Item 4.1: Minutes of the meeting of the TSI Board, 21st July 2026, Online via Teams

Present – Nicola Porciani (NP), Hilary Pearce (HP), Michelle Mundie (MM), Alison Gildea (AG), Takki Sulaiman (TS) - CEO, Lauren Martin (LM) - Business Manager, Angela Coburn (AC)

Welcome and Apologies

Apologies were received from Nicola Hackett and Luke Winter.

3. Declaration Of Interests

No amendments. It was noted that LM had received AC's DOI and the record will be updated.

4. Minutes of the Last Meeting

All present reviewed and agreed that the actions from the previous meeting were accurate.

4.2 Appointment of new board member

Angela Coburn attended the meeting as an observer, following an earlier meeting with the Chair and CEO. Introductions were made to all attendees.

Following discussion, the Board unanimously agreed to co-opt Angela Coburn as a Board member.

Angela thanked the Board for the trust placed in her and noted her extensive career within the voluntary sector, together with her particular interest in volunteering and its promotion.

5.1 CEO Report

TS presented the CEO Report and updated the Board on key activity since the previous meeting.

The third and community sector hustings, held in Oban, Dunoon and Helensburgh ahead of the Scottish Parliament election, were well attended and gave local organisations and residents an opportunity to engage directly with candidates on issues affecting the sector.

The Board received an update on staffing and recruitment. Eleanor Balfour had commenced maternity leave, with Fiona Blunsden providing maternity cover for the Walking Development Officer role. The Board was also advised that the Walking Development Officer post was now largely fully funded, subject to final accountant checks, following successful external grant applications.

TS provided a confidential update regarding an internal employee relations matter. The Board noted that the process had concluded. It was agreed that the experience had highlighted a need to review the organisation's HR support arrangements and associated policies and procedures, including the disciplinary procedure and the organisation's approach to providing employment references.

NH asked what additional support would be helpful. TS advised that access to appropriate HR advice was currently a concern and stressed the importance of keeping policies up to date and following appropriate procedures. NP agreed that suitable HR support was important in providing support and assurance to the CEO.

AC offered to provide support and experience in this area, and the potential use of non-contractual HR policies was discussed as one possible approach. It was agreed that TS, LM and AC would discuss this further.

TS also sought the Board's approval to use the organisation's "Nurturing a Flourishing Future for Argyll and Bute" work as the basis of a consultancy project for his MBA. It was confirmed that no personal data would be included. The Board raised no objections and approved the project.

5.2 Management Accounts

TS presented the Q1 Management Accounts for the three-month period ending 30 June 2026.

TS noted that the accounts showed a small deficit of £1,115 but explained that it was manageable and largely attributable to timing and profiling differences. The position remained stable and was significantly better than the budgeted deficit of £6,812.

The Board was advised that several areas would continue to be monitored, including Positive Destinations income and expenditure, Living Well expenditure, and the final costs associated with the Volunteer of the Year Awards.

TS discussed ongoing work with the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) and advised that longer-term financial planning was being developed, with work underway on a three-to-five-year budget to provide greater visibility of the organisation's future financial position.

TS also noted the need to consider a staff pay increase. While this was recognised as desirable, the organisation was not in a financial position to accommodate an increase, so it would need to remain under review as part of longer-term budget planning.

The Board raised no further comments or questions.

5.3 Business Management Report

LM presented the Business Management Report, providing an update on operational activity during the first quarter of 2026/27.

Event activity remained strong, with six events delivered during the quarter and 275 attendees, representing an increase in attendance compared with the same period in the previous year. This included the Volunteer of the Year Awards, which reached full capacity with more than 150 attendees, alongside the Election Hustings and Health and Wellbeing

Network activity. ABTSI had also supported the Funding Connections events delivered in partnership with Argyll and Bute Council.

An update was provided on the Argyll Community Lottery, which continued to perform strongly. The Lottery supported 132 live causes, with 597 active players purchasing 1,322 tickets each week. More than £240,000 had been generated for local causes since launch, with performance comparing favourably with community lotteries operating in significantly larger population areas. LM advised that discussions had taken place with the new Gatherwell account manager regarding opportunities to increase promotion, particularly through good-news and impact stories demonstrating how Lottery income benefits local organisations and communities.

LM also updated the Board on the ABCAN Seed Fund, with Round 7 opening in June, and on the Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund, where Year 6 payments were released following completion of the additional assurance process. The Scottish Government had also confirmed a seventh year of the Fund, with further work required to determine the local delivery approach.

Communications activity remained strong, with continued growth in ABTSI's combined social media following. Instagram showed particularly strong growth during the quarter, although overall impressions and engagement declined and will continue to be monitored. Email communications had seen improved click-through engagement among recipients who opened mailings.

MM suggested sharing suitable good-news stories with ACHA for inclusion in its newsletter, providing an additional opportunity to promote the Argyll Community Lottery and the benefits it delivers to local causes. It was agreed that a renewed promotional push for the Lottery would be beneficial.

The Board had no further comments or questions.

6.1 Volunteer of the Year Awards

LM presented the review of the 2026 Volunteer of the Year Awards, noting the event's continued growth in its sixth year. The event reached full capacity with more than 150 attendees, while the professionally produced livestream attracted a record 120 views on the day and continued to attract views after the event. Feedback from finalists, attendees, partners and sponsors had been consistently positive.

LM highlighted the programme's development in 2026, which included the Sustainability Showcase, Sustainable Fashion Show, live music, regional volunteer films, the In Memoriam tribute and, for the first time, a printed event programme. The review also identified operational learning around earlier planning, clearer allocation of responsibilities and improved management of technical and venue arrangements for future events.

The financial position was discussed. Direct expenditure for the 2026 event totalled £13,649.09, with £4,500 secured through sponsorship and partner contributions, leaving a net cost to ABTSI of £9,149.09. It was noted that sponsorship therefore covered approximately one-third of the direct event costs and did not account for the significant staff resource involved in planning and delivery.

Given the scale and established profile of the Awards, the group agreed it was time to take a more commercial and ambitious approach to sponsorship, with the aim of improving the event's longer-term financial sustainability and reducing the proportion of costs met through ABTSI resources.

MM suggested approaching ACHA at Board level to explore a larger-scale sponsorship arrangement. AG suggested broadening the approach to include larger organisations and employers, citing Babcock as an example of the type of organisation to approach.

LM welcomed the suggestions and advised that sponsorship development would form an early part of planning for the 2027 Awards, with an update to be provided at the next Board meeting.

6.2 Audit Discussion paper

TS presented the Audit Discussion Paper, prepared following changes to the Scottish charity accounting regulations. The Board noted that, for accounting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2026, the income threshold at which Scottish charities are generally required to have a professional audit had increased from £500,000 to £1 million, meaning that ABTSI may, depending on its income and other requirements, be eligible to move to Independent Examination.

TS recommended that, notwithstanding the change in threshold, ABTSI should continue to have its annual accounts professionally audited. It was noted that the organisation's income can fluctuate around the new threshold and that ABTSI has responsibility for administering and distributing significant public and charitable funds.

The Board discussed the additional assurance provided by a professional audit and agreed that it provided an important seal of approval, supporting transparency, funder confidence and good governance. Continuing with a professional audit was considered appropriate best practice, particularly given ABTSI's role as a third sector infrastructure organisation and its responsibility to demonstrate high standards of financial stewardship.

All Board members in attendance supported the recommendation to continue with a professional audit.

6.3 Towards an updated ABTSI reserves policy

TS presented a discussion paper setting out a proposed approach to updating ABTSI's Reserves Policy, following discussion at the April 2026 Board meeting.

The proposed approach would move the organisation from a simple three-month reserves position towards a more explicit risk-based policy, linking the level of reserves held to financial resilience, staffing commitments, income risk, going concern and ABTSI's wider role as a third sector infrastructure organisation.

The draft proposed retaining a minimum free reserves floor equivalent to approximately three months of operating costs, excluding fund distribution, together with provision for estimated statutory redundancy costs. It also proposed a longer-term strategic target

equivalent to 12 months of operating costs plus redundancy provision. The paper noted that this higher level should be viewed as an aspiration to strengthen organisational resilience rather than a rigid requirement.

The Board was asked to consider the proposed approach and supporting information ahead of a formal decision.

AOCB

NP asked for an update on the development of the organisation's Risk Register. TS advised that this remained on the workplan and that they were considering involving the Database Manager in developing an automated approach to maintaining and monitoring the register.

NP also requested that Board papers be circulated seven days in advance of meetings, wherever possible, to ensure Board members have sufficient time to read the papers and prepare for discussion.

Actions

Action Item	Description	Responsible Person	Status (RAG)
1	Review HR support and relevant policies	TS/LM/AC	Amber
2	Develop a three-to-five-year budget and review staff pay.	TS	Amber
3	Share Lottery good-news stories with ACHA and increase promotion.	LM	Amber
4	Develop VOY 2027 sponsorship, including larger corporate approaches.	LM	Amber
5	Bring Reserves Policy to next Board for approval.	TS	Amber
6	Progress Risk Register and explore automation	TS/PA	Amber