**AAETO Board – 23/09/20**

Minutes of a meeting of the AAETO Board of Directors held via Zoom Conference call on Wednesday 23rd September.

**Minutes prepared by Company Secretary**

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| **Present** | Pat Carrington (PC) (Chair), Joni Cunningham (JC) (Vice Chair), Simon Martin (SM), Dipa Ganguli (DG), Debbie Scarborough (DS) |
| **Attending** | Sue Pember (Director of Policy and External Relations (PD),<br>Charlie McKenna (Operations Officer/AAETO Company Secretary (CS) |

## 1. Apologies, quoracy, conflict of interest

- No Apologies (but SM lost connectivity briefly part way through and had to re-locate).
- No conflicts of interest were declared.
- The Chair welcomed Simon Martin to the board.

## 2. Review Minutes of last Board meeting

Directors received a copy of the minutes of the Board meeting held on 12th May 20 and accepted them as an accurate record.

## 3. AAETO 2019/20 Annual Accounts

CS talked the board through a paper detailing the annual accounts. It was noted that:

- Surplus on core business was higher than predicted, based mainly on Covid-19 cancellations.
- Project activity was relatively low; there will be more project activity in 20/21.
- There was no corporation tax to pay.
- The budgeted surplus for 20/21 referred to in this paper is out of date; this figure was the one budgeted as at end 2019/20 and has changed with the re-forecast budget this term.
- Various transactions have been adjusted between financial years to reflect the period in which activity has taken place (all recorded for transparency and accounted for in annual accounts).

The board acknowledged the financial stability of the organisation, based on deliberately accumulated reserves such that we will be able to support providers should funding be put at risk.

It was noted that the AAETO board and all HOLEX services have continued to function remotely throughout the period affected by Covid-19 (in fact being more intense and with input from CS/PD in excess of normal). It was noted that it has been a very different way of working with new pressures, and that it is likely to continue thus for at least 6 months.

**RESOLUTION – the Board agreed to sign off the 19/20 annual accounts.**

ACTION 1. CS/PD to share with PC a rough idea of additional time input over this period.

## 4. AAETO Company Secretary's report

### 4.1. HOLEX Membership update

It was noted that all bar one member has confirmed their position on renewal and that this is a good position to be in at this time of year. Two have left membership and three new have joined.

### 4.2. AAETO Financial Management reports

It was agreed that financial management reports should be produced to the quarter end (October) and to be circulated to the board in November, probably for review at the December board meeting.

### 4.3. HOLEX meetings (physical versus virtual)

It was agreed that, particularly in light of the recent government announcement, the Dec Network event could not continue as a physical event. It was also agreed that this should apply to the Spring Network event. Woburn House had confirmed that there will be no charges if we cancel the Dec event ASAP.

It was noted that the Summer 21 event booking was carried forward from Summer 20 and was agreed that we should consider the T&C's on cancellation and review this nearer the time.

ACTION 2. CS to cancel bookings with Woburn House for both Dec 20 and Mar 21 network events.

ACTION 3. CS to review T&C for the Summer Network event and monitor the position; add to agenda for consideration in Feb 21.

### 4.4. Review of baseline of characteristics of HOLEX members

Further to an action from Sep 19, the board considered the rationale/need for HOLEX to review baseline characteristics of members. It was agreed that, with data from the ETP survey (which captured info from over 200 ACE respondents), we have better data than we could have gathered. DG/PD plan to feed into a DfE review on FE data collection. It was agreed that there was no need for HOLEX to do an additional survey or data collection in this area.

### 4.5. Re-forecast budget 20/21

The board agreed that they were happy with the re-forecast budget. It was noted that the surplus would be higher than this forecast, particularly based on cancelled (re-scheduled to online) events this year.

### 4.6. Webinars

It was noted that our contract with Go to Webinar is up for renewal in Dec 20. CS discussed consideration of a number of alternative solutions. It was agreed that Go to Webinar is a solid solution but is clunky and limited in terms of attendee interaction. Zoom seems the best alternative; predominantly based on the additional audience interactivity. However, there are concerns about accessibility, particularly by local authorities.

It was agreed that, based on a) the access limitations of Zoom, b) given that HOLEX and its members are now used to Go to Webinar, and c) consideration of the time needed to get to grips with a new webinar solution, that HOLEX should renew with Go to Webinar this year and re-consider alternatives in 12 months' time.

ACTION 4. CS to put webinar alternatives on board agenda for consideration at May 21 board meeting.

### 4.7. Website/database management solutions

CS discussed the issues and various solutions that had been considered, noting that there are a myriad of options and that ideally we need to consider the whole piece of data management, not just add a solution that solves one area, but creates more administrative work.

It was agreed that the current website should receive an overhaul to update the data, to get it to showcase what we do and to keep it up to date. CS acknowledged that the website had dropped off the radar, but that some quick changes had been made since the issue was raised recently.

It was agreed that, once the current website is functioning as it should, we should consider what we want from a website going forwards, what will work for members and what is manageable.

ACTION 5. Board – send CS a photo of themselves and a short (100 to 200 words) biography.

ACTION 6. PD – send list of documents to upload on to website.

ACTION 7. CS to update current website and keep an action open to review what is needed going forwards.

### 4.8. GDPR – data cleansing

CS noted that the aim is now to complete historic data cleansing by May 21 (as proposed as a potential completion date in May 20). The board agreed with this.

### 4.9. Other outstanding actions

It was agreed that CS/PD would pick up on other actions.

## 5. Policy Director

PC formally thanked PD for her contribution to the Select Committee.

PD went through an overview of work for the last 3 months. Points noted included:

- Some representation work takes a while to have an impact.
- DfE meetings – included PD investing time with fresh civil servants, making our sector known.
- Devolution – HOLEX was planning a Devolution webinar, but different MCA's are very different.
- **Externally funded projects:**
    - Final 3 modules for **ACE leadership** will go ahead; though still some details to firm up with ETF around funding. Will potentially want board members to co-host with PD.
    - LGA funded project on **Guidance for Elected Members** (supported by HOLEX, but funding is not through us); project document ready to be published.
    - **Digital ACE** – Steering Group meeting Thursday 24th Sep. Materials ready for sign off, launch webinar and first strand webinar done.
    - FETL – **Levelling Up –** it was noted that ACL organisations provide data which historically is not analysed or accessible. FETL funding has enabled data access; will be analysed to get national data/regional data. Project will enable establishment of a solution such that providers can pay £500 for their own report to benchmark against their region and nationally. Will be 18/19 data and is based on whole activity, not just ACL line.
- **FE White paper**
    - It was noted that we are probably less than 6 weeks away from having a consultation paper and still don't know the scope. Lots of options are being considered.
    - PD has produced various papers.
    - PC noted that, once consultation starts, we should have something from HOLEX that members can take to LA, elected members, MP's.
- **How do we get members to lobby?**
    - It was noted that it is disappointing that not many HOLEX members are in touch with MP's, specifically recently relating to the Select Committee; could see the difference in the member who had been briefed.
    - It was discussed that some HOLEX organisations have barriers (hierarchy may block access to elected members) and also that there may be a lack of confidence.
    - It was noted that alternate terminology of 'advising' or 'influencing' may help to encourage lobbying. It was also noted that such advising often isn't political; is just providing useful information for MP's to fulfil their role.
    - PD noted that a webinar around interacting with elected members would be useful. PC noted that a survey could also be undertaken to establish what the barriers are.
    - It was noted that the PD's Forward Look is a continuation of current processes.

## 6. AOB

- PD noted is happy to endorse text around UK Shared Prosperity Fund.
- It was noted that similar has been done with Ofqual which is now published.

## 7. Time and place of next board meeting

Thursday 3rd December 2020 (following HOLEX network meeting). Will now be online. Details to be firmed up nearer the time.