Minutes - Board of Trustees

(The Central Executive Committee of the CIO)

Thursday, 25 February 2021. The meeting was held online.

Welcome, attendance and apologies

Chair: Helen O'Sullivan

Present: Daniel Clark, Peter Bryant, David White, Bella Abrams, Elizabeth Charles, Keith Smyth, Sharon Flynn, Lorna Campbell, Natalie Lafferty, Maren Deepwell

Apologies: none.

1. Welcome, attendance and apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone and set out the agenda for the day.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

Reviewed the Minutes of the last meeting held on 19 November 2020.

Trustees approved the minutes from the last meeting as an accurate record of the last meeting.

3. Matters arising from the last meeting

The Board reviewed the report on matters arising from the last meeting and noted that all actions had been completed.

4. Strategy for 2021

Trustees had an open discussion and worked together to set priorities for the year ahead:

Keith Smyth facilitated an open discussion on ALT's strategic aims.

The Board reflected on the changing context for Learning Technology, how the role of Learning Technologists has changed and the impact of the online pivot in 2020. The Board discussed the importance of Learning Technology leadership roles, the Learning Technology professionals' expertise and the increase in Learning Technology practitioners. The discussion had a focus on inclusiveness and sustainability.

The Board reviewed ALT's three strategic aims and reached a general consensus to update the wording of the aims.

Elizabeth Charles then led a review of 'what we do', reviewing our current range of activities, reflecting on how they have changed over the past year, what their purpose is and how they might develop going forward. The Board also reviewed how activities contributed to generating income for ALT.

Trustees discussed different approaches to engagement online, blended and in person for Members across a range of activities including events and groups. We identified a clear need to resource communications to ensure more nuanced communication to members engaging with Learning Technology in different ways.

David White facilitated a discussion setting strategic priorities for 2021, drawing on the previous two tasks. The Board reflected on the importance of the impact of Learning Technology on learners and how this is articulated in the strategy.

Action: Board to agree updated wording for ALT's overall strategic aims, to be included in the updated strategic plan. This will be prepared by the Chief Executive and informed by today's discussion including rolling priorities for the next 6-18 months and long term aims.

5. Chief Executive's Report
Maren Deepwell presented her Chief Executive's Report, and the Board welcomed this overall. Particular recommendations were discussed as follows:

Report section	
Governance	**Charity Governance Code updated** The updated Code for Small Charities and the related diagnostic tool has been included in ALT's Governance Information Folder. Recommendation: Trustees agreed to undertake a reflective review of ALT's governance using the diagnostic tool during this year. **Senior Staff transition responsibilities** The Chair, Vice-Chair, President and Treasurer together with me have reviewed a list of areas of responsibility for which senior staff shared responsibility. With the transition happening this year, we have reviewed and considered how to mitigate the risk of having only a single member of senior staff. We have assigned each area to: a member of staff, a member of support staff (i.e. HR Advisor for example) or a Trustee. Recommendation: Trusteed noted and approved the updated list of responsibilities for implementation.
Risk and Operations	The risk register for 2021 has been updated and reviewed. Elements of the separate risk registers for Brexit and COVID-19 have now been incorporated into the overall register. The highest risks we are currently

managing is the continued drop in income. Whilst the actions we have already taken have helped mitigate the risk, given the ongoing impact of the pandemic, we need to continue to work hard to manage these risks and the financial report sets this out in more detail.

<u>Recommendation</u>: Trustees reviewed and approved risk management and register.

Membership

Annual Survey
This year's annual survey analysis is now complete and we are ready to publish the analysis as usual. I'd like to take a different approach to publishing the survey this year as it now runs to 60+ pages. So in addition to the complete open dataset we usually publish, we are going to publish three separate, shorter reports:

- Special COVID findings from the survey, highlighting wellbeing, investment and change in the membership;
- About our members and what it means to be a Learning Technologist;
- Trends in Learning Technology, including some comparisons with previous years for the trends in technology and practice.

The Board has early access to these findings which will be shared first with Members and then published publicly.

<u>Recommendation:</u> Trustees approved the Survey reports for publication.

Research & Policy

Research in Learning Technology - Chair: Peter Bryant
We are sad to formally note the passing of Professor Lesley Diack, Editor-in-Chief. See https://www.alt.ac.uk/news/all_news/professor-lesley-diack

Interim Editor-in-Chief
As the recruitment cycle for new editors will not start again until later in the year, we propose for Michael Flavin to act as interim Editor-in-Chief for this year.

Michael has been in post for a number of years and also acted as a judge for the research project award, thus he has a lot of experience of both the journal and its governance.

Michael will also deputise for Peter Bryant as Vice-Chair of the Editorial Board as needed.

Recommendation: The Board approved Michael Flavin as the interim Editor-in-Chief of the journal.

6. Financial Report

This report covered the fourth quarter of the financial year ending 31 January 2021 and set out the financial strategy for the new financial year. Daniel Clark presented the report and the Board then:

- Reviewed the Outturn Report Q4 and Preliminary Outturn Report of Financial Year 2020/21;
- Noted update on reserves;
- Approved the plan for Independent Examination 2020/21;
- Approved the Financial Strategy for 2021/22.

Overall the Board welcomed the financial update that ALT's financial position has stabilised and that the outturn was as projected 6 months earlier which is a good sign in these turbulent times.

7. Membership and CMALT Report (from D Baff)

This report covered the last six months and the Board noted it overall. Specifically the Board noted the following points:

- Positive overall membership numbers for the financial year ending 31 Jan 2021
- No changes to individual membership fees for 2021
- Update on CMALT

Action: Trustees then reviewed and approved proposed fee increase and increase freeze in relation to organisational membership fees for 2021.

8. Events Report (from E-J Brazier)

This report covered the period between October 2020 and May 2021 which includes the delivery of the ALT Online Winter Conference (15 & 16 December 2020) and looks forward to the OERxDomains21 (21-22 April 2021) and ALT Annual Conference (date tbc). Trustees noted the report overall, and specifically the following points:

- Online Winter Conference positive feedback
- Preparations for OERxDomains21 are underway and on track
- Preparations for ALTs Annual Conference 2021 are underway
- ALTs new series of CMALT Accelerator workshops are underway and on track
- ALT has collaborated with London CLC to deliver a half day CPD event 24 February

Action: Trustees then discussed the update on next year's events and agreed to review decisions about resuming in person events in July, after the AGM.

9. Working Group: Ethical Framework for Learning Technology
Working Group leads: Bella Abrams, Sharon Flynn, Nathalie Lafferty

The work of the group has continued well with now 60+ volunteers signed up to stay informed and get involved. The group had its first meeting in early February and the next session will be part of the upcoming half day ALT Assembly meeting on Thursday, 4th March. The main outcome of the work to date has been to identify elements of the framework and to draft these, including ten ethical principles for professional practice in Learning Technology and tools, including for example a checklist or reflective questionnaire, to help individuals, institutions and industry to see how these principles are put into action. The group is working to draft an outline of the framework and ask for input to the ethical principles.

The Board reviewed the working document and had a discussion around the role of ethical principles and what tools the new framework may include to enable Members to make practical use of it.

Action: Following the ALT Assembly meeting, the initial parts of the ethical framework will be published and the work of the group will continue with a view to launch the final framework at this year's Annual Conference.

10. AOB
No other business was raised.

Close of meeting
Next meeting: next meeting 17 June 2021, 13.00 - 15.30 UK local time