

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHARITY COMMITTEE  
HELD ON 02 OCTOBER 2025 AT CARDIFF MRD  
AND REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

**Meeting started at 09:30**

**MEMBERS:**

Peter Curran	Non-Executive Director (Committee Chair)
Ceri Jackson	Non-Executive Director

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Julie Boalch	Assistant Director of Corporate Governance & Risk
Lee Brooks	Executive Director of Operations
Andrew Cotton	Fundraising and Communications Officer
Jackie Hatton-Bell	Volunteer Steering Group Member
David Husband	Support Officer (Volunteering) (Item 35/25 only)
Estelle Hitchon	Director of Partnerships and Engagement
David Hopkins	Head of Charity
Georgi Howard	Community Welfare Responder (Item 35/25 only)
Trish Mills	Director of Corporate Governance/Board Secretary
Steve Owen	Corporate Governance Officer
Alex Payne	Corporate Governance Manager
Hugh Parry	Trade Union Partner (Left during Item 35/25)
Jess Price	Head of Financial Accounting
Ed Roberts	Assistant Director of Finance
Leanne Smith	Assistant Director of Digital (Item 41/25 only)
Andy Swinburn	Executive Director of Paramedicine
Damon Turner	Trade Union Partner (Left during Item 35/25)
Marcus Viggers	Trade Union Partner (Left during Item 35/25)
Sara Williams	Workforce Policy and Governance Lead
Jenny Wilson	National Volunteer Manager

**APOLOGIES:**

Jo Kelso	Head of Workforce Education and Development
Liz Rogers	Deputy Director of People and Culture
Hannah Rowan	Non-Executive Director
Chris Turley	Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources

**OBSERVERS:**

Daniel King	Risk Manager
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### **31/25 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted apologies from Jo Kelso, Liz Rogers, Hannah Rowan and Chris Turley.

**The Committee RESOLVED: To Note the apologies of Jo Kelso, Liz Rogers, Hannah Rowan and Chris Turley.**

### **32/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no other declarations of interest to those already included in the Trust Register of Interests.

**The Committee RESOLVED: To note there were no other declarations of interest to those already included on the register of interest.**

### **33/25 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING AND HIGHLIGHT REPORT**

The minutes of the 03 July 2025 meeting were confirmed as correct record.

The highlight report of 03 July 2025 was received.

**The Committee RESOLVED To:**

- 1. Approve the minutes of the 03 July 2025 meeting as a correct record;**
- 2. Receive the Highlight report dated 03 July 2025.**

### **34/25 ACTION LOG**

Action 07/25 – Finance report - The Committee discussed the charity's position regarding reserves and indicated that it could be helpful to return to both the reserves policy and discussions regarding investment approaches in the coming months. The committee received the charity finance update and noted the detail provided. *The existing Charitable Funds Investment Policy, approved in July 2023, is due for formal review by July 2026. It is also proposed that a brief position on the Charity's reserves and investment approaches should be included within the draft Charitable Funds Policy, which is expected to be tabled for approval in January 2026. It has already been agreed that the Charity's budgets will be formally approved annually by Corporate Trustee, and this will include discussion on reserves held by the Charity.* Action to remain open, a further discussion was held under Any Other Business.

Action 23/25 – Finance Report - Ceri Jackson referred to the earlier point about risk in relation to posts commenting that it may be useful to include a brief statement in the finance report to acknowledge there are arrangements to consider potential risks and what the impact of that risk would be. Details of the risk regarding posts were also included in the Risk Register. *The risks relating to the fixed-term charity posts are included within the Charity's Risk Register. The long-term assessment of the sustainability of Charity Team roles has also been included as an action in the Charity Delivery Plan.* Action Closed.

**The Committee RESOLVED To Note the position of the action log.**

### **35/25 BIDS PANEL LIVED EXPERIENCE – CWR FUNDING - A FOCUS ON THE TRAINING RECEIVED**

Members welcomed Jenny Wilson (Volunteering Manager), David Husband (Volunteer Support Officer), and Georgi Howard (Community Welfare Responder) to give details of the Community Welfare Responder (CWR) project, which was possible due to the receipt of the £315,290 NHS Charities Together Grant.

Jenny explained that the original objective of this grant was to recruit, onboard, and train 600 new Community Welfare Responders (CWR) by the end of the project period. However, due to the additional funding from the Welsh Government (WG) not being secured, the team decided to pause that target. After renegotiations with NHS Charities Together, a revised goal of 400 was agreed upon.

The Committee was informed of the project's progress: 330 volunteers have been recruited, with 198 currently active. There were 47 volunteers prepared for training after completing onboarding and Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) checks, and an additional 70 were undergoing the onboarding process. The CWR project has made a substantial positive contribution to patient care; in the first year alone, over 1,100 patients received support, with more than half able to remain at home following a 999 call.

David Husband explained that he has been involved with the project from the beginning, with a focus on the onboarding of CWR, which included handling recruitment, training, and operations. As the project expanded, managing these tasks became more complex. After a restructure this year, a functional model has been adopted; one team handles all volunteer recruitment, while support officers collaborate with operational assistants.

The need for effective mentoring of volunteers was quickly recognised. While training courses were helpful, transitioning to real-life situations required ongoing support, and a mentorship programme was developed. Community First Responders (CFR) now act as mentors, but coordinating volunteer availability with those needing mentorship remained a challenge; despite having a strong pool of mentors, timing does not always align.

David added that CWR appreciated the Support Officers who were now available across all services provided; but they also expressed a desire for consistency. Frequent changes in team members due to different contracts and secondments disrupted rapport, support, and ongoing knowledge development.

Georgi Howard, serving as a volunteer CWR and CFR, provided a comprehensive overview of her responsibilities and, during her presentation, highlighted several operational challenges confronting the project. These included issues related to volunteer mentoring and the need for consistent support. She offered a balanced evaluation, acknowledging the positive contributions of volunteers while also addressing ongoing concerns regarding underutilisation, retention, and the importance of targeted recruitment initiatives.

Georgi noted an issue of recruitment, highlighting that targeting recruitment efforts was important; as recruiting CWR solely to meet numbers may not be sustainable or beneficial for volunteers or the Trust. She suggested focusing recruitment on local requirements, available positions, and the team's capacity to mentor new members. Regarding retention, she noted that in her area, retention was approximately 50%, with many CWRs leaving due to a lack of suitable roles, skill fade, and administrative delays. These issues resulted in reduced confidence and missed opportunities to use newly acquired skills.

Ceri Jackson observed that the project's scope extended beyond the responsibilities assigned to volunteers and offered support in her capacity as Chair of the People and Culture Committee.

Ceri Jackson was keen to learn more about the approach to equality, diversity and inclusivity (EDI) in the recruitment process and was particularly interested in learning how these principles were being applied in relation to volunteer recruitment. Jenny Wilson stated that the Trust was fully aware of its EDI commitments and noted that the volunteer workforce has generally been more diverse than the staff workforce. She acknowledged that considerable progress remains to be made and that certain challenges persist in this area, adding that she was happy to discuss these matters further with Ceri.

The Committee welcomed the honest and candid feedback, acknowledged the initiative's clear benefits for patients and families, and recognised the importance of addressing operational teething issues.

Members expressed their gratitude for the team's contributions and recognised the essential role volunteers played. Additionally, they extended their appreciation to the wider CWR group, acknowledging and valuing the ongoing efforts, even when outcomes may not always fully align with intentions.

**The Committee RESOLVED: To note the presentation.**

## **36/25 CHARITY FUNDRAISING PLAN**

Estelle Hitchon stated that this document represented a significant milestone, as it was the first instance of formally articulating the charity's fundraising ambitions and detailing approaches to actively increase its revenue.

David Hopkins explained that the Fundraising Plan was designed to give a detailed framework for the Charity's fundraising activities over the next three years, including:

- Project funding from NHS Charities Together, and from charitable trusts and foundations
- Individual giving and community fundraising
- Corporate giving
- In-memory giving and legacy giving

The Fundraising Plan considered internal and external situational analysis, including potential opportunities. It also included benchmarking data from the wider fundraising sector.

David Hopkins added that the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was valuable for strengthening internal governance and clarifying structures to external funders. The prioritisation process, with CWR as a case study, supported this. The MOU helped explain the relationship between the Charity and the Trust, which can be unfamiliar to organisations like the National Lottery, as they received few NHS charity applications.

David Hopkins added that the Plan was designed to deliver results, ensuring continued growth and development over the years. Its focus extended beyond increasing revenue to include diversifying income streams and exploring collaborative opportunities with other charitable organisations.

Ceri Jackson inquired about potential barriers related to fundraising expenditure. David Hopkins replied that this was an area requiring further examination and will be reviewed for the 2026/27 budget, which will be presented to the Committee in January 2026. Currently, fundraising expenditure, excluding staffing costs, remained low. Efforts were being made to identify activities that can be

implemented at little or no cost, with support from the NHS Charities Together Development Grant.

Estelle Hitchon added that a focus was on return on investment (ROI), which was not solely financial. The Committee needs to consider what ROI meant beyond just funding. Estelle assured members that the issues were discussed in the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) meetings and will be addressed further as solutions developed.

In terms of the recommendations, Trish Mills suggested that the Committee consider options beyond solely adopting an MOU. While an MOU might be an appropriate approach, for the final recommendation, instead of specifying that it must be addressed in an MOU, it could state that a process for joint monitoring and reporting should be established. By not specifying the format at this stage, flexibility would be maintained to explore additional solutions. It was agreed that Trish Mills, Estelle Hitchon and David Hopkins would work together to define the appropriate governance strictures going forward.

David clarified that the figures presented in the table within the report were sourced from the budget previously approved by the Corporate Trustee; therefore, these were not new numbers. His intention was to illustrate how these targets would be met through the fundraising plan. All amounts have been authorised by the Corporate Trustees.

David Hopkins added that discussions with other Health Boards and charities were underway, highlighting the potential to learn from their experience and share best practices.

The Chair added that Trusts and Foundations represented an area that have not previously been engaged with. He acknowledged this was a developing area and asked how confident the Charity was about finding viable Trusts and Foundations for success. David Hopkins explained that the outcomes will become clear over time. These targets were considered achievable given the potential opportunities available. The area of Trusts and Foundations was currently challenging and specialised. However, with focused pipeline efforts and further relationship development, there may be opportunities to utilise existing connections for the charity.

**The Committee RESOLVED: To**

**Approve the Fundraising Plan, and endorse the three recommendations within the Plan:**

- a. The Trust and Charity should jointly establish prioritisation processes for Charity projects and appeals.**

- b. The Trust and the Charity should agree an approval mechanism for the Charity's grant applications and ensure it is proportionate and manageable.**
- c. The Trust and Charity should jointly establish project monitoring and reporting mechanisms for successful grant applications, with details of these mechanisms of the structure to be determined.**

## **37/25 CHARITY PERFORMANCE REPORT**

The Charity Performance Report was received showing performance against the NHS Charity Together (NHSCT) grants:

Stage 3 Recovery Grant Progress: As of 31 August 2025, £73,467 has been spent out of £88,000 awarded, with various projects ongoing, including a Volunteer Development Programme and Mind over Mountains. The remaining funds were to be spent by December 2025 with a projected underspend of £7,013.

Ambulance Grant Update: The Ambulance Grant has recruited 330 Community First Responders to date, with a target of 400 by February 2026. The project has been extended due to recruitment delays.

In addition to the two active grants, two further grant applications have been submitted to NHS Charities Together since the last meeting - one for £142,000 (Community Resilience Fund) and one for £15,823 (Greener Communities Fund). Members also received a verbal update on NHS Charities Together Workplace Wellbeing fund, and on plans to submit an application towards Wish Ambulance to the National Lottery Community Fund.

David Hopkins added that Mind Over Mountains was currently the only project where performance against Key Performance Indicators (KPI) was marked in red. This issue has been discussed in previous meetings, but to clarify, it was not intended to continue this project beyond the final walk, which was scheduled for next weekend.

Regarding workplace well-being grants, David Hopkins explained there have been further updates since the report. While England used a competitive grant process, with many charities involved, Wales only has nine charities. The Trust was discussing a possible joint project supporting broader NHS Wales well-being services, which may benefit the Charity but might not bring direct funding to the charity. The Charity budget currently included £30K for workplace well-being, but this was under review, and further updates will be provided as discussions progress.

Estelle Hitchon drew attention to the WISH Ambulance which provides highly valuable services, with many people regularly using or having used them.

Currently, the Charity needs both unrestricted funds and donations for specific initiatives like WISH. The challenge is communicating the importance of general contributions, which help support staff and enhance services overall. While the Charity receives generous donations from families who have benefited from WISH, the aim was to highlight ways everyone can support this work and bring comfort to those at the end of life.

**The Committee RESOLVED: To receive assurance on the Charity's performance, and on the key risks and mitigations in place for the Charity's active NHSCT grants.**

## **38/25 CHARITY FUNDS FINANCE REPORT**

Ed Roberts outlined details of the report:

From 01 April 2025 to 31 August 2025, total income amounted to £28,000, comprising donations of approximately £21,000 and interest received of £7,500. No legacy or grant income was recorded during this period.

The total expenditure for the period amounted to £95,000, with charitable activities accounting for just under £6,000. Grant expenditure was approximately £62,000, primarily funded through restricted funds. Administrative and support costs totalled £27,000. Overall, there was a negative net movement of just under £67,000 for the period.

Regarding the fund balances, the total funds currently held amount to £695,000. This comprises £209,000 in unrestricted funds, £181,000 in designated funds, and £304,000 in restricted funds.

Between 01 April 2025 and 31 August 2025, the unit price of the Charity's investments increased by 1.67%, resulting in a gain of approximately £4.6k. The current holding is 1,090.14 units at a unit price of £256.1682, with a total market value of £279.3k. The investment strategy is aligned with the charity's identified risk appetite and focuses on low-risk options to maintain stability.

The Chair queried the current process in terms of profiling budgets. Jessica Price stated that the team will review the profile and budget to provide clarification regarding the initial approach, which was based on considerations from the bursaries and bids panel earlier in the year. She noted that the actual awards in the first round were less than anticipated, so the budget will be reprofiling in response to feedback and aligned with upcoming bursary panels and related activities throughout the year.

The Chair raised a question about the 1.67% return on investments, observing that higher yields are available from bank deposits. Ed Roberts responded by

noting that, in general, the stock market tends to yield higher returns over time compared to leaving funds in a bank account. The report also indicates the occurrence of a recent downward trend; however, under typical conditions for this portfolio type, returns are generally higher than standard bank interest rates. Over the recent period, however, the bank would have provided a higher return than the current investment results.

The Committee requested that it would be useful to review longer-term performance data that includes forward-looking forecasts, rather than focusing only on the current reporting period. Jessica Price reported that weekly investment monitoring showed a slight loss last week, but share equity remained at £70K. She agreed to include this longer-term data in future reports. Ed Roberts suggested adding a stock market plot and comparing current trends with returns to help identify if the portfolio aligned with the market and spot any warning signs of poor investments.

Members noted that funding for the strategy was apportioned across year one and year two, but recruitment delays have shifted timelines. It had also been noted that assurance had previously been given that funds can be carried over into future years, which was important context for the committee and should be included in the next report. Jessica Price clarified that apportionment covered staff costs for two years from the appointment date, not the original agreement date, and confirmed this detail would appear in the next financial update.

**The Committee RESOLVED: To Note the contents of the report.**

### **39/25 CHARITY COMMISSION - REGISTER OF CHARITIES**

Estelle Hitchon explained that as part of the Charity Strategy Delivery Plan, it was agreed that the entry on the Charity Commission's Register should be reviewed as part of a charity governance review. It was a legal requirement to ensure that the Register of Charities was kept up to date.

Two proposed changes were recommended, and required the approval of Corporate Trustee:

- a. The addition of two new "working names" for the charity, when the official name of the Charity is not used in full.
- b. The amendment of the Charity's activities description on the Register of Charities, to better reflect its Strategic Objective.

**The Committee RESOLVED: To endorse the paper and endorse the proposed changes to the Charity's working names and activities description to be approved by the Corporate Trustee at its meeting in November 2025.**

## **40/25 RISK MANAGEMENT REPORT - CHARITY RISK REGISTER**

The Committee received the new Charity Risk Register and approved inclusion of one new risk - CHAR-008 - Failure to raise sufficient funds to deliver the Charity's strategic objectives scored at 12 (3x4).

**The Committee RESOLVED: To Receive the Charity Risk Register and approve the inclusion of CHAR-008 on the Risk Register for the Charity.**

## **41/25 BIDS PANEL HIGHLIGHT REPORT – 22 SEPTEMBER 2025**

Leanne Smith drew attention to the following points from the report

There were no bids over £5,000 for the Committee to approve. A total of six bids were considered, with four approved relating to the Hazardous Area Response Team (HART) Garden Project, three TVs and a picnic bench; two bids were redirected for further consideration. The total funding awarded for approved bids was £3,990.

Round 3 of the NHS Charities Together Sports Fund saw three applications reviewed by the panel, resulting in separate approvals with a total spend of £3,830.

A new risk was identified in relation to Inequitable Awarding Patterns with the potential for awards granted to similar groups or areas given awareness of the Charitable Funds is higher in some localities, services or departments. An update will be provided to the Bids Panel at a future meeting on actions to mitigate this risk and to consider the process of approving national funds which will supplement new guidance in development for applications.

Leanne Smith also noted that Christmas hamper and dinner-related bids were expected in the coming weeks. An extraordinary meeting may be required due to the associated timelines. If any bid exceeds the expenditure limit, a Chair's Action may be required by the Charity Committee before the next committee meeting in January due to the timelines involved

Following a query on the volume of bids Leanne Smith stated that the current volume appeared reasonable and consistent with past trends.

Following a conversation around regional funding, David Hopkins added that the regional funds were legacy funds, with the North historically having higher amounts for at least the past decade. He planned to review more data on the geographic distribution of bids adding that the high fund levels in the North may have resulted from an initially larger allocation, not a lack of bids.

**The Committee RESOLVED: To receive and take assurance from the Bids Panel Highlight report from 22 September 2025.**

#### **42/25 BURSARY PANEL HIGHLIGHT REPORT – 18 JULY 2025**

David Hopkins provided the Committee with the following update in lieu of Jo Kelso, Chair of the Bursary Panel:

The Bursary Panel met on 18 July 2025 advising that of the 35 Bursary Rounds submissions for 2025, 6 received financial support totalling £7,283.86 contributing partial funding to five MSc programmes and an Advanced Child Protection course. A second round of applications will be invited for Q3 to ensure the full fund was allocated.

David Hopkins added that the number of applications received were being closely monitored, especially those not funded or failing to meet statutory training requirements. He was working closely with Jo Kelso to improve processes and clarify guidance to reduce unnecessary rejections, aiming to approve as many applications as funding allowed.

**The Committee RESOLVED: To receive and take assurance from the highlight report from 18 July 2025.**

#### **43/25 CONSENT ITEMS**

**The following items were presented to the Committee for information:**

##### **1. Committee Priorities & Cycle of Business Monitoring Report 2025/26**

Members were assured that there were no matters to escalate regarding the Committee's priorities for 2025/26 and the monitoring report was received.

Trish Mills brought the following ongoing action to the Committee's attention: *Action 07/25 The committee discussed the charity's position regarding reserves and indicated that it could be helpful to return to both the reserves policy and discussions regarding investment approaches in the coming months.*

It was agreed that Jessica Price would ascertain what it currently stated in the 2023/24 Annual Audit Accounts regarding the charity's position in terms of reserves- and this would be proactively brought back in Q4 as part of the annual report.

Trish Mills agreed that this represented a proactive policy position concerning reserves for the upcoming year. If it coincided with the timing of

the annual report, it would naturally fall within Q4 and would not require adjustment. Therefore, the Committee should consider updating the cycle of business and accompanying notes to specify that this was not an official policy, but rather a policy position articulated in the annual report. Trish advised that this will be followed up with the Chair after this meeting to provide clarification and indicate where the relevant information was documented.

## **2. Liability and Indemnity - Internal Guidance for Charitable Activities**

The Committee welcomed this guidance which was presented for noting.

David added this document was provided to those who took part in fundraising activity, or sporting activities supported by the Charity.

## **3. Volunteer Fundraising - Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)**

The Committee welcomed this SOP which was presented for noting.

### **The Committee RESOLVED To:**

- 1. Note the Committee priorities and the 2025/26 cycle of business monitoring report.**
- 2. Receive the Liability and Indemnity - Internal Guidance for Charitable Activities report**
- 3. Receive the Volunteer Fundraising - Standard Operating Procedure**

## **44/25 REFLECTIONS AND SUMMARY OF DECISIONS/ACTIONS**

Members reflected that the Charity was making strong progress in governance and operational maturity, with positive impacts on patients and staff. Members emphasised the need to support further growth by ensuring adequate capacity within the Charity, highlighted the benefits of cross-departmental collaboration, and expressed gratitude for everyone's contributions and the quality of reporting received.

## **45/25 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There were none

## **46/25 DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 13 January 2026**

**Meeting closed at: 11:15**