

**Minutes of the Board of Directors' Meeting
Wednesday 13 May 2009 at 5.00 p.m.
Conference Room 2 Southland's Centre**

Present	J Shepherd	Chair
	G Dobson	Treasurer
	L Laidler	Director
	H Wallace	Director
	P Frankland	Director
Apologies	D Whiting	Director
	C Butterfield	Vice Chair
	S Twist	Director
	C Field	Director
In Attendance	Helen Lowrie	CEO

BO01/09 Good Governance

Feedback from the questionnaire – 'Being a good employer.'

The Board agreed the proposed actions:

- ❖ Board members to attend top up training/ support group as already agreed
- ❖ A Human Resources sub group reporting to the Board reinstated. This to be held bimonthly to address the Employment issues that arise (in more detail than the Board can go into) and ensure that all Board members are aware of how UNITE's employment processes function. L Laidler, P Frankland and J Shepherd agreed to be members of the sub group and hoped that as many other Board members as possible would also attend. The meetings were agreed as 1.00pm on 24th June 2009, 26 August 2009, 21st October 2009 and 16th December 2009
- ❖ Questionnaire on Board/Staff relations completed by those present. To be sent to absentees for return by 19th June ahead of HR sub group.

BO02/09 Apologies for absence and declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest. D Whiting, C Butterfield, C Field gave apologies.

BO03/09 Approval of the minutes of the BOD Meetings of 25 March 2009

The minutes were approved by L Laidler and G Dobson.

BO04/09 Matter arising from the BOD Meeting of 25 March 2009

- ❖ L Laidler to email for dates for Board get-together
- ❖ Rota of dates for top up training and support group completed
- ❖ Directors contact details circulated electronically

- ❖ Secret shopping undertaken re UNITE union – unhelpful response. Board agreed to ask S Twist for advice as to how to improve the situation. P Frankland to raise issue informally with local UNITE branch.

All other actions on the agenda.

BO05/09

Financial Matters

Income and Expenditure Account

The Treasurer reported the Income and Expenditure Account for the end of April 2009 showed £xxxxx surplus for the year (subject to audit). The Board congratulated staff on an excellent result.

Income Generation Table

The contents of the table were noted with the progress made on the different bids. The CEO highlighted the facts that - xxxxxxx had previously been very positive but had recently reduced interest – xxxx had committed to only 3 months funding and were going to tender.

P Frankland suggested approaching xxxx to see if UNITE could provide services at this time.

Draft Budget

The CEO reminded the Board that income this year had reduced because of the completion of the Home Office project and EHRC. It had been hoped that the shortfall would be made up from xxxxx as well as other projects set out in the income generation table.

Currently however these have not been confirmed and a worst-case scenario budget has been produced which anticipates a shortfall of £xxxxx, which will be found from financial reserves.

The Board agreed:

- ❖ xxxxxxx

The Board supported the following principles:

- ❖ All team members to be given the opportunity to suggest where additional budget savings could be made.
- ❖ Sabbaticals to be considered (Board decision)
- ❖ Any decision to reduce salaries &/ hours to be considered equally across all team members
- ❖ Learning and development plans to be honoured but plans may be delivered by cheaper alternatives
- ❖ Reducing leasing costs by releasing office space (Board decision)
- ❖ As funding secured a system of revisiting budget headings is drawn up by SMT and RTL

The CEO highlighted that initial discussions with staff confirmed that they would rather keep a job than have increments/cost of living rises.

The Board noted that the principles were the basis of the exit strategy that the CEO is to bring to the next Board meeting.

The Board noted that it was not possible to employ any additional mediators to address the Pre Allocation list at this time.

Directors asked that thanks be relayed to those who had put together the financial papers, as they had been clear and helpful.

BO06/09

**Human Resources
Redundancy calculations**

The latest figures were noted.

Holiday entitlement

The proposal not to change current arrangements was agreed. To be revisited next year.

CEO's performance review

A report on the review was noted.

BO07/09

Strategic Plan 2009/12

After some discussion this was agreed. The additional post of Mediator Team Leader was proposed in the second year should funding allow. It was agreed that future reports on progress (Business Action Plan) would be made in the form of a traffic light system, which clarified elements of the plan which had/or had not been completed. The Board asked that the strategic plan be reissued to Directors electronically.

BO08/09

Business Plan 2006/09

The final outcome of this plan was noted. The CEO to clarify the status of Safeguarding Children training so that the Board is assured that all mediators working with children are appropriately trained.

BO09/09

**Policy and Procedure Reviews
Health and Safety Policy**

Noted by the Board.

Pay Policy

The Board noted that the policy did not address the issue of staff being at the top of their grade and only able to receive additional payment if they were re-graded. It was noted that affordability was important but felt that the policy should set out options for potential bonuses for such situations. The Board agreed the policy as set out and asked that the bonuses proposal be considered at the Human Resources sub group when it met in June.

BO10/09

Statistics

The new format of the statistics, which gave detail of the Indicators, was very helpful. The Board noted that whilst demand for mediation had been high, this had been met within timescales up until the beginning of May. Since then however, demand had risen even further. The situation today was xx cases waiting and xx days pre allocation and it was anticipated that the summer demand would continue to increase. Unless funding was secured and paid mediators engaged this situation put staff under a lot of pressure. One of the results of this was that outcomes tended to fall off.

BO11/09 **Equality & Diversity**
Nothing to report.

BO12/09 **Health and Safety**
No issues to report.

BO13/09 **Correspondence**
No correspondence.

BO14/09 **Any other business**
The CEO reported a request for an ex-mediator to join the Board. It was noted that the person concerned did not have an HR background and this was what the Board was looking for. There is also a vacancy on the Board for a Vol. Rep, which has been difficult to fill. However the Board asked the CEO to discuss this offer further with the person concerned.

BO15/09 **Date of next Board Meeting**
Wednesday 29th July 2009 at 5:00.

Note: H R sub on 24th June at 12 noon – Agenda to be circulated earlier.

**Action sheet from the Board of Directors' Meeting
Wednesday 13 May 2009**

Agenda Item Number		Action	By Whom	Deadline
This Meeting	Previous Meeting			
	BO35/08	The 15 th year of UNITE to be marked by a small marketing gift at the AGM in 2009.	CEO	2009 AGM
	BO90/08	UNITE to support upgrade of the Southlands quadrangle. Costs to be agreed by Board.	CEO	July 2009
	BO91/08	Invest reserves in £50,000 tranches	Treasurer/ RTL	On going review
BO01/09		A Human Resources sub group reporting to the Board reinstated. Absent Board members informed of first meeting.	CEO	July 09
BO04/09	BO87/08	L Laidler to email for dates for Board informal get-together	L Laidler	July/Aug 09
BO04/09		Action to improve relationship with UNITE union to be taken	CEO /S Twist/ P Frankland	July 09
BO04/09		Board/staff relations questionnaire to be completed	All Directors	19 th June 2009
BO05/09	BO91/08	Relevant staff contracts to be extended to Sept 09	CEO	September 09
BO05/09	BO87/08	Exit strategy to be formalised	CEO/Chair	July 2009
BO07/09		Final version of strategic plan reissued electronically	CEO	ASAP
BO08/09		Safeguarding children training clarified	CEO	July 2009
BO14/09		Potential Board member to meet CEO to discuss	CEO	