. Ms Esler noted that she will update the wording to avoid confusion.

Mr Lynas queried the trustee registration requirements, Ms Esler confirmed that this would be addressed in upcoming trustee training.

The need for Service User input in certain funding approvals was raised and it was suggested that Ms Esler should link with Gerard Rocks to identify an appropriate Service User representative group to meet this requirement.

Ms Esler confirmed with members that a full communication and training plan will accompany the launch of the document and members agree to approve in principle subject to the amendments discussed.

The final document will return to the Committee for formal approval then proceed to SLT, Policy Scrutiny for approval and Trust Board for assurance.

ACTION – Ms Esler to update the new corporate policy and procedures document according to suggested amendments and proceed with obtaining approval through the discussed route.

9. FINANCE REPORT MONTH 10

Ms Esler and Ms Jones provided a brief update, noting that income is up overall, partly due to NHS Charities Together funds. Corporate donations have increased slight, contrary to last year's declining trend, and income continues to exceed expenditure due to restrictions on spending legacy funds.

In terms of investments, some investments were crystallised to fund the Health & Wellbeing Hub, with expected expenditure late in 2026. Investments have held stable to end of February, however, the impact of global instability on the March valuations is awaited.

The highest expenditure includes £10,000 for a sensory room and the proportion of spending on patient education and welfare has increased.

Ms Esler noted that several capital projects have been delayed, however work has been reprofiled into 2026/27.

Friends of South Tyrone Hospital charity approached the Trust to advise they were winding down and had a balance of funds around £33,000 and asked if there was a project that we could use the funds for. Estates suggested a coffee dock at the front of the building and this project has been out for consultation. This proposal has been delayed following consultation and concern in relation to the main canteen.

Mrs Marks noted that the canteen is being closed, and that alternatives are being explored.

Mrs Toal suggested having staff focus groups to help decide on what the money should be spent on, given that it is site restricted and cannot be used elsewhere. She suggested that consideration could be given to sim equipment for use in South Tyrone Hospital.

NHS Charities Together membership is due to be renewed, and Mr Lynas queried if it was worthwhile maintaining a formal membership.

Mrs Esler highlighted that membership provides access to governance tool, training, webinars and lobbying groups and that the resources were useful. The Committee agreed the cost is justified.

The remainder of the report details where donations are coming in from and notes that there were six requests for funding deemed unsuitable, including retrospective requests.

Ms Esler noted that in one instance relating to a funding request from Bluebell House, they were advised that funding had been secured from elsewhere.

The lack of progress on some projects was discussed and will be reviewed to determine the reasons why as this was not clear form the report.

Ms Esler confirmed that work is underway to improve guidance on applications for funding to reinforce the correct processes.

10. UPDATE ON STAFF SUPPORT FUND

Mrs Toal provided an update noting that the CTF funded Occupational Health project has experienced delays, however, the Estates Team has now re-tendered the build. Tender returns are due by 30th April and a pre-tender estimate places the cost at £1.625m.

Assuming procurement proceeds smoothly, it is anticipated that there should be a contractor on site in June.

11. CORPORATE RISK REGISTER

The Corporate Risk Register is presented for information; there were no comments requiring escalation.

12. ITEMS FOR TRUST BOARD ESCALATION

There were no items to escalate to trust board

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr Lynas recorded his thanks to everyone for their contribution to today’s meeting and noted that the workshop which had been scheduled for today will be rearranged for a date in June, yet to be determined.

The meeting concluded at 11.05a.m.