



**MINUTES OF THE CHARITABLE TRUST FUNDS COMMITTEE AT
11.45 AM ON
THURSDAY 10 APRIL 2025 IN THE BOARDROOM, NIAS HQ**

PRESENT: Mr P Quinn Committee Chair
Mr J Dennison Non-Executive Director
Mr P Corrigan Non-Executive Director

IN ATTENDANCE:
Ms L Donnelly Interim Director of Finance
Ms S Beggs Manager of Chair and Chief
Executive Office
Mr B McAuley Assistant Director of Finance

1 Apologies & Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed members to the first meeting of the CTF Committee, which will provide oversight of the Charitable Trust Funds and how it is spent. The Committee will meet three times a year.

The Chair thanked Ms McAuley for preparing today's papers.

2 Procedure

2.1 Declaration of Potential Conflicts of Interest

The Chair asked those present to declare any potential conflicts of interest now or as the meeting progressed.

No declarations of conflict of interest were made.

2.2 Quorum

The Chair confirmed the Committee as quorate.

2.3 Confidentiality of Information

The Chair emphasised the confidentiality of information.

3 Terms of Reference (CTF10/04/25/01)

Members agreed they are content with the current membership of the Committee.

Ms McAuley confirmed that the charities registration application is based on NIAS having one core service and one fund. All other trusts have multiple funds. Mr Quinn queried if it would be problematic to only have one fund and Ms McAuley responded that she did not believe so. Ms McAuley further explained the process for donations received, including those that are restricted and discussed potentially amending the ToR in relation to restricted donations. Mr Quinn confirmed that there is no implication to keeping this in as the likelihood is small.

Once registered as a Charity, Ms McAuley confirmed that NIAS will provide an annual report and accounts that describes the charitable objectives and how it's used against those objectives. Ms McAuley is not sure of the process at this early stage and Mr Dennison offered any help in this respect.

Mr Dennison queried what role this committee has on the spend of the charitable trust funds. Ms McAuley is unsure but confirmed that in terms of spend, the current process is that an area manager makes a request and their respective director or SMT member approves it. Historically, NIAS has not had significant funds within the charitable trust funds with donations of around a few thousand pounds per year. However, there was a large donation of £250k in 2018-19. This has resulted in a larger balance in recent years.

The fund has been utilised recently to fund a paramedic researcher for around £40k which was approved via SMT. Ms McAuley advised that lower value requests are usually signed off by Directors.

Members noted that it is not stipulated what is an appropriate level for them to go to SMT and issues may arise if someone is turned down so therefore decisions need to be justified. Mr Corrigan referred to section six within the remit which states that spending

remains within SMT, and the Committee have oversight and assurance rather than approving specific spend.

Mr Quinn asked how well known the fund is within the Organisation and he suggested that the organisation think about how the fund can be made known to staff so they don't feel disenfranchised. Mr Quinn said that there are opportunities to apply for funding and grants. This would reduce reliance on donations alone. Ms McAuley confirmed that NIAS have made applications over the last few years in relation to staff well-being.

Mr Dennison asked if NIAS have considered how to invest the funds in the right way, however Mr Quinn believes the funds should be expended. Ms McAuley said there needs to be more focus on how NIAS apply for grants and suggested that a process should be approved by SMT to ensure there is a robust procedure for these matters.

Ms Donnelly agreed to take the feedback on board and put a proposal together for SMT to approve. She agreed that awareness is key to ensure the fund is available and will discuss further with SMT.

ACTION: Ms Donnelly

4 Charitable Trust Funds Procedures (CTF10/04/25/02)

Ms McAuley explained that the financial procedures detail the processes that should be followed by all staff in relation to the management and control of charitable trust funds. They include processes for the receipt of donations and the approval and payment of charitable trust fund expenditure.

This year there has been some advertising and money set aside for a 'dragons' den' approach to identify different ideas. The Ideas were considered and given authority to spend money based on their application.

Mr Quinn alluded to income generation and asked how NIAS actively seek funds, which perhaps needs added to the procedures.

Mr Dennison said that the process should be managed by staff and asked how this will be communicated with staff. He suggested sharing a condensed version as most of it is finance related,

advising what staff should do if they wish to make an application for funded expenditure. The Committee suggested a one-page document to include a flow diagram. Ms McAuley agreed to consider and bring back to the Committee.

ACTION: Ms McAuley

5 Charitable Trust Funds – Financial Policy (CTF10/04/25/03)

Ms McAuley presented the CTF financial policy which provides an overview on the Trusts CTF objective and activities including their spending policy and investment policy. This was produced two years ago as a result of audit recommendations and SMT requested that it is called a Policy. Mr Quinn said this document is useful for the charity's regulator as a statement of intent.

Ms McAuley confirmed that the regulator has received what NIAS' purpose is and public benefit statement, and they are content. She explained that the public benefit statement has been signed off and agreed to circulate as part of the registration process.

The Committee suggested that another paragraph is added into the Policy about raising awareness of the fund to staff and what the decision-making process is.

ACTION: Ms McAuley/Ms Donnelly

6 Charitable Funds Finance Report (CTF10/04/25/04)

Ms McAuley presented the update on income and expenditure relating to the Charitable Trust Funds for the 11 months ending February 2025. Ms McAuley explained that NIAS money is amalgamated and managed via Belfast Trust. Ms McAuley has requested an update on the current balance of the NIAS investments.

Mr Corrigan pointed out there is a big difference for NHS grants compared to last year. Last year £111,185 was received and this year £16,500.

Ms. McAuley explained that 'the service' applies for grants as opposed to the finance team and is unsure why there was less opportunity. Mr Corrigan asked that the well being team provide an overview of their approach to applying for grants. Mr Quinn asked if there is a source to manage this, he appreciates it is an ad hoc

process and doesn't want to make an industry but there is potential for income generation and how it is best managed and organised within the Trust. Ms McAuley agreed to discuss with SMT to think about how this is centrally managed.

ACTION: Ms McAuley

Ms McAuley referred to a donation of legacy money with a specific request for the funding to be used towards an Ambulance in the North. Ms McAuley advised that NIAS used this donation to part fund an Ambulance in the Northern area.

Mr Quinn referred to earlier discussions and suggested a balanced approach between expending the fund and investing for future returns.

Ms Donnelly responded that there are opportunities to improve the management and use of the Charitable Trust Funds. Ms Donnelly agreed to bring a paper to SMT outlining the current position, recommended next steps and to seek the views and insights of SMT's.

ACTION: Ms Donnelly

Mr Corrigan discussed targeted communication and said there may be opportunities for area managers to utilise this fund, over and above the normal spend, if there is a specific reason for it, whilst ensuring it is not a free for all.

Mr Quinn concluded by saying there is nothing for the Committee to be concerned about, and having these conversations highlights improvements to ensure best practice. Mr Corrigan agreed and added that now this Committee has been implemented it will help to improve the process going forward.

7 Update on Charity Commission Registration

Ms McAuley advised that the EOI to apply for charity registration was issued this week. The DLS solicitor has liaised with the Charities Commission, who are content for NIAS to proceed and agreed the purposes and public benefit statement to complete the registration. The application process can take eight weeks and Commissioners will be asking Trust Board for written confirmation.

Ms McAuley confirmed for Mr Corrigan that the projected timescale for registration could be into the next financial year.

Mr Corrigan asked if there are any practical differences to how NIAS operate once registered and Mr Quinn said there will be obligations in terms of governance and procedure. Ms McAuley advised that NIAS don't have the power to actively fund raise.

Mr Corrigan referred to the Belfast Trust administering NIAS funds and queried if the Charity Commission would have a problem with that arrangement. Mr Quinn said that it wouldn't be an issue making a grant application and that Trust Board are corporate trustees. Mr Quinn said there may be additional obligations for the Board once NIAS is registered.

8 Any other business

No matters discussed.

9 Next meeting:

18 September 2025

THIS BEING ALL THE BUSINESS, THE CHAIR DECLARED THE MEETING CLOSED AT 2.30PM

SIGNED: P Quinn

DATE: 18/9/25
