AAETO Board – 07/12/20

Minutes of a meeting of the AAETO Board of Directors held via Zoom Conference call on Monday 7th December 2020.

Minutes prepared by Company Secretary

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

1. Apologies, quoracy, conflict of interest

- Joni Cunningham (JC) (Vice Chair)
- No conflicts of interest were declared.

2. Review Minutes of last Board meeting

Directors received a copy of the minutes of the Board meeting held on 23rd September 20 and accepted them as an accurate record.

3. AAETO Company Secretary's report

3.1. HOLEX Membership update

It was noted that two new members have signed up since September, making 5 new members as against 3 lost members. Membership income is slightly up based on this and some members have paid reduced in-year joining fees the year before.

3.2. AAETO Financial Management reports

3.2.1. Profit and Loss/Balance sheet

The board noted the financial management reports and were happy with the figures. It was noted in particular that there are savings against budget based on events having been moved online and there having been a reduction in expenses claims due to the pandemic.

3.2.2. Projects

Ufi – Digital ACE project

- It was noted that the training element of this project has been more protracted than expected and that no shows for training have been higher than anticipated. It was noted that around 30 organisations have applied for Advisory sessions and it was agreed that additional capacity for Advisory sessions could potentially be directed at those who are not doing much online.
- PC suggested an option of a webinar/information about taking Community Learning online; possibly entitled "Ensuring the future of Community Learning".
- PD noted that we are considering updating the historic Tech Learn blogs (created as part of an AAETO project in 2016).

ACTION 1. Consider a webinar/info about taking Community Learning online; possibly entitled "Ensuring the future of Community Learning" – PD/CS.

FETL – Levelling up project - It was noted that we have lots of great data; mainly split into two groups - AEB/ACL. A consultant was commissioned as part of the project to produce a piece on 'cost to level up' and we are looking for data on costs of level 1.

ACTION 2. Provide some figures on the costs of Level 1 – SM.

ACE Leadership project - It was noted that ETF have now fully signed off completion of cohort 1, the full six modules for cohort 2 (both of which are now underway) and that they are also keen to consider a proposal for cohort 3.

Central Bedfordshire review – It was noted that this project is on track.

4. HOLEX Member feedback survey

Options around the annual HOLEX member feedback survey were discussed, particularly considering whether it is appropriate to launch a survey when people are so busy, when the results have been consistent each year and there is no reason to suspect this year would be different. It was agreed by the board that we should delay the survey this year and survey again in Autumn 21.

ACTION 3. Let members know that we are not surveying for the reasons mentioned and to ask them to email PC if they have anything they particularly want to say - SP

5. Proposal to use contractor to produce HOLEX monthly digest

The board discussed a proposal to use a known and trusted contractor to produce an ACE specific monthly news digest for a trial period of 12 months.

ACTION 4. Commission the new monthly digest – PD/CS.

6. Website update

It was noted that a small spend had been made to improve the website both from an administrative and end user perspective; this will be an annual spend but is low cost and is very reasonable for what we have gained.

7. Outstanding actions

The CS referred the board to the updates on other outstanding actions; these were not discussed based on time limitations.

8. Policy Director's Report

The board received an update from PD. It was noted in particular that:

- There has been a lot of activity over the last few months, including lots of work on externally funded projects.
- There is no White Paper yet; this will now come out after Christmas, though it is unclear what will be included and how it will impact on ACE.
- The Devolution White Paper has also been pushed into the New Year.
- The Spending Review has come out but there was nothing major to note.
- Lots of new contacts have been made at DfE.
- A fantastic meeting was held with the new Permanent Secretary.
- SM helped with the White Paper.
- There is budget for a consultant to take what was done for the Spending Review and re-cast this for the Spring Budget and that the Levelling up work will help with this; the board were happy with this approach.
- PD spoke out in FE Week last week about the Skills Toolkit.

There was a discussion around how the AoC proposal might impact on ACE and how this sits with the White Paper; it was noted that LA's should have increased power over scrutiny and co-ordination. PD is liaising with relevant parties around this and will continue to do so.

9. AOB

9.1. LEAFEA Chair

The new chair of LEAFEA is due to be announced.

ACTION 5. Put the new LEAFEA Chair in touch with PC – PD

ACTION 6. Share revised memorandum of understanding with new LEAFEA Chair and invite to (mid-way through) the Feb board meeting to share views on LEAFEA and how we can collaborate – CS.

9.2. Photo for HOLEX Christmas card

The below festive image of the board was taken for our HOLEX Christmas card.

9.3. AOC new chair

It was noted that AoC have announced their new chair who is also the Chief Exec of Leeds Council.

9.4. JC retirement

It was noted that JC is retiring in the Spring and that we need to recruit to the Policy Forum (at least two vacancies) and then recruit to the board.

ACTION 7. Progress recruitment of two people to the Policy Forum, and then recruitment of 1 person to the AAETO board – CS.

10. Time and place of next board meeting

Issue: Next scheduled board meeting Thursday 4th February 21 (after Policy Forum) – online.
Input required: None