

**UNITE Ltd.**  
**MEDIATION•CONCILIATION•TRAINING**

**Minutes of the Board of Directors' Meeting**  
**Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> March at 5.00 p.m.**  
**Conference Room 1, Southlands Centre**

<b>Present</b>	J Shepherd	Chair
	C Butterfield	Vice Chair
	G Dobson	Treasurer
	L Laidler	Director
	C Fields	Director
	S Twist	Secretary
	H Wallace	Director
<b>Apologies</b>	P Frankland	Director
	D Whiting	Director
<b>In Attendance</b>	Helen Lowrie	CEO

**BO87/08 Good Governance**

Feedback given from the Directors' appraisals.  
The Board agreed the proposed actions

- ❖ Chair to ensure all Directors have relevant information and that decisions reprised.
- ❖ Report format standardised
- ❖ Exit strategy formalised
- ❖ Board to meet informally
- ❖ Rota of Directors to attend top up training /support group
- ❖ Contact list for Directors checked and reissued

**BO88/08 Apologies for absence and declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest. P Frankland and D Whiting gave apologies.

**BO89/08 Approval of the minutes of the BOD Meetings of January 2009**

The minutes were approved by H Wallace and G Dobson

**BO90/08 Matter arising from the BOD Meeting of January 2009**

- ❖ Profiles to be put on web site once the last two obtained.
- ❖ S Twist attended Support group in February and J Shepherd attended top up training in March.
- ❖ Further investigation of the allotment revealed problems so CEO now proposing to await the outcome of the bid by Groundwork for funding to upgrade the Southlands quadrangle and supporting this venture. Proposed costs to return to the Board once they are known. Board agreed this action.

All other actions on the agenda

**BO91/08**

## **Financial Matters**

### **❖ Income and Expenditure Account**

The Treasurer reported the Income and Expenditure Account showed a very positive outcome for the year end. There is likely to be xxx months worth of reserves which in the present climate is welcome cushion.

The action to invest reserves in £xxx tranches is currently in abeyance but will be under regular review by the Treasurer and staff.

The Directors noted that a further £xxxxx is awaited and that staff will again talk to customers about payments that are not in arrears so that cash flow can be managed better.

The CEO reported that the Restorative Justice training was completed although there was a disappointingly poor take up. She also confirmed that all places at the business awards event had been sponsored by customers. The Board congratulated the CEO and staff for getting this far and hoped that they would be successful at the event.

The Connecting Communities project will end 31<sup>st</sup> of March and the project worker has decided to leave UNITE. The Board wished him well in his future endeavours.

### **❖ Income Generation Table**

The contents of the table were noted. The CEO reported additional information – UNITE unsuccessful in the bid to DCFS, and an application has been made to the Big Lottery for work in schools (up to second stage outcome in the summer). A bid had been made to West Lothian for mediator training and also a bid to Tees Valley Housing for community and work place mediation. The CEO also confirmed the bid to Catalyst and Stockton PCT was going ahead.

### **❖ Resources shortfall**

The CEO reported that the email discussion of options had not taken place because it had become obvious that there was only one viable option – that of taking on paid mediators. The ability to do this depended on the outcome of the clarification of the funding for next year. The Board agreed an earlier meeting to discuss this than the one scheduled for 27<sup>th</sup> May.

### **❖ Draft Budget**

Information on funding has not yet been confirmed by a range of agencies so the Board noted that the draft budget was currently in deficit.

The Board agreed the draft budget and the need to closely monitor the outcome of funding. The Board agreed to delete it's meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> May and replace it with an earlier date of 13<sup>th</sup> May when hopefully the funding should be clearer. In the meantime the Board agreed to extend the temporary contracts to 31<sup>st</sup> May.

In response to a question the CEO clarified the need to replace the current switchboard system, which is not fit for purpose.

**BO92/08**

## **Human Resources**

The Board agreed to extend relevant staff contracts by a month from April pending the confirmation of funding for 09/10.

The CEO reported that if funding was confirmed it was intended to employ two temporary mediators. The first stage of recruitment had been completed but she proposed that the process be held until funding was clear. Applicants were aware of the likelihood of this. The Board agreed this action and will reconsider on 13<sup>th</sup> May.

The CEO also said she intended to bring a report on holiday allowance to this meeting.

**BO93/08 Policy and Procedure Reviews**

**Absence Management Policy**

The Board agreed to the amended policy with the proviso that section 6.3.1 was deleted and section 7.2 reframed to clarify the legal requirement on which it was based.

**Equal opportunities policy**

The Board agreed the amendment of this policy with the proviso that all categories of relevant groups be included in the various sections by reference to 'those groups that fall within 1.3 of this policy'

**Complaints Procedure**

The Board agreed the revision

**Protection of Children, Young People and Vulnerable adults' policy.**

The Board agreed to the revisions

**Performance Review forms**

The Board felt that the process of performance review was in danger of overwhelming its usefulness. In light of this it proposed that the forms be tried out on a volunteer and a staff member with the object of seeing how they work, what the time commitment was entailed and elicit any alterations that would shorten the process without unduly reducing the quality.

**Existing policies and procedures agreed by SMT**

These were noted by the Board as was the plan of additional work planned for the year.

**BO94/08 Web site report**

The Board noted the information in the report and asked that this report be received six monthly. The Board discussed the problems emerging with the name being the same as the union. It was agreed that a secret shopping exercise be carried out to check the response of the Union to requests for UNITE mediation.

**BO95/08 Membership**

The Board agreed to the renewal or new member application of Jim Millar/ Lillian Howell / Margaret Kuby / Richard Westmorland / Stephen Twist /Liana Nagy /Lynn Millar /Sue Harrison / Liz Clarkin / Laura Fleming/ Sally Forth / Christine Fields / Lewis Warriner / Paul Jarrold.

**BO96/08 Equality & Diversity.**

Nothing to report

**BO97/08 Health and Safety**

It was noted that there had been a second theft from the offices. Directors suggested that a request for a visit from the crime prevention

officer might be appropriate and that staff needed to be reminded that personal security was a matter of personal responsibility. CEO to consider further action.

**BO98/08**

**Correspondence**

The CEO reported a letter following a request for repayment of training costs. Further action was being undertaken to tighten the paperwork and delay accreditation to reduce the likelihood of this happening again.

**BO99/08**

**Any other business**

The Board agreed to the nomination of J Shepherd to the Middlesbrough LINK

The Board noted the Race for Life on 19<sup>th</sup> June

**BO100/08**

**Date of next Board Meeting**

Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2009 at 5.00pm